

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

*
*
*
*
*
*

CHLORINE TANK CAR RELEASE IN
NEW MARTINSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA
ON AUGUST 27, 2016

Docket No.: DCA16SH002

* * * * *

Interview of: JOHN HIRSCHFIELD

Axiall Corporation
15696 Energy Road
Proctor, West Virginia

Thursday,
September 1, 2016

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: PAUL STANCIL
Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

PAUL STANCIL, Investigator-in-Charge
Senior Hazmat Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JOHN VORDERBRUEGGEN, Division Chief
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations
National Transportation Safety Board

WILLIAM WILMOTH, Esq.
Steptoe & Johnson, PLLC
(On behalf of Axiall Corporation and Mr. Hirschfield)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of John Hirschfield:		
By Mr. Stancil		4
By Mr. Vorderbrueggen		15
By Mr. Stancil		18
By Mr. Vorderbrueggen		19
By Mr. Stancil		19
By Mr. Vorderbrueggen		20
By Mr. Stancil		20
By Mr. Vorderbrueggen		25
By Mr. Stancil		27

I N T E R V I E W

(1:54 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. STANCIL: Today is September 1, 2016. It is about 1:54
4 p.m. This is Paul Stancil, senior hazardous materials accident
5 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

6 We are at the Axiall Corporation, 15696 Energy Road, Proctor,
7 West Virginia. This is in reference to NTSB accident
8 investigation number DCA16SH002. We're here to conduct a
9 interview of Mr. John Hirschfield, site director of Environmental
10 Health, Safety and Security for Axiall Corporation.

11 So we'll go around the room and introduce the other persons
12 here in the room.

13 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: This is John Vorderbrueggen. I'm the
14 chief of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations
15 Division with the NTSB.

16 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: As stated, this is John Hirschfield, site
17 director for Environmental Health, Safety and Security at the
18 Axiall Natrium facility.

19 MR. WILMOTH: And I'm Bill Wilmoth, W-i-l-m-o-t-h. I'm an
20 attorney retained by Axiall to help in the investigation and here
21 at Mr. Hirschfield's request.

INTERVIEW OF JOHN HIRSCHFIELD

22
23 BY MR. STANCIL:

24 Q. Okay. So, Mr. Hirschfield, if you could just give -- tell us
25 a little bit about your background, how long you've worked here

1 and what your general duties are?

2 A. Sure. I've been employed here for approximately 3 years. It
3 was 3 years here. And prior to that I've worked in the
4 environmental health safety field for 20-plus years, manufacturing
5 and metals, aluminum, copper, lead, tin, things like that.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Responsibility here is I head up the oversight of the various
8 departments, which as safety department manager I have three
9 direct reports: safety manager, process safety manager, and
10 environmental manager. Safety manager, we have the medical group,
11 industrial hygiene, security, the guards, things like that, our
12 emergency response. (Audio skip) for all, and make sure that
13 those people have the resources they need and make sure that, you
14 know, our budgets and (audio skip) on the plant manager's staff,
15 so I report into him.

16 Q. Okay. The purpose of our visit here today is in connection
17 with the investigation of the release of chlorine from a railroad.

18 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Is it telling you you're low on battery?

19 MR. STANCIL: No. We'll hope that this continues to work.

20 This is not -- that's an unusual thing.

21 BY MR. STANCIL:

22 Q. So we're here to investigate the release of chlorine (audio
23 skip). I understand that you were involved in the emergency
24 response to (audio skip) happened that day and what your role in
25 the emergency response was.

1 A. So I'll try to not be too lengthy. As far as my role, I'm
2 member of the crisis management team, so that when an incident at
3 the plant escalates to a level, what we call Level 2, which
4 requires full activation of our emergency operation center, I have
5 a role on that team. And I have an operations and logistics role
6 for -- the way we operate that is for during off-hours,
7 nonbusiness hours, we have on-call roles. And various members of
8 those teams rotate weekly as to being the person on call.

9 So the way notification will go is that when that is
10 activated, the guard will make phone calls to each of those
11 people, and then -- and notified to come into the plant we have a
12 situation. Those -- the person who is on call then has the
13 responsibility to call all the subsequent people who have that
14 role and to tell them about it, and to come in as a backup.

15 So for this event here, I was not on call but subsequently
16 did receive a call. And so then I got in the car and came up to
17 serve as a -- we have a board. When you come -- when you arrive,
18 you put your name on the assignment. So for me it was a
19 unassigned resource. So my role then at that point was to be a
20 resource for the incident commander and the main people on call.

21 Q. What about the initial call, what happened there?

22 A. The initial call that I received was actually -- it was in --
23 I don't have the approximate times. I didn't bring the timeline
24 with me, but of course that's all there. It was around 8-ish,
25 8:42 or so, and I received a call from a person who was responding

1 to the site that he was having trouble getting a hold of the guard
2 and everybody. Because at that time, I believe, calls were going
3 all over the place. So he just said you answered, there's been a
4 chlorine release at the site, we need to get -- keep the barges
5 that are coming down the river to drive through because this is a
6 -- there's a cloud out there. And I kind of was caught off guard
7 saying what; what's going on Duane, you know? So he said you've
8 got to try to get the barges stopped on the river. He said I
9 can't get the guards.

10 So I hung up. My next call was to the guard, who was very
11 busy. And said, John, I do not have any time. He said I am
12 trying to get through to the Coast Guard or, you know, who we need
13 to get those barges stopped. I said, fine, that's why I was
14 calling you; I just received a call and I'm trying to relay that
15 to you. It sounds like you understand it and I'll let you go, and
16 I hung up.

17 And so what I did is just -- I started calling some of the
18 environmental people to see about -- you know, make sure that they
19 had been notified. I wasn't able to get through to some of the
20 people. I subsequently did receive a call from that call tree
21 from the, again, the person who was in the operations role. He
22 said, John, I'm assuming you've heard? I say, oh my gosh, yeah.
23 He said, are you on your way up? I said, I'm working on it.

24 Because I wasn't home at the time, so it's get home, get the
25 car, go back up. So at that point is when I got in the car and

1 started driving to the plant.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Those were really the only calls I had subsequent to getting
4 in the car and driving up.

5 Q. So tell us what you observed.

6 A. When I arrived, again, my -- what I do is come right into the
7 OC here, so -- coming up there then, it was obviously a very busy
8 scene, saying that there was a chlorine release, had to do with a
9 rail car. By that time, quite frankly, I didn't notice any
10 active. So I had to drive -- I live south about an hour and 15
11 minutes south in Ohio. As I'm driving I want to say one, two --
12 at least three roadblocks, so the roads were blocked. They didn't
13 -- and I had to wait in line each time, of course. And over in
14 Ohio they said they're not going to let you over that bridge to
15 get into West Virginia. So showing them my badge and what I was
16 doing, they did let me get through.

17 So it took a while to get through all that, but that it was
18 all in place. So when I did arrive -- so what I was -- I didn't
19 know the magnitude, right, but obviously this was big because we
20 had roadblocks and things like that. So I wasn't aware of
21 evacuations or anything like that. So I was just trying to get a
22 sense of, you know, do I see a cloud or -- I don't think -- I
23 don't know if they would have let me through. I didn't know how
24 they decide you go through. I was kind of -- the one thing I do
25 remember though was when I got further -- just before the bridge

1 to come over there's a golf course there and there's guys out
2 there playing golf. And I said, well, I don't know if it's bad
3 or, you know, what do we have here, so --

4 I guess what I want to say is, when I did get here I just
5 looked out and I didn't see, but I certainly could smell a little
6 bit of chlorine. So I proceeded to the incident command center
7 where I just said, you know, I'm here and whatever you need me to
8 do, so --

9 Q. So I assume there was an evacuation order?

10 A. Yeah, so this is all, right, third -- secondhand because the
11 incident commander would take care of all this. But, yes, there
12 was an evacuation alarm given. And so my understanding is it was
13 an evacuation of nonessential personnel. On the weekends with a
14 light crew essentially everybody in is essential personnel. So
15 when the alarms go off, you know, they are going to get their air
16 packs -- got air packs, and then they do the orderly shutdown. So
17 those departments just started shutting down and people were
18 evacuating. So it ended up a total evacuation.

19 But the alarm that went off, my understanding, which I've --
20 so I'm finding this out through my own sort of investigation and
21 recap and review, was that the evacuation was given. So
22 nonessentials, contractors, you know, anybody -- visitors, anybody
23 who's there, right, you get out. And then they went through the
24 quick orderly shutdowns. And those people then -- all the
25 essential operators then evacuated also. Long winded.

1 Q. So there was (audio skip) from off-site to here, was there
2 local firefighters, other organizations coming on-site?

3 A. From an emergency response, I do not believe we had any
4 (audio skip) calls were all made. So the first call was to
5 Marshall County Emergency (audio skip) subsequent phone calls back
6 and, you know, state police (audio skip) and they just all sprang
7 into action. Once (audio skip) my understanding is, is when we
8 started getting into or hazmat crews --

9 MR. STANCIL: Let me interrupt you for one second,
10 Mr. Hirschfield --

11 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Sure.

12 MR. STANCIL: -- I think I'm having a problem with my
13 recorder.

14 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Okay.

15 MR. STANCIL: So let me try to repair this and then we'll
16 resume.

17 (Off the record.)

18 (On the record.)

19 MR. STANCIL: It was stopping and starting up, so there might
20 be some choppiness in the transcript.

21 All right. So this is Paul Stancil again. We're resuming
22 our interview of John Hirschfield. This is part two of a two-part
23 audio file.

24 BY MR. STANCIL:

25 Q. So Mr. Hirschfield, we were talking about what you observed

1 when you came here on scene. You arrived and you got here. And
2 tell us again what events occurred once you came on scene.

3 A. So by the time I got here, and again the time frame is
4 probably somewhere between 12 and 1. I'd have to --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Proceeded to the EOC, checked in as an unassigned resource.
7 And really just kind of sat and was observing and listening to
8 everything that was going on.

9 By that time, you know, the roadblocks were up, evacuations
10 had been done. My understanding was the river was, you know,
11 blocked because this is well hours after the incident.

12 I was asked then to -- what I did get involved in was on the
13 environmental, taking chlorine readings so that we could work on
14 getting the roads opened and closing the -- and, whatever, ending
15 the evacuation, I guess. So we had -- I was in contact with our
16 gas testing people, getting that set up to go.

17 We did have a visit from the West Virginia DEP. And so I
18 took that -- handled that, I'll say, met with him. He came over
19 because of the heat. We didn't have air conditioning and it was
20 very hot that day. So anyway, he came over to this building. We
21 sat down. I was just giving him an update and running through the
22 scenario where we were at the time. From there he indicated that
23 there was a group from the emergency response division of DEP that
24 was coming from Charleston, and he thought they were already here
25 at the roadblock for Wetzel.

1 They were a support. You know, they respond to releases.
2 They have the gas reading meters to do all that and they were
3 available. I said, you know, we'd love to use them to help us run
4 up and down Route 2, take measurements and readings both sides
5 because we need that before we, I'll say, give the all clear. So
6 I worked with those -- I met that group when they came.

7 We had our own gas guy here, so I had him do it in
8 conjunction with them. We sort of talked about where we're going
9 to go. They went north, south of the plant on Route 2. They took
10 a number of readings. Came back. I asked them if they would go
11 to the Ohio side also on Route 7 and do that. They needed to make
12 some calls, jurisdiction, those type things. They said it was no
13 problem. Actually, when they went over there, there was -- they
14 ended up meeting with an Ohio EPA gentleman in Monroe County, the
15 LEPC man who was there.

16 So they worked those out and they were able to do that and
17 did those readings. Came back. We looked at it. You know, I
18 made copies. I asked if I could have all their records because we
19 were going to use that as the basis of saying it's all clear. And
20 they were okay with that. I made copies of those and we did that.

21 They were on their way after that. From there I really just
22 sat around and was available, I'll say. Didn't really get
23 involved in much after that.

24 Q. Okay. So with respect to the chlorine testing, how far north
25 and south was affected by the release?

1 A. Yeah, I believe they went a couple miles either way. I know
2 they went to the roadblocks and the roadblocks were set up,
3 obviously, in some type of perimeter. So I believe it was a
4 couple miles, I would say, in that vicinity.

5 Q. Were there any logs or records made of what their findings
6 were?

7 A. Yes, yes.

8 Q. Do you have that documentation?

9 A. Yes, I have that.

10 Q. Okay. So what were some of the most severe readings that
11 were found off-site here?

12 A. They were all zeros.

13 Q. Really?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So the plume or the cloud of chlorine that was produced from
16 this release, was there an attempt to track where it was going?

17 A. In the incident command center there is a model. It's called
18 a SAFER model. It's a DuPont model. So there was data put in
19 that. I did follow up with the incident commander to say, you
20 know, was that used for making real-time decisions and things?
21 And they said no. So it was all just -- they would have it as an
22 after-type thing. So there wasn't any plume measurements being
23 done to determine, you know, the extent, I'll say.

24 Q. How many residents were affected by the release?

25 A. Well, we don't have that exact number. We've contacted

1 different emergency management groups and we've gotten some
2 numbers, but even they have said it's kind of a swag, I'll say.
3 The community just north of us is Kent; it's very small. I think
4 there's like 15 people there.

5 Q. That's small.

6 A. That is small. So they were all evacuated. I do not have a
7 number for Monroe County, which is in Ohio, but again it's kind of
8 a rural area. But we will be following -- that's part of our
9 review and follow-up is to get all that information.

10 South of us would be Wetzel County, so that's the larger
11 area. They did evacuate Proctor, which is a small community just
12 south of us. And then what I was told was the north, northern tip
13 of New Martinsville. And so I have had -- I heard an estimate of
14 400 people, 500 people, but I don't know how they -- we don't have
15 any hard numbers on that. But that's a follow-up that we will be
16 looking at.

17 Q. Okay. And how long was this in effect?

18 A. Again, getting those readings from the other side of the
19 river, I want to say in the 4:00 to 4:30 p.m. time frame. We sat
20 waiting and waiting for the Ohio -- you know, we sent them back
21 out -- it took a while, but we were not going to -- I was given
22 the order not to give any all clear until we had the whole Ohio
23 side run up and down the river.

24 Q. And was there an official time as to when did this accident
25 or this incident actually occurred? Did anybody put a timestamp

1 on it?

2 A. Yeah, there is a timestamp, and I'd like to be able look at
3 that to see. So I'm going -- my recollection I want to say 8:27
4 and the first report is 8:30, I think is the call to the
5 guardhouse. But that will be on -- there's a record.

6 Q. On the time log?

7 A. There's a record.

8 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Yeah, and we've asked for that.

9 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Yeah, so that will be on there. I believe
10 it's 8:27 and then there's -- 8:30 it's called in.

11 BY MR. STANCIL:

12 Q. So there were several agencies that responded here. Who --
13 what government agencies were involved in the response?

14 A. In the response? Well, what I just explained on the gas, if
15 you want to call that response, but they were here from the West
16 Virginia EP.

17 Q. Fire departments?

18 A. I don't believe fire department responded. And we did
19 transport two people to the hospital up north, Reynolds. And at
20 this point I'm not sure if that was outside -- or we have
21 ambulance capability here, and I'm not sure which group actually
22 transported them.

23 BY MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN:

24 Q. I heard they were airlifted.

25 A. Yeah, they were subsequently airlifted. And I haven't gotten

1 all the reports, but my understanding was that they weren't
2 comfortable or really, I'll say knowledgeable, with chlorine
3 inhalation so it was more of a concern -- or a conservative
4 approach that they sent them to Morgantown.

5 The one loader that was our employee, Linda, you know, I was
6 told she said she didn't even want to go to the doctor. She
7 actually came up and was helping with the phones, and then -- I
8 think she's a smoker and she just felt discomfort there, and so
9 she went.

10 So they did go there first I think as a precaution -- that
11 was the word I was thinking of. They sent him to Morgantown, the
12 flight --

13 Q. So the hospital made the decision --

14 A. Yes, my understanding.

15 Q. -- to transport them to Morgantown?

16 A. That's my understanding.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And they were discharged that day.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 MR. STANCIL: So you mentioned barges on the river. Was
22 there ever an incident where water traffic came in contact with
23 the plume?

24 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: I don't know. I don't have a report of
25 contact, but I don't know.

1 MR. STANCIL: Okay. All right.

2 BY MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN:

3 Q. You mentioned that the operations personnel, the critical ops
4 personnel went into an orderly shutdown of your operating
5 facilities when the alarm was sounded.

6 A. That's my understanding, yes.

7 Q. And you said that they have SCBA. Did they actually don the
8 SCBA or do they have it at the ready and they base it on their
9 discomfort level --

10 A. Right.

11 Q. -- maybe for lack of a better term?

12 A. Right. Right.

13 Q. So they do all have that capability --

14 A. Oh, absolutely.

15 Q. -- and they're trained and qualified to wear SCBA?

16 A. Absolutely.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Absolutely. They're all trained and qualified. And so the
19 incident commander could give a better time and -- because when I
20 listen -- you know, look at the log, they would call in and say
21 all accounted for, you know. So they were giving a head count of
22 their people in their departments, going through the orderly
23 shutdown, and then getting out. So yes, but those people all are
24 trained and approved for SCBAs and that's what they were wearing.

25 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Okay.

1 BY MR. STANCIL:

2 Q. How would you characterize the orderly evacuation and
3 response? Was there -- did everything work the way it was
4 supposed to work?

5 A. Right. So we're still going through our review, right, so a
6 final decision on that. But from what I've seen so far, I think
7 it was very timely, quick. You know, the response notifications
8 were very quick. So roadblocks, evacuations, all that was, you
9 know, minutes after.

10 I know -- and again, we have to investigate and see what we
11 can do better. So my opinion, one concern I had was the amount of
12 calls that do come in. We have a guard there and -- we have two
13 guards. And those guards are EMTs and they're trained on our E
14 crew. So we have an E crew of course 24/7. So one of them was
15 E crew; he responded to go in.

16 So the E crew was called and they get staged. And they go to
17 their staging to be given orders from the (indiscernible) chief on
18 what to do. So that left one guy at the phones and, you know, you
19 have people calling in, people going out. And he did a fabulous
20 job but you could see he was rattled. So we have to see how we
21 can help that situation. But overall, I think it was done --
22 handled very well.

23 Q. Are there any other lessons learned that --

24 A. Well, like I said, we're not really there --

25 Q. Still haven't gotten to that point yet. Okay.

1 A. We're working on that. Right.

2 BY MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN:

3 Q. Are you planning a hotwash --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- and meeting to where you'll sit down and look at
6 opportunities?

7 A. Yes. So I've asked, you know, like our medical. I want kind
8 of individual assessments and then we'll do a hotwash of the whole
9 thing. How did the nurse, how did the medical go, and each of the
10 different areas. So yes, we will do that.

11 Q. Do you have a nurse on staff 24/7 or somebody manning your
12 medical unit?

13 A. Not 24/7, yeah. Now luckily she's very close and she was
14 here very quickly. That certainly helped.

15 BY MR. STANCIL:

16 Q. Any accounting for damages at this point?

17 A. Not that I'm aware of.

18 Q. You have the tank car.

19 A. Oh, yeah.

20 Q. I'm assuming some equipment around the plant?

21 A. Oh, my goodness, yeah.

22 Q. And there was down time and a lot of other issues.

23 A. Right.

24 Q. So are you -- is someone accounting for all of that?

25 A. No. That's -- I mean, I may be asked to participate in that

1 but I'm not leading that effort.

2 Q. That's not your responsibility?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. No. And we're not there, I don't believe.

6 BY MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN:

7 Q. You mentioned your emergency ops center. Where is that?

8 A. It's on the second floor here in the corner.

9 Q. This building?

10 A. This building.

11 Q. Do you have an alternate location?

12 A. The alternate location is really a field decision, a decision
13 made at that time.

14 Q. Based on what the wind is doing?

15 A. Wind directions. We have windsocks obviously, so we can move
16 that.

17 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Okay.

18 BY MR. STANCIL:

19 Q. Which way did the plume move?

20 A. Well, what I -- I mean, just from the visual evidence and
21 from what -- it was south -- it was north to south. And then I
22 think with the bend in the river, it looks like it went a little
23 southeast as it moved down. But the winds were out of the north.
24 I believe they were out of the northwest and pushed it to the
25 southeast.

1 Q. It sort of followed the valley and the river --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- as it goes?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Any associated environmental damage?

6 A. Well, that's being assessed right now. But --

7 Q. Okay. Who's doing that?

8 A. Hum?

9 Q. Who is doing that?

10 A. Well, as far as like community -- I mean, we reported the
11 release, right, so there wasn't a release to the water.

12 Q. You mentioned though --

13 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: So there was no, no fish kill that
14 anybody's identified?

15 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: No. That's correct. I mean, so the
16 release is the foliage.

17 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Right.

18 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: And that's what I'm talking about. You
19 drive down you can see the brown, I mean, so --

20 BY MR. STANCIL:

21 Q. So the Department of Environmental Protection has been here
22 or --

23 A. Oh, yes. They were there that -- they were here, they were
24 here that day, Saturday. They followed up on Monday and we
25 received another call today as follow-up. So they're just wanting

1 to be kept in the loop as to where we're going, yes.

2 MR. STANCIL: Okay.

3 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Could you describe how you -- if and how
4 you do drills, emergency drills and how comprehensive are such
5 drills?

6 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Yes. So we do weekly, every Wednesday at
7 11:30, we do a test of the alarm systems. So we're not evacuating
8 but we're testing the alarms and letting everybody hear the alarms
9 and know that's what they are. We have been doing quarterly
10 drills for -- and I'll say smaller scale.

11 So we have an emergency response group team organize those.
12 So we had just -- actually our last quarterly one was a chlorine.
13 We did -- had a chlorine release. We've done an accident where
14 people fell off a scaffold. And so we -- they're unannounced, so
15 we are activating, you know, the E-squads and response and all
16 that. So we've been conducting those quarterly.

17 MR. STANCIL: Working with the Coast Guard much have you had
18 them here coordinating with their contingency planning?

19 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Yes. So we're obviously Coast Guard
20 regulated and TWIC and all that. That is really handled through
21 the CQA group here, or shipping group. So I would direct the
22 questions to them on that.

23 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Did Coast Guard send anybody over for a
24 debrief or anything since? Has anybody been on-site?

25 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Not that I'm aware of. So, again, if they

1 did, they would have gone to the CQA group, which is Larry
2 Berksham's (ph.) group, and they would have -- I'm not aware of
3 Coast Guard showing up here.

4 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Okay.

5 BY MR. STANCIL:

6 Q. Going back to the air monitoring issue for a second.

7 A. Sure.

8 Q. You mentioned that there were no detecs. What type of
9 detection equipment were they using?

10 A. They were using handheld. I don't have the name of the
11 model, but it's a handheld real-time chlorine detector.

12 Q. Okay. It's not one --

13 A. Just doing a readout.

14 Q. It wasn't the tube?

15 A. It's not a Draeger tube.

16 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: It's not a Draeger tube?

17 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: No, they were not.

18 MR. STANCIL: Okay.

19 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: AreaRAE or something like that?

20 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Yes, exactly, something like that. Now we
21 also -- yes. That's what -- so like I said, we also had our guy
22 with a meter and they had their meter.

23 BY MR. STANCIL:

24 Q. So within the plant, did you do any air monitoring yourself?

25 A. Within the plant?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. No. What we have is we have monitors throughout the
3 facility.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Stationaries. And we have --

6 Q. Tell us how that works. How sophisticated are your monitors
7 and how do they work?

8 A. Yeah. Well, so they are -- they're real time. They read and
9 we log those into our database, our FoxView. So we can bring
10 those up and look at those. So we have perimeter monitors and we
11 also have surrounding various -- like the chlorine operations and
12 things like that.

13 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Have you extracted any of the data, the
14 historical data that would show the peaks of that morning and
15 where they occurred?

16 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Yeah. So we had some instrumentation
17 problems with the chlorine, and a lot of stuff -- a lot of the
18 equipment has been haywire. But that information has been
19 collected, is available, and we're pulling that out and looking at
20 that, so. It has been saved, I guess I'll say.

21 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Retrieved and saved?

22 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Retrieved, yes.

23 BY MR. STANCIL:

24 Q. So I assume you weren't finding zero on the plant?

25 A. There was zero, there was zero on the perimeters.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But, no, not zero --

3 BY MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN:

4 Q. But that zero, to clarify, that zero wasn't -- that was when,
5 what, after you were on site?

6 A. Oh, yeah, that --

7 Q. I mean, early on I --

8 A. That's correct.

9 Q. -- (indiscernible) believe that the perimeter was all a zero.

10 A. That's correct. That's correct. That's correct.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. It was zero --

13 Q. So the noon-ish time frame?

14 A. That's correct.

15 Q. And again, the real data is available?

16 A. It is. The real data is available.

17 Q. So we don't need to speculate.

18 A. That's correct.

19 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Anything else that you think would be
20 important to know concerning this?

21 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: No. I mean, of course the whole rail
22 thing, which I'm not really involved in. But again, I believe,
23 you know, the challenge for the emergency activation and response,
24 the challenge is always the off hours when nobody is around and
25 all your resources aren't here, right. So given that, I believe

1 that we acted very quickly.

2 When I look at the time log of how long it took, you know,
3 evacuation, roadblocks, and all that, it was very timely and
4 quick. So initially I'm pleased with that. There wasn't long
5 delays in that area, so -- and again, the evacuation orders and
6 all that to get people safe and get out, I think was all very
7 quick and timely, as evident by the number of people that we had
8 to treat, I mean, two people and released. It could have been a
9 lot worse. So that's my initial assessment is things went pretty
10 well.

11 BY MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN:

12 Q. Do you know the extent of the public treatments? Numbers,
13 what was done, where it was done?

14 A. Yeah, so we're collecting that now. I believe we had a
15 handful of people who did walk in at Wetzel County Health Group,
16 and what I'm being told is they were all -- you know, nobody
17 admitted but they were checked and released. So I don't have a
18 number, but I was told it was a handful.

19 Q. Okay. Any -- you may not be the right person to ask the
20 question, but I'm going to ask it anyway.

21 A. Sure.

22 Q. Any complaints from the community expecting reimbursement for
23 damages or anything to date?

24 A. Right. So what I know is that we're, right, setting that up
25 by getting legal involved and such. And so what I do know is we

1 do have people who have called. And I actually went up and spoke
2 to one individual at the guard, so -- and what I told him, based
3 on what I was told, is that an adjuster will be out to everybody
4 within 48 hours. And so he was okay with that, so -- yes, there's
5 a number. I don't know -- I'm not the person collecting or
6 tracking that, but the process has been set up for that, yeah.

7 BY MR. STANCIL:

8 Q. So I notice you have a hazmat trailer here on the side of the
9 building.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. What hazardous material response resources do you have?

12 A. Okay. So that is not in my area of responsibility. So that
13 also is through CQA. CQA, because they're involved in
14 transportation, they have a group, and so you would need to talk
15 to them. You know, the chlor rep, they respond to transportation
16 incidents and things like that.

17 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: And what does CQA stand for?

18 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Gosh. It's Customer Quality Assurance.

19 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Perfect. That works for us.

20 MR. WILMOTH: I was trying not to help him. He got it on his
21 own.

22 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: I did get it, yes. The people in that
23 group are -- that run that. There are hazmat members in
24 operations, but it's their organization.

25 BY MR. STANCIL:

1 Q. Any other concerns?

2 A. Concerns, no. Again, I'll -- my concern -- one of my
3 concerns is that we get better from a response, and also interact
4 with the community and see did everything go what they expected.
5 So we will be meeting with the community, their response people,
6 right. We want to make sure that when things go bad we
7 communicate very quickly and right -- you know, the right phone
8 numbers are used, all that kind of stuff that can just slow down
9 things. So that's my concern is. I mean, this is the biggest
10 thing I've ever been involved in. It's scary, but to know that
11 we've got some good competent people, so I was very pleased on
12 that. Again, when you go through the log you'll see that people
13 were doing things that they were supposed to be doing. It wasn't,
14 you know, all hell breaking loose kind of thing.

15 Q. Who was maintaining this log?

16 A. Well, the guards keep a log. But each person as part of that
17 day toward the end of the scenario is to write down, you know,
18 what calls they made and those type things. So it's sort of --

19 Q. So somebody assembled it all together?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Yeah. And I think that's part of what your --

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. -- yeah, you see.

25 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: Were you part of the decision to return

1 the chlorine system to operations, or the chlorine loading to
2 operations?

3 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: No.

4 MR. STANCIL: All right. I don't have any other questions.

5 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Okay.

6 MR. STANCIL: How about you? Anyone else have a comment or
7 question? Okay.

8 MR. VORDERBRUEGGEN: All right.

9 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: Very good.

10 MR. STANCIL: Mr. Hirschfield, thank you very much.

11 MR. HIRSCHFIELD: You bet.

12 MR. STANCIL: And we'll terminate the interview now, and we
13 definitely appreciate your time and assistance with our
14 investigation. Thank you.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CHLORINE TANK CAR RELEASE IN
 NEW MARTINSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA
 ON AUGUST 27, 2016
 Interview of John Hirschfield

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA16SH002

PLACE: Proctor, West Virginia

DATE: September 1, 2016

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.

Elizabeth M. Cochran
Transcriber

TRANSCRIPTION ERROR FORM - PAGE 1

NTSB INVESTIGATION - DCA16SH002

INTERVIEWEE John Hirschfield

INTERVIEW DATE: Sept 6, 2016

The following mistakes in the transcription of the interviewee identified above were noted by the interviewee as follows:

PAGE	LINE	MISTAKE	CORRECTION
No. <u>24</u>	No. <u>25</u>	<u>there was zero on the perimeter</u>	<u>there was zero on the perimeter when I arrived later in the day.</u>
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____
No. _____	No. _____	_____	_____