

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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ENBRIDGE OIL SPILL
MARSHALL, MICHIGAN

Docket No.: DCA-10-MP-007

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Interview of: VINCENT KOLBUCK

Conference Room
Holiday Inn Express
630 East Chicago Street
Coldwater, Michigan

Friday,
July 30, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,
at 1:42 p.m.

BEFORE: KARL GUNTHER
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

KARL GUNTHER, Accident Investigator
DANA SANZO, Accident Investigator
CHUCK KOVAL, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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MATTHEW R. NICHOLSON, Investigator-in-Charge
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JAMES BUNN, General Engineer
BRIAN PIERZINA, General Engineer
U.S. Department of Transportation
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JAY A. JOHNSON, Senior Compliance Specialist
Enbridge Energy Company, Inc.

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TOM TIDWELL
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[REDACTED]

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:42 p.m.)

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3 MR. GUNTHER: Karl Gunther, National Transportation
4 Safety Board doing interviews for a pipeline accident/oil spill in
5 Marshall, Michigan on July 26, 2010.

INTERVIEW OF VINCENT KOLBUCK

BY MR. GUNTHER:

6
7
8 Q. Could you please give your name, address, and phone for
9 the record?

10 A. Name: Vincent Kolbuck, K-O-L-B-U-C-K. Work address:

11 [REDACTED].
12 Phone number: [REDACTED].

13 Q. Okay. Job number -- give me a job title and company
14 affiliation, please?

15 A. Enbridge Energy employee, Chicago Region Engineering,
16 Regional Engineering Supervisor.

17 Q. Okay. Do we want to start with the timeline? So, we'll
18 go ahead and start with the timeline and you can go ahead and
19 describe what you know; what you want to describe.

20 A. Okay. My first awareness of this incident, and I was
21 fortunate I kept a lot of notes for myself because I know how
22 critical this stuff is, I knew about the incident at 10:45 a.m. I
23 was informed by Tom Fridel, and that is -- correlates to the time
24 the Enbridge first responder confirmed the pipeline leak. So
25 basically within a minute of Tom Fridel knowing, I knew.

1 Q. And we're talking Monday?

2 A. We're talking Monday, 7-26-2010.

3 MR. BUNN: And 10:45 Central?

4 MR. KOLBUCK: 10:45 Central, which equates to the two-
5 hour time differential 8:45 MST. So I would recommend, or up to
6 you guys, but from now on I'd like to work in MST for clarity?

7 MR. PIERZINA: Sure. And MST means basically --

8 MR. KOLBUCK: Mountain Standard Time.

9 MR. PIERZINA: Yeah, which is kind of pipeline time, so
10 control center tags and stuff like that, that's consistent with
11 those.

12 MR. KOLBUCK: Yes. All the other -- yes.

13 MR. PIERZINA: And just to repeat for the record, the
14 local Eastern time is three hours, add three hours to the Mountain
15 Standard Time?

16 MR. KOLBUCK: Correct, yes. Yes.

17 So, upon knowing about this incident I could tell it was
18 very serious. General Manager Tom Fridel; my immediate manager,
19 Bill Burdeau, were literally getting on the road and described to
20 me to immediately proceed with the incident command drilldown.
21 Our emergency response directory tells us what to do. So I knew
22 they were leaving. I could tell it was serious, and I began to
23 try to fulfill the needs of the incident command drilldown.

24 Before calling NRC, I needed to collect information. So
25 my very first step, and I've got it listed at 11:00 Central, which

1 is 9:00 -- at 9:00 MST, I began collecting information. I had
2 called Kelly Soprovich, which is the Enbridge Energy shift lead in
3 the control center -- and I didn't have a clue what happened here.
4 I just heard there was a leak. So I got with him and tried to
5 understand better the dynamics of what happened. That's where I
6 can start to fill in this timeline.

7 He explained to me the pipeline on 7-25-2010 was
8 shutdown as part of normal operations, a scheduled shutdown; no
9 abnormal conditions. At 1:11 MST, he told me that they had a
10 scheduled line startup; no abnormal conditions. 2:02 on 7-26 they
11 had pressure indications and computer alarms indicating a column
12 separation condition. At 2:02 there was a line shutdown. From
13 2:02 to 4:32 MST, control center operations were monitoring
14 pressures at Marshall and Mendon stations to see what was
15 happening, and they believed they saw stabilization and made a
16 decision to proceed with startup.

17 BY MR. PIERZINA:

18 Q. Can I stop you right there one second? So the term at
19 2:02, column separation condition, witnessed on SCADA system, you
20 didn't determine column separation?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Do you know who determined column separation?

23 A. My understanding is the computer uses hydraulic profile
24 to pipeline coupled with pressure information, and it's a
25 calculation saying the pressures are inadequate to keep column for

1 a given hydraulic sort of layout.

2 Q. Okay, so basically a computer printout says column
3 separation?

4 A. Right. So the operator would get an alarm, column
5 separation.

6 Q. All right. So an operator at the control center on his
7 screen that he's monitoring the system gets something on his
8 screen that --

9 A. Abnormal.

10 Q. Abnormal. And it indicates column separation? Okay.

11 A. That's what I was told.

12 Q. Okay, thanks. That's good enough for now.

13 A. So they wanted to see if -- I understand there was no
14 mass balance differential at the time, so the mass balance --

15 MR. JOHNSON: All right, thank you.

16 MR. KOLBUCK: -- hadn't shown missing volumes. So
17 that's why the process of letting it sit and trying to understand,
18 you know, what was happening. So I think what, or I know what
19 they said. They said they saw pressures rise at both stations and
20 they saw no mass balance discrepancy, so the decision was made to
21 restart the pipeline again

22 MR. PIERZINA: Okay.

23 MR. KOLBUCK: And that restart would have occurred 4:32
24 MST, 7-26.

25 BY MR. PIERZINA:

1 Q. When it says control center operations, do we know
2 who -- is that the control center operator or --

3 A. I'll refer you to the second page, the incident event
4 log. This is Vince's page. This first page is my version of it.
5 This would be the official event log coming out of our control
6 center, and the details here are better than what I had at the
7 time I reported this.

8 Q. Okay, Vince. And thanks. I think not having looked at
9 this ahead of time, I think I'll try and refrain from asking
10 questions and let you run through the timeline, okay?

11 A. Right. So my prerogative at the time was to try to
12 understand enough that I could properly report.

13 Another question that I knew I would be asked is volume
14 out. So I was working with Kelly Soprovich, S-O-P-R-O-V-I-C-H,
15 and he indicated to me -- oh, wait a second, I'm out of time
16 sequence here. Going back one step; 4:32 they initiated a line
17 restart.

18 4:52 MST, 7-26, they again noticed column separation,
19 but this time they saw mass balance differential. So they
20 witnessed -- so this was verbal. I don't see it in their incident
21 investigation log, but what I was told is 2,000 cubic meters in
22 Griffith, Indiana; 200 cubic meters out in Marysville; approximate
23 distance, 300 miles. So the differential that they couldn't
24 account for was 1,800 cubic meters, which equates to approximately
25 11,322 barrels.

1 Q. I'm sorry. Repeat that number?

2 A. I did the conversion as 11,322 barrels.

3 In this time frame I received a call from Tom Fridel on
4 the phone. He was driving out to the site and he asked me -- I
5 had told him what I had found. He asked me what the distance was
6 block valve to block valve around this leak site.

7 What happened after they saw column separation is they
8 knew where the hydraulic problem existed, and they initiated
9 closing the closest two valves around that site. So what happens,
10 that distance is approximately three miles, and I've actually got
11 mile markers here. So this leak event happened between two block
12 valves, one at Marshall station, one a mainline block valve,
13 approximate distance three miles.

14 I told Tom Fridel this estimate of 11,322 barrels. He
15 felt that would probably not be enough because of time involved in
16 closing valves, takes three to four minutes to close valves. So
17 he had me give the official barrels out as the volume from
18 isolation valve to isolation valve. That's precisely where the
19 19,500 barrels comes from. And what I did, I have a chart,
20 barrels per foot. I added up the footage, and I calculated the
21 barrels.

22 Q. Do you have those conversion factors?

23 A. I do. If you add barrels per foot, 34-inch diameter
24 pipe, .281 wall thickness --

25 Q. Is that the right one that we're looking at?

1 A. Oh, I'm sorry -- 30 -- oh.

2 MR. GUNTHER: You know what, why don't you make us a
3 copy of that for all of us. That would be easier.

4 MR. KOLBUCK: Yes. The --

5 MR. GUNTHER: But yeah, go ahead.

6 MR. KOLBUCK: The 30-inch diameter pipe, 281 wall
7 thickness, which this is 250 wall thickness, is .841 barrels per
8 foot.

9 BY MR. PIERZINA:

10 Q. Do you have a factor for a 30-inch 250 wall?

11 A. No. And guys --

12 Q Did you use 34?

13 A. I used 34-inch.

14 Q. That's all right. That's only going to increase the
15 quality of your report, so we're okay with that.

16 MR. GUNTHER: That's going to be too close.

17 MR. KOLBUCK: Yeah, I know. I just realized now what
18 I'd done. I mean --

19 BY MR. PIERZINA:

20 Q. That's all right. 34-inch. What wall thickness?

21 A. I used a factor for 34-inch 281 wall thickness.

22 Q. And that number was what?

23 A. 1.086.

24 Q. 1.086.

25 A. Barrels per foot.

1 Q. Barrels per foot.

2 A. What it should be is in the magnitude of .85 barrels per
3 foot.

4 Q. .85 barrels. All right.

5 A. The four historical purposes that milepost valves --
6 mileposts and valves involved are 599.5 -- 599.43 -- to 607.66.
7 Guys, I messed -- well, wait a second.

8 MR. PIERZINA: Can we stop for a second?

9 (Off the record at 1:55 p.m.)

10 (On the record at 2:43 p.m.)

11 MR. GUNTHER: Back on the record.

12 COURT REPORTER: Okay.

13 MR. GUNTHER: Go ahead.

14 MR. KOLBUCK: Okay, picking up where we left off, I'd
15 stated it was --

16 MR. PIERZINA: Time out.

17 (Off the record.)

18 (On the record.)

19 MR. GUNTHER: Yeah.

20 MR. JOHNSON: I think I can breathe again.

21 MR. KOLBUCK: We're on?

22 MR. PIERZINA: We're on.

23 MR. KOLBUCK: Okay. Getting back to kind of where we
24 left off, I was instructed by Tom Fridel to calculate the distance
25 between the two isolation valves that were closed around the leak

1 area. The distance is 2.95 miles, approximately three miles. I
2 made a calculation on that distance of 19,500 barrels, and Tom
3 said, "Are you sure?" I said, "Yes." He said, "That's going to
4 be our official volume out."

5 I want to point out that in this interview I had made
6 the calculation on 34-inch diameter pipe on a table that I was
7 using. I should have been calculating on 30-inch diameter pipe,
8 making the volume out approximately 13,000 barrels. So the
9 estimate that is out there in the media is higher than what it
10 should have been per my manager's direction.

11 MR. PIERZINA: Fair enough. Thank you.

12 MR. GUNTHER: Okay.

13 MR. KOLBUCK: Continuing on with the timeline, according
14 to control center I was told that an external call was received
15 from a local gas company person at 8:16 MST, a Chris Treachur, and
16 this is where I begin to know of things. Everything up to this
17 point, 8:16 MST I was told by others.

18 I knew about the confirmation from the Enbridge first
19 responder at 8:45 because that's when I was told about the leak
20 myself. Tom Fridel specifically told me that he had initiated a
21 call to senior management, Mr. Leon Zupen. I have some other -- I
22 was still collecting information in this time period and receiving
23 calls. I received a call -- excuse me. I'll turn this off. I
24 received a call at 9:50 MST, 7-26 from the Michigan Department of
25 Environmental Quality, Mr. Brian Fish. I had not yet placed the

1 NRC call. I can't recall the circumstance of why he knew about
2 this leak.

3 MR. JOHNSON: If you'd have been here earlier, he was
4 out with Mick.

5 MR. GUNTHER: Right.

6 MR. JOHNSON: Because he lives right near it.

7 MR. KOLBUCK: Okay. Okay. So, yes, I responded to his
8 call, and then I was proceeding to call the NRC. The official
9 call from my perspective was 12:29. I do want to state that I
10 called at 12:08, was put on hold --

11 MR. GUNTHER: Hello? Yeah.

12 MR. PIERZINA: Can we go --

13 (Off the record.)

14 (On the record.)

15 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Thanks folks, for --

16 MR. KOLBUCK: Let me go back on clarity. Using Mountain
17 Standard Time, I attempted to call NRC 10:08 MST. I was put on
18 hold. I have called the NRC before. I've never been put on hold.
19 I was waiting. Other calls were coming in. I mismanaged my
20 phone, the call got dropped. I called again at 10:29, again put
21 on hold for a substantial period of time, and actually, if you
22 look at the NRC report, I did ask the lady to state this: "Caller
23 was contacted" -- wait a second.

24 MR. PIERZINA: I saw that --

25 MR. KOLBUCK: Yeah, I just want to point out --

1 MR. PIERZINA: I saw the initial --

2 MR. KOLBUCK: -- I don't know what happened. The petty
3 officer said they're having high call volumes. So I placed the
4 NRC call numbered 948903 at, was at the time being 10:29 MST.

5 I do want to also point to the NRC report for its
6 timing. If you see the report taken at 1333, that has to be
7 Eastern Time. And I noticed that this is taken at the Atlantic
8 Strike Team.

9 One of the items due to time zone that I made a mistake
10 on -- I shouldn't say mistake, is I informed them that we knew of
11 the leak at 9:45. And if you read the NRC report, it says, "Leak
12 discovered 9:45 local time." I didn't say what time zone. And so
13 if you look at the NRC report, it looks like 9:45 to 1333 would be
14 a period of four hours. You can see the differential there.
15 Whereas, what I'm stating is the differential in real time was
16 8:45 to 10:29; an hour and 45 minutes.

17 MR. GUNTHER: And 9:45 was Mountain Time?

18 MR. KOLBUCK: Right.

19 MR. GUNTHER: Okay.

20 MR. KOLBUCK: So that is the factual timing of the
21 calling. The other timelines include, I got some information
22 flowing to other regions to get people --

23 MR. JOHNSON: Just for a second. Are you clear on that,
24 Brian?

25 MR. PIERZINA: Yes.

1 MR. JOHNSON: You were looking at it pretty hard. Have
2 you got any questions? Because I think that's really critical,
3 because it appears like, you know, we went past the two hour and
4 it's just a matter of -- it was four hours based on the time
5 differentials, but it's truly from the time Enbridge is aware of
6 oil on the ground to when Vince reported it is it's about two
7 hours, but it is less than that two hour limit. I think that's
8 really critical as someone looks at that NRC report.

9 MR. PIERZINA: Right. And I think we've -- between all
10 of the witness interviews that we've done and, you know, all the
11 facts that are established, I think that the timeline, you know,
12 including confirming and notifications and all that stuff is going
13 to be pretty well --

14 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Well, I just -- you know, I know
15 Vince was worried about that, and it goes on there and everyone
16 gets second guessed, and I want to make sure we're clear on that.
17 So, thank you very much.

18 MR. KOLBUCK: Yes. Just some other, I guess,
19 clarification things: 7-26 at approximately 12:50 I got here. I
20 got a call from Hans Shieh, PHMSA, shortly followed by Brian
21 Schliegler (ph.), USEPA. So these calls start to immediately roll
22 into myself as the NRC person, and I'm hoping their time frames
23 collaborate [sic] what I'm saying. I also received a call, let me
24 see, what am I saying here. Received a call from PHMSA. Received
25 a call at 10:50 MST received a call from PHMSA.

1 At 10:55, received a call from USEPA. At 11:19 MST,
2 I -- we have an internal reporting system that sends notifications
3 to critical people during leak events. That went out at 11:19
4 MST. 11:25, I contacted Environment, and they were making
5 arrangements to travel to the location.

6 At 12:00, I was able to drill down and contact Mr. Dirk
7 Dunham from the Calhoun County Emergency Management Division.
8 He'd already been on site, and I think he just needed to know to
9 interact with. So I called him. And then I received a message to
10 call a Mr. Don Mazuchowski with the Michigan Public Service
11 Commission. And to my knowledge that's the extent of sort of
12 critical contacts made.

13 BY MR. PIERZINA:

14 Q. Okay, and I don't -- I guess one thing that occurs to
15 me, Vince, on the NRC notification if I'm not mistaken, it
16 indicated that oil had not reached the Kalamazoo River. Did it
17 say "yet"?

18 A. Yet.

19 Q. Yet.

20 A. Yet.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And -- go ahead.

23 Q. And can I ask where -- so that was a statement that you
24 provided to the NRC?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And who did you get that information from and when?

2 A. I had called First Responder Ben Camp. I could tell he
3 was scrambling. He was trying to assist with the deployment, and
4 he said, "One mile downstream in the creek running north to the
5 Kalamazoo River." So that may be the best he knew at the time. I
6 don't know if he knew what was happening at the riverhead. I
7 called him. I could tell he was in a panic situation.

8 MR. JOHNSON: He didn't know.

9 MR. KOLBUCK: Okay. So I --

10 MR. JOHNSON: I mean, we've talked to some other folks
11 that -- I think Mick was with Brian Fish; that's the first person
12 who knew it already hit the river.

13 MR. KOLBUCK: Right. So, I took what I knew to make the
14 call so I didn't delay the call further.

15 MR. PIERZINA: All right. I think that helps with that.

16 MR. JOHNSON: Okay.

17 MR. PIERZINA: And so just so we've got a more -- and
18 thanks, Vince -- and we have a more detailed incident and event
19 log attached with this that takes us through the evening of -- no,
20 the morning of July 28th that we haven't looked at yet, but it's
21 going to provide a lot of additional details as far as the
22 timeline of the response and that's probably beyond the scope of
23 this interview to really get into that.

24 Karl, any questions as far as the notifications that --

25 MR. GUNTHER: No, I don't have any additional. I think

1 I'm pretty satisfied.

2 MR. PIERZINA: I have a question, Vince.

3 BY MR. PIERZINA:

4 Q. So you made these notifications. And then what were
5 your instructions related to this accident after that?

6 A. At the start end, Tom made it clear that he was
7 mobilizing everything he could, including himself and other
8 managers, and he told me to take care of all the paperwork aspects
9 and stay back for whatever else might come up as far as critical
10 contact. So, I was doing whatever I could to inform internal
11 notification people. I actually did call OSRO. Or let me go
12 back. I informed my boss, Bill Burdeau, to call our OSRO bay west
13 -- what do they call, our OSRO --

14 MR. JOHNSON: OSRO. It's the bigger contractors.
15 That's --

16 MR. KOLBUCK: Yeah. So I was trying to orchestrate
17 anything I knew as far as internal resources, and I was receiving
18 calls from our insurance company. I had a contact with Dave
19 Hoffman who was getting calls from Dave Barrett. Dave Hoffman is
20 our compliance supervisor. I was giving him what updates I could.
21 For instance, there was some comments here about booming at the I-
22 94 crossing; approximately 200 feet was being put out at 6:34
23 p.m., which is 4:00 -- 34 MST. I was just taking calls basically.

24 BY MR. PIERZINA:

25 Q. So is it fair that --

1 MR. JOHNSON: You were making calls?

2 MR. KOLBUCK: Making and taking and whatever I needed to
3 do.

4 BY MR. PIERZINA:

5 Q. So is it fair to say that you were the person kind of
6 check -- charged with document, you know, basically implementing,
7 you know, notifications, you know, getting resources and --

8 A. Basically that was to fulfill the ERD, emergency
9 response directory, requirements. That was really my charge. The
10 other stuff I'm talking about was things I just did to help
11 expedite other departments or inform people --

12 MR. JOHNSON: Well, like he said, the alert notice --

13 MR. KOLBUCK: We have to get the internal alert notice.

14 MR. JOHNSON: -- that's a mechanism Vince can fill out
15 and it goes e-mailed to all the players, if you will.

16 MR. PIERZINA: Right.

17 But then I noticed in your log you put down where, you
18 know, what if the Environment doesn't get that alert or didn't
19 look at their e-mails? So I was pretty impressed because I even
20 saw it in there. It said, "Call Jay Johnson; he's on the way.
21 Call Bob Steed," stuff like that. So, you know, Vince didn't, to
22 his credit, he didn't assume that the notification was going to
23 roll these people out as fast as they had to be, so good job.

24 MR. KOLBUCK: Yeah, I could tell from Tom how serious it
25 was, and then in calling, and, yeah.

1 MR. PIERZINA: Karl, do you have any more questions?

2 MR. GUNTHER: No.

3 MR. PIERZINA: Sorry. If you can give me a few seconds
4 here, Jim.

5 (Off the record.)

6 (On the record.)

7 BY MR. PIERZINA:

8 Q. Vince, let me ask you this: Do you have in your notes
9 when you may have become aware that the oil had hit the Kalamazoo
10 River?

11 A. No, because I also received a phone call from Tom
12 saying, "Please mobilize out here." So I sort of lost contact at
13 -- I think my last correspondence is like 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. my
14 time; he called me and says, "We need you out here." So I went
15 home, picked up my stuff, and came out. So I sort of lost the
16 control or awareness because I was mobilizing myself.

17 Q. Right. So at that time your role changed?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Or at least you're in transit and not being able to do
20 that role?

21 A. Yeah. The concept being he knew he needed somebody back
22 to field calls in whatever manner. That was sort of primarily to
23 get the notifications out by -- he just said, "Stay back, we'll
24 tell you what to do." And I got fed information, and I relayed
25 things as best I could.

1 Q. So when you left Griffith or left your office, did
2 somebody take over for that role for you in Griffith?

3 A. No. Tom was now established to be the commander.

4 Q. So Tom Fridel was set up as incident commander?

5 A. Haz -- yeah.

6 MR. PIERZINA: All right. I think that all helps a lot,
7 especially the basis for the spill volume that was used, even if
8 it may have had some mathematical errors, I think we can overcome
9 that and, so --

10 MR. GUNTHER: No more questions.

11 MR. PIERZINA: Thanks a lot, Vince.

12 (Whereupon, at 3:08 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: ENBRIDGE OIL SPILL
 MARSHALL, MICHIGAN
 Interview of Vincent Kolbuck

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-10-MP-007

PLACE: Coldwater, Michigan

DATE: July 30, 2010

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to
the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Amy Shankleton-Novess
Certified Electronic Reporter

Kristen Shankleton
Transcriber