

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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MBTA RED LINE PASSENGER

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FATALITY IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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ON APRIL 10, 2022

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Interview of: JAMES ROSS,

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

Boston, Massachusetts

Tuesday,

April 12, 2021

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

RUBEN PAYAN, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

GEORGE GOOD, Accident Investigator  
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STEVEN CULP, Chief Investigation Officer  
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

JALILA ADAMS, Lead Safety Investigator Heavy Rail  
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NICHOLAS FERRARO, Accident Investigator  
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

ARUN MODH, Transit Engineer  
Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities

PAUL ROMAN, Compliance Officer  
Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities

FRANCISCO ANACLETO, Representative  
Carmen's Union, Local 589

ROUDY JEAN, Delegate  
Carmen's Union, Local 589

FRENIA HUNTER, Training Superintendent  
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

STEVEN DALEY, Revision Chief Red Line Operations  
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

JOHN MERSEREAU, Delegate  
Carmen's Union, Local 589

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. ZAGATA: Good afternoon. My name is Zach Zagata. I am the NTSB IIC for this accident. We are conducting an interview on April 12, 2022, with James Ross who works for MBTA.

This interview is in conjunction with NTSB's investigation of an accident in Boston -- of an accident near Boston. The NTSB accident reference number is RRD22LR008. The purpose of this investigation is to increase safety and not assign fault, blame, or liability.

Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go around and introduce ourselves. Please spell your name and your title. And I'll start off and then pass to my right. Again, my name is Zach, Z-a-c-h. Last name Zagata, Z-a-g-a-t-a. And I am the NTSB IIC for this accident.

MR. GOOD: My name is George Good, G-e-o-r-g-e G-o-o-d, accident investigator with the Federal Transit Administration.

MR. RICHMOND: Patrick Richmond, chief transportation officer heavy rail at MBTA. P-a-t-r-i-c-k R-i-c-h-m-o-n-d.

MR. CULP: Steven Culp, S-t-e-v-e-n C-u-l-p, chief investigation and safety assurance officer, MBTA.

MR. PAYAN: I'm Ruben Payan. Last name Payan, P-a-y-a-n. I'm with the NTSB.

MR. MODH: Arun Modh, A-r-u-n M-o-d-h, transit engineer with Mass DPU.

MR. ROMAN: Paul Roman, P-a-u-l R-o-m-a-n, compliance

1 officer, Mass DPU.

2 MR. JEAN: Roudy Jean, R-o-u-d-y. Jean, J-e-a-n, Boston  
3 Carmen's Union, Local 589, delegate.

4 MR. ANACLETO: Francisco Anacleto. Francisco, F-r-a-n-c-i-s-  
5 c-o. Last name Anacleto, A-n-a-c-l-e-t-o. 589 union rep.

6 MR. FERRARO: Nicholas Ferraro. N-i-c-h-o-l-a-s F-e-r-r-a-r-  
7 o. I am a MBTA, heavy rail instructor and the accident  
8 investigator for the training department.

9 MR. ROSS: James Ross, J-a-m-e-s. Last name Ross, R-o-s-s.  
10 MBTA red line motorperson.

11 MS. ADAMS: Jalila Adams, J-a-l-i-l-a. Adams, A-d-a-m-s.  
12 Lead safety investigator, MBTA.

13 MS. HUNTER: Frenia Hunter, F-r-e-n-i-a. Hunter, H-u-n-t-e-  
14 r. Superintendent of training for subway, MBTA.

15 MR. DALEY: Steven Daley, S-t-e-v-e-n D-a-l-e-y. Division  
16 chief red line operations, MBTA, as an observer.

17 MR. MERSEREAU: John Mersereau, delegate equipment  
18 maintenance, Boston Carmen's Union, Local 589. And I'm here as an  
19 observer. M-e-r-s-e-r-e-a-u.

20 MR. ZAGATA: Thank you.

21 INTERVIEW OF JAMES ROSS

22 BY MR. ZAGATA:

23 Q. To start off with, if you could just give us an overview of  
24 your career here at MBTA.

25 A. Sure. I've been with the MBTA for 23 years. Started off as

1 a bus operator in 1999 and started on the red line in 2003 to now.

2 Q. Appreciate it. If you could just kind of give us a  
3 description of on a normal day.

4 A. Yep.

5 Q. Pull into a platform and then departing, the things you do.

6 A. Sure. Coming into a station, you have to proceed in the  
7 station using caution, looking on the tracks, making sure that  
8 nobody is on the tracks, observing the yellow line, making sure  
9 passengers are not on the yellow line. You're looking for the  
10 motorperson's marker. And you stop the train after a motorperson  
11 marker. You don't get out of the seat until the train is at a  
12 complete stop and then you make your way to the side of the train  
13 where the platform is, open up the window and stick your head out  
14 and look for the door -- the platform train marker on the  
15 platform, as well.

16 The next thing you would do is look to the rear of the train,  
17 the direction where you're going to be opening the doors, and open  
18 up the toggle, and look for pilot lights making sure that all your  
19 doors have opened. And use the monitor to try to see things that  
20 you can't see with your own eyes looking down the platform. And  
21 then, you know, once people have exited the train, waiting for  
22 people to exit and enter the train, making sure that the platform  
23 is completely clear. You attempt to close the door keeping your  
24 hands on the toggle in case somebody were to jump out in the last  
25 minute or try to jump onto the train the last minute; that you

1 could reopen the doors.

2 At that point, you would be keeping your head out of the  
3 window of the train, looking down the train. And if you couldn't  
4 see everything, you'd have to try to utilize the monitors at the  
5 same time for troubled areas. Then once you felt that it was  
6 completely safe to close the doors, you closed the doors, keeping  
7 your head out the window, waiting for all the pilot lights to  
8 extinguish.

9 Once the pilot lights have extinguished, look at the monitor  
10 again. Maybe something -- you missed something. Go back to the  
11 seat and hit the door automatic or on an 1800, the door control.  
12 Once you've had that safety feature there, with the door  
13 automatics, then you can proceed out of the station. That's  
14 typically how it's done.

15 Q. Have you ever had any issues at the Broadway station?  
16 Specifically, have you ever noticed --

17 A. Yeah. I could give you a personal case that happened to me.  
18 This was going back a few years. I was on the platform at that  
19 same station, Broadway North. And I did exactly what I just said  
20 I did and I looked down the platform and I closed the doors. And  
21 all the pilot lights went out and I couldn't see anything going on  
22 back there. I looked down the line of sight. You're looking at  
23 six car lengths which is a long distance. All the pilot lights  
24 went out. I went from the window and looked at the monitor. I  
25 didn't see anything going on. Went to the driver's seat, hit the

1 door automatics, got the door automatics and then began to proceed  
2 out.

3       When I got probably a car out of the station, the passenger  
4 emergency intercom goes off and I stop the train. Passenger says,  
5 somebody's bag got caught in the doors. Right. The CSA at the  
6 station responds they have a passenger on the platform and the  
7 person is intoxicated, highly intoxicated on the platform. I get  
8 permission to back the train up. The person is clear of the  
9 train. I get permission to back up the train into the station and  
10 open the doors. Then I get taken off.

11       They go through the video and they say that on the video, the  
12 pilot remained lit. That the person was being dragged down the  
13 platform. When we looked at the video, what happened was the  
14 person was in the doorjamb and they were bouncing around on the  
15 doorjamb. And the pilot light went out even though the person was  
16 in the door.

17       That was the reason I got the door automatics. And in the  
18 two seconds that it took me to go from the window to move the  
19 train, that person wiggled out of the train and their bag got  
20 caught in the door. And the train proceeded out and they were  
21 almost being dragged down the platform but they released the bag.

22       So I've had issues kind of similar to this in the sense of  
23 equipment failure. Of sensitive edges that aren't working and  
24 also monitors that are not -- that don't give the motorperson the  
25 visuals that they need to see in order to ensure that everything



1 has happened safely and that nobody -- with 100 percent, knowing  
2 that there's nobody in those doors. You can't see that unless the  
3 monitors are showing exactly what you need to see. And honestly,  
4 most of them don't.

5 Q. What kind of issues do you see with the monitors?

6 A. They're in poor quality, they're not maintained, they don't  
7 factor in environmental factors like solar glare on -- outside  
8 stations. The frames, the camera angles are wrong. Most of them,  
9 with the vibration in the station, they begin to go down. You're  
10 looking at monitors and you're looking at platform floors.  
11 There's no consistency.

12 A lot of times we're looking at monitors and we don't know  
13 what we're looking at. Those are the issues that have made it  
14 unsafe for us, in my opinion, to be out there. And adding on to  
15 that also, the fact of the equipment issue of these sensitive  
16 edges that aren't working.

17 Q. Do you believe it's safe to rely upon the cameras?

18 A. No, no. They're unreliable. I would say the majority of  
19 them you can't use. And out of the four frames, you may have to  
20 pick out maybe just one -- one would be useful. But the other --  
21 you know, it's just -- there's no consistency across the board of  
22 what we're looking at as motormen to be able to safely close those  
23 doors consistently every time. We're constantly taking risks out  
24 there.

25 And basically, closing the doors blind in many ways because

1 of the distance that we have to look down the platform. There's  
2 lighting issues in the stations, there's curve issues with the  
3 station. Where you're -- there's obstructions and the cameras are  
4 not giving us the tools to be able to see those areas across the  
5 board. That's my opinion.

6 Q. You talked about issues with the doors.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Was that on a specific series of cars or --

9 A. It was a silver. It was one of the older trains. I forget  
10 which one it was. But it was the older train.

11 Q. Is there a way for you to report issues like you just  
12 described to us? Did you report that to anybody when that  
13 happened or (indiscernible)?

14 A. Yeah, we -- this has been something that motorpersons have  
15 been talking about for a long time. And it just -- the initiative  
16 hasn't been there to fix this problem, in my opinion.

17 Q. But when you turn that in, do you turn that into MBTA  
18 management and they do something with it or do you know what  
19 happens? When you turn in a close call or something like that or  
20 an issue with it?

21 A. You know, I don't know if anybody has actually put in a  
22 formal statement to request an audit on the monitors to go through  
23 them. But it's been discussed, it's been discussed with the  
24 union, it's been discussed with supervisors in the field. But  
25 it's not something where the will has been there to do this. And

1 this incident that happened is something that a lot of us knew  
2 what happened at some point and probably it will happen again.

3 Q. Approximately, the six cars, about how long is your train,  
4 how long is your (indiscernible) with six cars?

5 A. I don't know what it is. I think it's like 600 feet. I'm  
6 not 100 percent sure.

7 Q. Do you feel comfortable making that determination just with  
8 your eyes?

9 A. No. I mean, if you have a perfectly straight station and you  
10 don't have overcrowding -- and that can happen. Like pre-  
11 pandemic, you'd have extremely heavy platforms. Ridership was  
12 extremely high. And passengers would board and you would have a  
13 load that couldn't be carried so there would be remaining  
14 passengers on the platform. So looking down the platform, you  
15 wouldn't be able to see down there because the platform didn't  
16 completely clear. It makes it impossible to see with the  
17 obstructions. Then you would have to depend on the monitors to be  
18 able to see that but the monitors, you can't rely on them.  
19 They're unreliable. So you end up closing blind.

20 MR. ZAGATA: I appreciate it. That's all I've got for now.  
21 I'll pass it to my right.

22 BY MR. GOOD:

23 Q. George Good, FTA. Just to kind of follow up a little bit on  
24 what Zach was talking about. Is there safety committees or a  
25 formal process that safety has where you can report things if you

1 feel they're --

2 A. You know, I think --

3 Q. -- not being addressed properly?

4 A. I mean, I think the MBTA has done that a lot in the past. I  
5 know motorpersons who have sat on safety in meetings at JFK on the  
6 red line. And you know, the feedback that I've gotten back is  
7 that a lot has -- gets talked about but nothing gets done. So I'm  
8 sure that this issue with the monitors has come up several -- many  
9 times at those, you know, talking to motorpersons who have sat on  
10 those meetings. That this is something that has been talked about  
11 for a long time.

12 Q. You have a lot of years of experience as an operator. Does  
13 management allow -- when there is any revisions of SOPs or  
14 training to provide input and suggestions on how to improve it?

15 A. I'm sure they do. The real question is do they act on it? I  
16 think that that's -- I think that has been the failure, the  
17 failure to act. I mean, I think -- the -- we know the problems  
18 but we just don't put the effort as an authority to fix these  
19 issues, these safety issues that are out there. That's my opinion  
20 of it.

21 Q. Do you have, I'll say, an operator or division safety Rep  
22 that you know you can go to that will take things to the committee  
23 meetings? Do you know that person or --

24 A. In fairness, with Steve Daley, I've recently talked to Steve  
25 about these issues going back about two months ago. And his

1 feedback was this is something that was important to him and that  
2 he wanted to do something about it and was trying to find a way to  
3 bring this about.

4 Also, Jalila in the safety department, she used to ride my  
5 train every morning and we would talk about monitors. And she  
6 said that she would talk to the safety department about it and  
7 that monitors were something that were on the radar about going  
8 out there and looking at it.

9 I mean, there's kind of been an informal way of kind of  
10 communicating with people but at the same time, I think these  
11 things have been discussed in formal settings but they haven't  
12 really been put into action for whatever reason.

13 MR. GOOD: Thank you.

14 BY MR. RICHMOND:

15 Q. Hey, James. Patrick Richmond, MBTA. What kind of things, if  
16 anything, do you find helpful in operating the doors? I mean, we  
17 have the SPTO monitors, the mirrors, platform attendants.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Any of the tools that we use that you find are useful to a  
20 motorperson?

21 A. They're not reliable. You know, they're there. But they're  
22 there in appearance only. It's that they don't accomplish the  
23 purpose which is to allow us to see what we need to see to safely  
24 close the doors consistently at every station. And they just  
25 don't do that. So if I couldn't see down the platform and I

1 depended on the monitors out there, I would be closing -- at the  
2 majority of stations, I would be closing the doors blind. The  
3 best-case scenario is if the platform is completely clear which is  
4 not always the case.

5 I mean, there's lots of obstructions, the way the station is  
6 curved. And we don't have the tools out there to really be able  
7 to do the job after removing the second person from the train.  
8 The monitors were put in to give us the tools but from day one,  
9 they never really were done in a way that accomplished the -- what  
10 we needed it to accomplish.

11 As far as the mirrors, the mirrors -- you have to stop the  
12 train at an exact spot on the platform which is almost impossible  
13 to do consistently because of the braking, some trains slide a  
14 little bit more, other issues. And if you don't line up on that  
15 mirror, then it -- you can't use it for anything. And a lot of  
16 them shake in the wind on the outside so even if you're looking at  
17 that mirror, it's moving on you. You can't see it.

18 Q. You mentioned closing the doors blind. I'm kind of inferring  
19 what you mean is like there are areas along the side of the train  
20 where you don't have good visibility. Fair?

21 A. Yeah. There's parts of the train that you can't see.

22 Q. Do you think that there's like a number of those spots that  
23 could be identified?

24 A. Yeah. You could identify -- yeah. A good station, as an  
25 example of a good monitor, would be South Station North. That

1 monitor, you have four frames. In the first frame, you have a  
2 camera facing the first three cars. It gives you a view from the  
3 middle of the platform towards you and you see the entire train  
4 and you see all the pilot lights. Then the second frame shows the  
5 entire rear of the train almost intuitively like as if you were  
6 looking back and forth. You can see the rear.

7       So if I pulled my head in in that train and was not looking  
8 down the platform and I looked at that monitor, I could safely  
9 close the doors without looking down the platform because of the  
10 way those cameras are set up. Then the lower two frames, you  
11 know, the last frame would show the last car of that train. It  
12 shows like that trouble area. The farthest car all the way at the  
13 sixth car where it's very difficult to see, one of those trains  
14 would -- one of those frames would focus in on that area. That's  
15 probably the only one on the red line that I would say could be  
16 used as a model of how to set up the other stations.

17       MR. RICHMOND: Thank you.

18       MR. CULP: Steven Culp, MBTA safety. Do you know the number  
19 for the safety hotline?

20       MR. ROSS: No, I don't.

21       MR. CULP: It's 1-8 -- not (indiscernible). 222-SAFE.  
22 Anytime you have an issue, all you have to dial is S-A-F-E and  
23 leave a message there and we will make sure that things get  
24 followed up on. So I have no questions other than that.

25       BY MR. PAYAN:

1 Q. This is Ruben with the NTSB. Thank you, James. You kind of  
2 perked my interest when you -- the incident on the silver line.

3 A. On the silver line?

4 Q. That you described.

5 A. Oh, on my -- yeah, on my incident. Yeah.

6 Q. Yeah. Your incident, your experience. I might have missed  
7 it but did you use the door acknowledge button?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. And it still -- you heard a buzzer with the  
10 (indiscernible) --

11 A. Yeah. I got door automatics with somebody in the doors.

12 Q. And you said that they were wiggling out.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. That -- this was -- you were told this?

15 A. Yeah. It was a highly intoxicated person. They were trying  
16 to step off the train but they couldn't step off so they were kind  
17 of getting -- they were wobbling in the doorframe of the train.  
18 So when you look down that length, she was like in the fourth car  
19 which is like maybe 400 feet. And you're looking down, it's a  
20 straight line, and the station is dark. And you can't see anybody  
21 because they're in the doorjamb.

22 When I closed the doors, the door is closed on the person and  
23 the pilot light went out. And the two seconds that it took me to  
24 go from the window to hit the door automatics at the seat, I get  
25 the door automatics, I begin to proceed out. In those two to



1 three seconds, the person wiggled out of the doors and their bag  
2 got caught. Then I proceeded out and the person let go of the bag  
3 in that situation.

4 And the people on the train, they pressed the PI which  
5 allowed me to know what was going on. And I stopped the train.  
6 But it was one of those perfect situations where everything goes  
7 wrong. The equipment fails, the monitors don't show the entire  
8 train, do not show the doors so that you can eliminate that risk.  
9 And there's nobody on the platforms. There's no backup safety.  
10 Once those things fail, it's up to the passengers now. You know,  
11 it's up to the passenger to pull an emergency. It's up to a  
12 passenger to press the PI. That's what's happening.

13 Q. So I've been working on the car that was involved in the  
14 accident so I'm kind of learning about the system. So I'm really  
15 curious about the whole sequence of events that you experienced.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. While you closed the doors and this person wiggled out and  
18 you pressed the --

19 A. Door automatic button.

20 Q. -- door acknowledgement?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Do you think -- or were you told, was the person still indoor  
23 or (indiscernible)?

24 A. Well, we watched the video on that. Right? It --

25 RECORDING: May I have your attention, please? The signal

1 tone you have just heard indicated a report of an emergency in  
2 this building.

3 MR. ZAGATA: We're going to stop recording.

4 RECORDING: If your floor evacuation signal --

5 (Off the record.)

6 (On the record.)

7 MR. ZAGATA: We've resumed the interview.

8 BY MR. PAYAN:

9 Q. Let me try and pick up where I left off.

10 A. Sure.

11 Q. The video you saw --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- was it the person in the doorway when the door  
14 acknowledgement button was pushed or was it the purse or bag that  
15 he was holding getting caught in the door when you pushed the  
16 acknowledge button?

17 A. I couldn't see the person.

18 Q. Well, see, that's what I'm trying to -- for my side --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- the engineering side. If it was the bag, I can see where  
21 it might have been small enough to let the doors close. But if it  
22 was a person, that shouldn't have happened. And I'm trying to  
23 find out how that could happen.

24 A. That the doors should not have closed on the person? Well,  
25 the doors closed because I closed the doors. And the reason --

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. -- I closed the doors was because there was nobody in the  
3 doors that I could see.

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. Right. But there was somebody in the doors. I just couldn't  
6 see them because of my line of sight. Because they were in a  
7 doorjamb and they hadn't stepped off the train yet. And the  
8 cameras don't give you the perspective to be able to see the doors  
9 because you're looking down. So the equipment failed in the sense  
10 that the sensitive edge did not retract the doors and did not  
11 prevent the pilot light from extinguishing. The pilot light  
12 extinguishes with the person in the doorjamb. Therefore, I can  
13 get the door automatics because all the pilot lights were  
14 extinguished even though somebody was in the doors.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. Right.

17 Q. That's the part I'm trying to figure out. When the pilot  
18 went out, was it the person in the doorway?

19 A. Yeah. The video shows the person in the doorway when the  
20 pilot light goes out.

21 Q. When the pilot light goes out?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Then that's when shortly after that, you said two seconds  
24 later, you --

25 A. Two seconds, I go into the seat -- the motorperson's seat --

1 Q. And you got (indiscernible) --

2 A. You get door automatics. I get door automatics. Right.  
3 Then I begin to move the train. As I'm moving the train, the  
4 person wiggles out of the doors. As they clear the doors, the  
5 doors closed behind them because the toggle is closed to close the  
6 doors. But their bag that they're dragging gets caught because it  
7 closes on their bag, like the strap of the bag. So you got the  
8 bag in the train, you got them on the platform. They're holding  
9 the bag and the train is moving. They let go of the bag and they  
10 don't get dragged and a passenger hits the Pi and I stop the  
11 train.

12 MR. PAYAN: That makes sense now. Yeah. Thank you for that.  
13 That's all I have.

14 BY MR. MODH:

15 Q. Arun Modh (indiscernible). Do you vaguely remember how many  
16 years ago or any time frame for this?

17 A. Probably five years ago. Something like that.

18 Q. Five years ago. It was --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- at Broadway?

21 A. Yes, Broadway North.

22 MR. MODH: That's all I had. Thank you.

23 MR. ROMAN: Paul Roman, DPU. No questions.

24 BY MR. JEAN:

25 Q. Roudy Jean, Carmen's Union. Jimmy, some of these cameras,

1 are they often delayed, some of these cameras?

2 A. What's that?

3 Q. Are they delayed?

4 A. Yeah. There are some cameras out there that have a delay.  
5 Andrew North was a big problem for a while. So you would come  
6 into the station, you'd come to a full stop and you would open --  
7 come to a full stop and open up the window, look at the monitor.  
8 The frames would still show the train coming into the station.

9 Then when you're trying to close the door -- now, that  
10 station, Andrew North, is curved like this so you can't see the  
11 rear of the train. You have to lean almost half your body off the  
12 train to be able to see. And you have to use the monitors to the  
13 best of your ability trying to see -- get something that can help  
14 you to get the doors closed. When you would look at that  
15 particular monitor, it would show in the monitor that it was  
16 clear.

17 So the other issue is that a lot of times the monitors are  
18 facing in the opposite direction of your line of sight. So if you  
19 go to close the doors and you're looking this way, the monitor is  
20 here, and so you have to look this way and then go back and forth,  
21 and back and forth. And there's seconds of delay there that  
22 things change. So you would look up and you would see that nobody  
23 is on the -- nobody is at the doors. Then you would look to the  
24 right and there are people there.

25 So if you try to close the doors looking at the monitor, you

1 would hit people. That's the point that I was making; that these  
2 monitors, a lot of them are unreliable and they're not maintained  
3 and they're not -- sometimes these issues take a long time to  
4 resolve. That particular issue at Andrew North took a long time  
5 to resolve. And some people are still saying that there is a  
6 delay on that camera.

7 Q. I have one more question. How vital is a train attendant or  
8 a platform attendant be to your job?

9 A. You know, it's another layer of protection. It's a layer of  
10 protection that we've lost. And with the loss of the platform  
11 attendants -- I know there's some platform attendants out there  
12 just a few hours a day. But this incident happened at 12:30 a.m.  
13 So somebody getting dragged or somebody getting hurt can happen  
14 any time. The point is is that we can't safely close these doors  
15 using the tools that we're given.

16 In the past, When you had a train attendant on the train,  
17 their job -- because I was a train attendant at one time -- their  
18 job was to control the doors and to make sure that everybody was  
19 clear of those doors. And they were in a position almost in the  
20 middle of the train at the fifth car. So they could get a better  
21 view of what was happening and they could pull an emergency if  
22 something like that were to happen, they see somebody wiggling  
23 out. They could pull an emergency; they could stop the train  
24 without being dependent on the passengers to do that.

25 And there have been incidents where -- kind of a similar

1 situation that happened with me with the train attendant happened.  
2 Because of that train attendant they were able to stop the train  
3 and prevent somebody from being dragged and potentially killed.

4       You could say the same thing about the platform attendant.  
5 There was an employee that used to work here. He's now retired.  
6 When SBTO first went into effect and they had a lot of SBTO people  
7 on the platforms and there was an incident at Park Street on the  
8 southbound on the wall side. And a woman got her arms stuck in  
9 the doors and she was being dragged down the platform. And if it  
10 wasn't for that platform attendant on the platform who pulled her,  
11 physically pulled her out of the doors, the same thing would have  
12 happened to her.

13       Yeah. The platform attendants and train attendants gave us  
14 that other layer of protection in case equipment fails, in case  
15 passengers don't respond and in case we're not able to see what we  
16 need to see out there to safely close doors on the platform.

17       MR. JEAN: That's all I have. Thank you.

18       MR. ANACLETO: Francisco Anacleto. No questions.

19       BY MR. FERRARO:

20 Q.   Nick Ferraro, training department. Just a question for you.  
21 What would you say approximately seconds or time frame-wise would  
22 you say it takes from when you watch all your pilot lights  
23 extinguish until you sit back down in the driver's seat and hit  
24 the door automatics? How long would you say that's about and the  
25 train starts moving?

1 A. Yeah. I would say from the time that you have your head out  
2 the window and you're watching for all the pilot lights to  
3 extinguish, at that point, once you've pulled your head back in  
4 and closed the window to the operator's seat and hit the door  
5 automatics, two to three seconds. Two to three seconds to close  
6 and get back to the seat, hit the door automatics, and power up.

7 Q. Would it be fair to say, within that two to three seconds,  
8 you have no knowledge of anything going on outside the side of  
9 your train to the point where you power up the train?

10 A. That's right. Yeah, that's absolutely right. Because you're  
11 no longer looking at monitors. You've done the best you could  
12 visually looking down the platform. You've done your best with  
13 the monitors to see what you can see knowing that there's lots of  
14 blind spots out there. And you've done all those things and now  
15 you depend on your equipment to give you verification that you've  
16 closed the doors properly, that what you saw is true, that there's  
17 nobody in the doors. Then once you get those door automatics, you  
18 accept that signal and you proceed out without thinking twice.

19 Q. You mentioned you were a train attendant?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. As a train attendant, do you recall any other specifics after  
22 the closure of the doors that you were instructed to have to do?

23 A. Yes, yeah. When we were closing the doors, you would close  
24 the rear of the train first which was the rear two cars. Then you  
25 would close -- then you would look to the front of the train and



1 close the front four. Then -- you would then recheck left and  
2 right to make sure that the entire train was clear, that the doors  
3 were clear, that the pilot lights were extinguished. But where  
4 you were, you had a better view of the entire train.

5 Then you kept your head out the window until -- as the train  
6 began to move. So once the train moved, you were making sure that  
7 nobody was being dragged. Then at that point, you would pull your  
8 head in and close the window. So those are the things that you  
9 can't do in single-person operation.

10 With the elimination of the platform attendant, you don't  
11 have any eyes on the platform anymore and you don't have a train  
12 attendant to be that backup safety. So everything depends on  
13 everything working properly all the time in order for these things  
14 not to happen.

15 MR. FERRARO: Thank you. I have no further questions.

16 BY MR. ZAGATA:

17 Q. This is Zach Zagata, NTSB. I've got a few questions for you.  
18 If there is an issue, how would a passenger notify you?

19 A. They would press the PI button on the train.

20 Q. Is there stickers up so a passenger knows how -- how does a  
21 passenger know how to do that?

22 A. Yeah. There are stickers up that show passengers where the  
23 PI buttons are and the emergency levers to stop the train.

24 Q. Do you have people messing around with those quite a bit  
25 or --

1 A. They have been. There have been people pressing the PI and  
2 there have been people who have pulled the emergencies. But it's  
3 not a big issue as far as I have seen over the years.

4 Q. Do you feel like that's an effective way for them to notify  
5 you or do you think there's a better way or --

6 A. Yeah. I mean, I think the PIs, as long as they're working  
7 properly, is an effective way to contact the motorperson and the  
8 emergency to stop the train. Yeah. That's an effective way to  
9 stop the train. I don't think it's an effective way as a source  
10 of safely closing doors and preventing people from being dragged.  
11 I don't think that that should be something that should be kind of  
12 factored into your plan of how to keep people safe. I mean, I  
13 think that's your fail safe, your last -- absolute last resort.

14 Q. You mention getting rid of the train attendants. Do you know  
15 approximately how long ago that was?

16 A. That's when SPTO started. It's been a long time. Maybe 10  
17 years -- yeah.

18 Q. Ten years?

19 A. Ten years. 2012. I'm not 100 percent sure.

20 MR. ZAGATA: That's all I've got for now. I'll pass it off  
21 to my right.

22 MR. GOOD: Just one more follow-up question about safety  
23 concerns. I take it it's (indiscernible) shop when you're in the  
24 union, that you got the --

25 MR. ROSS: Yeah. Everybody is in the --

1 MR. GOOD: Yeah, okay. I wasn't positive on that. But is  
2 there like an advocate in the union if you feel that there's not  
3 safety concerns being addressed that works with management that  
4 can also help advocate for you?

5 MR. ROSS: Yeah. I mean, we have our union reps. We have  
6 our (indiscernible) captains and we have all those things in  
7 place. But what's lacking is not a lack of communication. It's a  
8 lack of initiative, it's a lack of taking these things and  
9 actually initiating, you know, executing them. And actually --  
10 let's fix it. That type of thing. Okay, we've heard of the  
11 problems, are they real, let's investigate.

12 Audit the monitors. Go out there and stand next to the  
13 monitor with the motorperson. And ask them, hey, what do you see  
14 here? Is that monitor helpful to you? But the attitude has been,  
15 you have the monitors, you have the mirrors. Pretty much make the  
16 best use you can out of it. And it's difficult for them to really  
17 understand and I get that because they're not doing this job every  
18 day so they don't really understand it on a day-to-day basis. But  
19 these are problems that can be fixed and they can make a huge  
20 difference.

21 MR. GOOD: That's all I had.

22 MR. RICHMOND: Patrick Richmond, MBTA. No questions.

23 MR. CULP: Steven Culp, MBTA. No further questions.

24 MR. PAYAN: No questions for Ruben.

25 MR. MODH: Arun Modh. No questions.

1 MR. ROMAN: Paul Roman. No questions.

2 MR. JEAN: Roudy Jean. No questions.

3 MR. ANACLETO: Francisco Anacleto. No questions.

4 MR. FERRARO: No questions.

5 MR. ZAGATA: Zach Zagata, NTSB. I appreciate everything  
6 you've told us here today. Do you have any ideas other than  
7 fixing the camera issue on things that can prevent this from  
8 happening again?

9 MR. ROSS: Yeah. There are some other issues, I mean, beside  
10 monitors and things like that. I mean, there are station issues,  
11 lighting issues, visibility issues, monitors that take in account  
12 -- outdoor monitors that take in account the environment, the  
13 lighting.

14 The other issue, too, is scheduling. Sometimes scheduling is  
15 extremely tight and there is a lot of pressure out there for  
16 motorpersons to keep time. And a lot of emphasis on time which,  
17 honestly, can push motorpersons into taking shortcuts. For  
18 example, not waiting for all the pilot lights to extinguish and  
19 pulling your head back in. Trying to save a few seconds. Trying  
20 to get to that next station. Trying to get to the end to stay on  
21 time. So that's another factor that can really add to  
22 motorpersons Making the human error side of it, of taking  
23 shortcuts and trying to be quick instead of safe.

24 MR. ZAGATA: I understand. No. I appreciate it. Does  
25 anybody else have any additional questions? Once again, I

1 appreciate your time.

2 MR. ROSS: You're welcome.

3 MR. ZAGATA: With that, we'll conclude the interview. Thank  
4 you.

5 (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: MBTA RED LINE PASSENGER FATALITY  
IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
ON APRIL 10, 2022  
Interview of James Ross

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD22LR008

PLACE: Boston, Massachusetts

DATE: April 12, 2022

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.



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Katie Leach  
Transcriber