

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: WILLIAM CYRUS, Engineer
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Tuesday,
July 29, 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. Cyrus

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:55 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. BACHMEIER: Good morning, my name is Michael Bachmeier
4 and I am the NTSB Investigator-in-Charge for this accident. We
5 are here today on July 29th at 9:55 in SEPTA headquarters to
6 conduct an interview with Will Cyrus, who works for SEPTA. The
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. CYRUS: Hi, my name is William Cyrus, I'm the engineer
19 that passed the train off to the engineer that got involved in the
20 accident at Paoli Station.

21 MR. BACHMEIER: Last name.

22 MR. CYRUS: Cyrus, C-y-r-u-s.

23 MR. HILL: Don Hill, H-i-l-l, General Chairman, BLET,
24 Division 71.

25 MR. POWELL: Matt Powell, P-o-w-e-l-l, Assistant Director of

1 Operations, SEPTA.

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

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

6 MR. GRAUBARD: Dave Graubard, Operating Practices inspector
7 with FRA. Last name is G-r-a-u-b-a-r-d.

8 MR. SHERRY: Richard Sherry, S-h-e-r-r-y, FRA IIC on this
9 accident, MP&E inspector.

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

12 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay, thank you.

13 Will, do we have your permission to record our discussion
14 with you today?

15 MR. CYRUS: Yes.

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

19 MR. CYRUS: Yes.

20 MR. BACHMEIER: As we discussed, you have a representative
21 with you today, Mr. Hill, is that correct?

22 MR. CYRUS: Yes.

23 MR. BACHMEIER: I'd like to ask everyone to clearly announce
24 your name and title before questioning.

25 INTERVIEW OF WILLIAM CYRUS

1 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

2 Q. With that, Will, could you give us a synopsis of your work
3 experience taking us up to your present job and let us know how
4 long you've been in your current position?

5 A. I've been at -- I worked for Norfolk Southern first, from
6 2000 to 2017. I was an engineer from 2005 to the present. I've
7 been with SEPTA for six years, I got promoted to engineer in
8 January of 2024.

9 Q. Okay. With NS what were you doing?

10 A. Engineer.

11 Q. Engineer.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Okay. And you've been here six years?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. And NS was -- how long were you with NS?

16 A. Since 2000 to 2017.

17 Q. Okay, with that, can you take us back to July 22nd and kind
18 of give us a summary of the day, taking us from West Trenton down
19 to Suburban Station, including your handoff with the outbound crew
20 at Suburban Station?

21 A. Okay. We had, I think, a total of five cars, we did the
22 Class 2 brake test in West Trenton Yard, pulled into the station
23 at -- I think it was -- I forget, 8 o'clock I think it was, 7:58,
24 actually. We pulled into the station, we pulled off and I was
25 having issues as far as the -- it was -- I was getting a lack of

1 acceleration, it happened the whole trip. The conductor, he went
2 back to reset the cars. I gained a little bit more traction once
3 he reset the last car. I got to Fern Rock transportation center,
4 I called the dispatch to let them know that we were having issues
5 with the equipment, it wasn't -- I had a lack of acceleration with
6 the equipment, so he told me to -- that he was going to turn it
7 in.

8 Q. Did you have an outbound briefing with the crew?

9 A. Yes, we had a job briefing, you know, basically, we were
10 talking about how many cars he was going to open up for the
11 passengers and, you know, that was basically it. I told him that,
12 you know, this equipment is horrible so, you know, if you think
13 I'm being slow, it's because of the equipment.

14 Q. Okay. And you talked to the dispatcher at Fern Rock --

15 A. Transportation center.

16 Q. Transportation center, okay. Do you know what dispatcher you
17 told, was --

18 A. It was SEPTA 3, SEPTA 2.

19 Q. SEPTA 2.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. Okay. How often do you get -- I don't know if I should say
22 bad or sluggish or lack of acceleration power throughout -- with
23 these Silverliner IVs?

24 A. I would say every other day I get issues with the equipment
25 as far as I can't maintain speed out of the equipment.

1 Q. Okay. I want to ask about dynamic braking, how do you know
2 that the dynamic braking is working on the cars in your train?

3 A. I can look at the gauges and if -- I can do it with a hand
4 meter for the dynamic braking. If it's not going up, then I know
5 that I just got straight air.

6 Q. Okay. Do you know if the dynamic was working on this train
7 set?

8 A. It wasn't either -- in both directions.

9 Q. Both directions. Is that normal that dynamic braking doesn't
10 work on the equipment or --

11 A. I would say 85 percent of the time.

12 Q. That it does not work?

13 A. It does not work.

14 Q. Eighty-five percent, okay. Do you remember what the gauge,
15 your amperage gauge, registered for amount of power southbound
16 when you were having this?

17 A. It wasn't registering anything, it was like that car was like
18 a dead car or something and that's -- that's usually the case with
19 a lot of this -- those Silverliner IVs, that you don't register
20 anything because one of the -- you know, one of the cars might be
21 dead as far as being able to gain acceleration, so --

22 Q. Okay, so the amp meter read zero.

23 A. Zero, um-hum.

24 Q. Okay. So how many fault lights does the Silverliner IVs
25 have?

1 A. It has the general fault and it has the -- the other fault
2 light, the red and white fault light, both were on at -- were on
3 at the time.

4 Q. Okay. Did you have the fault lights on your northbound trip
5 from --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- wherever you started?

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. You had them on --

10 A. North and south.

11 Q. Okay. And then on the northbound trip, did you have any
12 issues with acceleration or was it maintaining track speed?

13 A. I was having better acceleration when I was going north.
14 When I went to start going south, it got worse.

15 Q. Okay. So with the general fault light, how do you know what
16 the fault is?

17 A. You don't. It's just a light, it could be anything.

18 Q. Okay, so is that when you have to go on to that cabinet
19 number 2, I think it was PFI --

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. -- cabinet or --

22 A. We have to go in the cabinet, reset the -- push the yellow
23 button reset, then go on to the -- a married pair, which is two
24 cars that are together, you would have to go into that panel and
25 then go into the middle, between the married pair and reset the

1 switch.

2 Q. Okay. So that's -- the panel, that's where all the breakers
3 are and --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- if they're all white or green, it's all good, the only bad
6 one is if it's red, is that correct?

7 A. Well, that front panel that's on the engineer's side, that's
8 the only one that has the red and the white light. You would just
9 -- the yellow button is not an illuminated apparatus, it's just --
10 you just press a button, that's it. And then that other panel's
11 just a switch.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. In the middle.

14 Q. Okay. Is there -- by that switch, is there a light by that
15 switch?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. Is there any light that would come on if you were
18 dragging any brakes, such as a handbrake dynamic for a train?

19 A. Yes, that would be the blue light, it would let me know if I
20 had brakes on.

21 Q. Okay. And did you have any blue lights on your train?

22 A. No.

23 Q. And then you did inform the dispatcher of the slow power and
24 what did the dispatcher say?

25 A. He said that he would turn it in.

1 Q. Okay. Did the dispatcher ever get back to you before you
2 handed off?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Do you know about the new EOPs that came out in March? There
5 was a mechanical and a smoke and fire EOP that came out in March.

6 A. I'm familiar with it, just don't -- vaguely remember it.

7 Q. Okay. And you had a pretty good turnover with the outbound
8 engineer, telling him that you reported it and just no one ever
9 got back to you?

10 A. Yeah, I gave him the conditions of the equipment and he said
11 okay. I told him I had turned it in and I told the dispatcher.

12 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay. And that's all I got.

13 Matt, I'll pass it off to you.

14 BY MR. POWELL:

15 Q. Matt Powell, Assistant Director of Operations, SEPTA. Will,
16 when you had face-to-face relief with your relieving engineer, did
17 you -- did you give the specific car numbers or set the cars on
18 the track that had issues?

19 A. I told him the whole train from north -- when I was going
20 north, I was having issues and south, I was having issues. I just
21 told him it was -- I was getting a lack of acceleration.

22 Q. And prior to coming to Suburban Station, do you have
23 knowledge of which cars your conductor had reset coming south and
24 how many times he reset them?

25 A. He said he reset the last car, he went back there twice, one

1 time he said he went back there and reset the last car, the other
2 time, I don't know which cars he reset.

3 Q. Okay. And then coming southbound, I believe, you know,
4 previously someone said -- Elkins Park, do you recall when your
5 conductor came to the head end the second time after saying he
6 reset the equipment?

7 A. I don't recall.

8 Q. Okay. And then at what point -- based on the number of
9 resets your conductor gave on the equipment, at what point did you
10 contact dispatch, was it after the third time he reset, the
11 second?

12 A. It was after like the second or third time, yeah.

13 MR. POWELL: Okay. No further questions.

14 BY MS. WILLIAMS:

15 Q. Shandel Williams, Assistant Safety. So, just for
16 clarification, the general fault light that you see in the
17 engineer's cab, that's the white one, right?

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. And then what's the red one for?

20 A. The red one is just -- just a fault, like -- but at the
21 specific car, I think it is, yeah, that's for the specific car.

22 Q. Okay. And when you reported the issue to SEPTA, so you just
23 said that you had slow acceleration?

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. There was no specifics given as to --

1 A. Yeah, because you really don't know what's the problem, it
2 could be anything, that light could mean anything.

3 Q. Well, I mean by the time you reported it, your conductor --
4 did your conductor tell you what faults that he reset
5 specifically?

6 A. No, he just said he reset the car, the last car of the
7 consist.

8 Q. Okay, so he reset the car, okay.

9 A. Um-hum.

10 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay, roger that, no further questions.

11 MR. HILLIARD: I don't have anything.

12 BY MR. GRAUBARD:

13 Q. Dave Graubard, FRA. Have you -- you've run into this before,
14 similar issues?

15 A. This is all the time.

16 Q. All the time.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Have you ever had something like this happen where you
19 reported it to the dispatcher and they say okay, we're going to
20 get you new power or --

21 A. Basically, I actually said this on the radio, when he said
22 yeah, I'm turning it in and I said -- you know, I said you really
23 don't care, do you, like, because that's usually -- you know, they
24 tell you that, but they don't do anything or don't even get back
25 to you, you just basically just take it through.

1 Q. Is there a -- if you felt like there was something really
2 dangerous going on with this stuff and you reported that to the
3 dispatcher, do you feel like they would handle that, consider it
4 appropriately?

5 A. Well, if it was -- if it was dangerous, they would, they --
6 you know, if I said hey, this is a dangerous situation, they
7 would.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But it wasn't like -- that fire or whatever, it wasn't like
10 it was that bad, it was just like the norm that you have lack of
11 acceleration, so it wasn't like alarm raising.

12 Q. Okay. And other than sluggish power and your conductor
13 telling you that he had to reset the car, did you hear, see, smell
14 anything else out of the ordinary?

15 A. No.

16 MR. GRAUBARD: Okay, that's all I have.

17 BY MR. SHERRY:

18 Q. Rick Sherry, FRA. You stated earlier at 7:58 you got to the
19 station, was that West Trenton Station that you got to?

20 A. Yes, um-hum.

21 Q. When you were traveling north or eastbound to West Trenton
22 Station, you said you had a general fault light on, correct?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. Did you report it that time to dispatch?

25 A. No, because that's a normal -- that's normal, it doesn't --

1 like, I get a lot of equipment that has that light on, right, so I
2 don't report it unless it's -- that was bad as far as the
3 acceleration, I couldn't even -- you know, it took me -- if I ever
4 get up to maybe track speed, so that was like, you know, an
5 anomaly, so I reported it because of that.

6 Q. So you only report when you feel that it's sluggish, not if
7 the light's on?

8 A. Yeah, um-hum.

9 Q. Okay. Fern Rock, is that a station or is that where you call
10 to?

11 A. That's a station.

12 Q. Okay, so at Fern Rock is when you called it in?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And you said you had no dynamic brake going north and
15 southbound --

16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. Do you always have dynamic brake or only at a certain speed
18 dynamic brake will kick in?

19 A. Usually over like 20 miles an hour the dynamic brake will
20 kick in.

21 Q. Okay. During this trip, did you reach speeds over 20 miles
22 an hour?

23 A. I did, um-hum.

24 Q. That's when the dynamic brake should've kicked in?

25 A. It should've kicked in, right.

1 Q. Are you aware of the other two fires to this incidence that
2 happened --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- on SEPTA?

5 A. Um-hum.

6 MR. SHERRY: I have no further questions.

7 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

8 Q. Todd Kraholik with the NTSB. So I'll follow up with
9 Mr. Sherry's question. You're aware of the two fires that
10 previously happened, did anybody talk to you, like job brief you
11 on anything about them or anything like that?

12 A. No, no one talked about it.

13 Q. All right. If you get a new procedure at SEPTA, how do you
14 find out about it? If something -- policy changes, procedure --
15 how do you find out?

16 A. Through the bulletin orders or, you know, like the union
17 actually -- one of the union members actually sends out a text, a
18 mass text message, to inform people of operational changes or
19 issues.

20 Q. Okay, so when you -- when you come in, I guess you work --
21 what days do you work, Monday through Friday or so?

22 A. I'm on call, so I work through -- the only day I have off is
23 Thursday.

24 Q. Okay, so when you -- when you come in for the week, is that
25 when you get your bulletins? When do you get your bulletins?

1 A. I get my bulletins -- when do they come out -- that Friday
2 before the next week.

3 Q. Okay, so they'll come out Friday and you'll get it the first
4 day after you come back from that Friday.

5 A. Yeah, you know, I'll read through everything and see what
6 issues they have on the particular lines and Form Ds and
7 restrictions and stuff like that.

8 Q. And nobody's there to hand you these bulletins, you just pick
9 them up out of a box or print them off yourself or how do you get
10 them?

11 A. They usually come through my tablet. Nobody -- or you can go
12 into the station and get the bulletins, you can get a paper copy.

13 Q. So you only have one or the other or do you --

14 A. Yeah, you can either have one or the other.

15 Q. I gotcha. So if you get it on the tablet, there's no chance
16 of anybody talking to you because you're getting it on your
17 tablet, would that be accurate?

18 A. That's correct, um-hum.

19 Q. Have you ever had a manager -- I'm just going to use a
20 generic term, manager, have you ever had a manager come talk to
21 you about a policy change?

22 A. Yes, um-hum.

23 Q. What kind of -- if you can't remember specifically, what kind
24 of -- like, what do they come talk to you about?

25 A. Just, you know, make sure you -- you know, if it's a

1 temporary speed restriction, something like that, you know, like
2 at Schuylkill, you have a temporary speed restriction which is 10
3 miles an hour, actually a manager came up to me, he said make sure
4 you abide by that 10-mile-an-hour speed restriction, don't forget
5 that it's there, you know, stuff like that.

6 Q. I gotcha. Is it often that you see a manager on SEPTA
7 property?

8 A. Yes, um-hum.

9 Q. Would you say daily you see one?

10 A. Not daily, no.

11 Q. Okay. So has SEPTA ever told you when you're supposed to
12 report problems? Like, I know we -- this light's on pretty much
13 every trip and I know you said that you only contact them if it's
14 making a problem for yourself coming through, but is that -- is
15 SEPTA okay with that or does SEPTA tell you anything different, do
16 they tell you when to report or anything like that?

17 A. No. You kind of use your own judgment, you know, you know
18 the equipment and you know when it's -- you know, if you're having
19 major issues.

20 Q. So you're a conductor -- I'm sorry, engineer since '05, I
21 know it was on NS --

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. -- and you've been over here running since 2024, so you have
24 some experience. What about somebody that doesn't have
25 experience, how are they supposed to know, like --

1 A. They're actually pretty good with asking questions, you know,
2 an engineer will come in that's fairly new and he'll say hey,
3 listen, I have this issue, you know, how do I go about fixing it
4 and they'll, you know, ask other engineers and stuff like that, so
5 that's the way they know. And like I said, one of the union
6 members, he actually sends out a text message, you know, with
7 issues or things, things in the bulletins and stuff that you have
8 to be aware of.

9 Q. I gotcha, okay. Then we're going to go back to one of the
10 questions that was asked down there. So you have had -- I think
11 it's SEPTA policy or I could be mistaken on that, but if you're
12 having problems with your power or your train, you're supposed to
13 get another set of equipment, does that happen often?

14 A. They will swap equipment out when it's extreme, it's an
15 extreme case.

16 Q. Well, tell me what an extreme case is, what do you mean by
17 that?

18 A. Let's say, for instance, the cab, you're having issues with
19 the cabs or the -- and/or bypass or something like that, they will
20 swap it out. I've had equipment where I've had a lack of
21 acceleration and you had to swap it out.

22 Q. I gotcha. But is it -- so is it more often than not you take
23 the equipment that you're already on currently?

24 A. Yes, it's more that you're going to take that equipment.

25 Q. And you said you made a comment over the radio, that the

1 dispatcher didn't really care about your problem or however you
2 said, you said it over the radio, is that because it's a daily
3 problem and they never --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- get back to you, as you said, then?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. When you report it to a dispatcher, what do you say, like --
8 like, let's say you have your problem, let's just use your
9 instance that day, what did you tell the dispatcher?

10 A. I told him I'm getting a lack of acceleration with these --
11 with the equipment, north and south, and he just said that he was
12 going to turn it in and that was it, that was the end of our
13 conversation.

14 Q. Do you know who he turns it in to or do you not?

15 A. I have -- probably the STO.

16 Q. But that's just -- you don't -- you don't know that --

17 A. No, I don't.

18 Q. Right, right, I gotcha. You said that you reset the light
19 and then you go to the end of the car and flip a switch.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. Is it like an electrical switch, what kind of -- what kind of
22 switch is that?

23 A. It's just a -- like a light, kind of like light switches,
24 basically, it's just a breaker, you just reset it.

25 Q. Okay. So there's a -- that would be a breaker.

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. How do you know when to do all this stuff, do you have
3 training on this?

4 A. Yes, you do. In equipment class they teach you certain
5 things and, you know, just from dealing with older engineers that
6 have been here and been running that equipment, they kind of tell
7 you, you know, certain things that you have to do to maybe fix the
8 equipment.

9 Q. So you said a few times that engineers, people that are crew
10 members, union, it seems like you mainly get your information from
11 workers and not SEPTA management, is that an accurate statement?

12 A. That's correct. And I get it from the bulletin orders, but a
13 union member, actually he, you know, reiterates certain things,
14 you know, like hey, you know, make sure you abide by that speed
15 restriction at whatever, you know, he'll text it, send out a mass
16 text.

17 MR. KRAHOLIK: I gotcha. I don't have any further questions
18 right now.

19 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

20 Q. Okay. Mike Bachmeier. Like, how many times can you reset
21 the no power, do you guys have a -- in your training, did they
22 tell you how much you can reset it?

23 A. No, just -- you just -- he would set it -- usually you reset
24 it maybe once or twice and okay, this is not working, so --

25 Q. And then what do you do after you reset it twice and it still

1 doesn't work?

2 A. You kind of -- you alert the dispatcher.

3 Q. Okay. Lack of acceleration, could you get the train up to
4 speed?

5 A. It would take an extremely long time before -- it will get up
6 to speed, but it took, you know, like -- you know, it wasn't the
7 usual, you know, I can get it up in 10 seconds, 15 seconds, in 30,
8 40 seconds when you get up to -- kind of almost up to speed.

9 Q. Okay. And then I want to go back to Mr. Sherry, he asked a
10 question about dynamic braking, you said that it usually comes on
11 around after 20 mph.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. Like, when you had your train up to speed, you said that this
14 train set didn't have any dynamic braking.

15 A. It never came.

16 Q. It never popped on?

17 A. It never popped on.

18 Q. Is there a switch or is there something that pops on that
19 says that you have --

20 A. Well, you can look at the amperes meter for the dynamic and
21 taking power and you can see it's not moving.

22 Q. Okay. So is there a different handle for train line brakes
23 rather than --

24 A. Dynamic.

25 Q. -- dynamic?

1 A. No. It's a blended brake.

2 Q. So if you go to braking --

3 A. Um-hum. Your dynamic will kick in first.

4 Q. But on this power, on this train that day, in that six-car
5 set that day, the dynamic braking never kicked in, it was just
6 you --

7 A. No, it was straight air.

8 Q. Straight air.

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. And the only reason that you can see up there in the
11 engineer's table, then, is you would -- the dynamic amp never left
12 zero.

13 A. Right. And you can -- you know, when you're making a station
14 stop, you can actually -- you know, if your window's open, you can
15 smell the brakes because that's all the trains use, it's not using
16 -- it is not using dynamic.

17 Q. And now I want to get back to your original deal, you said
18 about 85 percent of the time the dynamics are not working?

19 A. That's correct.

20 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay. No further questions.

21 Matt?

22 BY MR. POWELL:

23 Q. Matt Powell. Will, you're train handling coming -- going up
24 and coming down, did anything feel like it was knocking you around
25 or anything, feel banging or was it smooth coming into the station

1 stops?

2 A. I had to smooth it out, but yeah, it would knock you around a
3 bit.

4 Q. Okay. And I know taking -- when you said you were taking
5 power it was kind of sluggish, kind of slow getting up to speed,
6 any knocks or bangs, did you feel like power was dropping out in
7 any cars or was it kind of just a slow speed only?

8 A. It was just a slow speed.

9 MR. POWELL: Okay. No further questions.

10 MS. WILLIAMS: No questions.

11 MR. BACHMEIER: Clarence?

12 BY MR. HILLIARD:

13 Q. Clarence Hilliard, system safety. Did anything change, like,
14 at Fern Rock, like, that you reported it at Fern Rock and not
15 prior to that or --

16 A. No, nothing changed.

17 Q. Okay. Was there a reason you didn't report the slow
18 acceleration prior to Fern Rock?

19 A. Because I'm used to it.

20 MR. HILLIARD: Okay. No further questions, thank you.

21 BY MR. GRAUBARD:

22 Q. Dave Graubard, FRA. You said you have about six years of
23 experience with this equipment, is that right?

24 A. Yes, with the Silverliner IV's and the Silverliner V's, yes.

25 Q. And is it an accurate summary to say that this is routine

1 that the equipment acts up this way?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. Has that -- has it been that way since the whole time
4 you've been running, I mean, six years or is that --

5 A. Well, I've been running here for -- I got promoted last year,
6 so -- but I've been here for six years. Yeah, it's been the same
7 way since I've been promoted.

8 Q. Has it gotten any more frequent or worse in that time
9 or --

10 A. Yeah, that equipment is getting worse and worse.

11 Q. Okay. Is there any particular spot or blind sidings that you
12 notice it acts up on often or is it everywhere?

13 A. It's everywhere. It's not just one specific spot, it's
14 everywhere, you get on equipment and, you know, the engineer that
15 gave you the equipment will tell you and you just say yeah, I
16 know, you know, like --

17 Q. Okay. Are there any repeat cars out there or is just kind of
18 all of them?

19 A. To be honest with you, I'd say 85 percent of the equipment is
20 bad, you know. You know, the engineer will come and he'll say
21 hey, listen, you know, this equipment is okay, it will get you
22 there, but I ain't making no promises.

23 Q. Okay. Does SEPTA have, like, a safety committee or something
24 like that where you can report stuff and --

25 A. No, we put them on the MP-11 or we report it to the

1 dispatcher.

2 Q. Okay. And last question, how would you say the relationship
3 is between management and labor, do you guys feel pretty good
4 about reporting stuff and it will get taken care of or is it --

5 A. No. Just I'd say okay, you know, basically.

6 MR. GRAUBARD: Okay. That's all the questions I have, thank
7 you.

8 BY MR. SHERRY:

9 Q. Rick Sherry, FRA. You said you receive the bulletins two
10 different ways, on a tablet and/or paper.

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. Do you ever have to sign for your bulletin, saying that you
13 accepted it, read it or anything like that and they can put it up
14 in --

15 A. No, uh-uh, that's your responsibility, you know, you know
16 your responsibility to look at the bulletins before you take those
17 trains.

18 Q. Has the trainmaster ever come up to you just with a random
19 bulletin and say hey, can you tell me a little bit about this
20 bulletin, to make sure you read it?

21 A. No.

22 Q. No?

23 A. No.

24 Q. So there's never any follow-up to make sure --

25 A. No.

1 Q. -- you read a bulletin.

2 A. No, but that's -- like, I came from another railroad, no one
3 does that, no one is going to hold your hand and tell you did you
4 read the bulletins, that's your responsibility.

5 MR. SHERRY: No other questions.

6 MR. BACHMEIER: Todd.

7 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

8 Q. Todd Kraholik, NTSB. I just want to confirm, I don't think
9 it's been asked yet, but mechanical never came out that day,
10 right? No one ever --

11 A. No.

12 Q. -- came and looked at your equipment?

13 A. No.

14 Q. All right. When you got on that morning, you just got it out
15 of the shop or yard or something?

16 A. Well, I got it out of the -- I got -- I relieved it at
17 Suburban Station and then I took it to West Trenton.

18 Q. So you got it from another crew at --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Did they report, tell you anything at that station?

21 A. Yeah, he said -- he said it will get you there, but not
22 making any promises.

23 Q. And if you don't know, that's cool, I can find it, but where
24 does that crew run from, that you get it from, where do they come
25 and go to, do you know?

1 A. Fifty-three forty-four, they were coming from -- from Malvern
2 or Thorndale, I'm not sure.

3 Q. And how often would you say that -- I know the dispatcher
4 doesn't -- in your words, doesn't necessarily care or doesn't ever
5 get back to you, but how often does mechanical come out when you
6 have problems? Is it very often or not very often or hardly ever,
7 what would you say?

8 A. Not very often. Like I said, it has to be an extreme
9 situation.

10 Q. So this situation, they didn't come out and you didn't -- you
11 didn't take an exception to that, like, that's just kind of --
12 this kind of happens every day and mechanical doesn't come out for
13 this kind of problem.

14 A. Right, for that kind of problem, that's correct.

15 Q. Gotcha. What kind of problems would they come out for, do
16 you know?

17 A. If you had a dead car where the -- it was a hot car, they
18 will come out for that. You're having issues with the cabs.
19 That's basically it. You can't get the brakes to release or
20 something like that, they'll come out for stuff like that.

21 MR. KRAHOLIK: Gotcha. And I don't have any further
22 questions, that's it.

23 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

24 Q. MP-11, what -- when you said you can report it there --

25 A. Yeah, you can.

1 Q. -- what is an MP-11?

2 A. It's basically you're reporting a defect, you're writing it
3 down on a piece of paper and you turn it in.

4 Q. Like a daily inspection --

5 A. Not a daily inspection report, but it's just basically you
6 have issues with the equipment or -- you can write an MP-11
7 because you have an unruly passenger or something like that.

8 Q. And does that go into the system or is that a handwritten
9 note that --

10 A. It's a handwritten note and you can actually turn it in at
11 Suburban Station or whatever station you're at. Or you just leave
12 it on the -- on the equipment for the next engineer.

13 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay. Okay. With that, Will --

14 MS. WILLIAMS: I have a couple of questions, sorry.

15 MR. BACHMEIER: Shandel, I'll let you ask two more questions.

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

17 BY MS. WILLIAMS:

18 Q. Shandel Williams. Okay, Will, I got a couple questions for
19 you. Regarding the MP-11, are you aware that you can turn that
20 information in via your tablet?

21 A. Yeah, um-hum.

22 Q. Okay. Have you ever done that before?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. And you are -- are you on the extra board?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So that train that you took north of West Trenton, that is
2 not stereotypically a train that you would've had because you're
3 on the extra board, do you only --

4 A. It's not my normal job --

5 Q. Gotcha.

6 A. -- but I take everything, you know.

7 Q. Right, right, right.

8 A. If you call me for something, I'll take it.

9 Q. Gotcha. So it wouldn't be -- you wouldn't know that, in
10 fact, that the train having six cars would be an anomaly in the
11 sense that it had more cars than what it normally would?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. And then the last question I have is I know you're
14 qualified on Silverliner IV's and V's, correct?

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. Silverliner V's, do you run on Amtrak territory, as well?

17 A. Yes, um-hum.

18 Q. Okay. Have you ever noticed a difference in performance of
19 the Silverliner IV's on Amtrak territory on these jobs?

20 A. Oh, yeah. I mean, you know, people pray that they get
21 Silverliner V's, you know, like -- you know, you look at the
22 schedule on your phone and it's like, okay, you can see what cars
23 you're getting and, you know, you say oh, man, I hope I get
24 Silverliner V's because you don't want to deal with the issues
25 that you have with the IV's.

1 Q. So can you explain to me what -- some of the issues with
2 these on our territory versus Amtrak?

3 A. Well, not -- it's -- well, no, I wouldn't say that they run
4 different on Amtrak territory, it's just if you was on SEPTA
5 territory, you will still want Silverliner V's instead of the IV's
6 because you do have a lot of issues with them.

7 MS. WILLIAMS: Right. That was it.

8 BY MR. HILLIARD:

9 Q. I have two more questions. With the MP-11 reporting system,
10 how often do you think you put one in a week?

11 A. MP-11? I don't put a lot of MP-11s in. Mainly, if I have
12 issues, I report it to the dispatcher and I'll let them make the
13 determination.

14 Q. And then with the way you said the dispatcher kind of gives
15 you the okay, do you ever want to make sure that you would say
16 hey, I don't know if this guy's pushing that along how he should,
17 I'm going to do a second follow-up and put an MP-11 in?

18 A. No, because I'll let people do their jobs. I'm doing my job,
19 so you got to do yours.

20 Q. Got it. And then you said major reasons that mechanical
21 would come out and you said hot car, that means no air condition
22 on the --

23 A. No air conditioner, um-hum.

24 Q. So no air conditioner, brakes can't release, with slow
25 equipment --

1 (Crosstalk.)

2 MR. CYRUS: Right, or you're having problems with the -- with
3 the -- you know, just having issues with the pantographs or
4 something like that, um-hum.

5 MR. HILLIARD: Or just slow power --

6 (Crosstalk.)

7 MR. CYRUS: No. Yeah, that's because you get a lot of
8 Silverliner IV's that, you know, can't make it up to speed.

9 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay.

10 BY MR. GRAUBARD:

11 Q. I have one follow-up question. Dave Graubard, FRA. The
12 inoperative dynamic brakes, do you report that every time you see
13 that?

14 A. No, because you'll be reporting that every single time you
15 get on a train, ordinarily.

16 MR. GRAUBARD: Phew, okay. That's all I have, thank you.

17 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

18 Q. Okay. Will, do you have anything you would like to add?

19 A. No, I just -- you know, that's -- you know, like I said, I
20 came from another railroad and this is the worst equipment I've
21 ever seen in my life, like, those Silverliner IV's, it's the
22 worst.

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

25 A. Sure.

1 MR. BACHMEIER: On behalf of the NTSB and our interview panel
2 here, we'd like to thank you for your time. Thank you.

3 MR. CYRUS: Thank you.

4 (Whereupon, at 10:33 a.m., the interview concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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

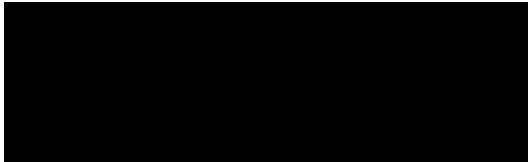
IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE ABOARD SEPTA TRAIN NEAR THE
CRUM LYNNE STATION IN RIDLEY PARK,
PENNSYLVANIA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025
Interview of William Cyrus

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD25FR006

PLACE: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DATE: July 29, 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