

April 26, 2007

Stalled Train May Have Played Part in Track Worker's Death

By [WILLIAM NEUMAN](#) and [DARYL KHAN](#)

Correction Appended

The subway train that struck and killed a track worker near the Columbus Circle station on Tuesday night had been diverted to the express track, where the accident occurred, because a stalled train was blocking a local track, according to two people briefed on the investigation.

Investigators will try to determine what went wrong and why the worker, Daniel Boggs, 41, stepped onto the downtown express track just as a No. 3 train was going through, about 11:20 p.m.

If not for the stalled train, which was farther uptown, the train that struck Mr. Boggs, a veteran track worker, would have been on the local track because of the replacement of switches and rails that was scheduled for the express track at Columbus Circle, said the people familiar with the investigation, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the inquiry is incomplete.

But they said that officials in the local control tower and in the main rail control center who gave permission for the train to proceed may not have been notified that the track work had begun.

One of the people briefed on the investigation said that a work train had passed on the same track a short time before and that as a result Mr. Boggs may have mistakenly believed that the track was closed to regular trains.

The operator of the train involved in the accident told investigators that Mr. Boggs had his back to the oncoming train, according to the other person with knowledge of the investigation.

[New York City Transit](#) is investigating the accident. Officials cautioned that many facts were still to be determined and that they had only a preliminary understanding of what had happened.

Mr. Boggs began working for New York City Transit in 1992, said Paul Fleuranges, a spokesman. Officials said Mr. Boggs had a brother who is also a subway track worker.

Margaret Mancusi, a family friend who went to high school with Mr. Boggs, said he was unabashedly enthusiastic about his work.

"You know what's funny, he loved that job," Ms. Mancusi said, standing outside the two-story white clapboard house on a wooded lot near a lake in Brewster, N.Y., where Mr. Boggs lived with his wife and three children. All Mr. Boggs talked about was his job, he said: "I don't know what it was. I guess he was proud of it."

"He's a kind-hearted guy, big, jovial, joking, hard-working," Ms. Mancusi said. "And he loved his kids."

Mr. Boggs was born on July 4, 1965, and Ms. Mancusi said that his friends used to call him Yankee Doodle Dandy.

Howard H. Roberts Jr., the president of New York City Transit, said in a statement that Mr. Boggs "was well liked and, more importantly, well respected by his colleagues."

Shortly before he was killed, Mr. Boggs had been placing lanterns, known as flagging lights, on the local tracks adjacent to the uptown and downtown express tracks. The lights are meant to alert approaching trains on those tracks that there are workers ahead.

Mr. Boggs was the first transit worker killed on the job in more than a year. In December 2005, Lewis Moore, a train operator, was killed while riding on a work train passing through a Bronx subway tunnel.

In 2004, Harold Dozier was struck by a train and killed while working on tracks in Brooklyn.

In 2003, a conductor, Janell Bennerson, died when she struck her head on a metal fence while leaning out a train window in Queens.

In 2002, three track workers were killed in separate accidents.

After those fatal accidents, the transit agency changed some of its work rules in an effort to increase safety.

Ed Watt, secretary-treasurer of Local 100 of the [Transport Workers Union](#), said he wanted attention “to be focused on the fact that it is a dangerous job and there’s people out there dodging trains while everyone is sleeping.”

John Samuelsen, a track inspector and a former union official, who knew Mr. Boggs, said, “The point is that this is an incredibly dangerous job” with risks posed by the third rail “or getting hit by the train.”

Correction: May 1, 2007

An article on Thursday about a New York subway track worker who was struck and killed by a train at Columbus Circle included erroneous information from the State Transportation Department about an investigation of the accident. New York City Transit is investigating — not the Transportation Department, which investigates only passenger accidents.

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