

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

SEPTA TROLLEY DERAILMENT *

IN SOUTHWEST PHILADELPHIA, *

PENNSYLVANIA ON JULY 27, 2023 *

Accident No.: RRD23FR014

* * * * *

Interview of: KEVIN TALBERT, Maintenance Manager
SEPTA, Elmwood District

via Microsoft Teams

Sunday,
July 30, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JOHN MANUTES, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

BEN STROT, Rail Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

GEORGE GOOD, Senior Accident Investigator
Federal Transit Administration

JAMES MICHAEL McLAUGHLIN, Safety Oversight Regional
Manager
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

PAUL SOUTHARD, Business Agent
TWU Local 234
Representative for Kevin Talbert

RON NEWMAN, Business Agent
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EDWARD CARRUTHERS, Senior Director
Metro Rail Equipment Maintenance

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SEPTA

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. MANUTES: All right. Good morning. My name is John
3 Manutes. I am an investigator with the National Transportation
4 Safety Board.

5 Today is July 30th, 2023. We are speaking remotely via Teams
6 with Kevin Talbert. The interview panel is located at the
7 Residence Inn City Center Philadelphia. Kevin is at work on
8 Teams.

9 This interview is being conducted in reference to NTSB
10 accident number RRD23FR014, which was an uncontrolled trolley
11 movement resulting in a derailment and a collision with
12 automobiles and a building.

13 The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with
14 determining probable causes of transportation accidents and
15 promoting transportation safety. It is not part of the Department
16 of Transportation, the FTA or any other federal or state
17 regulatory agency. NTSB has no regulatory or enforcement powers.
18 We publish recommendations to any party such as a federal or state
19 agency, a railroad, a labor union, a contractor, et cetera, that
20 we believe can act on those recommendations to prevent accidents
21 from happening in the future.

22 Today we are here to speak with Kevin Talbert.

23 The NTSB uses a party system. The party system helps ensure
24 participation from subject matter experts. They are here to
25 conduct follow-up questions and to help document the interview.

1 Kevin, before we begin, we're going to go around the table
2 that we have here and introduce ourselves for the transcript. I
3 just ask that since we're on line, that we speak slowly and
4 clearly and we're going to make an effort here around the table to
5 only speak one at time. We are also going to try and introduce
6 ourselves before we speak. I am the worst at forgetting. I'm
7 going to be reminding everybody else, but I'm the worst. So we
8 may have to interrupt ourselves and introduce ourselves before we
9 speak.

10 If there are any objections to individual participating, an
11 individual may be removed from this interview, but they would
12 remain a party member with access to the transcript.

13 Okay. So I'll begin. My name again is John Manutes, J-o-h-
14 n, M-a-n-u-t-e-s, railroad accident investigator with the NTSB and
15 the investigator-in-charge for this accident. Ben, I'm going to
16 ask you to go next.

17 MR. STROT: Ben Strot, B-e-n, S-t-r-o-t, NTSB, rail accident
18 investigation.

19 MR. GOOD: George Good, G-e-o-r-g-e, G-o-o-d, Federal Transit
20 Administration, senior accident investigator.

21 MR. McLAUGHLIN: Mike McLaughlin, M-i-k-e, M-c-L-a-u-g-h-l-i-
22 n. I'm the state safety oversight regional manager for
23 Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

24 MR. SOUTHARD: Paul Southard, P-a-u-l, S-o-u-t-h-a-r-d. I'm
25 a business agent for TWU Local 234.

1 MR. NEWMAN: Ronald Newman, R-o-n-a-l-d, N-e-w-m-a-n, TWU
2 Local 234 business agent.

3 MR. CARRUTHERS: Edward Carruthers, senior director, Metro
4 Rail equipment maintenance, E-d-w-a-r-d, C-a-r-r-u-t-h-e-r-s.

5 MR. KEELE: Ronald Keele, R-o-n-a-l-d, Keele, K-e-e-l-e, and
6 I'm the chief safety officer here at SEPTA.

7 MR. MANUTES: All right. Kevin, could you hear everybody
8 well enough?

9 MR. TALBERT: Yes.

10 MR. MANUTES: Okay. Great. Thank you. So, Kevin, as I
11 mentioned in the pre-briefing, you could have a representative or
12 somebody by your side if you wanted. Do you have anybody
13 representing you here today?

14 MR. TALBERT: No.

15 MR. MANUTES: Okay. And, Kevin, first of all, can I call you
16 Kevin or do you prefer Mr. Talbert?

17 MR. TALBERT: Kevin's fine.

18 MR. MANUTES: Okay. Thanks, Kevin. Do I have your
19 permission to record this interview with you today?

20 MR. TALBERT: Yes.

21 MR. MANUTES: Okay. Thank you. Kevin, I just ask you answer
22 all of the questions today to the best of your recollection. If
23 you do not understand a question or if you don't quite hear the
24 whole question, please ask for it to be repeated or explained.
25 That's especially important with the Teams Meeting. If you

1 realize later on that you misstated something or you need to
2 modify an answer that you gave previously, it's okay to do so at
3 any time, okay.

4 MR. TALBERT: Okay.

5 MR. MANUTES: All right. Kevin, if you would please just say
6 your name one more time, spell it for the transcriptionist and
7 give us your occupation and title, who you work for.

8 MR. TALBERT: My name is Kevin Talbert, K-e-v-i-n, T-a-l-b-e-
9 r-t, maintenance manager. I work for SEPTA.

10 MR. MANUTES: All right. Thank you, Kevin. How long have
11 you been a -- Kevin, we'll get started now. I'm going to ask you
12 a couple basic questions, start things off easy, and then I'm
13 going to ask you one big open ended question just because the most
14 important part of this interview is you telling your story as best
15 as you remember it. It works best if after we get through the
16 preliminary stuff, you just talk a lot and we don't interrupt you.
17 So, you know, plan after this beginning piece to spend a few
18 minutes talking.

19 INTERVIEW OF KEVIN TALBERT

20 BY MR. MANUTES:

21 Q. But to start off easy with some soft balls, how many years
22 have you been maintenance manager there at the Elmwood facility?

23 A. I've been a maintenance manager for 2 1/2 years.

24 Q. And did you work for SEPTA previous to that?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. What roles have you held at SEPTA while you've worked for
2 them and for how long?

3 A. I was an operator for 3 years, maintenance custodian for 7
4 years, a maintenance custodian driver for 2 years, backfill
5 maintenance manager for 2 years, and a maintenance manager for 2
6 years.

7 Q. Okay. Excellent. Thank you. And as a maintenance manager,
8 in the Elmwood Yard, how would you describe your roles and
9 responsibilities? What is your job? Can you tell us about it a
10 little bit?

11 A. I have a lot to tell you. I oversee, oversee between the
12 maintenance of the state inspection, repairs on the vehicles, the
13 safety, the cleanliness, and then out in the yard, ordering parts,
14 keeping track of the state inspection.

15 Q. Okay. Thank you. Kevin, I understand that on July 27th,
16 which was the Thursday, right. Yeah, Thursday, July 27th, you
17 were the first shift supervisor for the Elmwood Yard. Is that
18 correct?

19 A. That is correct.

20 Q. Did you work third shift the previous night? Were you on
21 overtime at all or anything?

22 A. No, I did not.

23 Q. Okay. So you -- okay. So you were first shift supervisor,
24 first shift manager at Elmwood facility. What time do you come to
25 work in the morning or what time did you come to work in the

1 morning on the 27th, Thursday?

2 A. 4 a.m.

3 Q. 4 a.m. Okay. So what, what I'd like to do is ask you a big
4 open ended question. I want you to please take your time with it,
5 you know, slow down. Plan on spending 10, 15 minutes, whatever
6 you need, to describe your day that Thursday, right. You know,
7 start wherever it makes sense, maybe if you woke up, had a cup of
8 coffee, drove into work. I'd like you to sort of put your mind
9 back in that timeframe. What was it, you know, was it -- try and
10 remember. Was it raining at 3 in the morning. Was the drive to
11 work normal? Was it hot already? You know, what did you do and
12 see when you first got to work? Walk us through, you know, your
13 turnover, assignments for that day, anything critical. Of course,
14 we're, you know, I'd like you to focus on that 9107, any work,
15 anybody you talked to about that. We've seen your statement but
16 I'd like you to get into a lot of detail all the way through, you
17 know, the end of the shift if you don't mind. What did you see?
18 Who did you talk to? What was, you know, any challenges you had
19 that day? Did you get interrupted? Did somebody spill coffee on
20 your pants? You know, just all the way back to that Thursday. I
21 know it's a long time ago, you know, things move fast and a lot's
22 happened, but if you can just take some time, you know, take a
23 deep breath, try and remember what it was like coming in that
24 morning and start there, and just walk us through kind of your
25 day. You know, NTSB is just looking for the facts and what

1 happened, but all of your details are important to us, and I
2 appreciate you, you know, walking us through the whole thing.
3 Does that sound good?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. All right. Go ahead. How did your day start that morning?

6 A. My day starts at 2:30 in the morning. I get up, get dressed,
7 get my lunch, get me a cup of coffee, and I hit the road 3:15 in
8 the morning. I come from Maryland. So I have a 45 minute drive
9 from Maryland all the way up to Elmwood Yard. Roads were clear,
10 no traffic, no detour.

11 I arrived on the property at 4 a.m. Talked to my colleagues,
12 talked to a few of the workers that were around, started a pot of
13 coffee here on property, had a cup of coffee, talked to my guys,
14 pretty usual in the morning. We have a little chitchat. What's
15 going on? How's everybody doing? I got the turnover from the
16 third shift manager. I'm not really recalling who the third shift
17 manager was at that time but received the turnover. Went to go
18 set up my shift which my shift starts in different spurts, one at
19 4:30, 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 7 o'clock.

20 Starting with the 4:30 is the pre-inspection. I assign the
21 guy for pre-inspection. Then 5 o'clock it starts my inspection.
22 Make sure all my inspection jobs are accounted for and everybody
23 is where they need to be at. I then receive repairs from my state
24 inspectors, populate them inside of our system, spit out the work
25 orders. Six o'clock, I make assignments. I assign the guys that

1 are actually here as my floor workers, I assign them to perform
2 work. At the 6 o'clock hour, I have an overtime person. Can you
3 hold on for one second?

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. Sorry about that. So setting up a plan to get some of our
6 cars back in service, there was a car 9107, that's been sitting
7 here for a D5 (ph.) compressor as well as a CBTC as well as I
8 believe it's HVAC also, decided to tackle that car. I assigned
9 one of the workers to repair that car, which was David Weihe.
10 Gave him the car. There was nothing in the notes that stated that
11 the car was diagnosed for the D5 compressor. That was the
12 original failure for that car. I instructed David Weihe to go
13 ahead, diagnose the compressor. He returned back to me to say
14 that, yes, that the compressor is going to need to be changed. I
15 said proceed with the D5 compressor being changed out.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. David was only staying for 4 hours but David installed the D5
18 compressor. I did also speak to him, let me know how far you get
19 along prior to your leaving. Approximately about 9:30, he came to
20 me and told me how far along he got with the D5 compressor. At
21 that time, the D5 compressor was removed and replaced with a new
22 compressor into the car. He stated to me that the car still
23 needed to be wired and the air leak test needs to be performed. I
24 said, okay. Make sure you note it in your notes. And that was
25 concluded of David Weihe and 9107 at that time.

1 That car hasn't gotten touched since then. That was getting
2 passed onto the next shift, notated it on my turnover to state
3 that it still needed to be wired and the air leak test needed to
4 be performed. As the rest of my day, the rest of my day is really
5 a blur of what was really going on but pretty much the same thing.
6 It's always focusing on the inspections, focusing on the yard,
7 attempting to make the lines every day.

8 At the conclusion of my day, as I gave my turnover to the
9 next shift, I did state to them and I showed them the turnover,
10 that the D5 compressor has been changed. It just needs the wiring
11 and it needs the air leak done.

12 Q. Okay. Thank you for that, Kevin. A couple of follow-up
13 questions from me. Did you ever go out and look at the 9107? Did
14 you ever watch David do any of his work on the 9107?

15 A. Yes, as I walk around the shop, I seen when he was removing
16 it. I did see when he put it back in.

17 Q. Just to clarify, you saw him take it out and put it in or you
18 did not see one of those things?

19 A. I seen him briefly take it out and I seen him briefly put it
20 in in passing.

21 Q. Okay. All right. Now, could you -- not specifically to what
22 David did on the 9107, but could you talk about the process of
23 removing and replacing any air compressor? Just kind of walk me
24 through how that works there at the Elmwood shop. What steps need
25 to be taken to replace an air compressor?

1 A. So I am not a mechanic of any sort, but by observation, they
2 have to remove the stirrup (ph.). Well, first things first. They
3 have to dump the air. They have to now unbolt the compressor, and
4 then they have to move the car back so they can remove the air
5 cool compressor out and then put a new one in. So it's going to
6 require for them to push the car back. And this car is not under
7 power. This car actually has no power at no time while this is
8 actually being performed.

9 Q. Okay. So talk me through that. How do they move the car
10 back to get the forklift under it?

11 A. So at that time, they will cut the brakes out of that car and
12 push it back with I guess I would call it the stick. They kind of
13 like wheel it back and then they chock the wheels.

14 Q. Okay. So then they get a forklift under it, replace the
15 compressor with the forklift. Am I right?

16 A. Well, they use the forklift to remove the first -- the one
17 that's already installed one, the bad one, remove that, put that
18 on the pallet, get the new one and then put that in there with the
19 forklift.

20 Q. Okay. So walk me through -- what happens then?

21 A. What part are you talking about?

22 Q. So they've got the air compressor -- the new air compressor's
23 off the pallet. It's in the car. If I've got this right, now the
24 car's sitting there with a new compressor with chocks under the
25 wheels likely. Do they then need to bar it back to where it was?

1 A. At that time, they will barring it back forward just so they
2 can get back underneath the car to finish bolting down.

3 Q. Okay. At any point in your observations, did you notice if
4 the car had chocks under it or not?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. You did see chocks. Did you happen to notice if there were
7 chocks under it after the new compressor was in?

8 A. I believe the chocks were still there, but I can't say that I
9 remember.

10 Q. Okay. You said that to move the car with the bar, you have
11 to disengage the truck brakes, and if I understand correctly,
12 that's because they're spring applied parking brakes, right?

13 A. That is correct.

14 Q. When, as a supervisor, just speaking generally, would you
15 expect that the brakes be cut back in for the trucks?

16 A. It should be cut back in after the -- well, once the
17 compressor is powered on, that's when the brakes should be cut
18 back in.

19 Q. Okay. So that speaks to the wiring piece?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. So you would not necessarily -- so when they -- when
22 it gets wired back up, that's when you would expect the brakes to
23 be cut back in?

24 A. Not exactly. So once they bar the car back up forward, so
25 they can continue to bolt the D5 compressor back onto the car, the

1 new one, that's when chocks should be back or actually you're
2 asking about the air.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. So at no point right now, the air is applied because the car
5 is not powered up. And in order for you, in order for you to put
6 the brakes back in, you have to power the car back up and the car
7 have the air back up also. So right --

8 Q. Okay. So I'm going to -- go ahead.

9 A. So right now as it stands, both parking brakes are actually
10 manually released.

11 Q. Okay. Let me ask you about some process questions real
12 quick. If -- is there a location where an employee can review
13 either a checklist or a procedure with regards to changing out an
14 air compressor? Where would that be? Or say, you know,
15 hypothetically, if you're a new supervisor and you want to know if
16 the employee is following the procedures, is there a place you can
17 go to look at the procedures?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Where is that? Can you talk me through that?

20 A. That's located in our back office. There is a procedure for
21 it.

22 Q. When you say back office, do employees on the shop floor have
23 access to that?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. How do they -- physically how do they do it? Is there a

1 computer on the shop floor? Can you talk me through how they
2 would get to it?

3 A. No, we actually have books and we have ECNs. We have a whole
4 bunch of books back there that has all of the knowledge for
5 anything regarding these trolleys.

6 Q. What is an EDM?

7 A. ECN. ECN is an engineer change notice.

8 Q. Okay. I'm going to ask you a fairly direct question. I'm
9 just curious what your answer is. Actually, I'm going to hold
10 that. So, Kevin, what we're going to do now is I'm going to ask
11 around the room if anybody has any follow up questions. The first
12 one will be my assistant investigator here from the NTSB. And
13 then we'll go to the FTA, Penn DOT, and then Local 234 and then
14 SEPTA. Yeah, SEPTA mechanical and SEPTA system safety. So if at
15 any point you don't hear clearly who's asking a question or you
16 need a question repeated because we're trying to talk into a
17 computer in the middle of the room, just let us know, okay.

18 A. Okay.

19 MR. MANUTES: All right. So first, I'm going to kick it to
20 Ben. Do you have any questions, Ben?

21 MR. STROT: Yeah.

22 BY MR. STROT:

23 Q. Good morning, Kevin.

24 A. Good morning.

25 Q. My name is Ben Strot. I'm a rail investigator with NTSB.

1 And my because is all in freight. So my questions may be kind of
2 basic because I'm trying to understand how transit equipment
3 works, but how do you manually cut out the brakes on a trolley?
4 Do you know that process? Can you basically explain it to me?

5 A. So we have two, we have two air cut outs, and we also have
6 two actual parking brake pull pins that we have to release. So
7 neither one works hand-in-hand with each other.

8 Q. Okay. So you release the air or cut out the air and pull
9 some pins to -- and that cuts the brakes out? Are you there,
10 Kevin?

11 A. I don't understand your question.

12 Q. Okay. Well, maybe if we come out to the shop today, I can
13 understand a little bit better.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. Is there a process written or is there a process for moving
16 equipment in the shop with the brakes cut out, a checklist,
17 anything like that?

18 A. Not to my knowledge.

19 MR. STROT: Okay. That's all the questions I have.

20 MR. MANUTES: All right. We'll go to FTA now.

21 BY MR. GOOD:

22 Q. Hi, Kevin, this is George Good, FTA. I just have a question
23 about the turnover. You mentioned when you did the turnover, you
24 relayed that it needed the wiring and the leak check. Was that
25 also documented in your Share Point system in addition to the

1 verbal transfer?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. That's good. And another question about the worker.
4 You said he was on 4 hours of overtime. Does he work a lot of
5 overtime that you know of?

6 A. No. No, he's at night.

7 Q. Okay. That's all I had. Thank you.

8 BY MR. McLAUGHLIN:

9 Q. Hey, Kevin. This is Mike McLaughlin from Penn DOT. I just
10 have a couple of questions. You mentioned that in the notes for
11 9107 there is nothing in there about it having a bad air
12 compressor. How did you guys figure out that the air compressor
13 was bad?

14 A. I had David Weihe actually check the compressor over to
15 verify whether it was a valid change out. He did do checks on it,
16 and confirmed that it does need to be changed out.

17 Q. I guess what I'm getting at is, if there wasn't anything in
18 there about the compressor, how did you know to send him to check
19 the compressor when it was in the shop for some other reason?

20 A. So the original movement is when we were moving it off of a
21 rail that we were (indiscernible) car. The car was not building
22 air. So we had to, we had to basically tow the car into the shop
23 which warranted to check to see what was going on with the air
24 compressor. Once we concluded with that, that's when we -- I just
25 determined to just change out the air compressor.

1 Q. I understand. So you went out there to move it for a
2 separate reason. It wouldn't build air. You determined at that
3 point, you needed to tow it and check the air compressor. So were
4 you involved in the MU movement, to tow it into the shop?

5 MR. MANUTES: Kevin, that would have been back I think nearly
6 like on the 14th of June or more than a month ago. Were you there
7 when it originally went in?

8 MR. TALBERT: I can't recall. That's too far back.

9 BY MR. McLAUGHLIN:

10 Q. What about that morning on the 27th? Is that the first
11 indication that day that the air compressor was bad that you're
12 aware of?

13 A. Not to my knowledge that that car had a bad air compressor.
14 I went out to the car because we were starting to work on a lot of
15 those cars. As a matter of fact -- scratch that. The car on the
16 turnover was carried over as it needed -- it was having an air
17 compressor issue.

18 Q. Okay. So nothing in the notes about an air compressor, but
19 you had it on your turnover that the air compressor was bad on the
20 9107. Am I understanding that correctly?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. The car originally was on hold for a (indiscernible) plate
24 reader, but when we went out there to get ready to do something
25 with a car that was right behind it, that car wouldn't move, the

1 front car, which was 9107 that we're talking about.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. So we had just received two air compressors. So instead of
4 just trying to move the car out of the way, let's just repair it.

5 Q. Got it. And when was that?

6 A. That was on the 27th, that morning.

7 Q. Okay. So the 27th is when you discovered the air compressor
8 was bad. You went to move it, wouldn't build air, that's when you
9 discovered the problem. Okay. So fast forward, your mechanic
10 replaced the air compressor. He has told you that the wiring
11 still needs to be done and the air leak test still needed to be
12 done. Is there any mention in the turnover or in the notes for
13 the 9107 that the brakes are also disabled?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. And would you say that -- I mean you said earlier that
16 that's a required practice when you're changing out the air
17 compressor, is to dump the air, disable the brakes, pull pins, et
18 cetera. Is that something that all of the employees responsible
19 for swapping out air compressors are aware of and trained on?

20 A. Not to my knowledge.

21 Q. Okay. Okay. That's all I have for now. Thank you.

22 MR. MANUTES: Okay. TWU.

23 MR. SOUTHARD: I have no questions at this time.

24 BY MR. NEWMAN:

25 Q. Ron Newman, Kevin. Did Ali ever work on this car?

1 A. I didn't --

2 Q. Ali.

3 A. Did Ali ever work on this car? Not to my knowledge.

4 Q. Yeah. Ali. Did Ali ever work on this car?

5 A. Not to my knowledge.

6 Q. When the mechanic puts notes in the Vemis (ph.), can anybody
7 else -- can anybody change their notes?

8 A. That's a no.

9 Q. So when you go into the Vemis -- can you go into the Vemis
10 and look at the notes?

11 A. I looked at the notes the next day, and this was the day
12 after the incident, yeah, the day after the incident, which was
13 Friday morning.

14 Q. Did you add anything to the notes?

15 A. I can add to it. I just can't edit.

16 Q. All right. No more questions.

17 BY MR. CARRUTHERS:

18 Q. Good morning, Kevin. Ed Carruthers, SEPTA. I want to build
19 out a little bit on something you touched on about the books and
20 ECNs. Where are they physically located let's say in relationship
21 to the manager's office which is kind of like the central hub of
22 the shop?

23 A. They're located in the manager's lounge which is --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- of our office.

1 Q. Okay. And hourly employees have free access to that?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. You're familiar with the VTIL system on the shop
4 floor?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And would that be -- is that going to have similar or
7 the same information as those books?

8 A. If it works 100 percent.

9 Q. Okay. At the time that you were on duty, what's your
10 understanding of the status of the VTIL on the shop floor? Did it
11 work? Did it not work? Again, I don't know if perfectly fine.

12 A. I really don't know.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Can you hold on for a second? Can you hold on for one
15 second?

16 MR. MANUTES: Yep.

17 MR. TALBERT: Sorry about that.

18 BY MR. CARRUTHERS:

19 Q. All right. No problem, Kevin. So I want to touch on real
20 quick, because I knew we have a lot of newer employees on the
21 property. What's your understanding of the job training period
22 and then performance testing that employees go through to become
23 either a first craft or -- a class or specialist position? Can
24 you kind of walk through that very briefly?

25 A. I absolutely don't have much knowledge of what their process

1 is.

2 Q. Okay. That's fine.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Have you witnessed employees at Elmwood being given
5 performance tests by the training department?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. I have no further questions. Thank you.

8 BY MR. KEELE:

9 Q. Kevin, this is Ronald Keele. Good morning. Those procedures
10 that you say are in the back office there, how often are they
11 updated?

12 A. As far as I know, I would say I haven't seen anybody update
13 them.

14 Q. So if they're not updated, why would we recommend folks go
15 back there to check to see how to do the work?

16 A. I'm not understanding your question.

17 Q. If these procedures are not regularly updated, why would they
18 still be current as far as the work is concerned?

19 A. But are we talking about their jobs that are actually pretty
20 much still the same?

21 Q. You said that -- you were asked where could the procedures or
22 work processes be found? You said they could be found in the back
23 office and there was some engineering change notices there. And
24 I'm asking how often are those things updated? You said you don't
25 believe they've ever been updated. If that's the case, I guess

1 why would we keep them and why would we refer employees back there
2 to use those procedures? You get where I'm coming from?

3 A. No, I do not.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you.

5 MR. MANUTES: Okay, Kevin. We're going to move on. This is
6 John Manutes again, NTSB. Let me -- does anybody else -- I'm
7 going, I'm going to poll the group here. Does anybody have
8 anything they want to ask real -- I mean we're going to do another
9 round.

10 MR. GOOD: Oh, okay.

11 MR. MANUTES: But does anybody want to follow up on any of
12 that specifically that was already talked about?

13 MR. GOOD: I did.

14 MR. MANUTES: Okay. Go ahead, George. This is George.

15 BY MR. GOOD:

16 Q. Related to those manuals, whether the electronic or the hard
17 copy, I'm familiar with other kinds of tech manuals for
18 maintenance and a lot of times they have notes, warnings or
19 cautions. Do you know if there's any notes, warnings or cautions
20 especially related to once you disconnect the -- cut out the
21 brakes?

22 A. I can't say that I actually read or saw anyone inside of the
23 manual.

24 Q. Okay. Thank you.

25 MR. MANUTES: Go ahead.

1 MR. McLAUGHLIN: I'm sorry. I have one more question. Mike
2 McLaughlin, Penn DOT.

3 BY MR. McLAUGHLIN:

4 Q. I just wanted to ask real quick. How often do you personally
5 reference those materials, whether it's the physical copies or
6 it's the electronic version?

7 A. Can you rephrase the question?

8 Q. Yeah. I was just wondering how you yourself have used these
9 materials, you know, referenced them to look up procedures or
10 confirm information?

11 A. Usually my workers will usually bring it to my attention. So
12 I really don't reference it. My guys really reference it.
13 They'll bring it to my attention.

14 Q. So would you say the employees that you oversee reference it
15 often, not often, sometimes?

16 A. Often.

17 Q. Okay. Thank you.

18 BY MR. MANUTES:

19 Q. Okay. Kevin, this John Manutes, NTSB again. A couple of
20 slightly more direct questions. Based on what you've got in your
21 notes, when you -- so based on what you've got in your notes, when
22 you left your shift at the end of the day, was your understanding
23 that the air compressor was not wired and the leak down test was
24 not completed. Is that correct?

25 A. That is correct.

1 Q. Did you -- before you left that day -- so did you leave
2 before or after David?

3 A. After David.

4 Q. By about 4 hours?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Did you happen to notice if the 9107 in the time after David
7 went home was wired or not wired?

8 A. No.

9 Q. You didn't notice? Is that correct? You're saying you
10 didn't notice, not that it wasn't wired. You just didn't notice.

11 A. I didn't notice.

12 Q. Okay. When you -- that air compressor was wired at some
13 point. Do you know who did the wiring?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. You didn't instruct anybody besides David to do the
16 wiring or anybody else?

17 A. No, the only person I instructed was to work on the
18 compressor was David.

19 Q. Okay. Would you, would you have expected David to cut the
20 trucks back in -- cut the brakes back in?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Would you have expected a vehicle like the 9107 which had --
23 your understanding at the end of the shift was that the wiring was
24 disconnected. That's what's in the notes. And the leak down test
25 still needed to be performed. Would you have expected that 9107

1 would have had the brakes cut in or cut out?

2 A. I would have expected them to be cut in, but there's now
3 power to the vehicle.

4 Q. What does that mean?

5 A. There's no power in the vehicle.

6 Q. I mean I understand what no power in the vehicle means. What
7 does that mean -- you said you would have expected them to be cut
8 in but there's no power on the vehicle. Help me understand that
9 comment a little bit.

10 A. Well, because again the brakes are spring. So there's no air
11 pressure that put the spring back in place. The brakes wouldn't
12 still be on until the car power was up.

13 Q. Okay. So cut -- you would have expected the brakes to be cut
14 in but until they had power, the spring wouldn't reset anyway?

15 A. That is correct.

16 Q. Okay. All right. Slightly different question off of that
17 topic. Can you describe the process for making a reverse move on
18 these vehicles at the Elmwood shop? Walk me through the process
19 for making a reverse move from the hostler (ph.) stand.

20 A. What was that last part?

21 Q. Walk me through the process of making a reverse move from
22 that rear end?

23 A. Reverse movements should be only made from the backup
24 controller which is inside the vehicle.

25 Q. What controller is that?

1 A. The backup controller.

2 Q. Backup controller. Okay. Keep going. Walk me through the
3 whole thing.

4 A. What are we talking about specifically and as far as like a
5 move -- just general movement?

6 Q. Well, all right. I'll ask some -- how many people does it
7 take to make a reverse move?

8 A. It should be two.

9 Q. Okay. And where would -- if one person is at the backup
10 controller, where is the other person?

11 A. The other person is also -- is outside the vehicle in the
12 rear.

13 Q. Okay. What's the purpose of the second person?

14 A. The second person is to watch the trolley, making sure it
15 doesn't go the wrong direction, also making sure that the pole
16 doesn't get caught up in the overhead. Could you hold on for one
17 second?

18 Q. Yeah, absolutely.

19 A. Sorry about that.

20 Q. That's okay. In a reverse move, does anybody go to the
21 normal operator's stand and do any work or inspections on the
22 gauges or anything like that?

23 A. Is this during the reverse movement?

24 Q. Well, probably prior to the movement, but at any time?

25 A. They should.

1 Q. Okay. When you're making a reverse move, would you expect
2 the person to do a -- any kind of break test like, for example,
3 move, you know, a few feet and apply the brakes to make sure they
4 work or no?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. You would expect them to. Okay. At the Elmwood shop, do you
7 always use two people to make a reverse move?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Do you ever use two people to make a reverse move?

10 A. Yes, we do.

11 MR. MANUTES: Okay. I'm done. We're going to go around the
12 room again. We'll start with Ben.

13 MR. TALBERT: One second, Ben.

14 MR. STROT: Sorry.

15 MR. TALBERT: Sorry about that, Ben.

16 MR. STROT: No problem. Ben Strot with NTSB.

17 BY MR. STROT:

18 Q. When you all towed the car into the shop, were the brakes cut
19 out on it at point? Do you have to cut the brakes out to tow the
20 car?

21 A. No, the brakes were not cut out in that car. That was a
22 success MU --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- full sharing in electric.

25 Q. Gotcha. Okay. And then whenever the brakes are cut out in

1 the shop, that is not part of like a written Kawasaki air
2 compressor removal process. That is just to move the car into
3 position to drop the compressor?

4 A. As far as the practice of the mechanics on the floor.

5 MR. MANUTES: Kevin, this is John. I'm just going to ask
6 that question a little bit differently. If you had access for the
7 forklift -- if you had a different shop, and there was access for
8 the forklift, changing out -- would the changing out of the
9 compressor require you to cut out the brakes?

10 MR. TALBERT: Now, when you say that -- repeat that question.

11 MR. MANUTES: Okay. I just want to understand. Okay. I'm
12 going to -- we're follow that up later.

13 MR. CARRUTHERS: Ed Carruthers, SEPTA. Kevin, I'll be a
14 little more specific. So if they're doing that same thing, that
15 air compressor change out at Woodland on the hoist, right?

16 MR. TALBERT: Right.

17 MR. CARRUTHERS: Would there be any need for them to cut out
18 the truck brakes in that instance in order to get that air
19 compressor out?

20 MR. TALBERT: I've never observed anything at Woodland. So I
21 couldn't tell you.

22 MR. MANUTES: All right. I'm going to be a little non-
23 standard here. Ed, would you explain briefly for the transcript a
24 Woodland air compressor change out?

25 MR. CARRUTHERS: Sure. So Woodland is a back shop facility.

1 It does heavy repair, vehicle overhaul, body work, things like
2 that. In the course of BLH vehicle overhaul of a trolley, the air
3 compressor is changed out. The way that's done it's on a hoist,
4 and the vehicle is moved up and down vertically on a hoist and we
5 have access to transfer tables and we can get the air compressor
6 off the vehicle without having to roll it anywhere because of the
7 hoisting system. At Elmwood, it's a fixed raised rail, and being
8 a raised rail, a pitted shop. There's only one spot where the
9 floor will line up to the air compressor, and that's at the skirt
10 of the shop requiring you to move the vehicle to the skirt. The
11 whole job can't be done at the skirt because you need the pit
12 otherwise.

13 MR. MANUTES: Kevin, is that your understanding of at least
14 the Elmwood half of it?

15 MR. TALBERT: Yes.

16 MR. STOUT: All right. Thanks.

17 MR. MANUTES: Thanks for that. Go ahead, Ben.

18 BY MR. STOUT:

19 Q. Okay. Back to -- Ben Strot, NTSB. When the brakes are cut
20 out on a vehicle, is there any warning to an operator that the
21 brakes are cut out, tagged on the side of the car, anything of
22 that nature, something to put on the control stand?

23 A. Not to my knowledge.

24 Q. All right.

25 A. However, there should a blue tag stating that.

1 Q. There should be a blue tag on the car stating that the brakes
2 are cut out?

3 A. It should be a blue tag --

4 Q. I'm sorry. Can you say that again?

5 A. There should be a blue signal, blue tag that -- it should be
6 present on the vehicle either on the vehicle or around the
7 vehicle.

8 Q. Okay. But is that blue flag just signifying that people are
9 working on the car or is that actually signifying that the brakes
10 are cut out?

11 A. That's just signifying that somebody's working on the car.

12 Q. Okay. And do you know, were there blue flags present on the
13 car that -- as this work was being performed?

14 A. Not to my knowledge. I did not observe it. I can't confirm
15 it.

16 Q. Okay. Let's see. And then was it -- I'm sorry. I'm mixed
17 up on names here. Was it Dave that was working on taking the
18 compressor out and putting a new one in?

19 A. That is correct.

20 Q. When he completed his work and left, was the car moved back
21 into position to where the wiring would be performed?

22 A. I can't recall the position of it, but it was -- but the car
23 was moved forward because you could still freely move in the back
24 of the shop with the actual ground.

25 MR. STROT: Okay. I think that's all the questions I have.

1 MR. MANUTES: George.

2 MR. GOOD: Yeah, George Good, FTA.

3 BY MR. GOOD:

4 Q. Just a quick question about -- since that seems like that's
5 an internal procedure for the Elmwood shop, to be able to move it
6 to remove that compressor, is there ever or have you ever seen any
7 internal procedures just for that process itself that are aside
8 from the manufacturer's procedures for removing a compressor?

9 A. No.

10 Q. That's all I had. Thank you.

11 MR. McLAUGHLIN: Mike McLaughlin from Penn DOT.

12 BY MR. McLAUGHLIN:

13 Q. Kevin, just one quick question regarding -- I just want to
14 back up a little bit to the reverse movement. Is there any
15 written rule or procedure that you're aware of that describes how
16 a reverse movement should be done?

17 A. In specific, I do not know how to articulate it but I do know
18 them.

19 Q. So you know of a written rule or procedure that exists or was
20 this just something that you were shown how to do and you know
21 this is how it should be done?

22 A. I'm not understanding how to answer that question.

23 Q. So have you ever seen a written rule or procedure that tells
24 you how to make a reverse movement with these trolleys?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. That's all. Thank you.

2 MR. MANUTES: Ed.

3 MR. CARRUTHERS: I'm going to jump out of turn a little bit
4 just because I want to stay fresh on. Ed Carruthers, SEPTA.

5 BY MR. CARRUTHERS:

6 Q. Kevin, are you a certified operator trolley in Elmwood Yard?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Can you briefly go over that certification process?
9 You went to training.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. During that training, were you given any
12 documentation, a rules book, anything like that?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. That wasn't provided to you by the trainer?

15 A. What?

16 Q. The rules book?

17 A. No, no rules book.

18 Q. What was provided to you by the trainer?

19 A. Nothing.

20 Q. Okay. Thank you very much.

21 MR. MANUTES: Okay. We'll going to TWU. Paul.

22 MR. SOUTHARD: Paul Southard. I don't have any questions at
23 this time.

24 BY MR. NEWMAN:

25 Q. Kevin, Ron Newman. When trolleys are pulled into the shop

1 for any reason, are they chocked?

2 A. Here at Elmwood, no.

3 Q. When a mechanic finishes their job, does the manager check to
4 make sure that their job has been completed?

5 A. Could you, could you ask that question again?

6 Q. A little earlier, you said you're not a mechanic. So I'm
7 asking when a mechanic finishes the job or has a job to complete,
8 does the manager check to make sure that that job has been
9 completed?

10 A. So if there's a headlight or a marker light, being as though
11 I have not been a mechanic, I can observe that if a headlight was
12 blown and it was replaced, yes.

13 Q. Last question. How many actual -- you're the foreman,
14 because the managers are director, assistant director. How many
15 foremen that you know of are mechanics?

16 A. I believe three.

17 Q. And who would that be?

18 A. Chris Powell, Ameer Rone and Anthony Mobley.

19 Q. Is Anthony Mobley still at Elmwood or is he at Callowhill?

20 A. He's at Callowhill.

21 Q. So at Elmwood, how many --

22 A. So at Elmwood, it's only two.

23 Q. Now, would they go and check the mechanic to make sure that
24 the job has been completed and everything is put back together?

25 A. I cannot speak for them.

1 MR. NEWMAN: No more questions.

2 MR. CARRUTHERS: Ed Carruthers. No questions at this time.

3 MR. KEELE: Ronald Keele.

4 BY MR. KEELE

5 Q. I just have one last question concerning the reverse
6 movement. You said we're required to use two people but at times
7 we use one person. What makes the difference in that choice?

8 A. I'm not sure how to answer that question.

9 Q. Okay. Thank you.

10 MR. MANUTES: Okay. Kevin, I promise we're almost done
11 there. I'm going to ask the group if anybody has any additional
12 questions.

13 (No response.)

14 MR. MANUTES: Okay. There's no additional questions.

15 BY MR. MANUTES:

16 Q. I'm going to ask you, do you -- based on -- I know this
17 incident didn't happen on your shift. When the vehicle rolled
18 away, it was later at night. But I do want to ask you, based on
19 what you've heard, what you know about the shop, your experience
20 as a supervisor, and what you may have picked up in the notes, is
21 there anything that we haven't asked you or that you're dying to
22 tell us that maybe we should know?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. Is there anything based on what you read, seen or
25 heard that you think could have prevented this accident or

1 anything that you would recommend that would prevent this accident
2 from happening in the future?

3 A. I think notes should have been more, described exactly what
4 the condition was being left to be pushed onto the next person to
5 complete the job. I think the notes were a little bit vague.

6 Q. What would you have added to the notes? What would you have
7 liked to have seen in there?

8 A. Definitely knowing that the brakes were still in the cut out
9 position. So at least somebody -- people are pretty blind or pre-
10 substandard to just to go ahead and jump in a vehicle and go. The
11 notes will provide that, oh, wait, the vehicle doesn't have any
12 brakes. Second thing is that just observing the tell tale signs
13 of the vehicle to know whether or not if the brakes are either cut
14 in or cut out.

15 Q. Okay. Last one I think. Kevin, who's your supervisor?

16 A. Steve Cook.

17 Q. And what's his title?

18 A. Assistant director.

19 Q. And is he the supervisor for Ameer also?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And is he the supervisor for Jonathan Baumgartner as well?

22 A. Yes.

23 MR. MANUTES: Okay. Any more questions?

24 (No response.)

25 MR. MANUTES: Okay, Kevin. All right. We're wrapping this

1 up, Kevin. Kevin, I'm going to provide you with my contact
2 information via email so that you can reach out to the
3 investigative team at any time if you have any questions, concerns
4 or if anything comes to your mind that you didn't say today that
5 you'd like to let the team know about. So you'll have my
6 information in a document here in a few minutes. You can contact
7 me at any time. We'll probably -- NTSB will be on scene for
8 another 4 or 5 days, but the investigation doesn't end when we
9 leave. We're going to gather all the facts and begin to analyze
10 those for the next several months. And so if anything comes to
11 light, you can reach out to me any time, okay.

12 MR. TALBERT: Okay.

13 MR. MANUTES: All right. Thank you very much for your time.
14 I'm going to end the record, and just hang on for a second while I
15 end it, okay.

16 MR. TALBERT: Okay.

17 (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 TROLLEY DERAILMENT
IN SOUTHWEST PHILADELPHIA,
PENNSYLVANIA ON JULY 27, 2023
Interview of Kevin Talbert

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD23FR014

PLACE: via Microsoft Teams

DATE: July 30, 2023

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.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber