

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: HENRY "HANK" SMITH, JR., Conductor
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

DAVE 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

CHINO WILLIAMS, Vice General Chairman
SMART Transportation Division, Local 61
Representing Mr. Smith

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:12 p.m.)

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2
3 MR. BACHMEIER: Good afternoon, my name is Mike Bachmeier and
4 I'm the NTSB IIC for this accident. We are here today on
5 July 29th at 2:12 in SEPTA headquarters to conduct an interview
6 with Hank Smith, Jr. The interview is in conjunction with NTSB's
7 investigation of the accident near Paoli Station. The NTSB
8 accident reference number is RRD25FR006. Purpose of the
9 investigation is to increase safety, not to assign fault, blame,
10 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 are representing, and your title. I would like to remind
14 everyone to speak clearly so we can get an accurate recording.
15 I'll start off and pass it off 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. SMITH: Henry Smith, S-m-i-t-h, Jr., conductor.

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Chino (ph.) Williams, SMART 61, Vice General
20 Chairman 1, as well as a SEPTA conductor.

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

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

25 MR. GRAUBARD: Dave Graubard, G-r-a-u-b-a-r-d, Operating

1 Practices inspector with FRA.

2 MR. SHERRY: Richard Sherry, S-h-e-r-r-y, MP&E inspector and
3 IIC for FRA on this accident.

4 MR. KRAHOLIK: Todd Kraholik, K-r-a-h-o-l-i-k, NTSB track.

5 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay, thank you.

6 Hank, do we have your permission to record our discussion
7 with you today?

8 MR. SMITH: Yes.

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

12 MR. SMITH: Yes.

13 MR. BACHMEIER: As we discussed, you have a representative
14 with you today, Mr. Williams, is that correct?

15 MR. SMITH: Yes.

16 MR. BACHMEIER: I'd like to ask everyone to clearly announce
17 your name and title before questioning. With that, let's proceed.

18 INTERVIEW OF HENRY "HANK" SMITH

19 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

20 Q. Hank, can you give us a synopsis of your work experience
21 taking us up to your present job and how long you've been in your
22 current position?

23 A. Ten years at SEPTA, been promoted to conductor since 2019,
24 I'm a conductor, new hire, we call it train -- new hire trainer,
25 through on-the-job training. That's basically it.

1 Q. Okay. How long have you worked with your engineer, how long
2 have you been teamed up?

3 A. Off and on, been together a couple years on different runs,
4 but this run we've been together since March -- I'm sorry,
5 March --

6 Q. That's fine. Okay. Can you take us back to July 27th,
7 Tuesday, take us from your turnover with the inbound crew of the
8 3553 up unto Paoli and through the -- through the accident and
9 when you were -- until the end there?

10 A. Um-hum. It was July 22nd. I thought you said 27th.

11 Q. Oh, 22nd, yeah.

12 A. Twenty-second.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. We were -- got the train from the relief, I believe it was
15 late coming in, maybe about 15, 20 minutes, I think. Upon
16 relieving, he told us they had trouble with the train is why they
17 were late coming in. They had to stop a couple times to reset the
18 train to get it going and it was moving slow the whole time, they
19 were having trouble with it. Upon us getting it, we moved slow
20 the whole time going up the branch, letting passengers off at
21 various stops. So we get to Villanova and the train's not moving,
22 so after a while I go up and talk to the engineer, he tells me
23 that he can't get no power, so he's going back and forth with
24 Amtrak, talking to them. So after that, he came and I think he
25 reset something in the first or second car, still didn't do

1 anything, so we went back -- he went back to the head end, so
2 after that I told the passengers we're going to be a minute trying
3 to get the train going. I went back up to him, we did a job
4 briefing and then I told him -- he was talking back and forth with
5 Amtrak and I told him I will go back and check and see if any of
6 the other cars have faults, so I went back to the -- I believe the
7 fourth and fifth car, it was lit up, a couple of those had faults,
8 so I reset and I called him on the walkie, told him to see if he
9 can move.

10 So he seen he was getting power from the gauges, I guess, he
11 didn't move, so I came up to make sure the doors were shut before
12 we took off. So once I found out the -- from my assistant
13 conductors that the doors were closed, then he attempted to move
14 and we were able to move so he let Amtrak know we're able to move
15 but we couldn't get up the hill, because once we got up the hill,
16 we can -- it's downhill from there.

17 So once we found out we could move, we were moving stop to
18 stop, I think we didn't have anybody for a couple stops, trying to
19 keep it going, and so we finally get to Paoli and I believe we
20 had, like, maybe four passengers left. Some of the passengers got
21 off while we were stuck in Villanova, they got off and found other
22 ways to get home or whatever, then we were able to go. Some of
23 them got back on before we closed up, I forgot to tell you that.
24 So we get to Paoli, train won't move again, so I tell him I'll go
25 back and reset again, so I look back and I see a little bit of

1 smoke coming out back there, so let me see what's going on. So I
2 get back to the -- I believe the fourth car and a lot more smoke,
3 so I can't -- I'm there but I can't really get in the car because
4 it's full of smoke so I come back and let him know smoke, and then
5 he calls Amtrak and I believe they said they're sending the fire
6 department out or whatever because of the smoke.

7 So I believe at that point, I think it was -- I looked up at
8 the wires and it was arcing or something and so while we were
9 standing there on the platform, we got everybody off, the last
10 four people, we told them it's time to get off, it's smoking, you
11 got to get off the train.

12 So there was a loud boom in the back and at that point I told
13 him drop the pans because take the power away, you know, less
14 chance of anything else happening, so told him to drop the pans
15 and at that point, I think the fire department was coming and
16 (indiscernible) we had to tie the train down.

17 So I go back in, I was sending my assistant conductors to do
18 it and they was kind of hesitant, so I said I'll go do it myself,
19 so I started tying the train down, get back to the fourth, fourth
20 car right before where the smoke was, so I tied those last -- the
21 last two brakes, they tied the rest of them on and I couldn't get
22 to the very last one because that's where most of the smoke was
23 and it was -- I wasn't going -- I was already in the smoke, I
24 wasn't going severely into the car --

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. -- to tie one more brake when I had enough brakes on, because
2 you're supposed to have all the brakes on, on the main, but if you
3 can't get to it, you can't, nothing you can do, so good thing I
4 didn't.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. And that's basically it. When they got there, the -- after
7 everything calmed down, you know, I started feeling a little
8 overwhelmed and chest was tight and so the EMS checked me out --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- took me in the thing and it was like I think you should go
11 in and get checked out, so they took me to the hospital.

12 Q. Okay. Did anyone go back and make sure all the passengers
13 were out?

14 A. I got them off before (indiscernible).

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yeah. Once I got the smoke, once I seen the smoke, came back
17 and got them off the train.

18 Q. Okay, perfect.

19 A. It was like four of them.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. They were going to Malvern, the last stop.

22 Q. Okay. Now, when you heard that -- so you were outside --

23 A. On the platform.

24 Q. Platform, when you heard that loud bang?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Where was the bang at, was it right --

2 A. It was back there where the cars were at, between the fourth
3 and the fifth car, I believe car 114 and 113, I believe.

4 Q. That's where you heard, kind of, the bang.

5 A. That where -- and you could see it.

6 Q. Oh, you seen something --

7 A. You seen it, boom. And then went and told him to drop the
8 pans.

9 Q. Okay, okay. So you saw, like, kind of an explosion or
10 whatever --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. -- you want to call it, right?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay, perfect. Thank you. I'll pass it off
15 to Matt.

16 BY MR. POWELL:

17 Q. Matt Powell, Assistant Director of Operations. Hank, after
18 leaving Villanova, how many passengers do you think got off
19 approximately between Villanova and Paoli?

20 A. Probably about a good 20, maybe.

21 Q. Okay, at the various stops. When you went back, we're
22 talking about Paoli now with the fire and the smoke, when you --
23 so you went back and saw the MU, but that was after you lowered
24 the pantographs or before?

25 A. That was before.

1 Q. And so how far did --

2 A. Went back and seen the smoke, am I right?

3 Q. Yeah, I'm talking about just before you lowered the
4 pantographs, so when you set the -- when you set the handbrake on
5 the car 114, was that before or after you lowered the pantographs?

6 A. That was before because the lights were still on, yeah.

7 Q. Okay, and so when -- how far did you get into that car, did
8 you just go into the vestibule where the handbrake was at?

9 A. I got onto the vestibule of the fifth car because the
10 handbrake was here, handbrake was here, so I got into the car
11 before the married pair, the last married pair, so I was in the
12 vestibule of the fifth car.

13 Q. Okay, the vestibule of the fifth car, meaning the 114 or
14 the --

15 A. The 114.

16 Q. The 114.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. So that was the car that was actually on fire that you could
19 see?

20 A. It wasn't on fire yet.

21 Q. Well, heavy smoke --

22 A. Yeah, there was heavy smoke, I'm sure there was more smoke
23 down in the next one, but it was smoke coming out the crack and
24 you can see in the car.

25 Q. So when you went into the vestibule to set the handbrake, the

1 parlor door was closed, you couldn't see into the body of the car
2 itself, you could --

3 A. I could look through the window and see, yeah.

4 Q. What did you see?

5 A. Smoke.

6 Q. Just --

7 A. It was filled up.

8 Q. Did you see active flames inside the car?

9 A. No, it wasn't active yet.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. It didn't get active until -- until after we lowered the
12 pantograph.

13 Q. So you were in that vestibule getting ready to set that
14 handbrake, did that car feel different, did it feel like hot, like
15 excessively hot, did it affect the air in the front end or --

16 A. No, it just felt like the air was coming from me, like taken
17 out of me because I'm trying to get this handbrake on.

18 Q. But you didn't feel any sort of intense heat or anything
19 physically?

20 A. No, it wasn't fire yet, it was just smoke.

21 Q. Just smoke, okay.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. As far as I could see, it wasn't any fire, I mean, I could
25 see outside because I'm inside, so --

1 Q. Right.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. So you just went into the vestibule, set the handbrake and
4 then exited that car?

5 A. I went -- the vestibule on the fifth car, then -- I believe
6 the fifth car, and then I came out that door and shut it, yeah. I
7 believe I came out that door, if I'm not mistaken.

8 Q. So you accessed that car going through the --

9 A. All the cars.

10 Q. You went through the car in front of it to get to that
11 vestibule?

12 A. Right. In other words, when I came from the front, I went
13 back in after I got all the passengers off and I came from the
14 front of the train, the west end, and went through all the cars to
15 get to that car.

16 Q. So you never -- you never keyed the doors locally in that car
17 at all, in the 114, the car with the smoke, you just came in
18 through the previous car, through the vestibule, the --

19 A. I think I keyed the one before it, I believe.

20 Q. Okay. To your recollection, not that car that was --

21 A. Yeah, I don't think I keyed that car.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I don't think. I keyed the one right next to it.

24 MR. POWELL: Okay, that's all I have right now, thank you.

25 MR. SMITH: Um-hum.

1 MR. BACHMEIER: Shandel?

2 BY MS. WILLIAMS:

3 Q. Shandel Williams, Assistant Safety. How many handbrakes did
4 you put on, again?

5 A. All of them except that last one.

6 Q. So what --

7 A. Me, myself?

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. I put on the ones -- my engineer put his on. I think they
10 were all married pairs, if I'm not mistaken. So I put the one on
11 between the -- the two between the fourth and the fifth car, and I
12 believe some up front, if I'm not mistaken, it was -- I'm not sure
13 about those, I know I put the ones on between the fourth and the
14 fifth car because I was -- my adrenalin was rolling because I'm
15 trying the get the handbrakes on and get out of there.

16 Q. Gotcha. And do you recall where your passengers were in your
17 two over (ph.) cars that you had, presumably the most eastern
18 cars, right?

19 A. One and two.

20 Q. So there were how many in each car?

21 A. It was about four of them, there was maybe one in the first
22 car and maybe two or three people in the second car.

23 Q. Okay, but relatively evenly spread out in the two cars
24 (indiscernible) --

25 A. Yeah, they were in the first two cars, yeah.

1 MS. WILLIAMS: That's all I have right now.

2 BY MR. GRAUBARD:

3 Q. Dave Graubard, FRA. When you arrived in Paoli, do you know
4 which car you were riding in at that time?

5 A. Second car.

6 Q. So that would've been the 325?

7 A. I'm not sure what the numbers are but whatever the second car
8 was on the west end going towards Malvern.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Okay. So other than the sluggish power, was there any other
12 -- anything else weird you noticed before stopping there at Paoli,
13 I mean --

14 A. No, once we got rolling, it was just sluggish, it wasn't
15 normal power.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. We was just trying to get up the hill, you know what I mean?
18 Or down the hill now, yeah.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Because once you go -- Villanova's downhill.

21 Q. Okay. And then when you got off at the platform, you said
22 you saw sparks prior to dropping the pans?

23 A. Yeah. Well, the sparks, the sparks was with the -- right
24 before the bang. And before I could say anything, the bang and I
25 was like go and lower the pantograph because we were waiting on to

1 hear -- we had called -- I think I called -- he called Amtrak and
2 asked about lowering them and I -- they wasn't answering fast
3 enough, so I was like drop them.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. You know what I mean, there's no -- I mean, it's going to be
6 a wait for them, but if we got to drop them, we got to drop them,
7 it takes away the power, you know?

8 Q. Do you know, do you have any idea where the sparks were
9 coming from --

10 (Crosstalk.)

11 MR. SMITH: The back, it was coming from the back, it was up
12 near the pantograph.

13 MR. GRAUBARD: Near, but not -- okay.

14 MR. SMITH: Yeah. It wasn't down below.

15 MR. GRAUBARD: Okay. Okay, that's all I have, thank you.

16 BY MR. SHERRY:

17 Q. Rick Sherry, FRA. Could you clearly see the pantograph on
18 the last married pair?

19 A. No.

20 Q. You couldn't see it?

21 A. No, there was too much smoke back there.

22 Q. So you don't know if it was up or down?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Well, it had to be up because the lights were on when I --

1 when I put the handbrake on, I believe, so it would have to be up
2 for the lights to be on.

3 Q. You had that battery backup, so that's --

4 A. Oh, well, I don't know.

5 Q. How many faults did you reset?

6 A. From what I can recall, it was like maybe three lights lit up
7 in each one.

8 Q. This is at Villanova?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. The two cars, yeah, I think it was the -- not mistaken, it
12 was the fourth and fifth car.

13 Q. Fourth and fifth car?

14 A. Yeah, I think it was the fourth and fifth car.

15 Q. The consist went 324/325, that's the first married pair and
16 the second one was 418/417, that was the second married pair,
17 third married pair was 114/113, that's how the consist went. So
18 you're saying --

19 A. It could've been -- it could -- I believe it was 117/114, I
20 believe. It could be -- it could've been the two before that, but
21 I -- I set -- I reset two cars.

22 Q. You reset two cars.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Let's just go -- if you can recall, I don't want --

25 A. Yeah, two cars, yeah. I don't know which ones they were.

1 Q. And then you went back up to tell your engineer you reset two
2 faults.

3 A. I called him on the walkie, I believe.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And I told him to see if he can get power.

6 Q. And at that time after you reset them, that's when the power
7 came back on for him?

8 A. He said he can get power, it felt like he can pull, so I said
9 hold on a second, let me get up here and make sure everything's
10 closed up and actually, actually from my recollection, I didn't
11 even go all the way up, I knew people were standing out and they
12 were -- I was telling them through the -- assistant conductors
13 close the traps (ph.) because I know they let people off, so they
14 were standing there, so I just looked out the door and seen
15 (indiscernible) getting on, somebody getting on because we're
16 ready to start moving, so I think maybe one or two people got back
17 on, closed the traps up, then I let my conductor know -- I mean,
18 my engineer know we can -- we can move.

19 MR. SHERRY: At this time I have no further questions.

20 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

21 Q. Todd Kraholik with the NTSB. How often do you have to reset
22 cars like that, the lights?

23 A. Me, not often.

24 Q. Not often, okay. Do you feel comfortable doing it, do you
25 feel like you have the training to do it or did your engineer have

1 to help you, how did you --

2 A. Well, he showed me, when he did the first two, the first car,
3 whatever he went to, I think the second car, he showed me the --
4 there's only one button to push to clear it.

5 Q. All right. And if SEPTA's got a new policy coming out, how
6 do you know about the new policies that come out? Procedures or
7 policies, how do you know about them?

8 A. Well, they come out every week and they're even in our
9 passenger services office, on our laptops, it's something we have
10 to require every -- we have to look at every week.

11 Q. Okay. And does anybody ever go over those with you, your
12 bulletins?

13 A. Well, you have to go over them yourself and look at them
14 yourself.

15 Q. What happens if you have a question with them?

16 A. Then you can ask your supervisor, the union --
17 (Noise interference.)

18 MR. SMITH: -- back office you can call up here, if you have
19 to, the training department.

20 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

21 Q. I gotcha. So we had two previous fires, one in February and
22 I think one a couple months after that, are you aware of any
23 procedure that came out in regards to those two?

24 A. I'm not aware, no.

25 Q. And when you run into problems, who reports that to dispatch,

1 is that you or is that the engineer?

2 A. If I run into a problem, I report it to him and then he
3 reports it to dispatch, if he runs into a problem, he reports it
4 to dispatch --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- and then relays it back to me.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. He's not --

9 Q. And how receptive has dispatch been for that, do you know?

10 A. I don't understand what you mean when you say --

11 Q. So let's say if you have problems and he calls it in, does
12 the dispatcher seem to get back to him or help him or get --

13 A. Oh, yeah. They come on to help as much as they can, if not,
14 they'll get mechanical on the phone.

15 Q. Okay. So they'll call mechanical if they need it?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. And there was -- did mechanical come out that day?

18 A. Not when we had the train, no.

19 Q. Okay, did it come out prior to --

20 A. I'm not -- I think they met the team before they got it to
21 us, I'm not sure.

22 MR. KRAHOLIK: I don't have any further questions right now.

23 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay.

24 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

25 Q. Now you're saying that you think -- during your job briefing

1 or your turnover with the inbound crew, did they say that the
2 mechanical met them, do you recall?

3 A. I can't recall, I know they said they had trouble and they
4 had to reset it a couple times, I believe.

5 Q. Okay. And then what radio channel were you on when you told
6 the engineer to drop the pan there at Paoli? Were you guys on
7 SEPTA or were you on Amtrak?

8 A. Amtrak.

9 Q. Amtrak?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Okay. And then how are your portable radios, does it --
12 like, when you have a six-car train, is it pretty -- can you talk
13 to the engineer on the head end pretty easy?

14 A. You can talk to him. Sometimes you can't hear real good, but
15 you can pretty much talk to him back and forth.

16 Q. Okay. And then --

17 A. If you're in a bad spot, sometimes it don't, though.

18 Q. And how about the emergency, did -- did anyone -- did you
19 guys call for emergency, emergency, emergency, call 9-1-1, how did
20 -- how did that all take place, do you guys --

21 A. When he called and told them that the train is smoking, they
22 immediately said we're sending out the fire department.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. They didn't want to -- they didn't want it to go any further.

25 Q. Okay. So you reported to the engineer, the engineer told the

1 dispatcher and they had someone --

2 A. Well, we were both standing there. After I told him about
3 the smoke, he called and told them the train is smoking severely,
4 it's getting worse and they said we're sending the fire department
5 out --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- and EMS.

8 Q. Perfect.

9 A. They asked if anybody else was on the train, we told them no,
10 we got everybody off.

11 Q. Okay. Perfect. And then at -- I think you talked about this
12 earlier, but at Villanova, you guys sat there for I don't know how
13 long.

14 A. About 15, 20 minutes.

15 Q. And there were some passengers that just got off --

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. -- and took their own --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- found their own stuff and then you just had the last four
20 passengers --

21 A. No, it was more than that, it was four when we got to Paoli.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. Along the way people got off.

24 Q. Okay, okay.

25 A. Different stops.

1 MR. BACHMEIER: Okay. That's all I got.

2 Matt?

3 MR. POWELL: No questions for me.

4 MR. BACHMEIER: Shandel?

5 BY MS. WILLIAMS:

6 Q. Shandel Williams. Hank, I just want you to clarify
7 something, I thought you said that half the people got back onto
8 the consist?

9 A. About three or four people, not half the people. It was
10 about maybe 10 people got off, 10, 15 people, maybe more.

11 Q. Okay, let me clarify, at Paoli?

12 A. No, at Villanova when we were sitting --

13 Q. Okay, now at Paoli when you were sitting, when you guys were
14 sitting at the platform.

15 A. People got off because we stopped, it was a stop.

16 Q. Right, a regular, regular station there.

17 A. A lot of people got off, they were getting off Paoli.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. But when we -- when everything was transpiring, it was like
20 maybe three or four people were still on the train.

21 Q. Okay, and then those were the ones that you guys got out.

22 A. Right.

23 Q. Okay, but nobody got back on after --

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. No, no.

2 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay, just making sure I was -- had clarified
3 that. That's all I have.

4 BY MR. GRAUBARD:

5 Q. Dave Graubard, FRA. How many times did you reset the faults
6 in those cars from the time you took it until Paoli?

7 A. Just the one time because I didn't have time to do it at
8 Paoli because --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- once I seen the smoke there was no purpose in doing that
11 because -- you know.

12 Q. Yeah, it's already -- yeah. And I just want to make sure I
13 heard you right, you had to reset it on both the 417 and the 114?

14 A. I believe those were the two cars. I know it was two cars --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- and they were towards the back, so --

17 Q. Okay. Overall, do you get a lot of problems with the
18 Silverliner IV's, are they, I mean --

19 A. I mean, we -- us per se, we haven't had a lot of problems --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- with my trains, my trains are pretty -- run pretty
22 smoothly. Has there been problems with the Silverliner IV's,
23 yeah, but not -- I haven't experienced a bunch.

24 MR. GRAUBARD: Okay. That's all I have, thank you.

25 BY MR. SHERRY:

1 Q. Rick Sherry, FRA. So you said you reset two faults, prior to
2 that, you -- with your engineer and he reset a fault, too?

3 A. Yeah, he reset one up to -- I mean, I think it was maybe the
4 second car. The second -- second car, yeah.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And it didn't do anything, so it didn't move. So once we did
7 that, he walked back up to the front and was talking to Amtrak
8 again, letting them know it didn't work, whatever, and so at that
9 point, they was like well, did you -- did you set the other cars,
10 so he was like well, let me go back and do it and I said I'll go
11 do it, you showed me, I'll go look, you know, that's when I walked
12 back and everything broke loose at that point.

13 Q. So at Paoli, you said four passengers were left on the first
14 and second car when you evacuated them --

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. -- but when you pulled into Paoli and you were saying that
17 was a passenger stop, more people got off that because it was
18 their regular stop.

19 A. Right.

20 Q. Do you know how many total that were on and how many got off?

21 A. Maybe 10, maybe. Approximately.

22 Q. So 14 people you're saying that were on that train.

23 A. At that point, yeah.

24 Q. Gotcha.

25 A. Not totally, but at that stop, yeah, 14, maybe.

1 MR. SHERRY: No further questions.

2 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

3 Q. Todd with the NTSB. So I just want to -- this boom you
4 heard, this noise you heard, you had already came into the station
5 at Paoli and you were stopped and were the passengers off at that
6 point?

7 A. Um-hum, yes.

8 Q. And you were trying to move at that point, when it went or
9 you were just --

10 A. No, we -- once we got the passengers off, closed the doors,
11 train's not moving, again.

12 Q. Right.

13 A. So that's when we -- I believe I opened the doors back up and
14 that's when we started doing everything, you know, trying to get
15 -- talking and him, he didn't even -- I don't think he went back
16 to reset the first car again, I said let me go back and check
17 myself, that's when I seen the smoke, so at that point, it's -- it
18 was smoking severely.

19 Q. Right, and that's when you heard the bang, is that --

20 A. No, the bang wasn't until we got all -- everybody off, staff,
21 passengers, we were standing on the platform, waiting for Amtrak
22 to tell us, give us the go-ahead and drop the pans, boom. And I
23 said drop the pans --

24 Q. I gotcha.

25 A. -- at that point.

1 Q. I gotcha, I gotcha, okay. I'm with you. And then how do you
2 know how many people you have on your train, customer-wise,
3 passenger-wise, how do you know how many people are on there?

4 A. Well, when I leave, when we leave Center City stations, we
5 are to walk through the train, count the passengers, leaving
6 Center City and prior to getting to Center City, so when we left
7 Center City, I know how many passengers are there and
8 approximately, you can see how many people are basically getting
9 on and off, you know how many people are on the train and how many
10 people get off. Some people don't even get off at a station, it's
11 not -- there's -- nobody's stop, so I know we had a lot of people
12 that night, so -- we normally -- going home, we have maybe 40
13 people sometimes.

14 Q. I gotcha.

15 A. Not a lot.

16 Q. I gotcha.

17 A. On that train, you know.

18 MR. KRAHOLIK: Right, I gotcha. I don't have any further
19 questions.

20 BY MR. BACHMEIER:

21 Q. Regarding the faults, I know you said something about you
22 seen like three lights and you reset the two cars, was it just one
23 fault that you set or was it no power?

24 A. What do you mean?

25 Q. What reset button did you hit?

1 A. It's a reset button that sets the faults --

2 Q. Okay, sets --

3 A. -- all together.

4 Q. Sets all --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. It resets all the faults.

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Okay, okay. Hank, do you have anything you would like to add
9 to our interview?

10 A. No.

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

13 A. Sure.

14 MR. BACHMEIER: On behalf of the NTSB, I'd like to thank you
15 for taking the time out and hopefully everything works out with
16 your chest. Thank you for coming in.

17 (Whereupon, at 2:42 p.m., the interview concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

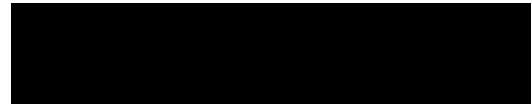
IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE ABOARD SEPTA TRAIN NEAR THE
CRUM LYNNE STATION IN RIDLEY PARK,
PENNSYLVANIA ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025
Interview of Henry "Hank" Smith, Jr.

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.



—
Karen D. Martini
Transcriber