

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SEPTA TRAIN CRASH
UPPER DARBY, PENNSYLVANIA
AUGUST 22, 2017

* Accident No.: DCA17FP012

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Interview of: ROCHELLE WORDEN

SEPTA Headquarters
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Wednesday,
August 23, 2017

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

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<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Rochelle Worden:		
By Mr. Torres		5
By Dr. Jenner		12
By Mr. Reynolds		23
By Mr. Cassity		25
By Ms. Angotta		27
By Ms. Bonini		27
By Mr. Fox		29
By Mr. Good		31
By Mr. Torres		33
By Dr. Jenner		37
By Mr. Reynolds		39
By Mr. Cassity		41
By Ms. Angotta		43
By Ms. Bonini		47
By Mr. Good		50
By Mr. Torres		51
By Dr. Jenner		53
By Ms. Angotta		59
By Mr. Torres		61

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. TORRES: Okay. Good morning. This is an NTSB informal
3 interview. My name is Tomas Torres, T-O-M-A-S, T-O-R-R-E-S.
4 Today's date is August the 23rd, 2017, and we are at SEPTA
5 Headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania interviewing the
6 controller-dispatcher in connection with an accident that occurred
7 in Philadelphia on August the 22nd, 2017. The NTSB accident
8 number is DCA17FR012.

9 The purpose of the investigation is to increase safety, not
10 to assign fault, blame, or liability. The NTSB cannot offer any
11 guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from legal or certificate
12 actions. A transcript or summary of the interview will go into
13 the public docket.

14 The interviewee can have one representative of the
15 interviewee's choice. Do you have somebody?

16 MS. WORDEN: (No audible response)

17 MR. TORRES: Okay. Do you understand this interview is being
18 recorded?

19 MS. WORDEN: Yes.

20 MR. TORRES: Please state your name and spell it.

21 MS. WORDEN: Rochelle, R-O-C-H-E-L-L-E, W-O-R-D-E-N.

22 MR. TORRES: And Steve?

23 DR. JENNER: Stephen Jenner, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, J-E-N-N-E-R, with
24 the NTSB.

25 MR. REYNOLDS: John Reynolds, J-O-H-N, R-E-Y-N-O-L-D-S, with

1 SEPTA.

2 MR. HARRIS: Waverly Harris, W-A-V-E-R-L-Y, H-A-R-R-I-S,
3 SMART, General Chairman.

4 MR. CASSITY: Jared Cassity, J-A-R-E-D, C-A-S-S-I-T-Y,
5 representative for the SMART National Safety Team.

6 MR. YOUNG: James Young, J-A-M-E-S, Y-O-U-N-G, with the
7 PennDOT Rail Transit Safety Review Program.

8 MS. BONINI: Beth Bonini, B-E-T-H, B-O-N-I-N-I with PennDOT
9 State Safety Oversight.

10 MR. FOX: James Fox, J-A-M-E-S, F-O-X, with SEPTA Control
11 Center Operations.

12 MR. GOOD: George Good, G-E-O-R-G-E, G-O-O-D, Federal Transit
13 Administration Accident Investigator.

14 INTERVIEW OF ROCHELLE WORDEN

15 BY MR. TORRES:

16 Q. Tomas Torres with the NTSB. Could you please tell us a brief
17 history of your work history here with SEPTA?

18 A. Okay. I started out as a rail operator on the
19 (indiscernible). From there, I went into supervision on the
20 street. From there I went into the control center on the west
21 side and rail, and I transferred to Victory Avenue as a suburban
22 controller. And when we moved to 1234 Market, I moved with the
23 control center.

24 Q. And when did you hire out?

25 A. 1987.

1 Q. 1987. On the day of the accident, can you describe the
2 beginning of your day?

3 A. Before I came to work you mean?

4 Q. Yeah, well -- yeah. When you came to work and the events --
5 you know, how your day went throughout your schedule.

6 A. I came in -- I don't understand your question, really.

7 Q. Okay. Well, what time did you come on duty?

8 A. I started at 10:00. I relieved, I relieved -- I don't even
9 remember who I relieved. Kevin, I think. And we had single track
10 going on between Bryn Mawr and West Overbrook. Track 2 was out of
11 service. Service delays. I had all the normal calls I normally
12 do, and the paperwork. You're going to have to help me here. I
13 don't quite understand, I mean --

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. -- it's the same thing every day.

16 Q. Right. Yeah. Well, you know, what time did you guys go --
17 what time do you go on duty?

18 A. 10:00 p.m.

19 Q. 10:00 p.m. And then, when you go to work, you -- when you
20 take charge of your position, what takes place?

21 A. I usually have a job briefing with my relief and we have
22 paperwork that we go over. We have a log that we sign and
23 transfer from, and then I just wait for calls to come in, and
24 because we had single track, I had to route the trains, you know,
25 and keep service going.

1 Q. Is that -- is that what the job briefing is?

2 A. He just tells me who has a Form W, who's out there, you know,
3 if there's any special circumstances going on. Stuff like that.

4 Q. Okay. On the incident train, what interaction did you have
5 with them?

6 A. The operator that was involved with the accident, I never
7 spoke to him after, like, from the time that he, you know, that
8 trip, other than to give him permission to go through the red
9 signal at Bryn Mawr and do the single track. And then there was
10 no more communication with him after that. The way I heard about
11 the accident was the starter on the platform called me and told
12 me.

13 Q. So, you had given him permission to go past a red signal?

14 A. Right.

15 Q. And that's just prior to the accident?

16 A. No. That was at Bryn Mawr. It's like 10 minutes --

17 Q. Ten minutes prior to that?

18 A. Like, a normal service is 10 minutes. So, it probably was
19 more like 15 to 18 minutes, maybe more because they had to go
20 through and he might've had to wait. I don't remember.

21 Q. So, you're the one that controls the signals?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Is there a reason why he had a red signal, or --

24 A. Because in that particular interlocking, there's no switch to
25 make a direct crossover. It's kind of like a Z move. You go

1 through the red in the pocket, and then back out. It's just the
2 way it's set up.

3 Q. So, it's a manual switch, hand throw switch?

4 A. I have to -- no. I have to throw it from the computer.

5 Q. And then you -- but you still have to flag him?

6 A. What do you mean flag him?

7 Q. Get him past the red signal?

8 A. Right. They call on the radio and they ask permission to go
9 through the signal, and then I give them permission under Rule 5
10 to -- I can't even remember now. You've got me confused. And
11 through the rule, whatever it is, and then they go through. We
12 had another man there that was the -- actually making the train go
13 the other way so they didn't have to get up and walk to the end of
14 the train. And then, I don't remember if he had to wait or not.

15 And then once he got into the pocket, then once it clears,
16 then I give him a light to go out. So, he only goes through one
17 red. He gets a signal to go into -- then he gets a signal to go
18 in the pocket, and then a signal to come out of the pocket. And
19 then he goes all the way down, Wynnewood, gets a signal when he
20 gets to West Overbrook, another signal to cross back to Track 2.

21 Q. And what -- you see this on a computer screen?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. So --

24 A. Plus, I -- they talk to me on the radio.

25 Q. Okay. So once he -- once you got him past that red signal,

1 he continued onto where?

2 A. He goes past the red to below the interlocking, then changes
3 -- well, he didn't have to change it. Well, yeah, they change in,
4 but he -- because I have another person there. So, then that
5 person takes it into the pocket, and then -- and once they're in
6 the pocket, then they get another light to go out.

7 Q. So, after he went past the red signal, he had clear signal
8 indications?

9 A. Then he'll have a clear once he changes ends to go into the
10 pocket.

11 Q. And the pocket is where?

12 A. At Bryn Mawr.

13 Q. Bryn Mawr. That's the where the accident happened?

14 A. No. The accident happened at 69th Street.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. It's three interlockings.

17 Q. Okay. And from Bryn Mawr, where did he go?

18 A. He went southbound towards 69th Street. The next
19 interlocking is Wynnewood, and then the next one is West
20 Overbrook. And at West Overbrook, that's where they cross back
21 over to Track 1. So, they get like a reduce code, maybe 15 miles
22 an hour through there. And then, from West Overbrook into 69th
23 Street, and I never talked to him after Bryn Mawr.

24 Q. But going into the last station, they had clear signal
25 indications, or --

1 A. Yes. Well, the system was in automatic.

2 Q. It was in automatic?

3 A. So, once he passed West Overbrook, where I gave him a light,
4 69th Street was in automatic, so the signals automatically come
5 up, my Vetag and occupancy. You know, each light comes up if
6 there's -- a track is occupied, then the X light comes up. And
7 once they -- it's like, sequential.

8 Q. So, as he's approaching, the signals all light up?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. You know --

11 A. Except 6S. 6S, you actually have to get right up to it and
12 get over the loop and have your Vetag programmed, and then the
13 Vetag throws the switch and the signal. So, you don't ever get a
14 light prior to 6S. You actually have to get right up to the loop
15 -- over the loop in track.

16 Q. Okay. When he gets to the last station, prior to the
17 accident -- so, he's going to have a clear signal going in there?

18 A. Yes. Up to the last signal. There's 2S, 4S, and then 6S.
19 It's the whole length of the yard.

20 Q. Right. And all this is recorded, right? It's in logs, and
21 you can see it on the computer screen?

22 A. Yeah, they did a playback.

23 Q. That -- is the train equipped with cab signals?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And does it show in your system when it's activated, or --

1 A. No, not anymore. We used to have a little box that did, but
2 it -- they don't have that anymore.

3 Q. Well, when did they do away with that?

4 A. I was still at Victory Avenue. They might have one at the
5 shop. I know when they come out of the yard, they have a test
6 that they have to do, that the cab signals are working. And if it
7 doesn't work -- well, if it doesn't work, they can't move,
8 basically. He wouldn't be able to move if it didn't work.

9 Q. Right. So, when did you become aware that something had
10 occurred?

11 A. When the starter called me and said the accident happened.

12 Q. And starter's a station master, or --

13 A. He's an operator that they just put on the platform to
14 control service and passenger information and stuff. Because of
15 the single track, they had someone stay until 2:00 a.m. And that
16 -- and he's the guy that called me.

17 Q. And what's his name, again?

18 A. Shawn something. Shawn --

19 MS. ANGOTTA: Jackson?

20 MS. WORDEN: Jackson. Thank you. Thanks, Linda. We got a -
21 - we got a late comer.

22 MR. TORRES: Yes. And we have -- somebody just entered the
23 room, and if that person could please introduce themselves and
24 spell their name.

25 MS. ANGOTTA: Linda Angotta, A-N-G-O-T-T-A.

1 MR. TORRES: And --

2 MS. ANGOTTA: SEPTA supervision.

3 MR. TORRES: Thank you. Steve?

4 DR. JENNER: Okay. This is Steve Jenner. Thank you. If I
5 can have you clarify some of the things that you just said --

6 MS. WORDEN: Sure.

7 DR. JENNER: -- because this is new to me.

8 BY DR. JENNER:

9 Q. What was the reason for the single tracking that evening?

10 A. It's -- in order to have a contractor out there for building
11 and bridges, working at a bridge around Haverford. It's scheduled
12 work.

13 Q. How often does this type of schedule work occur?

14 A. Well, normally, I never have single track at that time of
15 night. But for the last few weeks, they've been doing this work.

16 Q. Okay. How does that change your workload or your operations
17 versus a typical night?

18 A. Well, the only thing I -- is I have to, you know, route the
19 cars in and out or talk to them if there's a red. But other than
20 that, it's not that big of a deal, unless there's a problem.

21 Q. So, do you normally -- on nights that you have single
22 tracking, you have more interaction, verbal interaction with the
23 train operators?

24 A. Yes. Some days I wouldn't talk to them at all.

25 Q. Okay. How many times total did you talk to the operator

1 involved in the incident?

2 A. I couldn't say. I don't know how many trips he did before.
3 Maybe two or three. I don't know. It was only when he went out
4 to the red at Bryn Mawr.

5 Q. Okay. So, if you could explain to me -- and sorry to have
6 you repeat what you said earlier. But what would be the
7 difference on that evening versus a non-single track evening from
8 --

9 A. Well, people were late. He probably had different passengers
10 on his vehicle because he was operating different time. He
11 would've -- he was getting off late. I think he was at least 20
12 minutes late when he got in. And that's it.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And different stations. He had to pick up on -- instead of
15 picking up on the southbound stations where he normally would pick
16 up, he was picking up the people on the northbound stations
17 because the southbound stations were closed.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And then they get a reduced speed when they approach a red or
20 crossover.

21 Q. So, there are more crossovers during single tracking
22 operations?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Are they routinely crossing over, back and forth?

25 A. Only during single track.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. The only other time you use any kind of switches is when you
3 leave 69th Street, you may have to cross over a switch, and when
4 you go in Norristown and Bridgeport, you might have to cross a
5 switch, depending on where you're going, or if you're a schedule
6 tripper. But at the time of day, we don't have trippers.

7 Q. What's a tripper?

8 A. Oh, it's a train that only goes part of the way. Like, we
9 have trains that go from 69th to Bryn Mawr, and then we have
10 trains that go from 69th Street to Hughes Park.

11 Q. Sure.

12 A. And back, of course.

13 Q. So, you had talked to the operator at what station?

14 A. At -- every time that he came south at Bryn Mawr, which -- I
15 couldn't even tell you how many that would've been between 10:00
16 and midnight.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. One or two, maybe.

19 Q. So, you talked to him on multiple occasions?

20 A. Definitely one, maybe two.

21 Q. Okay. Once or twice. How did you -- do you know this
22 operator? Do you get --

23 A. No.

24 Q. -- to know them at all?

25 A. I've never met him.

1 Q. Oh, you've never met him? Okay. Do you recognize his voice
2 some?

3 A. Hum-um.

4 Q. Do you recognize other people's voices?

5 A. Yeah, some people, I know from when I worked out there.

6 Q. Okay. So, when he -- is your phone --

7 A. The radio?

8 Q. -- ringing? I'm sorry. The radio. Is it -- is it --

9 A. It's clear, yes.

10 Q. Okay. And any problems with reception during the evening?

11 A. I didn't have any, but I wouldn't know. You know what I
12 mean?

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Like, if someone tried to call and I didn't come through, I
15 wouldn't know.

16 Q. Okay. So, the -- let's talk about the times that you did
17 talk to him on the radio, if you can talk about the first time.
18 So, your radio alerts you that he's trying to call.

19 A. Right.

20 Q. Can you just recount the conversation?

21 A. It would just be, he would say, I'm approaching 2S Bryn Mawr.
22 I need permission to go through the red. And then I would say,
23 you have permission to go through the red under Rule 205C, down as
24 far as 2N. Change end, and I'll route you in the pocket. And
25 then, he'll repeat it, and then I'll say, repeated correctly.

1 Proceed as directed. And that would be it.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Sometimes, I can't say when because I talk to a lot of
4 people, if there's a car in there, I might tell him your -- let
5 your people know they're going to have to wait or, you know, stuff
6 like that. But I couldn't tell you what I said. I mean, it's
7 recorded, so --

8 Q. Sure. So, that was one call, and you thought there might've
9 been a second call as well?

10 A. There may have been. I couldn't -- I couldn't swear to that.

11 Q. Right. As best you can remember, did that call go as
12 planned?

13 A. Yeah. Yeah.

14 Q. All right. Did he discuss anything about how his train was
15 handling that evening?

16 A. No. I didn't have any calls about problems.

17 Q. Calls from him about problems? Did you get any calls from
18 any --

19 A. I had a couple people say there were slippery rails. After
20 the incident, someone told me -- I believe it was after, that
21 there were slippery rails at 69th Street. And then earlier, I had
22 a guy -- I think it was that night -- slide past Gulph Mills. But
23 I didn't get a lot of calls about it.

24 Q. Do you -- do you know who that person was? Was it -- was it
25 --

1 A. The Gulph Mills --

2 Q. -- the same operators? Yeah.

3 A. I don't know.

4 Q. That's fine. So, what happens when someone says, I'm
5 slipping? What's your response?

6 A. Depending on how many calls I get, if it's just one, I
7 probably don't do anything about it. If it's multiple calls, I'll
8 page in the line and say, it's slippery. That night, I didn't
9 make any PAs about slippery rail. The operator that went past
10 Gulph Mills, he changed ends and went back to the station. He was
11 the only one that reported that. The one that told me it was
12 slippery at 69th Street, I tried calling the next car, but his
13 radio didn't answer. He didn't answer his radio.

14 Q. Okay. Can you walk me through the process of -- the person
15 who you dealt with at Gulph Mills, what has to happen?

16 A. They call me and tell me that it slid past the station, and I
17 tell them to change end to go back to the station. Change ends
18 and go back to the station. That's about it.

19 Q. So, now, basically, when they change end, what happens from --
20 -- if you can talk about what they have to do when --

21 A. They have to get out of their seat, walk to the other end of
22 the train, start it up from there, and drive back to the station
23 so the people can get on or off. Then, when they do that, then
24 they go back to the other end, and then go their merry way.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Unless they're at an interlocking. Then I've got to give
2 them a light. But he wasn't.

3 Q. I saw that there's some single car trains, and are there
4 multiple car trains?

5 A. Not at -- not at -- not at -- not on my shift. Only singles.

6 Q. Just because of fewer passengers?

7 A. I guess.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Less people to drive them.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. Not much of a load.

12 Q. And I'm sorry, what time is your shift? 10:00 p.m. --

13 A. 10:00 to 6:00. I usually get there about a quarter of, when
14 I usually relieve the other guy.

15 Q. Right. And even at 6:00 a.m., you're only dealing with
16 single car trains?

17 A. No. They start coming out with two-car trains around 10 of,
18 quarter of 6:00.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I think. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. They first one's 6:00.

23 Q. Okay. So, you are, at the very end of your shift,
24 dispatching two --

25 A. Right. One -- a one-car might come out with two -- with two

1 trains.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And they actually have to call and talk to me every time to
4 go -- to know where they're going.

5 Q. Okay. Okay. So, someone -- you're talking the operators
6 through, and situations where they come upon a red signal, and
7 it's -- and you -- do you mention the name of the rule?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. The -- during your conversation --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- you mention the name of the rule?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay. Do they -- on a night where there's not single
14 tracking, what is their responsibility when they come upon a red
15 signal? What are their options, if you could --

16 A. They have to call. And then, we decide why it's red. Like,
17 is it a switch problem or did the fleeting fall out, or who knows.
18 It could be anything.

19 Q. And what are your options?

20 A. Well, depending on what's going on, like, I had one at West
21 Overbrook where the switch is flashing, so I knew the switch was
22 messed up. So, I had a signal maintainer right there. So, he did
23 what he had to do, and then we put the switch in a lock position
24 and sent them to the red. Sometimes, it's just the fleet falls
25 out.

1 Fleeting is where you have a signal, and then it's a computer
2 thing, and you put it on there so every time someone goes past
3 that signal, it always goes back to the signal again. And it's
4 not a -- it's not an automatic interlocking, it's a manual
5 interlocking. I can fleet any signal, even a manual, an automatic
6 interlocking signal, but it has to stay in manual if it's fledted.
7 So, if West Overbrook went to stop, I would check and see if the
8 fleet dropped out. There's only two manual interlockings.

9 Q. There are only two manual --

10 A. Yeah. West Overbrook and Radnor.

11 Q. And in terms of overall operations between manual and
12 automatic, it's -- is that a big difference, from your
13 perspective?

14 A. Only if I have to run something in manual. Like, now, we're
15 running 69th Street in manual because the track is out of service.
16 So, that's just more work for me.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And I try to do the least amount of work as possible.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He said, be honest.

20 BY DR. JENNER:

21 Q. Yeah. You mentioned, if you get -- in instances where you
22 get multiple calls about trains slipping, and sometimes you'll get
23 on a PA --

24 A. Right, we have a PA.

25 Q. -- and what is your announcement, and to who?

1 A. Attention all operators, it's been reported there's slippery
2 rail at XYZ. You know, operate according to the conditions.

3 Q. Do they have to change operations on their side? Is there a
4 rule that dictates --

5 A. We don't have a rule for that.

6 Q. So, it's basically, just be --

7 A. Hey, it's slippery.

8 Q. Yeah, right.

9 A. It's raining.

10 Q. Okay. Giving them some information that --

11 A. Right. I mean, that --

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. Obviously they know it's wet. You know, it's not --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And leaves. You know, the whole -- everything. Stuff makes
16 it slippery, depending on the time of year. Ice.

17 Q. Sometimes of year are more slippery than other times that --

18 A. Right. Especially in the fall.

19 Q. Right. Right. How about this time of year? There --

20 A. No, it's not. I think we had a special rain situation that
21 night that caused it to be slippery.

22 Q. But as far as you recall, you just got how many calls about
23 slippery?

24 A. Once or twice a month, maybe. Maybe.

25 Q. For -- I mean this evening.

1 A. Oh, that evening?

2 Q. On the -- on the shift. Yeah.

3 A. I think I got two. The Gulph Mills, and then, after the
4 incident, someone told me 69th Street was slippery, and I don't
5 remember who.

6 Q. Okay. If I can take you to after the incident, what is your
7 role in after the incident in terms of, who do you notify?

8 A. Oh.

9 Q. Who do you call?

10 A. I try to tell everybody that I think needs to know. We have
11 a list of the people -- I don't have that in front of me, but
12 immediately I called Rescue. I called the supervisor to the
13 scene. I called the extra supervisors to the scene. I called
14 SEPTA Police. I sent out a page to, like, 144 people or something
15 like that. Maybe even more.

16 And then people who wanted to know more information calling
17 me back. System Safety called me back. PR called me back. I had
18 to the shop foreman, or the shop director because later on, the
19 supervisors told me that he needed the shop there. I spoke to the
20 power dispatcher after they requested the power be taken out.

21 I had to call medical once they determined that the person
22 had to be held off. I called -- I'm pretty sure I called the
23 chief controller, let him know we had a problem. I can't remember
24 if I called them or not. Yeah, I did. I think I did tell him
25 because I pulled some of his supervisors to help. I think that --

1 I think that's everyone.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. The page system is really a blessing because back in the
4 olden days, I had to call everybody phone.

5 Q. Right. Okay. From your perspective, how did things go,
6 post-accident?

7 A. I think we did pretty good. We had Rescue there right away.
8 Really fast. The supervisor was there. The help was there. We
9 did miss one trip because of the logistics of, you know, getting
10 the people back and forth on a bus, because there was a point when
11 we couldn't go in the terminal. So, that's why we missed one
12 trip. But basically, other than that, everybody answered my
13 questions and I think we did really good. I mean, I'm glad.

14 DR. JENNER: Great. Thank you. That's all the questions I
15 have for now. We'll continue around the room. Just introduce
16 yourself.

17 BY MR. REYNOLDS:

18 Q. Rochelle and I go back -- we were in supervision together 30
19 years ago. The night of the incident, obviously you were busier
20 than normal. Is that a challenge for you? What was the staffing
21 level at that time?

22 A. I was the only one there.

23 Q. You were the only one?

24 A. And Ted was the only supervisor, I think.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I'm pretty sure Ted -- oh, there might've been other
2 supervisors, because we had somebody with Frontier, I think.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Linda might know.

5 Q. Yeah. Did you get more calls than normal?

6 A. No, I don't believe so, other than the -- at the red.

7 Q. Okay. So, do operators normally call for lateness?

8 A. No.

9 Q. No? Okay. The --

10 A. Well, some do because they may want their trip filled.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. But other than that --

13 Q. Did anybody call that night to have a trip fill --

14 A. No.

15 Q. -- that you're aware of?

16 A. I don't remember. No, I don't think so. The starter was
17 really good about filling trips when people got in, if somebody
18 needed it filled though. And he would let me know every time.

19 Q. You mentioned that if somebody tries to call you with the --
20 through the radio, and they don't get through, you wouldn't know
21 about it because obviously they didn't get through. Aren't they
22 required to call by other means possible?

23 A. If they -- if it's that important, they would. Yeah.

24 Q. When you get a phone call, do you ask if, hey, is something
25 wrong with your radio? Or you just process the call?

1 A. I'm probably supposed to, but no, I just answer it.

2 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay. Fair enough. That's really all I have
3 at this point.

4 BY MR. CASSITY:

5 Q. Jared Cassity with SMART Transportation Division. I'm going
6 to go back to the 69th Street real quick, in the report, that you
7 said that you received a slippery -- did I hear you correctly,
8 someone made that report after the incident?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. You don't recall who that was that made that report?

11 A. There might be a sheet on it. I don't know.

12 Q. Okay. I'm a freight guy, so bear with me here. A lot of my
13 questions are going to be in layman's terms. Really, if you could
14 just explain, I would appreciate it. Do you fall under any kind
15 of hours of service?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. How -- do you know how long you have been off duty prior to
18 going on duty?

19 A. I got off at 6:00 in the a.m., and I came back at 10:00, so -
20 -

21 Q. Okay. You feel like you rested pretty well, you know --

22 A. Yeah, I do get enough sleep.

23 Q. Okay. With the one track being out of service, was there any
24 other exceptions to the tracks, as far as slow orders or any
25 indication that there may be something out of the ordinary with

1 the tracks that they were operating over?

2 A. Nothing that wasn't in the bulletin order. I mean, there
3 might be a slow zone in the bulletin order that's been out there
4 for a while.

5 Q. Okay. So, there may have been and you don't know what --

6 A. Not, I don't think so.

7 Q. You read those bulletins, typically --

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. -- when you come on duty? Okay. But you don't recall
10 specifically what it was? Okay. As far as your system goes from
11 a controller or dispatcher standpoint, what kind of flags does it
12 throw up, or what kind of signals or signs does it give you to
13 indicate that something's wrong on the -- on the tracks, or
14 particularly with a train?

15 A. I don't get any indication about a train with a problem
16 unless the operator tells me. The switches, the -- it kind of,
17 like, flashes. It's like a line and it flashes if it's messed up.
18 If the track circuit is occupied and I know there's not a train
19 there, it'll be red and show like there is a train there. And the
20 signals will just go dark or flash or have funny colors that
21 aren't normally there.

22 Q. Okay. So, there's no indication of speeding or anything of
23 that sort? Do you recall if there was any indications in the
24 system that would signify something was wrong that night prior to
25 the derailment?

1 A. No.

2 MR. CASSITY: I think I'll let that be for right now. Thank
3 you.

4 BY MS. ANGOTTA:

5 Q. Linda Angotta. I only have one question. You said the
6 operator never called you to hit priority or anything?

7 A. The priority alarm came in at 13, and I don't know who hit it
8 because they said he was on the floor.

9 Q. What do you mean by 13?

10 A. The incident happened at 12:08, and --

11 Q. So, 12:13.

12 A. -- the priority came at 13. But he could've hit it prior to
13 that. We've had that before where a call will come in much later.
14 You know, the operator will say, oh, I called you an hour ago.
15 You know?

16 Q. So, he transmitted -- he put out transfer.

17 A. Right. But the timestamp --

18 Q. The prior --

19 A. -- said 13.

20 Q. But you were seeing it at 12:13. So, at that point, the
21 starter had already called you?

22 A. Yeah.

23 MS. ANGOTTA: Okay. I was just -- that's the only question I
24 have.

25 BY MS. BONINI:

1 Q. Hi. Beth Bonini from PennDOT. It's a blessing to be at the
2 end. People already asked my questions. But you mentioned that
3 there was a slide past Gulph Mills that night. Do trains often
4 slide past stations? Or --

5 A. Yeah. It's common. Yeah.

6 Q. How common?

7 A. On my shift, maybe a couple of times. But I only have, you
8 know, four cars out there until, like, 11:00. And then three
9 cars, and then two. You know? So -- but during the day, I'm sure
10 they get more.

11 Q. Does it happen at a particular --

12 A. No.

13 Q. -- spot? Or --

14 A. There's no -- it's just random.

15 Q. Okay. As far as the reporting of the incident, I know that
16 you said that you heard from Sean Jackson. Is that the typical
17 way that you would hear about an incident? Did that follow the
18 normal accident --

19 A. Well, normally there isn't a person at a location.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. It's usually just the train operator. In this particular
22 instance, it happened at the end of the line where there was
23 somebody standing there. Had the operator been the only person
24 there, I wouldn't have known because he was on the floor. So, it
25 would've had to have come from somebody on the train calling

1 somebody.

2 Q. And if you -- throughout the night when you're on duty, if
3 you have to take a break or do something, because I think you said
4 you were the only person --

5 A. Right.

6 Q. -- there, who relieves you?

7 A. No one.

8 Q. So, if something happens --

9 A. Nobody.

10 Q. There's not a supervisor or anyone there to relieve you --

11 A. No.

12 Q. -- while you --

13 A. No.

14 MS. BONINI: That's all I have. Thank you.

15 BY MR. FOX:

16 Q. Hey, Rochelle. This is Jim Fox. Just some questions to help
17 clarify, I think, for some of our guests who might not be as
18 familiar. In regards to the single track, the 2S signal at Bryn
19 Mawr that you were giving permission past, why is that signal set
20 at red?

21 A. Because we have the track blocked between Bryn Mawr and
22 Wynnewood, and you can't get a light when you have a track block
23 on.

24 Q. And that's for protection to make sure every train stops and
25 is reminded about the single track operation?

1 A. Well, they have to stop because it's red, and they'll never
2 get a light.

3 Q. Right. But why is the purpose of the blocks being set up
4 there?

5 A. To protect the work area.

6 Q. All right. And in the particular case of Bryn Mawr, I just
7 want to clarify, this is the a concept that we call the Z move,
8 and why they have to change engine reverse. And I don't know if
9 this is more of a question or more of a statement as to what's
10 going on, but because it's not -- it's not a universal
11 interlocking, the operators have to continue past one point,
12 reverse back into a center pocket, and then cross back over in the
13 opposite direction to make the crossover from one track to the
14 other, as opposed to just a direct crossover with a universal.
15 That's why the Z move is there. Getting the 6S signal, what's
16 typically done at 6S signal on a regular basis when operators are
17 approaching the station?

18 A. They stop and then the system just gives them their routing.
19 If they get routed to a track that they're not assigned, they
20 call.

21 Q. And how do they know if they're -- what track they're
22 assigned to?

23 A. It's in their run guide.

24 Q. Do they get any kind of display on their equipment or
25 anything like that?

1 A. Well, they have to select the track they want.

2 Q. Based on what's in their run guide?

3 A. Every trip.

4 Q. Okay. And is there ever a chance that 6S would ever be at
5 clear signal, that they would automatically be able to go in, or
6 is it always provided --

7 A. Only if it was in manual and I gave it to them.

8 Q. Okay. And on this night, it was in automatic?

9 A. Automatic.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Like, when I bring cars out of the yard, they all get a
12 light.

13 MR. FOX: I think that's all I've got for now.

14 MR. GOOD: Hello.

15 MS. WORDEN: Hi.

16 BY MR. GOOD:

17 Q. George Good, FTA. I just had a question about the cab
18 signaling. I don't understand the system. When you -- when you
19 give permission past a red signal, what happens to the cab
20 signaling or the cab co? What do they get?

21 A. They have to get -- push the stop and proceed button.

22 Q. And that's part of the permission that you give them when you
23 tell them to go past the red?

24 A. No, I don't tell them to do that. No.

25 Q. Or they just know when they --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- get the permission to do that?

3 A. Right. And then it gives them a reduced speed of 15. And
4 then they get to where they've got to go, and then they wait for
5 their light.

6 Q. So, if they go through a signal without -- where you haven't
7 already given them permission, what's the procedure for that?

8 A. I try to call them on the radio.

9 Q. Oh, you just see it on your board that they --

10 A. Yeah, you get --

11 Q. -- went through the red?

12 A. -- like, a little flashing thing.

13 Q. And then -- but if you just didn't happen to see it, what are
14 the -- are they supposed to do? What is the operator supposed to
15 do?

16 A. The operator should call and say they have a no code or, you
17 know, something. But that's -- they could just go if they wanted
18 to.

19 Q. Now, you said you received a priority alarm. What exactly is
20 that?

21 A. Oh, it -- we have a Sima radio system where if you want to
22 talk, not a priority, you just hit a routine request. It's a
23 button the radio. If you have a priority, there's another button
24 that you would push that would be priority, which just means that
25 I have to answer within a minimum amount of time.

1 And then if they have an emergency, it's like, under the
2 dashboard kind of thing, and where it opens up the mic on the
3 train, and then you can hear everybody talking, but you can't talk
4 to them. But when they push priority, nobody talked to me.

5 Q. Okay. Did they -- did the handsets -- is that just on the
6 train, or is there any kind of priority on the hand radios?

7 A. No, it's just the box. I think it's above them or behind
8 them or something. I don't even know. Do you, Linda? Where is
9 it on there?

10 MS. ANGOTTA: It's to the left.

11 MS. WORDEN: High, up high, right?

12 MS. ANGOTTA: No. Arm level.

13 MS. WORDEN: Oh, arm level?

14 MR. FOX: Do the operators have, in addition to the cab
15 radio, have --

16 MS. WORDEN: No.

17 MR. FOX: -- handheld radios? No? That's all I had. Thank
18 you.

19 BY MR. TORRES:

20 Q. Tomas Torres with the NTSB. So, what station was the
21 accident?

22 A. 69th Street station, the end of the line.

23 Q. Okay. And how far is the signal there going into the
24 station? Do you have any idea?

25 A. Maybe three train lengths.

1 Q. Three?

2 MS. ANGOTTA: More.

3 MS. WORDEN: It's more than that?

4 MR. TORRES: So, he --

5 MS. WORDEN: I'm not an operator.

6 BY MR. TORRES:

7 Q. So, he could get a clear signal there, going into the
8 station, even if you got -- if it's occupied by --

9 A. No.

10 Q. -- some other equipment?

11 A. No. It would not give him a signal to go in. If the -- if
12 there's a car on A Berth, it doesn't give you a signal to go to an
13 occupied track. I can't even do that.

14 Q. Yeah. But on that day, he had a clear signal going in there?

15 A. No. He went through the red at 6S.

16 Q. Oh, he had a red? And prior to that, do you know what kind
17 of signal indications he had?

18 A. It was in automatic, so he would've had a clear proceed cab
19 at 2S and 4S.

20 Q. Okay. Can you -- can you describe the layout of the station
21 there? You know --

22 A. Of 69th Street itself?

23 Q. Yeah. The red signal, then beyond that, can you --

24 A. Oh.

25 Q. -- describe that?

1 A. It's just a little bridge there, and then they pull down, and
2 there's, like, a loop in the track that the -- that the responder
3 or whatever it's called talks to the box, and then whatever's
4 poked in their thing, then that just gives them whatever track it
5 is. So, then it would come up -- it would come up and tell them
6 what track they're going on, and then there's an indication that
7 says one, two, or three, and then that -- and then they would go.
8 But like I said, I'm not an operator.

9 Q. So, there's, like, four tracks in there that they can go to?

10 A. Well, there are four tracks there, but they can't go to Track
11 4.

12 Q. One, two --

13 A. They can't go to the other track up here, which you don't
14 even see. They can't even go up there without me letting them go
15 up there. Right there.

16 Q. So, when they go on duty, they already know what tracks
17 they're going to go into in every station?

18 A. A single car does, yes.

19 Q. So, on that day, do you remember what --

20 A. I believe he was supposed to go to Track 2, but Track 2 was
21 occupied because everybody was late and we had an extra car over
22 there. So, he would've gone to -- well, he could've gone to 2,
23 because the guy was getting ready to leave. So, who's to say what
24 track he would've went to?

25 He might've called me and said, I don't have the proper

1 track. You know, it's speculating. I have no idea what he
2 would've done. If he didn't get -- if he didn't get the signal to
3 go to 2, he might've called and said, I'm supposed to be on 2.
4 Can I take 3 or, you know?

5 Q. So, when he went past the red signal, he continued on to
6 Track 2?

7 A. 2 was occupied and 1 was occupied. So, the only place he
8 could've gone was 3. But this person had already requested their
9 signal on Track 2, so this prevented any movement from any
10 direction. This train prevented him from going on 1.

11 This train, in two ways, prevented him from going anywhere
12 else. It was occupying Track A, and because he had a light, it
13 was -- it was preventing him to go to Track 3. So, he couldn't go
14 anywhere.

15 Q. And he ended up in what track though?

16 A. 1.

17 Q. 1. And he struck there. And it was unattended? Nobody on
18 it?

19 A. No one was on that car, they said. Yeah. That was good.

20 Q. It was secured?

21 A. I don't know. I wouldn't know if -- I mean, it was there.
22 The procedure is to make it secure, but I can't tell you if it was
23 or not. It wasn't too secure. It went all the way back to the
24 other -- the other block, there.

25 Q. No, I guess what I'm saying, was it -- was it going to be in

1 use later?

2 A. Not that trip. It may have been later on.

3 MR. TORRES: Steve?

4 BY DR. JENNER:

5 Q. Okay. Steve Jenner. If you -- do you know, when he got to
6 6S, and if he waited, as --

7 A. I don't know.

8 Q. No. My question is, do you have any sense how long he
9 would've had to have waited before he would've been allowed to
10 proceed into the station?

11 A. Less than a minute, maybe. Depending on what time that train
12 was leaving.

13 Q. Which train?

14 A. The one on 2 Track that had plugged its light. It was
15 leaving late already, and so they just have to wait for all the
16 people to get on, and then you would -- then they leave. So, it
17 could've been a minute. It could've been less than a minute. It
18 could've been 2 minutes. If they get there and have to sit too
19 long, they call me and say, you know, I'm here. I don't sit there
20 and stare at it, so --

21 Q. So --

22 A. And at that point, it's actually at my back. It's behind me.
23 69th Street is behind me on the board.

24 Q. So, your estimate, and I'm not holding to this, he may have
25 needed to wait one to 2 minutes?

1 A. That would be reasonable.

2 Q. Okay. How long have you been dispatching this territory?

3 A. Oh, goodness. Before '97. My son was born in '97. I'm
4 going to say '94, maybe. I don't remember when I went to Victory.

5 Q. Okay. So, you have --

6 A. Forever.

7 Q. Quite a long time. Is there anything -- do you hear
8 complaints or issues from train operators or other dispatchers
9 that this is a challenging area for operators to operate in?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Are there some sections that you dispatch are more
12 challenging for them than others?

13 A. If they go on 3 Track, sometimes they get caught in the gap -
14 - the gap in power, because there's, like, you can't have the line
15 go across tracks or the trains will crash into them. So, they
16 have gaps in the power for the third rail. So, some operators
17 don't get it that you have to, like, gas up and then -- Linda
18 would be more able to describe that to you.

19 But some people, especially if they're new, they get caught
20 in the gap going to 3. Some even get caught in the gap going to
21 2. It's just -- that's the only issue that I think is weird.
22 Just getting caught in the gap.

23 Q. So, just to summarize, besides the scheduled single tracking,
24 how normal was this evening for you?

25 A. It was normal. Normal busy with, you know, lateness and

1 moving everybody around. Talking to the starter. I don't
2 normally have to talk to the starter 1,000 times a night. But we
3 get along, so it's no big deal.

4 Q. Okay. All right. Let me just change pace a bit. Can you
5 tell me your -- you went on duty this evening, Monday night. Your
6 shift started at 10:00 p.m.

7 A. 10:00.

8 Q. Did you work the previous nights, Saturday, Sunday?

9 A. No. I was off Saturday and Sunday.

10 Q. Were those your scheduled days off?

11 A. Yes. I get off at 6:00 on Saturday morning.

12 Q. Okay. All right. So, what is your normal work schedule?

13 A. Monday through Friday, 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

14 Q. Okay. The handoff when you went on duty, the changeover
15 between the previous dispatcher, did he discuss anything abnormal
16 that evening with --

17 A. Just the single track and who had it and who had power --

18 Q. Did --

19 A. -- that there was a starter there.

20 Q. Was there any conversation about, during his shift, that
21 trains were slipping?

22 A. No.

23 DR. JENNER: Okay. I think that's my questions. Thank you.

24 BY MR. REYNOLDS:

25 Q. Just some follow-up questions. The track was out of service.

1 Was anything going on on the adjacent track? Was there a work
2 zone established?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And for everybody here, what's that mean?

5 A. It just means the operator has to operate slowly. There
6 might be a flag or a stop sign, people on the track area.

7 Q. So, it would slow down the operation?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. The operator that called to do the Z move at Gulph -- I mean,
10 to back up at Gulph Mills, how long does that take, roughly?

11 A. Two or 3 minutes.

12 Q. Two or 3 minutes?

13 A. Not even that long. I don't know. I'm not an operator. Not
14 that long. However long it takes you to walk back, drive back a
15 few feet, turn it off, back up and run.

16 Q. Did you -- he violated the signal in 6S. Were you aware of
17 that prior to the accident?

18 A. No. No. It was so weird because Ted called me and said, the
19 starter said the car was on A. And I was like, what? And I said,
20 oh, my God, 6S is flashing. And that's when I saw the overrun.

21 Q. Okay. As a controller, although you're not an operator, do
22 you get additional training to -- basically a recertification?

23 A. I get recertified, but we don't operate a train. Basically,
24 you sit in an office and they talk to you for 6 or 10 hours, and
25 then you take a ride.

1 Q. You take a ride on the line, but you don't operate? Do you
2 know if at one time you did operate?

3 A. I did when I was first in training, I did.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Or those -- you're talking about those, right?

6 Q. Yeah, the recertification.

7 A. Yeah. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. And then, kind of just a follow-up. How long have you
9 been on the 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. shift?

10 A. A while. Several years.

11 Q. Several years? So, you're used to it?

12 A. Yes.

13 MR. REYNOLDS: Okay. I'm good.

14 BY MR. CASSITY:

15 Q. Jared Cassity with SMART Transportation Division. I'm going
16 to go back real quick to the 6S signal violation. Did you say it
17 did not give you any kind of indication that the signal was --

18 A. There's no on -- there's -- it's like a little light that
19 flickers. But when he called me with the accident, I was like,
20 oh, you know, doing all the other stuff. And I didn't even look
21 at the signal until Ted told me that the car was on A.

22 I just thought the operator went through the signal and onto
23 -- actually, I didn't even know he went through the signal. I
24 thought the operator went through 6S normal onto Track 1, and
25 didn't know that there was a car on the bumper, and then tapped

1 it, basically, is what I thought happened until they told me how
2 bad it was.

3 Q. Is --

4 A. And then Ted told me that the starter said the car was in the
5 A Berth.

6 Q. Is there a procedure or an operation that's common in nature
7 that would allow what you just described that you thought --

8 A. Yeah, if there's a single car on the -- on the B Berth, it'll
9 automatically route even a two-car train into a -- into a track.

10 Q. Now, you were talking about the lateness, and I'm just
11 curious, I imagine it's probably just the population, but was
12 there anything specific that caused the lateness for the trains
13 that night?

14 A. Just the fact that they have to slow down for single track.
15 The single track was double block. They had the Z move. By the
16 time I get in, it's already beat.

17 Q. Okay. And then you were talking about the slippery rail. Is
18 there anything of significance that operators have to do to
19 account for slippery rail that you're aware of?

20 A. No. There's no button or, you know, just --

21 Q. I didn't know if there was a change in -- I know you've never
22 been an operator, so --

23 A. Well, I have been an operator, but --

24 Q. I mean -- oh, have you?

25 A. We, you know, they just -- you just operator like you do your

1 car. You know, you operate according to conditions.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. You slow down, you don't get so close to the person in front
4 of you. You know?

5 Q. And then, I think my last question for the moment, do you
6 recall if it started raining before or after your shift began?

7 A. I don't think it was raining when I came -- no, it wasn't
8 raining when I came in.

9 Q. Okay. So, it would've started after the fact?

10 A. Yeah.

11 MR. CASSITY: Okay. That's all for now. Thank you.

12 BY MS. ANGOTTA:

13 Q. Linda Angotta. Rochelle, after you crossed -- you set the
14 routing for the operator to go through single track and cross over
15 at West Overbrook. After that took place, you took your eye off
16 the model board, I suppose?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. So, you didn't notice him coming in excessively fast at 69th
19 Street and --

20 A. I sure didn't.

21 Q. -- you said that there was no audible --

22 A. No. And even when there's a signal violation, unless you
23 have some other --

24 Q. Is that something you turn off, or --

25 A. No. It's been off for years. I don't know why it got turned

1 off.

2 Q. Because I remember there used to be an audible.

3 A. Yeah, there's not anymore.

4 Q. So, if you weren't physically looking at the model board --

5 A. You wouldn't know.

6 Q. -- you wouldn't know that there was a violation anywhere.

7 A. Not until you --

8 Q. Until on the next vehicle had --

9 A. -- until you caught it or --

10 Q. -- encountered a problem.

11 A. Yeah. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay. So, that car -- you said there was a car on 2 Track
13 that was already tagging out?

14 A. Right.

15 Q. So, that's the reason he had the red at 6S?

16 A. That's the reason he had a straight rail. Otherwise, he
17 would've crashed into --

18 Q. Right, because as he approached --

19 A. -- the one on 2 Track.

20 Q. -- as he approached and went over the loop under the Victory
21 Avenue Bridge, the Vetag would've start throwing the switch, had
22 the car on 2 Track not --

23 A. Right.

24 Q. -- Vetagged out and locked them.

25 A. That would've put him on 3.

1 Q. So, that's what I was trying to figure out, how the switch
2 stayed in a straight position for him --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- if he was routing for 3. Okay. And you were unaware of
5 that until the supervisor --

6 A. Yeah, until the starter called me --

7 Q. -- informed you.

8 A. -- and then I didn't know about the signal violation until
9 Ted said about the thing, and I'm like, oh, you know?

10 Q. So, Ted realized because that car was at the Berth --

11 A. The starter told him. Right. Yeah.

12 Q. Right. Okay. And that -- it was at that point that you
13 started sending the signal department out to research?

14 A. (No audible response)

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Oh, that's the other call I made, the signal department.

17 Q. And then -- and then, how long did, after you were contacted
18 about the accident, did Ted figure out that the signal must've
19 been violated?

20 A. I think that as soon as he got there and they told him it was
21 on -- that the original car was on A, and he called me right away.

22 Q. So, it wasn't -- it wasn't more than a half hour?

23 A. Oh, no. It was --

24 Q. Less than that.

25 A. I don't know when the page went out, but I put the page out

1 almost immediately that, you know, how bad it was.

2 Q. Okay. So, you said the operator had priority -- well, you
3 got it at 12:13.

4 A. Right. But no one spoke. It was just -- there was no route
5 or block or nothing.

6 Q. So, did you ever attempt to answer the priority?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But there was no --

10 Q. At that point, he --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. -- he wasn't responding. Okay, and then it was some time --
13 thank you, that's all I have.

14 A. I can't -- no, I may not have tried to answer. I used that
15 sheet as the incident.

16 Q. Right, okay. So, you opened this sheet --

17 A. Right, but I don't think I attempted to call it.

18 Q. -- and you used that as your incident number?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Thank you. PRE?

21 A. Incident 8. PR0008. Three 0's. Then there's other
22 incidents in there. One for the signal violation. There's
23 another one with like 25 or 30 names on it of all the injured,
24 because they didn't fit on the first one. Actually, I think it
25 was like 12. It's when I got up to, like, 23, I think, and then I

1 had to put the rest on another sheet.

2 Q. I do have one more question. You said, you routed the car
3 southbound and you stopped looking at the model board. So, you
4 wouldn't have looked again until the next car went through --

5 A. Until the --

6 Q. -- single track?

7 A. Yeah. I had set -- I would've set -- as soon as he crossed
8 over, I set up the route for northbound, and then for -- I would
9 just wait for the next Bryn Mawr.

10 Q. So, he crosses over, goes through, and you set the proceed
11 cab --

12 A. For northbound.

13 MS. ANGOTTA: -- for the northbound train. And that's what
14 you routinely do. Okay. Now I'm done.

15 BY MS. BONINI:

16 Q. Beth Bonini from PennDOT. Could you explain your training?
17 So, what, as a controller, I think you said a little bit, or I
18 heard bits and pieces, but could you go through --

19 A. Originally, from the beginning of my SEPTA career, or just as
20 a control center person?

21 Q. You've been at SEPTA since --

22 A. '87.

23 Q. -- '87? Let's do as a control person.

24 A. All right. That was probably 3 or 4 years after I started.
25 At that point, we had a lot of training on all of the different

1 kinds of vehicles, like, mostly bus and rail, stuff that isn't
2 even here anymore, classroom, go out and look at different things
3 like that. Every year, you re-cert on the rail.

4 I was a trolley operator, so -- and then in control center, I
5 would take different classes, depending on what was going on or
6 what we had to know, drug class, this thing called BOSS. I mean,
7 just all kinds of weird stuff that SEPTA throws out there.

8 As a controller, every year we have to do a re-cert. You
9 know, it used to be we had to drive. And then they stopped that
10 and you just go in the room and they just go over rules and you
11 take a test. But, like, on the jobs, sometimes they send out
12 memos that you've got to read. We've had tests. They check your
13 book, make sure your rule book's up to date. Basically, you don't
14 get in trouble unless something happens, and then you get maybe
15 reinstructed.

16 Q. So, there is a process for reinstruction because you got in
17 trouble? But what does -- so, could you explain --

18 A. Any random thing. You know, like, I couldn't even tell you
19 the last time I got in trouble for something I did. But one time,
20 a long time ago, I sent a car in single track when it was
21 occupied. So, then I got reinstructed on that.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But just stuff like that. You know, you either go out and
24 have -- of the training department, or maybe they just take you
25 back and, you know, give you some verbal stuff.

1 Q. So, now, on a different topic, if you were getting a lot of
2 phone calls about slippery rail, would you be able to -- do you
3 have the authority to reduce speed or restrict --

4 A. No.

5 Q. -- speed at all?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Who --

8 A. No, we don't have -- in order to have a speed restriction,
9 somebody's got to post sign out, a Form W would have to go out.
10 You know, it's not our procedure to do that. We just page the
11 line, let them know it's slippery. If it's due to some debris,
12 like oil or something like that, I could send a track guy out or
13 something like that. When the leaves are there, we request a
14 scrubber. It's like a machine that cleans the rail off. But
15 basically, if it's slippery, oh, well. You better slow down, you
16 know, basically, is how it is.

17 Q. But you said you would put out a verbal --

18 A. A page, yeah.

19 Q. -- page to everyone. But you --

20 A. And that's not guaranteeing their getting it because not
21 every radio works, or maybe they're off the car.

22 MS. BONINI: Thank you.

23 MS. WORDEN: Sometimes we have announcements that we have to
24 make periodically, like every hour. But even that, we don't get a
25 confirmation back that someone got it. I put out a text sometimes

1 of stuff, and they can say yes or no, or didn't receive or
2 received. But I wouldn't generally do that unless it was
3 something really, really serious.

4 If it was really serious, I would call each operator and say
5 -- like, today, I had a tree branch. So, the first guy told me he
6 ran over it. Cleaned it over. Second guy told him 11-9, look for
7 the branch. He got there, it was cleaned up. So --

8 MS. BONINI: Okay. Thank you.

9 MR. FOX: Jim Fox. I don't -- I don't have any other follow-
10 up questions.

11 MR. GOOD: George Good. I just had a few additional
12 questions. Do you know, do the trains have sanders or --

13 MS. WORDEN: Can they push the sander or just automatic it
14 comes out?

15 MS. ANGOTTA: It has sanders.

16 MS. WORDEN: But they can't push it, right? It just --

17 MR. GOOD: It's automatic?

18 MS. WORDEN: And it only comes out if something happens and
19 it has to come out.

20 BY MR. GOOD:

21 Q. Is there -- is it common to move cars into the platform
22 tracks when there's already a car in there?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. How common is that? Pretty common? To your knowledge, has
25 there ever been any issues of cars sliding into the bumping post?

1 A. The bumper?

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. Maybe once. But they have tapped other cars.

4 Q. So, that's happened a few --

5 A. And then they, like, sometimes couple. I've had that a few
6 times.

7 Q. Okay. And talking about the control room, you say you're the
8 only person in the control room. Is there --

9 A. Not in the control room.

10 Q. Oh, just --

11 A. Just in my area.

12 Q. So, I mean, as far as --

13 A. There's other people there.

14 Q. -- a relief when you need a relief, you don't have anyone
15 that can relieve you?

16 A. No. Not on my shift.

17 Q. So, is there any current concerns ever been expressed about
18 that, or --

19 A. No.

20 MR. GOOD: Okay. All right. That's all I had. Thank you.

21 BY MR. TORRES:

22 Q. Tomas Torres with the NTSB. On the day of the accident,
23 there was no report of slippage on the track there near the
24 accident area?

25 A. Not prior to, no.

1 Q. No? Oh. But when it gets reported to you -- so, you say you
2 put a verbal over the radio?

3 A. If I get more than one call, I do.

4 Q. So, when you have unusual conditions like that, it's not
5 required for the train crew or the operator to confirm --

6 A. No.

7 Q. -- of an unusual condition? And when you get a slippage like
8 that, a report of slippage like that, is it reported to track
9 personnel?

10 A. I -- like, it depends on how many calls I get. If I just got
11 one random call, no. If a -- like, a -- especially on the Elmwood
12 side, we might have somebody spill grease on the rail because it's
13 a street, then yeah, the track will go out and do what they can.
14 So, I just -- it just depends on the situation. Like, if it's
15 raining and they're slipping, no. If that's a reason why, you
16 know, it was raining.

17 Q. Okay. The other question is, when the train went by the red
18 signal at 6S, did you get an alert on your computer?

19 A. Not on my computer. The screens -- I sit facing this way,
20 facing the car system so in case a call comes through, I can see
21 it. The -- where I sit, the -- there's a big board with the whole
22 route on it, and then there's three smaller screens here, and the
23 69th one is behind me, and 69th Street is behind me, up top. So,
24 no. There's no audible alarm. It's just a little tiny flashing
25 light.

1 Q. So, have you -- if somebody goes by a red signal, and you're
2 not looking at the screen, you won't know?

3 A. No. They might call and say, I have a no code, or they might
4 say, you know, I have a red, or a -- and my car won't move. Or,
5 you know, any number of reasons.

6 Q. So, in the past, like, when somebody's gone by a red signal,
7 I mean, how do you become aware? I mean, if you don't get an
8 audible alarm or --

9 A. I wouldn't know because I wouldn't have known.

10 Q. Do they self-report? Or --

11 A. Yes. Also, sometimes we give faults once.

12 MR. TORRES: Steve?

13 BY DR. JENNER:

14 Q. Yeah, Steve Jenner. Just a couple questions about the
15 audible alarm that used to be there. When it was there, you were
16 dispatching --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- at a time when it was there? Any reason why it no longer
19 exists? Do you -- do you have any insight?

20 A. I seem to remember that we were getting a bunch of calls and
21 -- that were every random alarm that came up. They took all that
22 away. Every alarm that we used get that come up on the little
23 screen thing, I think they did some kind of upgrade or something,
24 is what I think happened. And then that just went away. That's
25 the only thing -- you might want to talk to signals about that, or

1 the people that have that. I forget their name. I don't even
2 know if they're still in business anymore.

3 Q. From your perspective, when it went away, is that a good
4 thing or a bad thing, or you're indifferent about it?

5 A. I think it's a bad thing. I think it should be audible
6 alarms.

7 Q. What disadvantage does it have? Why do you think it should
8 be an audible alarm?

9 A. So, you're aware. You know, is it's for safety.

10 Q. If you -- if there were an audible alarm, either
11 hypothetically or if you can think back to a situation where you
12 did hear an audible alarm, what are your options then?

13 A. Well, it'll tell me the time it happened, so I'll know who
14 was there at that time by the schedule. And we keep track of all
15 the car numbers. And then I can contact that operator and stop
16 them. Or get a hold of signal department, then they have to go
17 out -- like, when you call the signal department, they're never
18 where the incident happened. So, that takes them the time to get
19 there, then they have to go in their computer and see all the
20 alarms that they got, and what time it all happened, and then --
21 like that.

22 Q. Has -- can you think back on a case where you did hear an
23 audible alarm and you -- and you took the actions you just
24 described?

25 A. Yeah. Sure.

1 Q. So, if you've heard the audible, you'll try to contact --

2 A. Ron Redden, my Chief, he was one that went through a red and
3 the audible alarm came up, and it was an unusual one because it
4 was -- it was the end of the interlocking. And I asked him, did
5 you change ends, and he's like, yeah. And I said, well, you went
6 through that signal. So, yes. That's one I do remember. And it
7 was one I wouldn't normally say it was a signal violation because
8 it was the opposite direction he was supposed to be going.

9 Q. So, right now, there is -- there is a little flashing light
10 that's your only indication, and that's on one of these smaller
11 screens?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. Where is your attention mostly focused during --

14 A. On the card system, the radio, where the people push their
15 button and it comes up and that they want to talk to me.

16 Q. That's where your -- when you're dispatching --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- where your eyes are going?

19 A. Yeah. I'm looking at the computer screen for the calls to
20 come in.

21 Q. Okay. Can you just discuss what -- you have a big board and
22 then you have three separate smaller screens?

23 A. Right. There's a -- there's a model board that has TV
24 screens. I don't know how many, six or nine of them. And it's
25 all across the whole area. Up top is Route 100, and down below is

1 the BD in Sharon Hill, and then on one little corner is the
2 Elmwood stuff.

3 And then on my desk, on the Route 100 side is three computers
4 that show Norristown to 69th Street, top -- it's like a stack.
5 You know? And my radio dispatching and me talking all that is
6 this way, like, straight in front of me where I sit at that desk.
7 The desk is shaped like a U.

8 So, on the left-hand side is the radio computer, and then if
9 you turned maybe 45 degrees -- I guess that's 45 -- then that's
10 where the three -- maybe not quite 45 -- the three other screens
11 are. And then, if you turn all the way, you could -- see the
12 whole board from one end to the other. But there's no reason for
13 me to look at that board because it's boring, okay?

14 Q. No, no, no, no. I'm trying to --

15 A. And I need to talk to people when they push their radio, so -
16 -

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We should probably set a time for you
18 guys to just go up and look at it.

19 DR. JENNER: That would be great.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's really on the 19th floor. It's
21 real quick. We could do that sometime today if you're in the
22 region and we have time.

23 DR. JENNER: Great. We'll save you painting us a picture
24 there.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

1 DR. JENNER: Thank you. Let me play -- sometimes we have a
2 physician who's part of the questioning. He's not here today, but
3 I'm going to ask you, if that's okay, just some --

4 MS. WORDEN: A physician, you said --

5 DR. JENNER: Yeah.

6 MS. WORDEN: -- like a doctor? Okay.

7 BY DR. JENNER:

8 Q. Like a doctor, doctor. Well, first of all, how did you feel
9 when you -- health-wise and alertness and things like that, when
10 you went onto your shift?

11 A. I'm okay. I work -- I have a part time job, but I don't do
12 it in the summer. So, I'm just awake as I am now, and I worked
13 all night. I usually sleep 10 hours a day.

14 Q. How is your quality of sleep?

15 A. I wake up and go back to sleep. Go to the bathroom, get a
16 drink. It's not like straight time and get up. You know? But --

17 Q. And what is your normal wake -- your sleep period?

18 A. This is embarrassing. I go home and I go to bed at 6:30, and
19 if I don't have anything to do that day, I'm in and out of bed all
20 day until it's time to get up at 8:00 and go to work. So, that's
21 where the air conditioner is.

22 Q. When do you eat?

23 A. I work.

24 Q. Okay. And on this evening when you -- before you started
25 your shift, did you have -- you feel good?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. And your overall health, how is your overall health?

3 A. I'm not a picture of health or anything, but I mean, I'm
4 okay.

5 Q. Okay. Do you -- I see you have glasses there. Do you -- do
6 you use --

7 A. They're for up close, so I don't normally wear them when I'm
8 working.

9 Q. Okay. Your hearing normal?

10 A. As far as I know.

11 Q. Okay. Do you -- do you have an annual physical exam or every
12 3 years?

13 A. I go to my doctor probably every 3 to 6 months to have blood
14 tests and stuff.

15 Q. Okay. Taking any medications for anything?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Can you discuss those?

18 A. I take Synthroid for a thyroidism. I take Xarelto. They
19 just put me on four new things. Xarelto, lisinopril, and two
20 other ones I can't tell you the names of right now. But they all
21 have to do with either blood pressure, controlling the beat of my
22 heart, cholesterol, and the two are for -- one is for my kidneys
23 to keep -- the lisinopril is for my kidneys to keep the blood
24 pressure down, and I know one is cholesterol. I used to take a
25 water pill, but I don't anymore. I don't know. Doctors just

1 write stuff and you take it, right? But that's all.

2 Q. Okay. And do any of these have side effects?

3 A. No.

4 DR. JENNER: Okay. All right. I'll take my doctor hat off
5 now. So, great. Thank you. Rather than going individually, are
6 there any follow-up from looking around the room?

7 MS. ANGOTTA: I just have one.

8 DR. JENNER: Linda?

9 BY MS. ANGOTTA:

10 Q. Do you ever put the information lights on for slippery rail?

11 A. Not on -- not on Route 100. No.

12 Q. You know, sort of like we have on the Green Line.

13 A. Right. On the Green Line, we have one.

14 Q. You were controlling the Green Line as well --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- in the evening? And do you ever bring in another
17 controller to assist when there's single track to control --

18 A. Do I?

19 Q. No, not -- does your department? When you -- I remember
20 years ago --

21 A. We used to, but now, no.

22 Q. -- the unscheduled one --

23 A. Now, they just have one person on duty weekends and
24 everything.

25 Q. But you had been doing that for 2 weeks now?

1 A. At least. Maybe three.

2 Q. And it really hasn't been much of a difference in your
3 workload?

4 A. No.

5 Q. No? Okay.

6 A. I mean, yeah, but I mean, it's not --

7 Q. I -- well, I know it's slower overnight to begin with.

8 A. -- so much that I'm overwhelmed.

9 Q. But --

10 A. Maybe somebody else might be overwhelmed because I'm such a
11 great controller, you know what I'm saying? But --

12 Q. But you never felt overwhelmed?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I did feel like a one-armed paper hanger in a windstorm
16 though. I did get a lot of phone calls, but I took care of it.

17 Q. So, the information lights were -- they weren't on at all
18 that evening for anything. Correct?

19 A. I don't think so.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. They're on now.

22 MS. ANGOTTA: That's all of the questions.

23 MR. GOOD: I just have one other. During the day and rush
24 hour, is there more than one -- oh, George Good, FTA. During the
25 day and rush hour, is there normally more than one controller, or

1 is still one?

2 MS. WORDEN: There is supposed to be two. Right now there's
3 one because I'm down here.

4 MR. GOOD: Okay. Thank you.

5 BY MR. TORRES:

6 Q. Tomas Torres with the NTSB. Is there anything that could be
7 different that could make it safer or --

8 A. Make what safer?

9 Q. -- or prevent this type of accident? Is there anything --

10 A. I don't know the cause of the accident.

11 Q. So, you wouldn't know any -- have any suggestions as to what,
12 I mean, like --

13 A. If the operator, let's say, had a situation where his car was
14 sliding because of the slippery rail or maybe a defect of the
15 train itself, the cab system wouldn't have stopped him. There's
16 nothing he could've done. So, if he's sliding, I've done that on
17 an LRV, you just slide until you don't slide anymore. I mean,
18 they can maybe raise the rail up so it's uphill.

19 Q. Okay. You say you had a certification? Oh what?

20 A. You get recertified as a controller. So, it's some -- just
21 something. I don't know what it is.

22 Q. Yeah. And you did --

23 A. You don't get a paper or nothing.

24 Q. No.

25 A. They sign your rule book.

- 1 Q. Okay.
- 2 A. Linda knows. She's instructor girl.
- 3 Q. And that happened -- you get recertified every what?
- 4 A. Every year or so, depending on manpower.
- 5 Q. When's the last time a supervisor oversaw your activities?
- 6 You know, see how you were doing?
- 7 A. Me, personally, on my shifts?
- 8 Q. Yeah.
- 9 A. I couldn't tell you.
- 10 Q. I mean, do they supervise you?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. I mean, do they test you to --
- 13 A. No.
- 14 Q. -- see how you're doing? No?
- 15 A. Only when I mess up.
- 16 Q. And can you give an example of that?
- 17 A. Of messing up? It's been a while, other than my attitude. I
- 18 don't usually mess up. I can't even remember the last time I
- 19 messed up.
- 20 Q. About -- what kind of mess up would that be? Or --
- 21 A. Like, many years ago, like I said, I sent a person into
- 22 single track when it was occupied. Geeze. I don't know.
- 23 Q. But other than that, they don't supervise your performance,
- 24 see how you're performing and stuff like that?
- 25 A. No, we don't get evaluations until --

1 Q. You don't get rated?

2 A. -- the end of the year. And nobody's really watched me work
3 because nobody's on my shift. They only go by the sheets, I
4 guess, the sheets. I don't know what they go by. People
5 complain, so I don't know.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Ask my boss. Maybe he knows.

8 Q. Is there anything you want to add?

9 A. No. I probably said too much already.

10 MR. TORRES: Any more questions? I guess nobody has any more
11 questions, so this conclude the interview. Thank you.

12 MS. WORDEN: Thank you.

13 DR. JENNER: Thank you, Rochelle.

14 MS. BONINI: Thank you.

15 MS. WORDEN: Nice meeting you all. Come up and see me
16 anytime.

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 TRAIN CRASH
UPPER DARBY, PENNSYLVANIA
AUGUST 22, 2017
Interview of Rochelle Worden

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA17FR012

PLACE: Philadelphia, PA

DATE: August 23, 2017

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.



Wendi N La Belle
Transcriber