

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Investigation of:)
SEPTA Fire) Accident No.: RRD25FR006
)

Interview of: DAVID GUZMAN, Locomotive Engineer

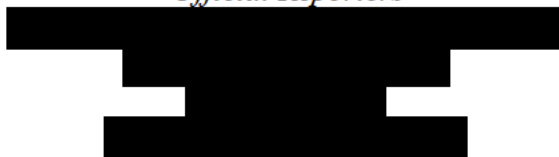
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Place: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Date: September 26, 2025

HERITAGE REPORTING CORPORATION

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:)
SEPTA Fire) Accident No.: RRD25FR006
)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Friday,
September 26, 2025

Interview of: DAVID GUZMAN, Locomotive Engineer

Heritage [REDACTED] poration

APPEARANCES:

TODD KRAHOLIK, NTSB Assistant IIC

RICHARD SHERRY, Federal Railroad Administration
(FRA)

RICH MAHON, Assistant Chief Officer, SEPTA
Railroad Operations

JOHN POINSETTE, Director of Railroad Operations
and Yards

JEFF THOMPSON, Senior Director, Railroad Vehicle
Maintenance

DON HILL, BLET, Engineer Rep.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. KRAHOLIK: My name's Todd Kraholik. I am the
3 NTSB Assistant IIC for this incident. We're here
4 today on September 26, 2025, in Philadelphia,
5 Pennsylvania, to conduct an interview with David
6 Guzman, who works for SEPTA.

7 This interview is in conjunction with NTSB
8 investigation of a fire that happened on September 25,
9 2025, near Grove -- Gravers Station. The NTSB
10 Reference Number is RRD25FR006.

11 The purpose of this investigation is to increase
12 safety, not to assign fault, blame, or liability.

13 Before we begin our interview and questions,
14 let's go around the table and introduce ourselves.
15 Please spell your last name, who you represent, and
16 your title.

17 I'd like to remind everybody please speak clearly
18 so we can get an accurate recording.

19 I'll start off and pass it to my right.

20 Again, my name is Todd Kraholik. The spelling of
21 my last name is K-R-A-H-O-L-I-K, and I'm the NTSB
22 Assistant IIC.

23 MR. SHERRY: My name is Richard Sherry. Last
24 name's spelled S-H-E-R-R-Y. I am the FRA IIC for this
25 investigation.

1 MR. MAHON: My name is Rich Mahon. M-A-H-O-N.
2 And I am the Assistant Chief Officer for SEPTA's
3 Railroad Operations.

4 MR. POINSETTE: My name is John Poinsette.
5 P-O-I-N-S-E-T-T-E. I am the Director of Railroad
6 Operations and Yards.

7 MR. GUZMAN: I'm David Guzman, G-U-Z-M-A-N. I'm
8 a Locomotive Engineer.

9 MR. HILL: Don Hill, representing Mr. Guzman.
10 H-I-L-L. For the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers
11 and Trainmen.

12 MR. THOMPSON: Jeff Thompson. T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N.
13 Senior Director of Railroad Vehicle Maintenance.

14 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. Thanks, everybody.

15 David, do we have your permission to record our
16 discussion with you today?

17 MR. GUZMAN: Yes.

18 MR. KRAHOLIK: And do you understand the
19 transcription will be part of a public docket and, as
20 such, we can't guarantee any confidentiality?

21 MR. GUZMAN: Yes.

22 MR. KRAHOLIK: And, as we discussed, you have a
23 representative today, Don Hill, is that correct?

24 MR. GUZMAN: That is correct.

25 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. Everybody please

1 clearly announce your name and title before you ask a
2 question.

3 INTERVIEW OF DAVID GUZMAN

4 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

5 Q So, David, can you give us a synopsis of your
6 work experience? What's your current job, and how
7 long have you been doing it?

8 A Well, I've been a locomotive engineer for 27
9 years. My synopsis is I get people to their station
10 safely and properly. Safety is always our main
11 concern, of course, and that's about it. I've been
12 operating all the equipment. I'm diesel qualified,
13 ACS qualified, Silverliner IVs and Vs. And that's
14 basically it.

15 Q So 27 years is roughly 1998. What year did you
16 hire out with SEPTA? Do you remember?

17 A '97.

18 Q What did you do prior? Were you a conductor,
19 assistant conductor?

20 A No, I went through class immediately. We were
21 one of those that just went into NORAC and done PCs.

22 Q Okay. I got you.

23 A I'm sorry, I did PA for 40 days when a strike.
24 Safety PA or whatever.

25 Q What does that stand for? What does PA stand

1 for?

2 A Passenger Assistant.

3 Q Okay. That's like an assistant conductor? Is

4 that --

5 A Yeah, assistant, yeah.

6 Q Okay.

7 A I'm sorry.

8 Q No, no, I'm good. I just want to make sure I had

9 it right.

10 A Yeah.

11 Q So, on the 24th, you picked up the train -- I'm

12 going to butcher his name -- Mr. Migliarese? Does

13 that sound right?

14 A Chris? Okay. Yes.

15 Q Is that who you got your --

16 A Yes.

17 Q From Chris? That's who you got it?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And where did you get the train at?

20 A Suburban Station.

21 Q And --

22 A I'm sorry. What train number is this? I'm

23 sorry, you know, because I run five trains a day.

24 Q I got you.

25 A Can you tell me what train number it is?

1 MR. KRAHOLIK: I'm going to pause this real
2 quick.

3 MR. GUZMAN: I'm sorry. I apologize.

4 (Discussion held off the record.)

5 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

6 Q All right, Mr. Guzman, Train 722 you think you
7 had gotten from Engineer Chris, does that sound right?

8 A Yes, that is correct.

9 Q And you got on that train at where?

10 A Suburban Station.

11 Q And when you got to Suburban Station, was that
12 train crew still on the train when you got there?

13 A Did they stay on the train? No.

14 Q So there was nobody on the train when you were
15 there as far as crew members? When you got on at
16 Suburban Station, was the previous crew still on?

17 A They get off that train and I get on.

18 Q Okay. Were they there when you were there, or
19 they were already gone?

20 A They were there.

21 Q Did they -- did you have, like, a job briefing
22 with them? Did you talk to them?

23 A Yes.

24 Q What did they talk about on that job briefing?

25 A Basic stuff. Good on the brakes, no Form B's,

1 how many cars we have. Sometimes they tell you how
2 many are open. That's about it.

3 Q Open means available for passengers?

4 A Yeah. For passengers, correct.

5 Q Gotcha. But, on the 722 train, when you got on
6 it, he didn't tell you of any defects? Was there any
7 defects mentioned?

8 A No. No.

9 Q Did he mention fault lights at any point or no on
10 that as well?

11 A No, he didn't.

12 Q Okay. And when you got on it, what do you do
13 when you get on that train? Do you have to do, like,
14 a brake test or inspection or anything?

15 A We do, we charge up our system, braking system,
16 and we just wait for a two from the conductor. After
17 we get the two, we have to do a running brake test.

18 Q And on the 722, you did a running brake test?

19 A Yes.

20 Q And there was nothing, no problems when you did
21 the running brake test?

22 A We actually feel that the brakes are applied. We
23 look at the gauges, make sure it gives you a
24 indication of the brakes are applied. So then we
25 release, go to the next station.

1 Q And all that was normal? Everything like that
2 was normal as always?

3 A Yeah. Yes, sir.

4 Q And you didn't see any fault lights when you got
5 on it?

6 A I didn't really look, to be honest with you.

7 Q Okay. And are you required to look? I'm only
8 asking because I don't know. Is there a rule
9 requiring you to look?

10 A Not that I know of.

11 Q Would it be rare for you to see a fault light on,
12 or is that a common occurrence?

13 A It's very common.

14 Q Is that how you might have, if there was a light
15 on, would you say you may have missed it because you
16 see one all the time and you just don't take notice of
17 it, or you think you didn't see one at all?

18 A That's correct.

19 Q You think you didn't see one?

20 A My brain just blocks it out or doesn't pay any
21 attention.

22 Q Okay. So you -- I don't want to speak for you.
23 I guess I'm asking you, so as long as the train's
24 running normal, that's what you're concerned with
25 basically, is --

1 A Basically, yes.

2 Q -- the light can be on or off, but as long as

3 it's operating good --

4 A Right.

5 Q -- you're --

6 A That is correct.

7 Q And when you operated the 722, was it operating

8 correct? Was everything good?

9 A Yeah, very good.

10 Q And you go up to --

11 A Running correctly, yes.

12 Q You take it from Suburban and you go up and you

13 flip around and come on the 729?

14 A Right.

15 Q And where do you do that at again? I'm sorry.

16 A I do that at Chestnut Hill East.

17 Q Chestnut Hill.

18 A Right now, we're in the yard, a 3 Yard, at

19 Chestnut Hill East.

20 Q And when you flip around, do you run a Y, or do

21 you actually change ends on that train?

22 A We change ends.

23 Q And when you changed ends, did you have to do

24 anything special, like a brake test when you swapped

25 ends?

1 A Yeah, yeah.

2 Q Same kind of thing, a running brake test?

3 A We do a A1, AEB. What is it? A1. And then we
4 do a running brake test after that.

5 Q And what is the A1? Tell me -- talk to me about
6 what that -- what is that?

7 A It's a normal procedure of in terminals or turn-
8 around stations, core areas or whatever, we do a brake
9 test to make sure the brakes are running properly,
10 we've got power basically, so --

11 Q How do you --

12 A Do you want me to explain it, how it's done?

13 Q Yeah, yeah, because I -- yeah, I'm not very
14 familiar.

15 A All right. You've got to apply the brakes.

16 Q Mm-hmm.

17 A Okay? You release. Of course, it's charging the
18 train. You have it in a release position. You let it
19 fully charge, 125 to 140 main reservoir, okay? You
20 get a buzzer from the -- hopefully, you got a release
21 in the back. You get a buzzer to apply. You have 20
22 pounds of brake cylinder pressure, okay? He gives you
23 another buzzer. Put it in release. You take your
24 foot off the dead man to make sure it's working
25 properly. Then, after that, you charge up again and

1 you bump for power.

2 Q Okay.

3 A And you're not doing your running brake test.
4 The test ain't complete until you finish your running
5 brake test.

6 Q Gotcha.

7 A You do that after he gives you two. You've got
8 the train loaded, and you can proceed to do a running
9 brake test.

10 Q Gotcha. Okay, understand. Makes sense. And at
11 that point in time on the other end, which would be
12 your rear car coming in, you didn't see a light on
13 that one either when you left?

14 A I didn't, no. Like I said, 99 percent of the
15 time my brain is blocking it out. It's not like
16 something I tend to, you know, look at the light.
17 Most of the time we're looking at the brakes being
18 applied, being released, you know, we're observing
19 sometimes the gauges to make sure the dynamic brake is
20 working. Other than that, you know, me personally, I
21 could say I don't look.

22 Q I got you. And --

23 A Not every engineer is the same. You get
24 different engineers, they look, they don't look, you
25 know.

1 Q So we've been up here, I think this is the sixth
2 fire or smoke incident we've been to. Has anything
3 come out since the first one, any kind of new
4 bulletins or anything? Has there been any kind of
5 bulletin come out?

6 A Yes. We were supposed to report faults and
7 DBL -- can I say DBL, or do you want me to say the
8 whole thing? Brake, Dynamic Brake Light.

9 Q And how did you receive that? How did you get
10 that bulletin?

11 A I got it from a manager, I don't remember which
12 one.

13 Q So they --

14 A They were here in the morning time. I don't know
15 the -- I don't got the specific date itself, but,
16 yeah, there was.

17 Q So a manager came out and briefed you on what the
18 new rules are, I guess?

19 A Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

20 Q I got you. And did you have any questions with
21 it, or did you understand that?

22 A I understood it. It was written down.

23 Q And is that a rare occurrence you see a manager,
24 or do you see a transportation manager pretty often?

25 A It's a rare occurrence.

1 Q You said rare?

2 A What are we talking about? Supervisors? We see
3 supervisors every day, yes. Managers, you know,
4 they're doing other stuff, so we rarely see -- I think
5 I haven't seen him in 10 years, but, you know, it's
6 over in -- they're a different building. You know,
7 it's --

8 Q Right.

9 A You know what I'm trying to say?

10 Q Right, right, right. I got you.

11 A I'm in Roberts. He could be in, you know,
12 somewhere else.

13 Q Right. So --

14 A I'm apologizing. Are you a manager? I see him
15 every day. How about that?

16 Q Okay.

17 A So I don't know if he's considered management. I
18 apologize. Let me correct myself.

19 Q Okay. So you see a manager every day?

20 A Yes, I do.

21 Q So not him specifically, but any manager, does
22 any manager ever come do compliance testing on you?
23 Do they ever say, I watched you get on that car
24 properly, or I watched you get off the car properly,
25 or I watched you do your running brake test properly?

1 Do you ever see -- it can be any test. Any test, does
2 anybody ever talk to you about doing a test on you?

3 A Not really.

4 Q Okay.

5 A Can I say that they do compliance tests every
6 year, and I think a rules person comes out once a year
7 and then you get a supervisor that rides once a year.

8 Q Right. So you get a --

9 A And then twice a year you get seen, and they make
10 sure you're doing your job properly.

11 Q Okay. So twice a year you actually have somebody
12 physically riding with you?

13 A Right, exactly.

14 Q And they do your certification card, I assume, on
15 one of those rides.

16 A Certifications. They sign the back of your
17 license.

18 Q And then, other than that, you don't really have
19 one interact with you too much?

20 A No, not really.

21 Q I got you.

22 A I'm a good employee. It's a joke.

23 Q Well, if you did something wrong, would you
24 expect them to come talk to you about it?

25 A Oh, definitely, definitely.

1 Q So has anybody ever came up to you and said you
2 weren't, in any compliance test failures, has anybody
3 ever came up and told you that?

4 A Not that I'm aware of.

5 MR. KRAHOLIK: Gotcha, gotcha. I don't have any
6 questions. I'm going to pass it to Jeff over there.

7 MR. THOMPSON: Yeah, I don't have any questions.

8 MR. KRAHOLIK: Say your name.

9 MR. POINSETTE: John Poinsette, Director of
10 Railroad Operations.

11 BY MR. POINSETTE:

12 Q You cleared up the OPM ride that you receive
13 yearly, ride management, and also you go to recert,
14 recertification classes yearly?

15 A Yes.

16 Q The block classes --

17 A That is correct.

18 Q -- yearly and we go over hot topics yearly?

19 A Yeah, that's correct.

20 Q And we also go through all the rules as a
21 refresher yearly?

22 A Yeah, right. Yeah. That is correct.

23 MR. POINSETTE: All right. That's it.

24 MR. SHERRY: Rick Sherry, FRA.

25 //

1 BY MR. SHERRY:

2 Q I see that you picked this equipment up at
3 Suburban Station. I know you guys do different bids
4 and everything like that. How many times are you ever
5 picking a piece of equipment up from a yard and/or an
6 outlying point?

7 A I'm on -- let's see. I got my first train -- I
8 operate five trains a day.

9 Q All right.

10 A I'm sorry, four trains, four trains a day.

11 Q All right. Four trains a day?

12 A Yeah.

13 Q Do you ever pick any up from an outlying point
14 and/or a yard, or are they all from --

15 A It's picked -- no. I'm out of Suburban.

16 Q You're out of Suburban?

17 A Right. So that means I don't touch yards. I
18 start out of Suburban and I'm gone in Suburban.

19 Q And that equipment's usually already been
20 running, correct, when you get it?

21 A Yes, that is correct.

22 Q All right. On occurrence, I know you said you're
23 seasoned or so accustomed to seeing a fault light.

24 Can you recall in the course of a year when you get on
25 a piece of equipment at Suburban that that light is

1 always already on?

2 A No comment. Can I say that?

3 MR. HILL: Yeah. Speak the truth.

4 MR. GUZMAN: All right.

5 MR. HILL: Speak the truth.

6 MR. GUZMAN: I would say I see a light maybe two
7 times a day. If I see it, if I don't notice it, it's,
8 you know, like I said, I block it out. It's something
9 normal to me.

10 BY MR. SHERRY:

11 Q Can you -- I mean, so if you're running four
12 trains a day, you're seeing the fault light on this
13 equipment 70 percent, 75 percent of the time, is that
14 what you're telling me percentage-wise?

15 A No, I operate for 50 percent.

16 Q Fifty percent of the time you see a fault light
17 on your equipment when you first get on it?

18 A Sometimes, yes.

19 Q Okay.

20 A I'm not saying it's every day.

21 Q Over the course --

22 A Yeah, yeah.

23 Q Just give me a one-year window.

24 A Oh, you're talking about one year --

25 Q A one-year window.

1 A Let's say 25 percent. I'm not going to go crazy
2 about it because some days you don't have a light.

3 Q Okay. So, over the course of a year, you get on
4 four trains five days a week, you see a fault light on
5 25 percent of the time?

6 A That's correct.

7 Q Okay. Are you aware of the MP-11 form?

8 A Yes, I am.

9 Q Are you aware that they're going strictly
10 electronic?

11 A Yes, I am.

12 Q Have you been trained how to put a MP-11 form in
13 electronically?

14 A No, I haven't. I haven't been trained.

15 Q You have not been trained?

16 A But I know how to fill it out.

17 Q Okay. But SEPTA's not offered you training to
18 show you how to fill out an MP-11 form correctly?

19 A That is correct. I tried to write one the other
20 day. It wasn't working either. So I don't know.
21 It's just spinning. It was just spinning. You know,
22 I don't know. I don't know if there was too many
23 people on it or --

24 Q Also, are you -- have you been -- how do you get
25 your information of these bulletins coming up, this

1 push for these MP-11s?

2 A We have a tablet that we carry. We're required
3 to open it every day.

4 Q Are you aware of, if you see a fault light or any
5 defect, whether it got fixed or resolved, that you're
6 still required to put a MP-11 form in every time this
7 happens, occurs?

8 A Can you clarify that for me? Like, can you give
9 me an example if you can? I'm sorry.

10 Q Would you like me to read that, or would you want
11 to read that?

12 A Yeah. Oh, yeah, I've read this, yes. And what
13 was the question again?

14 Q All right. So you're aware of that document?

15 A Yes, I am aware of this.

16 Q All right. So per your last answer, in the last
17 three weeks to four weeks, you should have put in 25
18 percent of them, correct, and happening?

19 A That is correct.

20 Q And have you done so?

21 A Like I said, the problem with the site is I
22 couldn't write it out.

23 Q All right. Have you told them that?

24 A Or type it up I should say.

25 Q Have you discussed that with one of your train

1 masters or one of your supervisors that you were
2 unable to do so?

3 A No.

4 Q Okay.

5 A And I did it at Suburban, which is one of the
6 points that you can update your computer. And I even
7 had it plugged in for a while, and it still just spun.

8 Q Okay.

9 A So I, you know --

10 MR. SHERRY: All right. At this time, I have no
11 further questions.

12 MR. GUZMAN: One more thing is that you cannot --
13 sometimes we don't find the MP-11 paper-wise in there.
14 They're not supplying it.

15 MR. SHERRY: Well, supposedly, per that document,
16 they are doing away with the paper ones --

17 MR. GUZMAN: I understand that, I understand
18 that. Right.

19 MR. SHERRY: -- if they have not already. So
20 what's the date on that? October 1? Okay.

21 MR. GUZMAN: You know, that should be a backup, I
22 don't know, if they're going --

23 MR. SHERRY: I have nothing else, Todd.

24 MR. KRAHOLIK: Todd Kraholik with NTSB.

25 //

1 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

2 Q Would you say that supervisors or SEPTA managers
3 are approachable? Like, are they, if you had a
4 problem or needed clarification on something, do you
5 feel like the managers could come up and talk to you,
6 you could go up to the manager and talk to them?

7 A Yes.

8 Q And you feel like you would get good feedback
9 or --

10 A Oh, definitely.

11 Q You don't think they'd retaliate against you or
12 anything like that or --

13 A I hope not.

14 Q I got you, I got you. Okay. Do you have
15 supervisor or managers' phone numbers? Like, if you
16 had a problem, could you get a hold of a supervisor or
17 manager?

18 A To give you an example, I called the supervisor,
19 Sino, Mark Sino. We had a problem with one of the
20 signals. I called him up. He made it happen. He
21 fixed it. So, yeah, they're very approachable.
22 They're very friendly.

23 MR. KRAHOLIK: Gotcha. Okay. I don't have any
24 further questions.

25 MR. THOMPSON: Jeff Thompson. No further

1 questions.

2 MR. POINSETTE: John Poinsette, Director,
3 Railroad Operations and Yards.

4 BY MR. POINSETTE:

5 Q Are you familiar, have you been shown the proper
6 way to fill out an MP-11 paper form, or are you
7 familiar with the process?

8 A I'm familiar with the process.

9 Q So did you attempt to fill out a paper form once
10 the electronic version didn't work?

11 A Did I? No, I don't think I had one on me. I was
12 off the train already. Like I said, we have so many
13 trains, I couldn't even remember the number. So, at
14 that time, I was talking to my conductor, and I said
15 I'll fill it out later. When I opened it up, you
16 know, like I said, it was just spinning. There's an
17 icon in the tablet that you hit, it's a MP-11 form,
18 and you just hit it, that's it, and it should come up,
19 but it didn't.

20 Q Roger that. So, when that didn't come up, the
21 next step would have been a paper.

22 A Yeah, I would assume, yeah.

23 Q All right. And from this time, you haven't done
24 that?

25 A That is correct.

1 MR. POINSETTE: Roger.

2 MR. SHERRY: Rick Sherry, FRA.

3 BY MR. SHERRY:

4 Q At no point in your run from start to finish did
5 you see a fault light on this train that you remember?

6 A Not that I remember, no.

7 MR. SHERRY: Okay. No further questions.

8 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. Do you have anything
9 you want to add, Mr. Guzman, anything you want to say,
10 any questions we didn't ask you we should have,
11 anything like that?

12 MR. GUZMAN: Let me have a minute with Don.

13 MR. KRAHOLIK: Sure.

14 (Discussion held off the record.)

15 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right.

16 MR. HILL: Yeah. This is Don Hill for
17 clarifications with the locomotive engineer, Mr.
18 Guzman.

19 BY MR. HILL:

20 Q You hired -- your job title when you hired with
21 SEPTA was as a locomotive engineer?

22 A That is correct.

23 Q Okay. And MP-11s, where are they located
24 primarily?

25 A Behind you in the cabinet and on the train

1 itself.

2 Q Okay. All right. So, if you're off the train,
3 you have no access to it?

4 A Exactly.

5 MR. HILL: Okay. That's all I have. Thanks.

6 MR. GUZMAN: Yeah.

7 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. Anything you want to
8 add, Mr. Guzman?

9 MR. GUZMAN: That's it.

10 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. If we have any follow-
11 up questions, do you mind if we contact you?

12 MR. GUZMAN: No.

13 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. On behalf of the NTSB,
14 thank you for your time and cooperation.

15 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
16 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

CASE TITLE: SEPTA Fire
ACCIDENT NO.: RRD25FR006
LOCATION: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
DATE: September 26, 2025

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the National Transportation Safety Board 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.

[REDACTED]

Marcia Thurmond

[REDACTED]

N.W.

Heritage [REDACTED] poration