

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

FIRE ABOARD SEPTA TRAIN NEAR THE *

CRUM LYNNE STATION IN RIDLEY PARK, * Accident No.: RRD25FR006

PENNSYLVANIA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025 *

* * * * *

Interview of: THOMAS BOLLING, JR., Engineer
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Tuesday,
July 22, 2025

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL BACHMEIER, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

TODD KRAHOLIK, Railroad Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

RICHARD SHERRY, Investigator-in-Charge
Federal Railroad Administration

DAVID GRAUBARD, Operating Practices Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

MATT POWELL, Assistant Director of Operations
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

SHANDEL WILLIAMS, Assistant Safety Operations Officer
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

CLARENCE HILLIARD, Safety Officer
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

DONALD HILL, Local Chairman, Division 71
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
Representing Mr. Bolling

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:10 a.m.)

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2
3 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay, my name is Mike Bachmeier and I'm the
4 NTSB Investigator-in-Charge for this accident. We are here today
5 on July 22nd (sic) at 11:10 in SEPTA headquarters to conduct an
6 interview with Thomas Bolling, who works for SEPTA. This
7 interview is in conjunction with NTSB's investigation of the
8 accident near Paoli Station. Accident reference number is
9 RRD25FR006. Purpose of the investigation is to increase safety,
10 not to assign fault, blame, or liability.

11 Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go around
12 the table and introduce ourselves. Please spell your last name,
13 who you're representing, and your title. I'd like to remind
14 everyone to speak clearly so we can get an accurate recording.
15 I'll start off and then pass it to my right.

16 Again, my name is Mike Bachmeier, spelling of my last name is
17 B-a-c-h-m-e-i-e-r, and I am the NTSB IIC for this accident.

18 MR. BOLLING: I am Thomas Bolling, Jr., last name's spelled
19 B-o-l-l-i-n-g, I am a locomotive engineer for SEPTA.

20 MR. HILL: My name is Donald Hill, H-i-l-l, General Chairman,
21 Division 71, BLET.

22 MR. POWELL: Matt Powell, P-o-w-e-l-l, Assistant Director of
23 Operations for SEPTA.

24 MS. WILLIAMS: Shandel (ph.) Williams, W-i-l-l-i-a-m-s,
25 Safety Operations Officer.

1 MR. HILLIARD: Clarence Hilliard, H-i-l-l-i-a-r-d, SEPTA
2 safety officer.

3 MR. GRAUBARD: Dave Graubard, Operating Practices inspector
4 with FRA.

5 MR. SHERRY: Richard Sherry, S-h-e-r-r-y, MP&E inspector and
6 IIC on this accident.

7 MR. KRAHOLIK: Todd Kraholik, K-r-a-h-o-l-i-k, I'm with the
8 NTSB, I'm track.

9 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay, thank you.

10 Do we have your permission to record our discussion with you
11 today, Tom?

12 MR. BOLLING: Yes.

13 MR. BACHMEIER: Do you understand the transcripts will be
14 part of the public docket, as such we cannot guarantee any
15 confidentiality?

16 MR. BOLLING: Yes.

17 MR. BACHMEIER: As discussed, you have a representative with
18 you today, Mr. Hill, is that correct?

19 MR. BOLLING: Yes.

20 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay. I would like to ask everyone to
21 clearly announce your name and title before questioning. With
22 that, let's proceed.

23 INTERVIEW OF THOMAS BOLLING, JR.

24 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

25 Q. Tom, can you give us a synopsis of your work experience

1 taking us up to your present job and let us -- and how long you've
2 been in your current position?

3 A. I've been in my current position almost nine years here with
4 SEPTA. I've been in the railroad industry close to 28 years, I
5 started at the CSX as a conductor and then became a locomotive
6 engineer there. Subsequently, I spent a little time working for
7 Watco Corporation in their rail division and then I came to SEPTA.

8 Q. Okay. And your nine years with SEPTA, have they all been
9 with -- as an engineer?

10 A. Well, two years of that I worked as an assistant conductor
11 and then after that, yeah.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. About seven as an engineer.

14 Q. Okay. Let's go back to last Tuesday, you received your 3553
15 at interchange --

16 A. Um-hum, um-hum.

17 Q. -- at Suburban from Will. Can you just kind of go through
18 the -- your job briefing and the handover with him and then taking
19 us up to --

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. -- the subsequent fire at Paoli Station?

22 A. When Will got off the train, we had a conversation about the
23 equipment, he let me know it was a total of six cars, straight
24 air, he said it was straight air, no dynamic brake, he said that
25 it was real slow to take off, so -- took me out -- and he said he

1 reported it to the powers that be before he handed the train off
2 to me. After that, we get on board, you know, I guess my
3 conductor got the same information that I got, we got on board at
4 Suburban, we did our 30th Street stop, I did a running brake test
5 from Suburban to out towards Overbrook, the train seemed to be --
6 it was slow, you know, sluggish getting up there, slow at speed,
7 but we made it up to almost track speed before we made our
8 Overbrook stop. Made our Overbrook stop, came in there, put the
9 air on, you know, let the people off, continued on at a slow rate
10 of speed up to Villanova.

11 When we got to Villanova, we couldn't -- the train had no
12 power, so I was calling my conductor over the radio to see if I
13 could can get a hold of him, I tried to do a no power reset from
14 where I was at. I informed Amtrak Paoli that the train was down,
15 then I went over to SEPTA 6 and let them know that we were having
16 problems with power at that particular point in time.

17 A couple minutes went by, I started walking back. As I'm
18 walking back through the first two cars, my conductor meets me, so
19 we have a discussion on what was going on back there, that we
20 didn't have any power. So he walked back to the head end with me
21 because his radio was unable to transmit the communication to
22 Paoli tower. So we went back up there, we discussed that I was
23 going to man the radio station or the communications and he would
24 walk back and reset or try -- and we briefly went over how to
25 reset the no power reset, so I was basically showing him how to do

1 that, as well. Then he walked back and the whole time I'm in
2 communication with Paoli about what's going on and then he went
3 back, eventually he got back, some people wanted to get off, he
4 was dealing with the passengers, as well, and letting them know
5 what was going on. Then when he got back, I guess he reset a
6 fault back there because we ended up getting power again at some
7 point. I communicated that to Paoli, Paoli said if you have
8 power, take the train west. We continued west until we got to
9 Paoli Station.

10 Once we got to Paoli Station, I couldn't take power again, so
11 I asked my conductor, maybe you need to reset the fault again, go
12 back. He went back and that's when he noticed the smoke. And
13 then from there, he went back, told me there was smoke, I looked
14 out, there's smoke coming out, I told Paoli, Paoli said evacuate
15 the train, I evacuated the train, dropped the pans, got the
16 handbrake on and then, I guess at some point after that, there was
17 a fire.

18 Q. Okay. When you stopped at Villanova --

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. -- did you lose all the power, you didn't have any power at
21 all?

22 A. I didn't have any power to move the train and the train was
23 illuminated and all of the HVAC and --

24 Q. Yeah, you just didn't have no traction power.

25 A. Didn't have no traction power, no.

1 Q. So like even the head -- your lead, I don't even know what
2 number you had on the lead, but that lead stuff wasn't working --

3 A. That lead stuff wasn't working when we -- when it came to
4 when I got it, when I -- when I picked up the train at 30th, it
5 wasn't taking power.

6 Q. Is that because there was no amperage?

7 A. There was no amperage, you know, I couldn't even tell -- I
8 knew that we were putting straight air on, but there was no
9 amperage and there was no dynamic showing on the gauge there.

10 Q. So is that normal? Do you guys -- do you encounter that a
11 lot on the Silverliner IVs?

12 A. Yes. It's nothing that would have alarmed me that this was
13 going to be a problem, when he told me that this is -- there was
14 no power, like, he told me there was no power on the -- you know,
15 it wasn't taking power, so --

16 Q. Yeah. So like from Suburban Station up to Villanova, you
17 were getting up to close to track speed, but even your amperage on
18 your lead car there showed no --

19 A. Yeah, it didn't show any --

20 Q. So you were getting your power from the rear?

21 A. Somewhere other than where I was sitting at.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. So I don't know if it was actually the second set of married
24 pairs or the third.

25 Q. Okay. So that amperage meter, that would be for your whole

1 -- the first two cars because they're a married pair, so your
2 first two cars were not working? Is that kind of how that works?

3 Your --

4 A. Right, right. Yeah.

5 Q. Okay. So dynamic brake, so how do you know the dynamic is
6 working on the cars in the train, is that with that same
7 amperage?

8 A. Yeah, you would know with that, otherwise you would hear the
9 brakes -- like, me, personally, I hear the brakes and I smell
10 them, so I know that we're straight air, you could hear, it's a
11 difference -- for me, it's a different kind of sound that you --
12 because it -- when the dynamic's on, you could see the gauge go up
13 and you could feel it coming, yeah, it's --

14 Q. Now, on your train sets, now, how often do you have dynamics
15 working on a Silverliner IV set?

16 A. You mean --

17 Q. Do you have -- does it normally work or does it normally --
18 do you usually have -- does dynamic usually work on the
19 Silverliner IVs?

20 A. On a percentage, I mean, probably 50 percent, 60 percent of
21 the time. I don't know. I mean, yeah, it works when it's
22 working.

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. I mean, on that particular day, it wasn't working and the
25 engineers here, we learn how to adjust and move trains

1 accordingly, you know.

2 Q. Yeah. And then the fault lights, did you have a fault light?
3 How many fault lights are on a Silverliner IV?

4 A. How many lights is on --

5 Q. Like, fault lights.

6 A. Well, there was one in the cab that was on, so I knew it was
7 a fault somewhere, I didn't walk back and actually look inside the
8 cabinet --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- to see what particular faults that were on.

11 Q. Okay. Do you normally have a fault light on when you get on
12 a Silverliner IV?

13 A. Here lately, I mean, that's been the norm, there's been some
14 type of fault that I've experienced.

15 Q. For the last seven years is it getting worse or is it about
16 the same for the last seven years?

17 A. Oh, it's progressively gotten worse. Yeah, it's worse.

18 Q. Okay. And then is that fault -- and then when he reset it,
19 is that the -- is it in the panel opposite of where you're --
20 where you're at --

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. -- at the control stand?

23 A. Well, yeah, it's a two-part, you have to go in there and hit
24 the little yellow button down the fireman's side, then you have to
25 walk inside the -- in the panel and hit that reset, as well.

1 Q. Okay, okay.

2 A. So that's what I was explaining to the conductor, how to
3 reset it.

4 Q. Okay. And is there any lights that would come on if your
5 brakes were dragging, such as a handbrake, dynamic brake or --

6 A. Well, I mean --

7 Q. -- a train line?

8 A. Well, there's no -- there is a light on if there is a brake,
9 a handbrake light, it's a blue light, so --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- you would see that.

12 Q. Okay. Yeah. So you didn't know how many cars on line had
13 tractive power, you just --

14 A. No.

15 Q. -- knew the first set didn't have tractive power.

16 A. No.

17 Q. So does that -- that gauge, that amperage gauge, that is just
18 for -- if it was a single car, it's just for the single car you're
19 operating.

20 A. Right.

21 Q. It doesn't tell you what the rest -- like, you had three
22 married pairs --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- so that amperage gauge just shows the train you're on, you
25 don't get any information --

1 A. I wouldn't know what was happening beyond.

2 Q. Okay. So the conductor went back and he reset and do you
3 know how many times he had to reset or --

4 A. I have no idea. He didn't communicate that with me, so --

5 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay. Thank you. I'll pass it off to Matt.

6 BY MR. POWELL:

7 Q. Matt Powell. Tom, can you talk about -- so you guys left
8 Villanova and you made every station stop according to your
9 schedule out to Paoli, correct?

10 A. Yes, until we got up -- up until Paoli and we made Paoli.

11 Q. Okay. And then to your knowledge, did you have passengers
12 for each station or was it intermittent? I know you kind of --

13 A. I don't know, I don't know.

14 Q. And then your operations out to Paoli interlocking, did you
15 -- were you held for any trains, any westbound trains?

16 A. Well, what happened is -- yeah, well, an Amtrak train passed
17 us prior to us getting into Paoli, he went around us and at -- and
18 at the signal, I thought they -- because he told me we may be
19 waiting for that Amtrak train because he was right in front of us
20 in the station and prior to us going into the station, he went
21 right around me, crossed over and went up 4 track and into the
22 station.

23 Q. You just referenced he, is that the Paoli tower, is that what
24 you're talking about as he?

25 A. Yes -- well, yeah, Paoli tower, he told -- Paoli tower told

1 me that we possibly would be waiting on him to clear the station.

2 Q. All right, so you're coming towards Paoli, you get a normal
3 cab signal progression, probably went from clear to approach
4 medium (ph.) down to --

5 A. Right, to approach, yeah --

6 Q. -- down to restriction.

7 A. -- to resection.

8 Q. So you made your station stop at Daylesford and you
9 discharged passengers, you believe? Well, you made a station
10 stop.

11 A. We made a station stop there, I don't know who got off or
12 not.

13 Q. By the time you made the station stop at Daylesford, were you
14 guys restricting already?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. No.

18 Q. So departing Daylesford, you came up on the automatic --

19 A. Yeah, the automatic and then it was like a -- I'm going to
20 say it was an approach and then it dropped down to restricted
21 right before we got to Paoli, then it popped back up as he cleared
22 Paoli Station. As the Amtrak train cleared Paoli, he's in and
23 out, so I'm still -- I'm creeping up --

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. -- under the restricting, but then it pops up.

1 Q. So you never came to a full stop --

2 A. No, no.

3 Q. -- before reaching the stop signal displayed at Paoli home?

4 A. No, no.

5 Q. Yeah, home signal, okay. That westbound Amtrak train, did
6 they report anything to you?

7 A. No.

8 MR. POWELL: Okay. All right, no further questions.

9 BY MS. WILLIAMS:

10 Q. Okay, Shandel Williams. Hey, Tom.

11 A. Hey, Shand.

12 Q. All right. So first time you guys had something was at
13 Villanova when you lost power --

14 A. That is correct.

15 Q. -- and you had an issue getting up the hill?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So whatever, it pegged (ph.) at something to get the train
18 moving, whatever he reset --

19 A. Right.

20 Q. -- is that correct --

21 A. Right.

22 Q. -- and you don't know where it was. How was the train
23 before or in between Nova and Paoli?

24 A. It was performing pretty much like it was, it was just slow,
25 it was just -- it was real slow getting up to speed, but like I

1 said, a couple of those stops where you had a little bit of
2 distance, it would get up to speed, sort of, you know, like, I
3 won't say it got up to track speed, but it got past 20.

4 Q. Gotcha, yeah, because --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- the stops are relatively close.

7 A. Right. And then if it wasn't on that grade, so the grade
8 kind of kept us at 20 and going, I don't know how many traction --
9 how many traction motors that we had on line at that particular
10 time, but going up that grade, you know, it put a strain on
11 whatever was going on back there, so that's all I know.

12 Q. Gotcha. And when you were talking to Paoli --

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. -- and you referenced -- what were you saying, the train
15 wasn't taking power or --

16 A. Well, when -- you mean at Villanova?

17 Q. Yes, I'm sorry, at Villanova, when you first started talking
18 to --

19 A. Okay, the train, when I first started talking, it wouldn't
20 take power at all.

21 Q. Okay. And you --

22 A. I had no power, so every time I released the brakes, we were
23 drifting backwards.

24 Q. Roger, okay.

25 A. Yeah, we were drifting east.

1 Q. And when it was conveyed to Paoli, you said power and not
2 traction power, did you? I mean --

3 A. Yeah, it -- yeah, this guy said we don't have -- I didn't say
4 -- well, yeah, I didn't say traction power because I didn't think
5 that I needed to.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. I thought that he would've understood --

8 Q. He understood.

9 A. -- that we didn't -- like the power I was talking about was
10 not, like, powering the train, because he asked and I said we got
11 power on the train, but we don't have the power to move.

12 Q. Okay. And then -- so you guys got up to Paoli, how long do
13 you think you were sitting in the station before your conductor
14 noticed the smoke, do you have any idea of what time that was?

15 A. I'm going to say -- we let people off, so probably two
16 minutes, three minutes, by the time it took him to walk back there
17 because I didn't have any traction power at that time and I
18 relayed that to -- when we pulled into Paoli Station and we let
19 the passengers off and he gave me two to go, we started drifting
20 back and I said I don't have any power again, which is the
21 traction power, and I relayed that to Paoli and then I said to my
22 conductor, you might want to go back there and maybe reset
23 whatever you did before.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And then when he walked back there, he said it was smoke.

1 Q. Gotcha. And at Paoli, did you guys empty out the train, were
2 there no more passengers once you did your station work?

3 A. It was four -- it was two passengers in each car as one -- I
4 had two to go, is what I was told, so we cleared out after we
5 realized that the rear of the train was smoking.

6 Q. Gotcha. And when you were at Paoli, did you end up seeing a
7 brake light?

8 A. Did I see a brake light?

9 Q. Um-hum. Or anything that would indicate that your handbrake
10 was on in the consist?

11 A. Well, the brake light, you're talking about the little blue
12 thing? The little blue light was on, right, it was on.

13 Q. From when?

14 A. It was on, it was on when I noticed it right there at Paoli,
15 because I kind of joked about it, but it wasn't on the whole --
16 like, I don't know if somebody put it on or not.

17 Q. Right, maybe like when you got the train at Suburban the blue
18 light wasn't on.

19 A. It wasn't on, no.

20 Q. Right, right, that's what I'm just saying.

21 A. Right, right. Right, right.

22 Q. Okay, so at some point, possibly at Paoli, is when you
23 noticed that the blue light was on.

24 A. Yeah, yeah.

25 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay, okay. And that's all I have.

1 BY MR. HILLIARD:

2 Q. Clarence Hilliard, Assistant Safety.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. At Villanova, when you reported that you didn't have power,
5 did you get any instructions from Paoli on what to do or --

6 A. Well, we automatically, as engineers and conductors, we go in
7 to automatically start to troubleshoot the problem right there,
8 you know what I mean? So we went back and initially it was just
9 like, you know, you got the fault, I'm trying to clear the fault
10 to get the no power reset, you walk through the consist and you go
11 to the ones that are all lit up and at some point, you'll go
12 through the ones that clear the fault and maybe if you have luck
13 with that, then you can proceed.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And that's what happened, I mean, there was no need to call
16 anybody else yet because it wasn't -- you know, we hadn't even
17 tried to troubleshoot ourselves.

18 Q. Understood. Do you know about how long that troubleshooting
19 process was before you got moving there?

20 A. Before we got moving?

21 Q. And pulled over, yes.

22 A. Fifteen, twenty minutes, maybe.

23 Q. And then --

24 A. So we -- excuse me, in the midst of that, the physical -- we
25 were -- we were trying to -- we were having a job briefing on what

1 we were going to do with the passengers, we were trying to
2 construct a good plan of operation, who's going to man the radio,
3 his radio isn't working, we got two PAs with bell (ph.) radios, so
4 I can't be on three lines or talk to SEPTA and Amtrak at the same
5 time because we only have one redundant means of communication.
6 So that being said, he walked back and then he finally did what --
7 and the whole time I'm talking to Paoli because I'm trying to keep
8 him abreast of what's going on and I got people, you know,
9 passengers, trying to figure out what they were going to do, as
10 well, so I mean, it took probably about -- and then my conductor,
11 he's -- you know, he's a little challenged walking, so it takes
12 him a little while to get back there, so that being the case, it
13 probably took him about 20 minutes.

14 Once he got that, we relayed to Paoli again that we have
15 power, we have traction power, I didn't say traction power, but we
16 had power, we can move and he said okay, west. We took it west.

17 Q. And then get to Paoli, you said the conductor noticed smoke
18 in the rear cars.

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. Did you take any immediate actions after hearing that? What
21 were your immediate actions that day?

22 A. Well, I mean -- well, real time, me, Paoli, we're here and
23 the radio was coming in and out at -- so my radio was coming in
24 and out. So immediately, when he said smoke, the radio went off,
25 then it came back in, then I went out because I couldn't hear, I

1 didn't know where he was at, so I came back out to get on the
2 radio to try to talk to Paoli and Paoli, when it came back in, he
3 said, "Am I hearing that correctly, there's smoke?" I said,
4 "Yeah, smoke out there, real bad" and then he said, "Okay, get all
5 the passengers off." Dropped the pan and that was it, tied the
6 handbrakes and we waited. He said he had emergency personnel
7 coming, so --

8 Q. Okay. So at any point was there an emergency transmission
9 over the radio?

10 A. No.

11 Q. And --

12 A. Because when we initially got there, there wasn't -- it
13 wasn't -- it wasn't an apparent emergency, we just didn't have any
14 power, so when he said that the emergency personnel was coming,
15 right, in my mind that was the declare of emergency.

16 Q. Okay. And --

17 A. And in my thinking at that particular point is to get myself
18 in safety, I'm going to tie the handbrake down, I'm going to drop
19 the pan and I'm going to get somewhere where I am safe, so --

20 MR. HILLIARD: Okay. That's all I had, thank you.

21 BY MR. GRAUBARD:

22 Q. Dave Graubard, FRA.

23 A. Hey, David.

24 Q. You get to Paoli, smoke, you're talking to the dispatcher,
25 you drop the pans, right?

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. Did you ever notice, did the radio drop out, too, when you
3 dropped your pans or did that stay live?

4 A. It was like maybe in and out for a second or so.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So it was like -- like -- was the -- so you said when I
7 dropped the pan, was the radio still active?

8 Q. Correct.

9 A. When I dropped the pan, I was -- after I dropped the pan, I
10 went outside of the --

11 Q. Gotcha.

12 A. Yeah. I was not in there after I dropped the pan, I got off
13 and was out by the elevator.

14 (Laughter.)

15 BY MR. GRAUBARD:

16 Q. Gotcha. All right. And then -- so you pulled into Paoli,
17 you had no power, no traction power, right?

18 A. Well, when we pulled into Paoli, we had power. Something
19 happened after we dropped the passengers off and he gave me two to
20 go and I tried to take power, traction power, and I didn't have
21 any traction power.

22 Q. In that time between you arriving at the station and trying
23 to get -- to move the train again, did you notice anything -- I
24 mean, was there smoke, was there things crackling, I mean,
25 anything?

1 A. I didn't notice anything.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. He didn't notice anything until he walked back there, I --
4 because he was closer to the rear than I, I guess, from my
5 opinion, but he would've probably smelled something before I did.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And when we left Villanova, I had suggested that he stay back
8 there because of the problem existing. So I don't know, I don't
9 know what went on, I just made my suggestions and he had just
10 smoke, the smoke, I don't --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I have no idea.

13 Q. How many times did he reset the --

14 A. I have no idea. I only know of one, only of the one time
15 that he reset the power and that was at Villanova when we didn't
16 have any traction power.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I mean, other than that, we stopped at Villanova, two at
19 Villanova and then we -- at Paoli, so those were the two lines of
20 demarcation, those two events, one at Paoli and one at Villanova
21 and we wouldn't have been able to get from Villanova to Paoli if
22 he didn't reset, so I only know of one time that he reset it.

23 MR. GRAUBARD: Thank you, that's all I have.

24 BY MR. SHERRY:

25 Q. Rick Sherry, FRA.

1 A. Hey, Rick.

2 Q. Amount of crew members, just yourself and the conductor, no
3 assistant conductor?

4 A. No, it was me, we had two assistant conductors and the
5 conductor.

6 Q. Okay, so there was four, total.

7 A. It was four, total.

8 Q. And when you say your conductor says two to go, two more
9 stops or two more passengers?

10 A. No, it's like two on the buzzer, it's like he doesn't say two
11 to go, he gives you two with the buzzer and that's the signal for
12 us to move the train.

13 Q. Oh. Two hits on the buzzer means go.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. You don't know if you have any more passengers during
16 a stop, that just -- all that means is go?

17 A. It just mean to go to the next stop and we -- and on that
18 train, after -- well, I don't know where -- but if we were at
19 Paoli, we would've had one more stop into --

20 Q. Before Frazer?

21 A. Into Frazer, yes.

22 Q. Okay. So at that time you -- would he ever tell you to go
23 past and go right to Frazer and not stop at that next stop?

24 A. Well, no, he would never tell me that. If it's a station
25 stop that we're required to stop at, then we're going to stop

1 there. The only one that could tell -- would've been able to tell
2 us that would've been Amtrak. Paoli, Paoli, through his dispatch,
3 if they wanted us to get -- evacuate everybody and take the train
4 straight into Frazer, we could've done that, so --

5 Q. All right. Let me back up to the Villanova stop --

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. -- where you had no traction power, correct?

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. Did you feel that you had no power, the battery backup came
10 on or was it just traction power?

11 A. It was just traction power.

12 Q. Just traction.

13 A. The power for the train remained on the whole time, it was
14 just the traction, I could not --

15 Q. Okay. When you felt it rolling back, do you think at that
16 time one of your three conductors would've tied a handbrake on?

17 A. No, because they didn't -- I don't -- how am I going to
18 phrase this? The only person that knew the train was going
19 backwards was probably me. I mean, I'm just going to be honest
20 with you.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So as far as anybody putting brakes on, no, they wouldn't
23 have put a brake on because they didn't even know what was going
24 on until I walked through, until I actually got up and started
25 troubleshooting --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- and I was looking for it because I couldn't get -- I
3 couldn't get my conductor on the radio, so I started walking back
4 to kind of tell him what was going on.

5 Q. You made a comment that you had shown him how to do some
6 reset faults, was this fairly a rookie crew that you had with you?

7 A. No, but sometimes, like, I won't -- well, I know that the two
8 PAs were pretty much new, so they wouldn't have any verse in
9 trying to reset anything, anyway, because they're not -- they're
10 not qualified on resetting any faults.

11 Sometimes, just in our job briefing or trying to communicate
12 amongst each other sometimes, because you don't do this all the
13 time and they're conductors, you show them, you show them, you
14 know, this -- because they may have forgotten, you know, I don't
15 know the last time you had to reset something, this is -- this is
16 what I do with everybody, you know, make sure that they know what
17 they're doing because I can't be everywhere.

18 Q. Did you notice your blue brake light on at Villanova or not
19 until you got to Paoli?

20 A. No, I didn't see any light on at Villanova.

21 Q. Just Paoli?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And I don't know if this would be a question for you or the
24 conductor, you said you had four passengers on at Villanova or at
25 Paoli?

1 A. Well, what I was told after the fact is there was -- at --
2 you said at Villanova or Paoli?

3 Q. You tell me.

4 A. At Paoli, what I was told is there was two passengers, one in
5 each car, or two -- there were four passengers, two in each car.

6 Q. Okay. So four passengers --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- at Paoli.

9 A. Right.

10 MR. SHERRY: That's all I have right now.

11 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

12 Q. Todd Kraholik with the NTSB.

13 A. All right, Todd. See, I remembered.

14 (Laughter.)

15 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

16 Q. So I got questions all over the place, but did you hear an
17 explosion that night --

18 A. I don't know if it was an explosion, right, I heard a loud
19 bang, right, and that's when I'm out. Yeah.

20 Q. So this was --

21 (Laughter.)

22 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

23 Q. Was the pantograph down when you heard the bang? Or you
24 heard it and then you dropped it or can you remember?

25 A. Probably heard it and dropped, probably, I'm thinking. It

1 was almost simultaneous, though, but it was like the bang, boom,
2 boom or whatever.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Because at the same time, we're talking and it's still not
5 declared anything, but the brakes are smoking back -- I don't know
6 if it's the brakes smoking, I don't know what's smoking back
7 there, right, but I know we were using straight air and at that
8 particular time I'm still asking Paoli tower, do you want me to
9 drop the pan, you know what I mean, because there's smoke and he's
10 like, leave it up, right. Then when I heard, I think it was the
11 -- it was the bang and then, yeah, then I dropped.

12 Q. Okay. So when you're -- when you go over to Amtrak line, you
13 talk to Amtrak's dispatcher for all your movements?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And then does SEPTA -- you said at some point you talked to
16 -- to 6, I think you said.

17 A. Well, yeah, but if you're delayed or anything is going on at
18 SEPTA -- on the Amtrak line that delays your train, then you have
19 to notify SEPTA 6 dispatcher of your delay and what's going on.

20 Q. And you do that via radio?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Same channel as Amtrak or do you have to flip channels?

23 A. No, you flip channels, it's two different -- they're on two
24 different channels.

25 Q. Gotcha, okay. So if you get delayed anytime en route, then

1 you let SEPTA 6 know --

2 A. Right.

3 Q. -- what's going on.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. So when you have a fault light on, my understanding, and I
6 could be way off on this, doesn't necessarily mean you don't have
7 power, right, like when you're on Amtrak --

8 A. Right.

9 Q. -- at Villanova, you -- you couldn't do anything.

10 A. Right.

11 Q. My understanding, that's not -- is that a common problem
12 where you don't have any kind of power like that?

13 A. What do you mean, like traction power?

14 Q. Yeah, traction, not physical power, as you told the
15 dispatcher, power, like you -- yeah, traction power, is that a
16 common thing to lose traction power like that?

17 A. I mean, the fault light could be on and one of the traction
18 motors could be down, I mean -- I mean, it could happen, yeah.

19 Q. But is it common that you start -- you lose power so much
20 that you start rolling backwards, is that common?

21 A. Is it common? I don't know. I mean, it doesn't happen every
22 day, but it happens.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. It's not -- I don't know, like if you -- to me, when you say
25 common, this is an occurrence that happens over and over daily,

1 no --

2 Q. Right.

3 A. -- that is not common, but it has happened.

4 Q. Right. So the point I'm trying to make is you have an
5 uncommon problem or not -- something that doesn't happen every
6 day, you lose total power at Villanova, but Amtrak still sends you
7 to finish your route, would you --

8 A. I wouldn't --

9 Q. Would you take exception to that or you think that's normal,
10 hey, we got power back, now let's try and make this run, like does
11 that seem --

12 A. Well, that would be above me to make that decision on whether
13 to go west or not.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. But that was his choice. I gave him the information that was
16 given to me and he said okay to take it west.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. At that point I'm not back there, so I don't know how many --
19 I don't know -- I don't know if we got two traction motors on, one
20 traction motor, I don't know.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. I know that we have power and we were sitting on his railroad
23 and he wanted us off, so he said go west and what I did was go
24 west.

25 Q. Right, that was going to be my next thing, he -- you're on

1 his line, he wants you off, he wants SEPTA off his line, so he
2 wants you to move whatever you can do to get off his -- is that
3 your understanding of it?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Right. And I don't want to put words in your mouth here, but
6 it sounds like if it wasn't for you, the conductors wouldn't
7 necessarily know exactly what to do. Would that be an accurate
8 statement?

9 A. I wouldn't say that was an accurate assessment, I know that
10 the assistant conductors have no knowledge of how to reset. What
11 I try to do with my crew is to refresh, because sometimes you
12 don't -- if he hasn't worked in a yard and he hasn't done this, he
13 may not know, I'm just trying to help and assure that he knows
14 what -- what I know.

15 Q. Right. So it wouldn't be a training issue, you're just
16 trying to help them.

17 A. Yeah, I'm just trying to help them.

18 Q. I gotcha, okay.

19 A. You know, if I'm -- if I see something that I'm more
20 experienced at, I would help the guys out, you know, instead of us
21 sitting here and not --

22 Q. Right.

23 A. -- with them being stuck in the water.

24 Q. Gotcha, gotcha, okay. And then if there's a new policy or
25 procedure at SEPTA, how do you hear about it, how do you know

1 about it?

2 A. How do we hear and know about it? We get division notices of
3 this or the notice or bulletin.

4 Q. And how do you get that bulletin?

5 A. Paper, tablet.

6 Q. Okay. So either/or, you would --

7 A. Either/or.

8 Q. Or both, if you wanted both.

9 A. Yeah. Me, personally, I like to get the paper copy because I
10 have something to reference, so I could look at it right away.

11 Q. When you pick that paper copy up, does anybody talk to you
12 about anything in that paper stack you got?

13 A. Do they -- do they talk to us? I mean, sometimes, yeah.

14 Q. When you say sometimes, like --

15 A. I mean, it's only like -- you know, like, they're limited in
16 staff, too, so I mean, you may not see them all the time to
17 actually go over or review a rule or a new policy change every
18 time.

19 Q. Right, so -- so your understanding, if a policy changed, it
20 would be in that bulletin and it's strictly up to you to know it
21 and find it and act on it.

22 A. Pretty much, yeah.

23 Q. So there were two previous fires here, did you know that?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Are you aware of any procedure changing from those two fires?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Gotcha. Do you see managers, do they come talk to you
3 periodically, do they test you on rules or anything like that?

4 A. I do see the managers, yeah, I see them all the time.

5 Q. Gotcha.

6 A. Well, this purpose, you're talking about the rules guys or
7 the roadies or --

8 A. Whoever would -- if you're supposed to have safety glasses on
9 and you don't, somebody would come talk to you and --

10 A. Okay, right, right.

11 Q. Do you see that manager?

12 A. Yeah, I see the -- I see -- I see those guys quite often,
13 yeah, yeah.

14 Q. Gotcha, I gotcha. And just to confirm, mechanical didn't
15 come out at any point in time on your run, correct?

16 A. Well, no. When we started out at the beginning of the run, I
17 was told that they did, but I -- like I said, that was before I --
18 you know, the train got to me.

19 Q. So you were under the understanding that mechanical looked at
20 the train.

21 A. And they were -- yes. This is what I was told, that it was
22 reported and they looked at it.

23 Q. Gotcha, okay.

24 A. I don't know if that -- you know, that was misinformation or
25 stuff, that was under the impression that I had in my head because

1 when I called over to SEPTA 6, I said do you guys know about this,
2 you know, that was one of the things that I said, if you pull the
3 tapes out, that's what I said.

4 Q. What did they say when you said that?

5 A. They said this is the first I'm hearing about it.

6 Q. So just because I don't know --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- how everything works, would SEPTA 6 be a dispatcher or
9 would that be like a chief dispatcher or STO? Who answers that,
10 who would that be?

11 A. I guess that's who we're to report to if there's any problem.
12 Now, if we're on the SEPTA side, you would report to the
13 dispatcher that's -- that you're -- whatever territory you're
14 working under.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. So I don't know if when they came down, they did it to 3 desk
17 or 4 desk or whoever, but it was reported and somebody knew about
18 it and I don't know if that message was relayed to him, which
19 means he -- that was the first he was hearing about it when I
20 called, I don't know.

21 Q. Right.

22 A. I don't know what happens up there once it's --

23 Q. But you don't know who that is. Is that a dispatcher or STO
24 or --

25 A. Who? SEPTA 6?

1 Q. SEPTA 6, yeah.

2 A. Is this somebody with the dispatcher?

3 Q. Right.

4 A. The STO is right there, I guess, I don't know how that
5 hierarchy is up there.

6 Q. I gotcha. And when you -- when are you supposed to report
7 problems to -- not delays, I'm not talking about delays, I'm
8 talking about problems with your equipment, when are you supposed
9 to report those?

10 A. Real time, when it happens.

11 Q. So do you report all -- like, if you got a sluggish train, do
12 you report that to the dispatcher?

13 A. Do I? I would if I wasn't told it was already reported.

14 Q. So you -- okay.

15 A. Because I think that the powers that be would already be
16 aware of it if it's already been reported.

17 Q. Right, right.

18 A. So if I got on it and for me, it wasn't sluggish when I first
19 got on it.

20 Q. Right, right. Yeah --

21 A. Yeah, so --

22 Q. On a completely -- let's say you got a -- you got a piece of
23 equipment out of the -- let's just say you got it out of the yard
24 or whatever.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. You're the first one on it.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. If you're going and it's acting sluggish, struggling to get
4 up to track speed --

5 A. Right.

6 Q. -- would you report that to --

7 A. Oh, absolutely.

8 Q. So you report anything like that to the dispatcher.

9 A. Yeah, I would -- whatever, this is about your territory, then
10 I'm letting them know that we -- we're not, you know, dynamic's --
11 you know, it was straight air, we report all that.

12 Q. And what is the general feedback you get when you do that
13 kind of stuff, do they take it serious, do you think? What do you
14 think on that?

15 A. I mean, most of the time it's like -- well, it's like they're
16 pacifying you, okay, and we'll report that. Okay, okay, report
17 it. You know, they tell you write up an MP-11.

18 Q. Do you ever hear any feedback from when you report stuff
19 to --

20 A. No.

21 Q. So if you have sluggish power and you report it to the
22 dispatcher, would you expect mechanical to come look at it at that
23 point? When do you think, when should mechanical come out? Or
24 what's your understanding of when --

25 A. I would think that they would come out at the closest

1 forward-facing repair facility, that would be the next -- you
2 know, wherever -- so if we're going towards Wayne Junction, it
3 would be at Roberts, you know, or if we were going towards south,
4 it would be out of Powelton.

5 Q. And that's for anything that you called in. So if you called
6 in sluggish power, you would expect mechanical to get on --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- and look at it at the next --

9 A. I would.

10 Q. Does that happen?

11 A. Sometimes.

12 Q. Give me a percentage, what would you guess it at? Twenty
13 percent, fifty percent?

14 A. Thirty, thirty-five.

15 MR. KRAHOLIK: Gotcha, right. I don't have any more
16 questions, thank you.

17 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

18 Q. Okay. Going back, is this your regular job? Are you on this
19 job?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. So is that --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- your regular conductor or was he --

24 A. Yes, that's my regular conductor.

25 Q. So regular job with the regular conductor.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Then do you normally have two assistant conductors or --

3 A. It's been hit or miss, sometimes it's just the one, but that
4 -- or that day he had a --

5 Q. Trainee?

6 A. No, he had somebody assigned with him, so they assigned
7 another PA to him for the day.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. So that was your -- this is your regular job, regular --

11 A. Yeah, regular job, regular conductor and it was out of the
12 ordinary for us to have six cars.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. So I don't know if that was -- there was some other --

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. -- preexisting problem with the equipment because normally we
17 have four cars every night.

18 Q. Normally four cars and that's your run, normally, you --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- go up to -- take it up to Amtrak, up that way and --

21 A. Yeah, yeah.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And that's our -- that particular job, 3553, is our go-home
24 train, so it's the last train for the night, so --

25 Q. And that's kind of why you knew to help that conductor out

1 because you had --

2 A. We're good friends.

3 Q. -- he had -- he hadn't been -- he hadn't had --

4 A. Well, yes.

5 Q. -- reset the power recently, so --

6 A. No.

7 Q. -- you just wanted to --

8 A. Absolutely, he's my friend, you know what I mean? He's a
9 good guy, so I mean, we talk.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. Yeah.

12 MR. BACHMEIER: Appreciate that.

13 Matt.

14 BY MR. POWELL:

15 Q. Matt Powell. Tom, so going from Suburban to -- up to
16 Villanova, besides -- but you said you kind of had regular
17 acceleration, right, it moved slow --

18 A. No, I mean, it was -- a little bit, you could -- you know,
19 it's kind of flat, it was, you know, leveled out pretty much and
20 you could get the momentum going, it was -- yeah, I was going
21 pretty -- I was going at a pretty good clip.

22 Q. And then coming into stations you didn't feel anything
23 abnormal or nothing, nothing slamming you back, it didn't feel
24 like something was bumping you around, smooth stops --

25 A. No, no.

1 Q. -- moving out, get your stop bumps and --

2 A. I mean, yeah, I was definitely able to smooth it up, but I
3 think that that's -- you know, I pride myself on being able to
4 make it in adverse conditions with these -- this equipment, yeah.
5 So I didn't -- it was nothing, but it was just like straight air,
6 you just had to, you know -- and that's it to get wherever you got
7 to get and make sure the people get off safely.

8 Q. Yeah, I want to talk, so coming -- coming towards Paoli, you
9 got --

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. -- a stop signal on 4 track at Paoli, so you're coming in,
12 you're getting cab signal changes, you kind of said you were
13 anticipating them, more or less. So did you have to suppress
14 anything, did you ever go into suppression --

15 A. No.

16 Q. -- coming in?

17 A. No.

18 Q. And then when you got that restricted, you never had to
19 suppress your brake system?

20 A. No, no.

21 Q. You just had your speed down --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- before the cab signal? Okay.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And then one more thing, Tom, so going back to your job

1 briefing there at Suburban, I don't know if I heard you right, but
2 you kind of -- your assumption was that the train had been
3 inspected previously or had met mechanics based on what was told
4 you?

5 A. That's what -- yeah, that's what -- that was what was told to
6 me, you know what I mean, that they -- it was reported and maybe I
7 took -- I read too much into it, but he said it was -- they -- it
8 was reported.

9 Q. So he never said anything, hey, it was reported, we stopped,
10 there was a hole in the fence or --

11 A. Well, he didn't say that, I mean, he didn't say that, but I
12 think that somewhere along the line it was Hank told me or
13 somebody said that that's what happened.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So I don't know, but I know that when he told me it was
16 reported, it was -- to me, in my mind, it's reported and they
17 would talk to -- that's what I thought, so I didn't think anything
18 of it for me to have to call anybody because he already did it.

19 Q. And then when the train came into Suburban, your call was on
20 time, was it close to schedule or was it wildly (ph.) --

21 A. It was late because it wasn't able to maintain track speed,
22 so they were -- I'm going to say seven, eight, maybe ten minutes
23 late, something like that.

24 Q. And was that -- was that reason for delay conveyed as
25 equipment issues from Will?

1 A. Did Will tell me that?

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Hey, we're seven down, you know --

5 A. Yeah. Well, he was like, it's slow, so yeah.

6 Q. But there was never a hey, we're seven minutes down and three
7 stops and then mechanics anywhere.

8 A. I don't recall that part, no, but -- yeah.

9 MR. POWELL: That's all I got right now.

10 MR. BOLLING: Yeah.

11 MR. POWELL: Yeah, thank you.

12 BY MS. WILLIAMS:

13 Q. Shandel Williams.

14 A. Hey.

15 Q. So going off (indiscernible), we know there's a lot of
16 (indiscernible) in that schedule coming through West Trenton,
17 right --

18 A. Right.

19 Q. -- so for a train to be down eight, ten minutes, that's --
20 that would be reflective, significant, knowing how fast you were
21 able to go?

22 A. Right.

23 Q. Okay. The other thing to do with the handbrake, like, at
24 Paoli, is it possible that maybe one of the PAs or the conductor
25 put the handbrake on because of the issues that were going on at

1 the platform?

2 A. It could've.

3 Q. Because you didn't --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. You didn't see that light before Paoli, correct?

6 A. No. It could have, I mean -- I mean, the one guy, he's like
7 super brand new, so I don't know --

8 Q. Right.

9 A. -- if he's not -- yeah, I don't --

10 Q. I mean, that makes sense, you know, on the main --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Right, okay.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And then the other thing was -- it was something about the
15 cars, yeah, you touched on that, you normally only have four
16 cars --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- and today -- or on that day you had six, which is
19 abnormal.

20 A. Right, right.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I didn't want to assume that them adding cars was because of,
23 you know, the bearing of bad cars. To me --

24 Q. Is that something that you've experienced before, though? I
25 mean --

1 A. Well, they will, they will put a -- they will do that, I
2 mean, I've experienced where there's a bad car in the middle or
3 something like that. I don't like to speculate, you know. We had
4 the ongoing joke of Hank was mad because it was six cars, but I
5 was like, well, what does it matter to you, you're not the one
6 that has to walk, I have to walk it from the other end and he's
7 not, so we had that little joke, but other than that, I don't
8 think we --

9 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay, no other questions.

10 MR. BACHMEIER: Clarence?

11 MR. BACHMEIER: David?

12 BY MR. GRAUBARD:

13 Q. Dave Graubard, FRA. Is there any kind of report that you
14 have to fill out at the end of your shift, that just speaks to the
15 condition that you were working, any issues, you know --

16 A. A report for -- no. I mean, I don't -- because the
17 MP-11 is just about -- no, that is not a report that you fill out
18 that actually tells you -- yeah, the MP-11 is about anything that
19 would've been -- that went wrong or what's wrong with the
20 equipment.

21 Q. So that MP-11, the only time you fill out one of those is if
22 you have something to report?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. There is no MP-11 -- is it safe to -- the assumption would be
25 okay, there's no issues with the equipment, is that what,

1 whoever's looking at the MP-11s, they're looking for?

2 A. Yeah, well, I mean, I guess you could assume that. I mean, a
3 lot of times like, if you don't have an MP-11 on your train,
4 you'll give it to the dispatcher and the dispatcher will say that
5 they're going to turn it in and then sometimes if I get the train
6 and I bring it into the yard, I may tell the yardmaster and bring
7 it to his attention that there's something wrong with this
8 equipment. But if you don't have the MP-11 on -- on the
9 equipment, you know, you try to pass it on the best you could to
10 the next person that's in charge.

11 Q. Who usually does the calendar day inspections on that
12 equipment?

13 A. Who does the calendar day inspections? The mechanic, the --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- mechanics, yeah.

16 Q. So you report, get on the train and it's already been
17 inspected, that's the usual --

18 A. What, the --

19 Q. The calendar day inspection, it's already done?

20 A. It's already done when you get on a train, yeah.

21 Q. Okay. And one more question. So when you experience dynamic
22 brake issues, have you ever tagged one, do they give you defect
23 tags to report inoperative dynamic brake or anything like that?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah.

2 MR. GRAUBARD: That's all I have.

3 BY MR. SHERRY:

4 Q. Rick Sherry, FRA. Have you ever filled out an MP-11 on your
5 tablet and were aware that you can do that on your tablet?

6 A. No and no. So I've never filled out an MP-11 on the tablet
7 and no, I wasn't aware. I just saw the other day, I'm aware now,
8 I mean, just like looking recently that I saw it on there, the
9 little -- the little form or the little link.

10 Q. But you never knew that before, that you could do that on a
11 tablet, correct?

12 A. No.

13 Q. When the smoke occurred at the platform there, is it your job
14 or the conductor's job to do a head count of all four crew
15 members, that all guys all got off that train?

16 A. Who's job is it? I guess -- I don't know.

17 Q. Just, it's everybody for himself?

18 A. No, it's not everybody for himself, I mean, we can see right
19 on the platform who's there and then like, I didn't -- we didn't
20 specifically say -- because like you said, the circumstances was
21 not declared an emergency, so I could actually see everybody.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And as far as after the personnel, the emergency personnel
24 got there, we all sat in a group so we knew we were all -- so
25 nobody had the role of saying okay, you're going to count this

1 person to see if everybody's here.

2 Q. So you guys huddled up afterwards, all four of you and --

3 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

4 Q. -- everybody was all right?

5 A. Yeah, we were all sitting there together, yeah.

6 Q. Everybody was all right?

7 A. Every -- well. Everybody was all right, they appeared to be
8 all right.

9 Q. You guys were talking about the incident, chitchatting or
10 anything like that, everybody seemed fine, correct?

11 A. I wasn't talking, I was looking over there to make sure that
12 I was okay, I'm like --

13 (Laughter.)

14 MR. BOLLING: I was hey, what's going on. But what they were
15 saying, I don't know what they was talking about. Actually, I was
16 trying to keep my eye on the smoke and make sure it wasn't coming
17 in my direction. That's what I was doing. Yeah, we were in a
18 huddle together as far as chitchatting --

19 BY MR. SHERRY:

20 Q. Did those four passengers come towards you guys, as well?

21 A. At that particular point, I thought they were off because I
22 wasn't -- like, I was -- I guess they got them off because they
23 were doing some squabbling back there, the conductors and the
24 assistant, I don't know, but I was looking to tie the handbrake
25 going in. I guess they were already gone, because I didn't see

1 any passengers at that point, I thought that they already had
2 left.

3 Q. Left the station or --

4 A. Yeah, they were gone.

5 Q. So you're just responsible for the head end handbrake or --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yes, and I saw my conductor go back there where the smoke
9 was, walk in there and put a handbrake on or something, he did
10 something back there.

11 Q. This is after the fact or --

12 A. This is during. Like, you mean after what fact?

13 Q. You guys huddled up and then he decided to go into --

14 A. No, this was prior to us getting into the huddle.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yeah. That was -- he went in there prior to, because he was
17 way down the platform and he went in there prior to us gathering
18 back there where the EMTs were.

19 Q. Now, do you know if all the vestibule doors were open or were
20 they shut, were all single cars -- like, could he have just --
21 could you guys tie four handbrakes in the car that was smoking and
22 the last car and left alone or --

23 A. I don't know, I know where I was at, I tied that handbrake on
24 and that vestibule door was open in there.

25 Q. So from your married pair, from 324 and 325, you had that

1 vestibule door open to go all the way back to those two cars?

2 A. You mean go back east? I didn't have the -- I --

3 Q. Your head end --

4 A. You're saying was the vestibule door open within -- no, I
5 don't know because mine was closed and I opened up where I was at,
6 controlling that, tied that handbrake on, that thing is -- and I
7 was standing --

8 Q. You went out your side door?

9 A. -- out on the platform, on the side door and I could look
10 back and I could see the two assistant conductors and I could see
11 Hank further down on the platform by the fourth and fifth car.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Yeah. So I don't know if he had the vestibule open or the
14 door, I have no idea.

15 Q. All right. That will be a question for him.

16 A. Right.

17 MR. SHERRY: Very well, thank you.

18 MR. BOLLING: All right, no problem.

19 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

20 Q. Okay. Tom, do you have anything you'd like to add?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. If we have any follow-up questions, would you mind if
23 we contacted you?

24 A. Absolutely.

25 MR. BACHMEIER: On behalf of the NTSB and our group here,

1 thank you for your time and cooperation.

2 MR. BOLLING: Thank you, sir, appreciate you.

3 (Whereupon, at 12:07 p.m., the interview concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

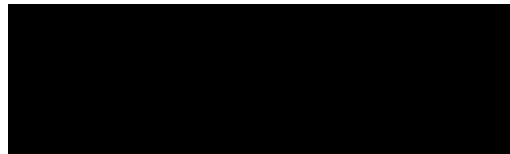
IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE ABOARD SEPTA TRAIN NEAR THE
CRUM LYNNE STATION IN RIDLEY PARK,
PENNSYLVANIA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025
Interview of Thomas Bolling, Jr.

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD25FR006

PLACE: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DATE: July 22, 2025

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.



David A. Martini
Transcriber