

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: JEFF RAHN

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

Thursday,
July 29, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,
at 10:25 a.m.

BEFORE: KARL GUNTHER
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

KARL GUNTHER, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

MATTHEW NICHOLSON, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Railroad, Pipeline, &
Hazardous Materials Investigations

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

JAMES BUNN, General Engineer
BRIAN PIERZINA, General Engineer
U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials
Safety Administration

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

JAY JOHNSON, Senior Compliance Specialist
Enbridge Energy Company, Inc.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

TOM TIDWELL
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[REDACTED]

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:38 a.m.)

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3 MR. GUNTHER: I'm Karl Gunther, National Transportation
4 Safety Board. We are investigating an accident in Marshall,
5 Michigan, an oil spill that occurred on July 26th, 2010.

INTERVIEW OF JEFF RAHN

6
7 BY MR. GUNTHER:

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

10 A. Jeff Rahn, [REDACTED].

11 [REDACTED]
12 Q. And could I get your job title and company affiliation?

13 A. I'm a pipeliner for Enbridge Energy in the Marshall PLM.

14 Q. And again, take it back from the first time you heard
15 about the spill to when you finished up. Just go ahead and tell
16 us what you did and what you saw.

17 A. Okay. Previously, Monday, I was actually getting stuff
18 loaded for a pig run, and roughly around 11:30 Ben had come out
19 and said that we got to go check for a possible leak. So we just
20 grabbed our masks and gas detectors and went down and approached
21 the right of way, walked upstream, and seen oil, verified it, came
22 back to the truck and started to make phone calls. Talked to --
23 while Ben was talking to the control center, I contacted Bill
24 Burdeau and had confirmed it with him, and he said he was going to
25 notify other PLMs, and Ben talked to Mick Collier.

1 Then, we proceeded to -- we seen some firemen on
2 Division Drive. We went down there and verified it and seen Brian
3 Whittaker was there. We went to the shop, started to -- we got
4 the boom trailer, the gang truck, the vac truck, some boom, went
5 over to highway -- or County Road A, and at that point there was
6 no oil. We threw some absorbent boom there, went to the next road
7 upstream, seen oil. We started immediately -- took benzene
8 readings and started immediately vacuuming that out. And while we
9 did that, the homeowner that was there came out and was talking to
10 us. I suggested that he not be on the premises, and that's -- and
11 we stayed there until other people started to arrive.

12 Q. Okay, and now what did you do after that? When did you
13 leave the site?

14 A. Well, I stayed there pretty much for the entire evening.
15 We just kept vacuuming. Other vacuum trucks were starting to roll
16 in and other personnel, and we set up a skimmer, and we just
17 continually vacuumed. And from that point it was -- the time
18 frame was roughly, I got off that evening at 11:00.

19 Q. And, again, when did you arrive on the site?

20 A. It was approximately 12:10. It was a very short
21 distance from our shop to that location.

22 Q. And what formal training do you have?

23 A. Numerous boom deployments. We do HAZWOPER every year.
24 OQ done a lot of different aspects of TDW fittings. Just did a
25 driving -- numerous ones. It's continually training.

1 Q. For how long are the classes and how often are they
2 given?

3 A. The boom deployments are very often. They're a day or
4 two, and I've actually done several over in Canada and Buffalo,
5 New York, also.

6 Q. Do they give you any kind of exams and what type?

7 A. We do a tabletop exercise after the boom deployments and
8 discuss anything that went right, wrong.

9 Q. Yeah. But do you have any written exams, anything like
10 that?

11 A. Not on the boom deployment, but definitely others.

12 Q. Okay. And are you qualified under OQ?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. And how many years of experience do you have?

15 A. I have 21 years.

16 Q. Okay. Could you describe what you observed when you
17 arrived on the site?

18 A. We just, like I said, we placed a boom on the other
19 road, didn't see any oil. We came back. We started to see a flow
20 of the oil, and then that's when we took action. We grabbed the
21 boom, threw the boom in, and there was three of us at that point.
22 We started vacuuming the oil.

23 Q. Did you observe any environmental damage or --

24 A. Well, sure. There was oil in the creek.

25 MR. GUNTHER: Okay. Matt, do you have any questions?

1 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah.

2 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

3 Q. I came in late. I apologize, Jeff. I'm Matt Nicholson,
4 NTSB, IIC.

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. What's your position?

7 A. I'm a senior pipeliner.

8 Q. You are a pipeliner?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. And as a pipeliner, can you just tell me what your
11 responsibilities would be?

12 A. Basically, the gamut. I do on-calls, help welders, run
13 machinery, run gang trucks.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Assist in pretty much every fashion.

16 Q. Does that include pump stations?

17 A. No, sir. We don't do anything in them, but we do
18 maintain them if, you know, we have to go in there and work.

19 Q. So is -- you're doing the maintenance and you do a
20 little bit of everything, that would include the actuators on the
21 remove valves?

22 A. No, sir.

23 Q. No?

24 A. That's all mechanical and electrical.

25 Q. So what equipment would you be working on?

1 A. We have a gang truck, a vacuum truck.

2 Q. The support equipment --

3 A. You mean as far as in the station?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. We don't do anything in there. I mean, if they need
6 some digging or stuff like that, we go and do assist. That's
7 about it.

8 Q. You'll do the digging?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. But then you do, you also take the readings? You took
11 benzene readings while you were out there?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. What time did you take the readings?

14 A. That was probably around, I want to say, 1:00.

15 Q. Okay. And what readings were you getting?

16 A. There was a little bit of wind, and they were, I want to
17 say, 1.6.

18 Q. 1.6?

19 A. That's the number that sticks with me.

20 Q. PP? What is that?

21 A. PPM.

22 Q. You took those -- where were you when you took them?
23 Right next to the creek or --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Do you -- I don't know how it works with Enbridge, but

1 when there's a spill like this, there's got to be a procedure for
2 emergency response or responding to leaks of this magnitude?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. And what would that -- part of that procedure is to take
5 the readings you took?

6 A. Well, we -- the reason I did it, because we were --
7 there were only a few of us there, and to verify the air quality,
8 that it was feasible for us to do it, for us to be close enough
9 with what we had.

10 Q. Okay. So that was just your personal safety?

11 A. Yes. And that's probably another training. They kind
12 of emphasize that pretty heavy.

13 Q. That's great. So then what is the procedure then? I
14 mean what steps did you take after you noticed the size of this
15 release? People you call or --

16 A. We -- the size of the leaks, yes, I notified -- well,
17 Ben had called the control center already. I notified Bill
18 Burdeau and just kind of --

19 Q. Bill?

20 A. Burdeau. That's our manager in Griffith. And confirmed
21 it with him, and so he could get other crews on the way.

22 Q. Okay. And what time did those crews arrive?

23 A. Well, they were arriving in bits and pieces. You know,
24 I mean, they were coming in at all different times.

25 Q. When did you first -- because you were there pretty

1 early, 12:10.

2 A. Yeah, we were the first ones on site.

3 Q. Yeah. Because you're out of the same maintenance
4 station?

5 A. Yes, and that's only approximately, you know, three,
6 four miles from our home base.

7 Q. So when did you start noticing trucks arriving or other
8 support personnel?

9 A. Probably a couple hours.

10 Q. A few hours?

11 A. Yeah.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. That's all I got for now.

13 MR. GUNTHER: Any PHMSA?

14 BY MR. PIERZINA:

15 Q. All right, Jeff. I'm Brian Pierzina at the Pipeline and
16 Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, or PHMSA.

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. So you were at -- where you deployed the boom you were
19 ahead of the oil at that point?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. And that was at A Drive?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Okay. So at some point the oil got to A Drive and is
24 that where you guys were vac'ing up?

25 A. I was on 15 1/2 Mile for the first day, and these last

1 couple I've been at A Drive.

2 Q. Okay. I guess what I'd like to know is as the oil
3 progressed down Talmadge Creek, do you know at what point it got
4 to the Kalamazoo River? About what time or --

5 A. No, sir, I don't, because I believe -- like I said, when
6 we first arrived we were concentrating on the first sight of oil.

7 Q. Okay. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm kind of
8 expecting that you got your resources deployed relatively quickly,
9 and then, you know, pretty much waiting for additional boom and
10 stuff?

11 A. For? Yes, sir.

12 Q. Do you know about how long it took until it got there,
13 and where it went?

14 A. Not really because, like I said, I spent most of my time
15 at 15 1/2 Mile.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. The next day was when I went to A.

18 Q. Do you know what crew that was? Which PLM shop got
19 there next?

20 A. I believe Bay City.

21 Q. Bay City

22 A. I believe they're the closest.

23 Q. But you're not sure where they went to?

24 A. No, at that point it was turned over to Mick Collier,
25 which is the supervisor.

1 MR. PIERZINA: Sure. Thank you.

2 MR. GUNTHER: Enbridge?

3 MR. JOHNSON: Jay Johnson with Enbridge.

4 BY MR. JOHNSON:

5 Q. When you're talking about -- the question came up, do
6 you do any work in pump stations, I think, if I'm not mistaken.
7 Do you do flange work and small piping or the torquing?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. So, you do that type of work?

10 A. Yes, sir, and tie-ins.

11 Q. Okay, tie-ins, things like that; general pipeline stuff
12 as opposed to pumps and valves and things like that? I'm trying
13 to get an idea of what a pipeliner does as opposed to a mechanic.

14 A. Right. They do the technical aspect. The readings, the
15 gas detectors, the small piping, sometimes we assist with that,
16 but the majority of it is all the tie-in work, the hot work, the
17 bolting, the high torquing and flange integrity.

18 Q. Now, you talked about your gas detectors. Do your gas
19 detectors have recording chips or anything that would --

20 A. I believe they do.

21 Q. Well, that was my understanding too, and we've got Bryan
22 Christ and Eric Williams coming in later today, we can verify with
23 them. But that's your understanding?

24 A. I believe they do, yes, sir.

25 Q. That's really all I had, Jeff. I think you covered it

1 very well.

2 BY MR. PIERZINA:

3 Q. If I may apologize again for bouncing around, but, Jeff,
4 over the last two months, say, you know, in your responsibilities,
5 what has been the primary work that you've been involved in on
6 line 6B?

7 A. Well, we had a major tie-in at Stockbridge station,
8 which took a good chunk of that one. The prep-work, the tying-in,
9 the teardown and everything.

10 Q. Are you saying a week, two weeks or more, like a month?

11 A. A month. Five weeks.

12 MR. JOHNSON: When you say a tie-in, as the result of
13 a --

14 MR. RAHN: Oh, yes. Well, they put scraper traps in and
15 that prep-work, so that was a huge job.

16 BY MR. PIERZINA:

17 Q. So am I correct in assuming probably a lot of the
18 Marshall PLM crew that were involved in that operation?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Contractor personnel as well?

21 A. Yes, sir. And other outside PLMs.

22 Q. Okay. Any other activities on line 6B besides the
23 Stockbridge tie-in?

24 A. Just regular maintenance. A little bit of brushing.

25 Q. Brushing. Any integrity assessments?

1 A. No, we didn't have any part of that.

2 Q. Okay. If there were integrity assessments going on, who
3 would that involve from Enbridge? I'm assuming it's contract
4 personnel maybe doing the digs and doing, you know, that. Who
5 from Enbridge would be overseeing that?

6 A. They have Enbridge's inspectors.

7 Q. Would they be from Marshall?

8 A. One would, yes.

9 Q. Okay. What is that position? You know, who does that?
10 You know, is that a pipeliner or --

11 A. Right now, yes, it is. From our crew it is a pipeliner.

12 Q. It is a pipeliner.

13 MR. JOHNSON: In some areas it's project coordinators.

14 MR. RAHN: Project coordinators and, yeah, some -- you
15 have welders that are inspecting and --

16 BY MR. PIERZINA:

17 Q. Does Marshall have a project coordinator or --

18 A. No, sir, we don't.

19 Q. Where are project coordinators located?

20 A. One's in Griffith. One's in Vesper, Wisconsin. I know
21 they have one in Superior or maybe even two in Superior. I know
22 they have one in Ironwood.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Bay City.

24 MR. RAHN: Bay City. Randy Roach, yes.

25 BY MR. PIERZINA:

1 Q. So those are the people that oversee sleeving and
2 integrity, digs, and that kind of stuff?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 MR. JOHNSON: And all of those people came out of the
5 pipeline maintenance crews?

6 MR. RAHN: For the most part, yes.

7 MR. PIERZINA: All right. Thanks.

8 MR. NICHOLSON: I want to follow up on that.

9 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

10 Q. So what's their responsibility? They install the
11 sleeves? Is that what we're saying?

12 A. The project coordinator?

13 Q. Yes, right.

14 A. They coordinate everything.

15 Q. Oh, okay.

16 A. You know, they review the dig sheets.

17 Q. They get the materials and the laborers in place?

18 A. And, yes, and locations.

19 MR. PIERZINA: They're like the company inspector. You
20 know, it could be contract welders and excavators and such, but a
21 project coordinator, correct me if I'm wrong, basically watches to
22 ensure that it's done in accordance with Enbridge --

23 MR. RAHN: Correct. Correct. And does the paperwork on
24 each individual dig.

25 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

1 Q. And there's not one at the Marshall station?

2 A. He's doing that right now for the dig program that's in
3 process. He is doing that right now.

4 Q. Well, there's someone on site now for this; is that what
5 you're saying?

6 A. Right, but we --

7 Q. But not prior to the --

8 A. No, we didn't have anybody.

9 Q. And was it the Stockbridge tie-in you're talking about?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Where is that in relation to where we think this failure
12 of the line is?

13 A. It's approximately 40 miles.

14 Q. Northwest?

15 A. Northeast.

16 Q. Northeast? Okay. Let me go back to those. The benzene
17 readings you took, the 1.6 PPM. What threshold reading do you
18 have to get before you are required to either clear the air --

19 A. .5.

20 Q. What?

21 A. .5.

22 Q. .5.

23 A. And that requires a half-mask.

24 Q. And so, being that you were over that --

25 A. We donned the half-mask on immediately.

1 Q. You did what? You donned the -- okay.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And you talked about a homeowner that was in the area
4 and you advised them?

5 A. Well, he came over and he was saying it was a little bit
6 strong, and so I went inside the house and, you know, I could
7 actually smell it, and then I made phone calls to take care of
8 them basically.

9 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

10 BY MR. PIERZINA:

11 Q. One quick question. What were you getting as far as LEL
12 readings?

13 A. For the benzene, actually on my monitor itself it was
14 very minute. The alarms didn't go off or nothing, and strictly
15 the benzene tester was just for benzene.

16 MR. JOHNSON: Well, maybe for everyone's benefit, you
17 would wear a personal monitor and then you also have a what? Like
18 a --

19 MR. RAHN: A benzene tester, correct.

20 MR. GUNTHER: Okay, any more questions?

21 All right. We'll cut it off.

22 (Whereupon, at 10:44 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

23

24

25

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 Jeff Rahn

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-10-MP-007

PLACE: Coldwater, Michigan

DATE: July 29, 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
Official Reporter

Kristen Shankleton
Transcriber