

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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

Interview of: BILL WAMSLEY, Engineer

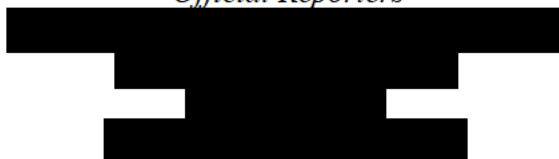
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Place: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Date: September 26, 2025

HERITAGE REPORTING CORPORATION

Official Reporters



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Friday,
September 26, 2025

Interview of: BILL WAMSLEY, Engineer

APPEARANCES:

TODD KRAHOLIK, NTSB Assistant IIC

RICHARD SHERRY, Federal Railroad Administration

JOHN POINSETTE, Director of Railroad Operations
and Yards

JEFF THOMPSON, Senior Director, Railroad Vehicle
Maintenance

DON HILL, BLET

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

2 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. My name is Todd
3 Kraholik. I am the NTSB Assistant IIC for this
4 accident. We are here today on September 26, 2025, in
5 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to conduct an interview
6 with Bill Wamsley, who works for SEPTA.

7 This interview is in conjunction with NTSB's
8 investigation of a fire that happened on September 25,
9 2025, at Gravers Station. The NTSB Accident Reference
10 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, let's
14 go around the table and introduce ourselves. Please
15 spell your last name, who you represent, and your
16 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 will 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. I am the NTSB
22 Assistant IIC.

23 MR. SHERRY: Richard Sherry. Last name is
24 spelled S-H-E-R-R-Y. FRA IIC for this investigation.

25 MR. POINSETTE: My name is John Poinsette. Last

Heritage [REDACTED] poration

1 name spelled P-O-I-N-S-E-T-T-E, Director of
2 Railroad Operations and Yards.

3 MR. WAMSLEY: Bill Wamsley, W-A-M-S-L-E-Y.
4 Engineer for SEPTA. I was operating Trains 730 and
5 737.

6 MR. HILL: Don Hill, H-I-L-L, representing the
7 engineer, BLET.

8 MR. THOMPSON: Jeff Thompson, T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N.
9 Senior Director, Railroad Vehicle Maintenance.

10 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right, Bill, do we have
11 permission to record our discussion with you today?

12 MR. WAMSLEY: Yes, you do.

13 MR. KRAHOLIK: You understand the transcription
14 will be part of a public docket, and as such, we can't
15 guarantee any confidentiality?

16 MR. WAMSLEY: Yes, I do.

17 MR. KRAHOLIK: And you have a representative
18 today. It's Don Hill, is that correct?

19 MR. WAMSLEY: Yes.

20 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right. Everybody please
21 clearly announce your name and title before
22 questioning, and we'll start.

23 INTERVIEW OF BILL WAMSLEY

24 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

25 Q Bill, can you give me a brief synopsis of your

Heritage [REDACTED] poration

1 work experience, taking up to your present job and how
2 long you've been in that job.

3 A Bill Wamsley, Engineer. Promoted as an engineer
4 for 12, 13 years doing this job.

5 Q And how long have you been with SEPTA?

6 A It'll be 15 years in the spring.

7 Q And were you a assistant conductor and then a
8 conductor? Is that the --

9 A Assistant conductor and then an engineer.

10 Q And on the 24th, you took Train 730, is that
11 correct?

12 A Yes, that is correct.

13 Q And where did you get on it at?

14 A Suburban Station.

15 Q And you took over -- for the engineer you took
16 over from, did you get a job briefing from him?

17 A Yes, I did.

18 Q Tell me what that job briefing entailed, please.

19 A He told me how many cars we had, if there were
20 any Form D's in effect, and told me the previous
21 signal, and told me the condition of the equipment was
22 good, it ran good.

23 Q All right. And when you get on that train, are
24 you required to do any, like, inspections or brake
25 tests or anything on that?

1 A When I take over for one that's running, I check
2 the paperwork, just pretty much every time you get on
3 you check the paperwork and then just a running brake
4 test we do.

5 Q I got you. Okay. And after you did the running
6 brake test, did a light, any kind of fault light come
7 on the screen or anything or on the panel?

8 A If I remember correctly, lights were on when I
9 got on.

10 Q Okay. And --

11 A Now, like I said, that's if I remember correctly.

12 Q I got you. Did the -- when -- did it go off at
13 any point in time, or did it stay on? Or, if you don't
14 know, you don't know.

15 A It stayed on.

16 Q It stayed on the whole time?

17 A Did not go off.

18 Q And when you get -- and you flop -- change ends
19 and go the other direction, it would have stayed on
20 that time too?

21 A It did stay on as well. I did try to reset it
22 when I was at Chestnut Hill East. When I came
23 through, I checked each of the panels to see what
24 faults were there and see if they were resettable.

25 Q And were they?

1 A The two no powers reset. The ground fault in one
2 of the cars did not reset. I tried resetting it with
3 the traction motor off and on, which will sometimes do
4 it.

5 Q I got you. Did you call any of this into the ROC
6 or dispatch or --

7 A No, I did not.

8 Q Okay. And when you get on trains, how often
9 would you say there's a fault light on the train?

10 A Eighty percent.

11 Q If you get a new operating procedure, a new
12 SOP or whatever we want to call it, how do you get
13 those?

14 A Somebody will usually make you aware of it. A
15 lot of times you'll get an email. Somebody did grab
16 me, one of the roadies grabbed me in the hallway and
17 said, hey, there's a new procedure out, make sure you
18 take a look at it. You know, it's available on the
19 tablet.

20 Q He said take a look at it, but he didn't go over
21 what it entailed?

22 A They were headed toward -- I was headed toward
23 the crew room, they were headed toward the platform
24 with arms full of paper, probably, my guess, is going
25 down to pass these things out.

1 Q I got you. So it was no instruction, just a --

2 A Just a quickie, just, you know, this is -- make
3 sure you take a look at it, it's new.

4 Q I got you. Is that a common thing? Would you
5 say that's common or not common?

6 A Not common. Usually you get, like I said, either
7 an email, we use a private page, an occasional, you
8 know, if something new comes out. Somebody will post.

9 Q And it's always on your tablet too, right? You
10 get it always in the tablet or not?

11 A Yes if you can find it.

12 Q Find the tablet or find it in the tablet?

13 A Find it in the tablet.

14 Q Got you.

15 A I'm sorry.

16 Q So it's not user-friendly you would say? Is that
17 an accurate statement? The tablets.

18 A Shall we say it's not consistent.

19 Q Got you. Meaning you get circles that spin, like
20 it's not having --

21 A Oh, yeah, when you're trying to do a repair form,
22 sometimes it loads, sometimes it doesn't, sometimes the
23 circle spins for a day, but it's not consistent where
24 they put the things.

25 Q I got you. Did anybody train you on the tablets,

1 or you just get them one day and expected to use them?

2 A No, we had a training thing on them a couple
3 years ago. But they've made changes, and often the
4 changes aren't brought to you.

5 Q I got you. I got you. And you reset all these
6 fault lights before, I'm assuming that you've done it
7 before. Did you get training on that, or is that
8 something you've learned since you've been an engineer
9 for such a long time?

10 A It was all gone over in equipment class, yeah.

11 Q Recently or --

12 A Fourteen years ago.

13 Q Okay.

14 A Thirteen, 14 years ago. We do get some
15 refreshers from time to time, you know, some new
16 procedures. But most of it is things that you just
17 learn out here.

18 Q And if you have a problem, are you supposed to
19 report it any kind of way, like, on a piece of paper
20 or something?

21 A Supposed to fill out a repair form.

22 Q Is that an MP-11? Is that what that's called?

23 A That would be an MP-11, yes.

24 Q Okay. And did you happen to fill one out this
25 day or no?

1 A I did not.

2 Q Okay. Do you fill them out common or not common
3 to fill them out?

4 A I try to fill them out as time allows. They've
5 taken spin time away from us. You walk from one end
6 of the train to the other, it's time to go. You know,
7 you stop and you start checking in the boxes to see
8 what could be reset, what's got a red light on, you're
9 leaving late. I don't think spin time was originally
10 put in there for you to sit with your feet up. I
11 think it was put in there to allow you time to do what
12 you need to do from one train to the next.

13 Q How much spin time do you get?

14 A It varies on where you are.

15 Q I got you. Are we talking, like, two minutes, or
16 is it more like 15 minutes?

17 A It's more like 15 minutes.

18 Q I got you.

19 A But, in 15 minutes, you've got to go from one end
20 of the train to the other. If you have a fault light
21 on, you have to check each box walking through the
22 train. Not just one that tells you where it is.
23 You've got to check each one. If there's more than
24 one, you reset this one, reset that one. Now this is
25 if it's a quickie, like a no power. We just open a

1 door and push a button. Other stuff you've got to go
2 out into the outside boxes for, and there is just no
3 time to do it.

4 Q I got you.

5 A Or you're next to a platform and it's
6 inaccessible.

7 Q I got you. Okay. Do you see transportation
8 managers often out and about?

9 A No. I figured that was a good thing. If they
10 weren't looking for me, that was a good thing.

11 Q Have you ever had any interaction with, other
12 than the quick brief thing the other day with the new
13 SOP, have you ever had any interaction with them?

14 A Sure.

15 Q And do they seem approachable?

16 A Oh, absolutely.

17 Q I got you. Has any of them ever done any kind of
18 compliance testing with you?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Is that an often thing? Do you see that a lot or
21 no?

22 A Not very often.

23 Q And when you -- when they do a compliance check
24 on you, do they tell you you pass or fail?

25 A Yeah, they'll usually tell you at the end. You

1 know, I was doing this compliance check on you, I
2 wanted to check your books, do you have proper
3 footwear? Okay, everything's good. Let me get your
4 account number. You're good, you passed.

5 MR. KRAHOLIK: I got you. I don't have anything
6 further. I'm going to pass it to Jeff.

7 MR. THOMPSON: Jeff Thompson. No questions.

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

10 BY MR. POINSETTE:

11 Q Do you know if your conductor was aware that
12 there was a fault light lit on the train?

13 A I do not know.

14 Q Okay. And being as though you had an electronic
15 issue with your tablet, did you try to fill out a
16 paper MP-11?

17 A No.

18 MR. POINSETTE: Okay. No more questions.

19 MR. SHERRY: Richard Sherry, FRA.

20 BY MR. SHERRY:

21 Q I see your years as an engineer, and it seems
22 like you know a lot about this equipment of checking
23 different panels and even knowing about where to do
24 things underneath the train in the boxes, and it seems
25 like you want to do what's right for SEPTA and get

1 passengers to where they're going on time. Do you feel
2 that's a job that you should be doing or you should
3 pass it off to the Mechanical Department? And just in
4 your opinion.

5 A Hey, it would be great if when we got on there
6 nothing was lit, everything worked as it was supposed
7 to, the fault lights had bulbs in them would be nice
8 rather than the bulbs being removed. It makes it very
9 difficult for lights to light if there's no bulb in
10 there. But I think what we need to do is we need to
11 all work together on it.

12 Q So you're aware of the new procedures with the
13 fault lights, call them into dispatch and also filling
14 out an MP-11, is that correct?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Is there a reason that did not get done?

17 A I was told the equipment was good. We took it up
18 already. It had probably been running like that all
19 day if not all week. And in the past, you fill out a
20 paper MP-11 form, you turn it in, and you get the
21 equipment back two weeks later and the same stuff is
22 wrong with it. You get frustrated.

23 Q I totally understand that. And so is that the
24 reason that you didn't do the right procedures, because
25 you were frustrated?

1 A I was short on time.

2 Q If you stayed over, would they have paid you for
3 your time?

4 A Yes. And the people who were trying to make
5 their connection in Trenton would have said thank you
6 very much, we'll be sleeping in the station.

7 Q So you're saying -- I didn't understand. Like,
8 when you're short on time, like, to get to the stop or
9 you're short on time for, like --

10 A You're short on time to have -- you can't fill a
11 paper form out while you're running the train. It
12 can't be done. It's electrical.

13 Q Are you able to call your conductor on the radio
14 and bring them up and have them fill the MP-11 out?

15 A No. They've got -- they have their hands full
16 already. And they've got passengers on and off. It's
17 the last train of the night. It has a tendency to be
18 not the best passengers.

19 Q Okay. But, as you're moving, does your conductor
20 also have a tablet that they could put an electronic
21 MP-11 in?

22 A Yeah, they probably could.

23 Q All right. Do you think that would be a course
24 of action moving forward that you would maybe take
25 that action and ask the conductor to put that in?

1 A Probably not. Probably not. I would probably
2 get up to my finish point and sit there and do it
3 myself.

4 Q Okay.

5 A Like I did when I brought the stuff in that they
6 pulled off our rail yesterday that I had trouble with.

7 Q Okay. Yeah. We're trying to make a big push here
8 to get these things corrected. I understand your
9 frustrations of the past, and we're just trying to
10 right this ship, and we could really use your help in
11 righting the ship and all you guys' help of righting
12 the ship.

13 When you get on equipment, you got this on at
14 Suburban Station. Is that pretty much your normal
15 route, Suburban Station, since you're a senior person?

16 A Yeah. That's where I pick that up every night.

17 Q How often do you come across when you get on this
18 equipment, I know you're getting off your shift, is
19 there a fault light on? In the course of a month, how
20 many times?

21 A Fifteen, 20. I mean, it's --

22 Q So 75 percent of the time you get on that
23 equipment at Suburban Station there's a fault light?

24 A It's gotten a little bit better as of late.

25 Q Okay.

1 A But, yeah, it's the end of the night. This
2 stuff's 50 years old. It's been out running around all
3 day.

4 Q Yeah. I totally understand that. So you're
5 saying 50 percent of the time, 75 percent of the time
6 maybe a --

7 A Go with 50 percent of the time. Let's not get --

8 Q All right. So we're going to say 50 percent of
9 the time there's a fault light on. So five days a week
10 --

11 A You figure you have five cars. If one of those
12 five 50-year-old cars has a fault, it turns a light on
13 throughout all the cars.

14 Q Correct. So let's just say you do 20 runs, 10 of
15 them have a fault light.

16 A Yeah.

17 Q So that's 10 times you're not calling dispatch to
18 report it, 10 times you're not putting an MP-11 in. We
19 need everybody as a team to help fix this problem.

20 A I understand that.

21 MR. SHERRY: All right. No further questions.

22 MR. KRAHOLIK: Todd with NTSB. I don't have any
23 further questions.

24 MR. THOMPSON: Jeff Thompson. No further
25 questions.

1 MR. POINSETTE: John Poinsette. Just one
2 question.

3 BY MR. POINSETTE:

4 Q When you went to troubleshoot, did you smell
5 anything on the train?

6 A Weed. Aside from that. It's the end of the
7 night, what can I tell you? That's what the train
8 smells like. But, no, there was no burning smells.

9 MR. POINSETTE: No burning smell. Thank you for
10 clarity. I have no further questions.

11 MR. KRAHOLIK: All right, Bill, did we --

12 MR. WAMSLEY: I didn't want to hold back.

13 MR. THOMPSON: You didn't.

14 MR. POINSETTE: No, you didn't.

15 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

16 Q Bill, is there anything we should have asked you
17 but we didn't?

18 A I don't think so.

19 Q Is there anything else you want to add?

20 A Yes. I'd really like to see this get fixed.
21 I've got three years to go, and I would like for them
22 to be nice, easy, and smooth, and this would help. I
23 will say yesterday I had trouble with equipment that I
24 got up in Trenton. I got on at Trenton at the start
25 of my day. I get on it, they brought it up, lights

1 on. Nobody said anything. Of course, that's the end
2 of their day, so they only have that go home state of
3 mind. I call it in. Of course, you have to get off
4 the train to call because the radios don't reach from
5 there.

6 I call it in, I talked to the STO, he said, all
7 right, you've got to call Mechanical. I call
8 Mechanical. It takes me, like, 10 minutes to get
9 through to Mechanical because he gave me the wrong
10 number. I get a hold of Mechanical, give them what's
11 going on, the light's on. I walked through here's
12 what I've got. I had a no power at this car. I reset
13 it. I walked through all the other cars. All the
14 other cars are good. But I needed to call it in to
15 you before we go because the light's still on, the
16 dynamic light is still on, because it won't reset until
17 we make a 30-mile-an-hour-or-so stop. He says, all
18 right, you did what you should. Take it. Go two
19 stops, make at least a 30-mile-an-hour stop and see
20 what happens. I said, all right, I'll call you from
21 Bristol.

22 Left Trenton, made my stop at Levittown.
23 Straight air. Left Levittown, the fault light came
24 back on with the dynamic light. The dynamic light
25 never went out. Made my stop at Bristol. Now I've

1 got a fault light and a dynamic light. I called, was
2 actually able to -- the radio actually reached from
3 there. I was surprised. Told them what was going on.
4 They wanted to know, do you smell anything burning?
5 Well, yeah, of course, you smell smoke, you're making
6 stops at 75 miles an hour, straight air. Well, but
7 is it brake smell or is it something burning? I said
8 I believe it's brake smell. You know, you're making
9 high-speed stops with straight air. Okay. Last stop
10 for that will be Suburban.

11 By the time all this was done, MP-11s were
12 written and all that, I was an hour late bringing the
13 train in. It's not efficient.

14 MR. SHERRY: It isn't, but it's the only way we're
15 going to get it fixed, by you and your union
16 brothers doing what you're supposed to be doing.
17 That's going to be Mechanical's department to fix these
18 issues. It does not fall on you. Let Don and you and
19 all your union brothers, let them know, I know you
20 guys want to get people to their stops, but it's the
21 only way it's going to get fixed, is if you guys work
22 as team.

23 MR. HILL: We're telling them, trust me.

24 BY MR. KRAHOLIK:

25 Q Yeah. The reporting's a big thing. I know

1 you've had a history -- we've heard from a lot of
2 engineers where you feel like you're banging your head
3 against a wall reporting stuff that doesn't get fixed.
4 We're really trying to change that.

5 A I mean, I've gotten to the point where, when they
6 ask us, well, did you fill out an MP-11 form, did you
7 notice that that MP-11 form is the same width as
8 toilet paper? Because that's what happens to it.
9 Nothing gets done with it.

10 Q We've been doing a lot. I mean, we've been doing
11 a lot of work. We're trying to really make the cars
12 better.

13 A I was out sick for about a month and a half. I
14 had a problem with my leg. And I did see an
15 improvement when I first got back.

16 Q That's good.

17 BY MR. POINSETTE:

18 Q Real quick, what was the train number that you
19 experienced that one yesterday?

20 A Yesterday? 720.

21 MR. POINSETTE: Okay. All right. It was in
22 (inaudible). Roger that.

23 MR. THOMPSON: The other thing too, like, with
24 reporting, basically, everything you reset, like the
25 no powers, that's not good for A3 if you don't get, you

1 know, power when you cut the handle over. And if we
2 don't know that that car's tripped out, like, five
3 times or 10 times, because you're not the only engineer
4 resetting it, other people are --

5 MR. WAMSLEY: Right. Right. That's why I did
6 that.

7 MR. THOMPSON: -- we don't know there's, like, a
8 repeat issue with that car, you know?

9 MR. WAMSLEY: Right.

10 MR. THOMPSON: So the more notifications we get
11 the better for us to be able to figure out.

12 MR. POINSETTE: Right. And I'm going to explain
13 that at the end, but I told Isaac that -- oh, I'm
14 sorry.

15 MR. KRAHOLIK: Anybody else got anything?

16 MR. THOMPSON: Sorry. No.

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

19 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
20 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.

Date: October 7, 2025


Marcia Thurmond
Official Transcriber
Heritage Reporting Corporation


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