

DCA13MR002
Conrail - Shared Assets
Derailment/Hazardous Material Release
Paulsboro, New Jersey
November 30, 2012

NTSB - Interview of Borough of Paulsboro Fire Chief

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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TRAIN DERAILMENT/CHEMICAL SPILL *

NOVEMBER 30, 2012 * Docket No.: DCA-13-MR-002

PAULSBORO, NEW JERSEY *

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Interview of: ALFONSO GIAMPOLA

Clarksboro, New Jersey

Wednesday,
December 5, 2012

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: PAUL STANCIL
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

PAUL STANCIL, Accident Investigator
Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous
Materials Investigations
National Transportation Safety Board
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** PII **

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** PII **

ROBERT DEDOW
Railroad Safety Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

JIM BOGUSKY
Manager of Field Services
Trinity Rail

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I N T E R V I E W

(12:21 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Today is December 5th, 2012,
4 12:21 p.m. My name is Paul Stancil. I'm a hazardous materials
5 accident investigator with the National Transportation Safety
6 Board in Washington, D.C. We're here in Clarksboro, New Jersey at
7 the unified command center in response to the November 30th, 2012
8 accident on the train bridge in Paulsboro, New Jersey.

9 I'd like to go around the room to introduce everyone
10 who's present, please.

11 MR. EL-ZOGHBI: Muhamed El-Zoghbi, hazardous materials
12 accident investigator with the National Transportation Safety
13 Board.

14 MR. DEDOW: Robert Dedow, hazardous material railroad
15 safety inspector for the Federal Railroad Administration.

16 MR. BOGUSKY: Jim Bogusky, Manager of Field Services,
17 Trinity Rail.

18 ALFONSO GIAMPOLA: Fire Chief, Borough of Paulsboro.

INTERVIEW OF ALFONSO GIAMPOLA

19
20 BY MR. STANCIL:

21 Q: Okay, Sir. Chief Giampola, if you could describe to us
22 what happened from the moment you were notified of this accident
23 and up through the -- at least through the time of unified command
24 was established. That would be a good frame of reference for the
25 type of information we're looking for, sir.

1 A. Sure. I believe it was 7:00, 7:05 the page went out for
2 -- don't know the exact words -- train derailment, 230 East
3 Jefferson Street at the bridge. Got up out of bed. Got dressed.
4 Chief's vehicle, proceeded to it. Listening to the radio
5 communications on the way.

6 My assistant chief's house is there so he was already on
7 location, had just gotten home from work. The communications I
8 got back from him, that he was attempting to get a placard number.
9 He had the binoculars out attempting to get the placard numbers
10 off the car.

11 That's a suggestion for you. Have them put more
12 placards around the car just in case they're rolled over so you
13 can be able to see them. He was having difficulty trying to get
14 to see a placard. I believe they're only on the sides and the
15 ends and he was having difficulty trying to get that. And by the
16 time I got there he had gotten it and we were getting a look-up
17 through the county communications of what it was.

18 I got there probably 3 to 5 minutes after the initial
19 page to me. I'm sure it's timestamped at Gloucester County
20 Communications, when I signed on and when I arrived on location.
21 Got on location, pulled up into Gary's driveway at 230 East
22 Jefferson Street, got out, went down to where he was. Seen the
23 mangled mess, started getting orders for equipment to come in,
24 having them stage out on Delaware Street or Commerce Street to
25 keep them out of the scene, so -- till we got information back

1 what it was.

2 Police Department arrived on location. I believe they
3 started a door-to-door, banging as the cloud came out. I did not
4 get involved in that until we got back inside. We went through
5 that looking to make sure that there was no fire, trying to size
6 up the situation, so to speak.

7 We did that, then we said, look, we need to go to a
8 command post. There was a cloud that came out. We thought it was
9 fog rolling in off the marshes. After -- in hindsight it was not.
10 It was vinyl chloride that was -- it looked like it came off the
11 marshes on the east side of the railroad tracks. I don't know if
12 the wind was blowing from that way but it came off and it rolled
13 up and rolled up onto the ground. After about -- again, my
14 timeline may have -- be a little off because of everything that
15 was going on. I would say maybe 45 minutes, an hour it basically
16 burnt off and the vapors or the fog went away.

17 We didn't see anything leaking. You couldn't -- I
18 couldn't visibly see a leak and we decided -- after we knew that
19 it was vinyl chloride, we moved back to the church, St. James
20 Church and we had gotten somebody to open it for us so we could
21 take the command post back there and get out from right there in
22 front of it. We were going to go back there and do a briefing and
23 find out what we should do and what the actions that we should
24 take.

25 I made a communications early on -- to backtrack --

1 early on right after I got there it was give me my CBRNE team,
2 give me Valero or Paulsboro Refining Company, give me their hazmat
3 group out of the refinery. They're my two resources to go to when
4 I have a hazmat incident. Pat Robinson, from there, he showed up
5 with his team out of the refinery and they went in to monitoring
6 mode to check VOCs in the vicinity.

7 Again, they're not specific to vinyl chloride. They're
8 just, you know, a multi-meter so they were doing VOC readings in
9 the area and we were trying to get the information back that we
10 needed to know about this product and what the readings were, and
11 the decision was made that the church was too close.

12 So we moved back to Borough Hall and we started getting
13 resources in: DEP, EPA, the county CBRNE team, the hazmat team
14 from the county; Paulsboro Refining Company, their people were
15 there. We were starting to get representatives from all the
16 interested entities, Conrail.

17 We were looking for -- I think it's the consist or
18 consist sheets. We were looking for them from the railroad to see
19 exactly what we had, how many cars we had and try to get the
20 lineup of the cars, what was there, because the only one that we
21 got, I guess, was the one that had the rupture in it and trying to
22 get the number off of that. Again, I'd have to ask Gary what car
23 he actually took the number off of. He just gave the number to
24 the county and we proceeded from there.

25 And we got the sheets and we started looking at the

1 lineup of cars and what we had in there and I'm guessing that was
2 11:00-ish when we got out to Borough Hall where we moved the new
3 command post and, again, all assets were -- available assets were
4 rolling in. We started to set up a command staff. We moved out
5 of the large room, the courtroom, into the conference room and we
6 were starting to go around the table to get the command staff
7 together and start it as an incident management system, and that's
8 about when the Coast Guard came in and Captain Moore -- we had the
9 meeting.

10 We went through some of the things that were there and
11 she was -- she wanted to know where we could go to another ICP and
12 farther away from the scene so we weren't compromised being in the
13 hot zone, and it was suggested the firehouse and then it ended up
14 coming out here because the firehouse would have still been in the
15 1-mile zone should they breathe something catastrophic.

16 Q. Okay. Could you tell us a little bit about -- some
17 background information about the Paulsboro Fire Department? How
18 large are you and what's the capabilities and such?

19 A. We -- 25 members, two pumpers, rescue, not hazmat
20 capable. We are a strictly -- we're trained to hazmat awareness
21 and operations and we're strictly a defensive mode. We don't do
22 any offensive maneuvering. We hold in place and call the experts.
23 County hazmat team and my first notification is them and then
24 Paulsboro Refining Company because they -- they're there and they
25 -- a lot of these products they deal with so -- and we have a

1 mutual aid agreement with them so they come out to the scene.

2 Like I said, most of our firefighters are Firefighter I.
3 We try to have everybody at least I-200 certified and hazmat
4 awareness, hazmat operations.

5 Q. Okay. Any particular training in the railroading
6 aspects of hazardous materials?

7 A. We've had some training but it's been a few years since
8 they -- Conrail used to have the train, the training train that
9 they used to bring in and so I'm trying to remember the guy's name
10 from Woodbury that used to be involved with Conrail, and he would
11 get it there for us and he retired. So it's been sporadic when we
12 get the training on the railcar.

13 Q. Okay. Do you have any -- do you all keep records for
14 the sort of hazardous materials training or updating?

15 A. We -- yes. I -- we do have training files that we keep
16 on all our members back in my office at the firehouse.

17 Q. Okay. Going back to when you arrived on scene, you said
18 when you showed up at the deputy chief's home there was fog on the
19 marsh and there was some initial thought that it was naturally
20 occurring. Is that what you meant?

21 A. It was a light haze when I first got there. It wasn't
22 anything but it was still early morning so it started increasingly
23 getting heavier as the time period went on. And I -- again,
24 Captain Marino and myself were standing next to each other and we
25 both thought it was fog and he's accusing me of trying to walk him

1 into the creek. So we didn't know what it was and that's -- we
2 really didn't, and we were -- neither one of us, and I don't think
3 anybody in my department was familiar with vinyl chloride. Just
4 not something we come across. We -- knock on wood, our hazmat
5 incidents in Paulsboro are very, very limited.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. One every 5 years and if it is it may be a diesel truck
8 that ruptured a tank and it's on the highway. I think the last
9 one that we had was a trash truck that somebody threw some waste
10 in and it punctured a bottle, and there was some stuff that got
11 down the sewer like Drano, I don't know, one of them. We normally
12 -- it's not our bread and butter calls. Our calls are usually
13 house fires, grass fires, bells and whistles type calls.

14 Q. Okay. How did you come to find out that vinyl chloride
15 was released?

16 A. We got the placard number, called the county, they gave
17 us the lookup on the -- the UN number on the car, they gave us the
18 lookup on it, told us what it was and gave us the basics on it.
19 You know, the basics, the MSDS sheet of vinyl chloride, not
20 company-specific but general, you know.

21 Q. And when was this?

22 A. That was early on. That was at the very beginning of
23 the incident. That was between, I would say, 7:00 and 7:30.

24 Q. So you got information about vinyl chloride. At that
25 time did you know that that's what had released?

1 A. No. No. We got information from it because that was
2 the placard number that we got.

3 Q. I see.

4 A. Early on in the process we couldn't see what was
5 released or if it was released. We couldn't see a puncture hole
6 in the side of the car. It wasn't until after we gathered the
7 information and got it back that we determined that that fog that
8 was on the ground that we thought was fog was vinyl chloride that
9 was released. So right away it went to the assumption that
10 something punctured and released it. Amounts, gallons, we had
11 none of that.

12 Q. So how long did it take to determine that the car was
13 punctured?

14 A. Forty-five minutes to an hour, I would guess, until we
15 finally got the determination that the car was -- we were doing
16 metering. We got the information back from the county and that's
17 when the determination was, well, this isn't fog rolling in; it's
18 vinyl chloride. And I mean it dissipated fairly quickly after it
19 rolled in. The fog looked -- I mean, it wasn't a long time it
20 went fairly quickly away and we were actively monitoring the --
21 around it through the Paulsboro Refining Company.

22 Q. How was the communications between you and the railroad
23 on identifying the hazardous material?

24 A. We had trouble getting the sheets.

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. Did not know where the conductor was and we didn't get
2 the sheets -- it took us a while before we got the sheets. I
3 think the first time we seen the sheets or anybody on my staff
4 were involved in it the first time we seen the sheets were when we
5 got to St. James Church is -- I believe it was a thin black guy, I
6 think, was the conductor of the train or engineer. I don't know
7 what he was, but he was the one that had them in his back pocket
8 and brought them out to us. And that's when we started getting
9 the lineup of the cars and what they were and what car it was that
10 rolled over. I guess it's the polyresin car with the beads in it
11 or whatever, then a lumber car, alcohol car and then the vinyl
12 chloride cars.

13 And -- well, I missed one step in there. When the --
14 when we got to the Conrail, I think -- I believe it was Neil. It
15 was a while into it, I don't remember his last name, but the guy
16 Neil from Conrail. He wanted to get the cars off the other end,
17 the east end, and I said I don't have an issue with that. Let's
18 get them out of there. We don't want them to be involved in this
19 and we agreed that they were going to leave one car hooked on to
20 the other so we didn't lose more cars into the creek.

21 Q. Okay. Did you have any conversations with the railroad
22 or police department or anyone else who was on scene before you
23 arrived concerning the nature of the materials on the train or the
24 fog, or any release --

25 A. No.

1 Q. -- information.

2 A. No.

3 Q. Were there any rumors --

4 A. Not at that point --

5 Q. -- going on there?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Did you hear anything about the fog being anything other
8 than natural weather or vinyl chloride?

9 A. No.

10 MR. STANCIL: Okay. I'll pass it to you for a while.

11 BY MR. EL-ZOGHBI:

12 Q. My understanding is Pat Robinson --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- was providing assistance in this --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- and what type of feedback was occurring between the
17 two of you and did you feel like you had adequate resources at the
18 time to -- or was information coming to you fast enough?

19 A. It was coming and Pat is the guy I keep in my right
20 pocket because he's very good with this, being in the refinery,
21 being the chief at the refinery. If I'm going to have a hazmat
22 incident, he's the guy I want next to me.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. I don't want my county team. I want him next to me --

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. -- because he's the guy that's got -- and he was guiding
2 me through it because, again, give me a building that's on fire I
3 can put it out.

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. Give me a railcar sputing stuff on the ground, that's
6 what it is to me, it's sputing stuff.

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. So he was feeding me the information and giving me
9 direction on which way we should go. And again, the police
10 department they were -- I think it was Sergeant Gilcrist, he was
11 just coming off shift and was at the station when it happened so
12 he immediately responded to the call and I believe that -- he
13 says, "I got the houses covered." I believe that's what the
14 wording was and he was taking care of his -- his officers were
15 taking care of the door knocking.

16 Q. Did you have any concerns about the scope of the
17 evacuation in terms of, like, the area that needed to be
18 evacuated? Was there any discussion about, like, the evacuation
19 zone?

20 A. No. I --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I truly left it to --

23 Q. Left it to --

24 A. -- Sergeant Gilcrist.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I was more concerned with the wreckage than anything
2 that was going to happen with that so him being a resource, I just
3 passed it off to -- you handle that, let me know how you're doing
4 and we, you know, tried to funnel information to him how far to go
5 and I made sure he was in contact, you know, Pat, if he's got any
6 questions and --

7 MR. EL-ZOGHBI: Okay.

8 MR. BOGUSKY: No, I have nothing.

9 BY MR. STANCIL:

10 Q. On the topic of the evacuation, it changed from a get
11 out and evacuate to a shelter in place at some point?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. How did -- how was that decision determined?

14 A. Based on what we read and the information that was given
15 us it was, I believe, the immediate house is right there down
16 Chestnut Street or down Commerce Street on the creek side was the
17 concern because of the proximity of them, and it was what do you
18 do? Well, based on the readings you can shelter in place. Okay.
19 We just didn't have the resources to be able to go, okay,
20 everybody get out --

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. -- so we did the shelter in place. We did the
23 notification to the -- I believe the reverse 911 we used and we
24 have an early warning system at the Borough Hall that is voice
25 activated so we got the -- you can go out there and give a voice

1 message. And we did the global connect and got the message out
2 and got it to the schools to get the school kids out and as far as
3 shelter in place and then, eventually, we dismissed school and --
4 because parents were calling and getting inundated with calls.

5 Q. So at the incident command post at Paulsboro, I'm sorry,
6 at the St. James Church, you were the incident commander at that
7 point?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Okay. Were you -- did you feel that you were getting
10 adequate information about the nature of this incident? You
11 mentioned you had problems with getting the consist.

12 A. We had problems getting the consist. It took a while to
13 get them. Once we had that -- once we had them, the information
14 flowed fairly good and I don't -- Neil got there and he came up,
15 introduced himself and he says, "I'm from Conrail and I know what
16 this stuff is," and I went, "Good, you're next to me. You stay
17 right here, tell me what I should do. I don't deal with train
18 cars. These are your toys so you let me know." And that's when
19 we got into moving the cars away from it and making sure that we
20 were -- we didn't have anything else that happened.

21 Q. Tell us about your conversations with the railroad
22 representatives and your technical assistance there. What sorts
23 of advice were you getting?

24 A. Neil was -- I'm trying to remember -- we got more
25 concerned about the other cars being there and we told him about

1 it and they were monitoring and we weren't getting high levels and
2 high readings and he said it probably dispersed fairly quickly,
3 given the time in the morning and the wind and, like I said, they
4 were monitoring, so -- and I don't know if it was him, Pat -- but
5 then it came up about the sheltering in place and getting the
6 general area out of there. And again, too many things were
7 happening and trying to keep them sorted I just wanted information
8 of where we were. I had my hazmat guy -- Pat Dossi (ph.) is my
9 hazmat guy. He was in charge of the hazmat team that morning from
10 CBRNE. He was giving us readings back and getting information
11 back to us and he was relaying a lot of information.

12 Q. The CBRNE team, what agency did that come from?

13 A. Gloucester County.

14 Q. Emergency Management?

15 A. No. They're part of the Gloucester County. They're a
16 -- I don't -- the terminology, either they're a strike team or a
17 task force. I don't know which one, which terminology they're
18 using, but they're a hazard -- it's the county hazmat response
19 team.

20 Q. Okay. Did anyone suggest to you that any level of
21 personal protective equipment would be necessary to work in this
22 environment?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Can you tell us anything about that?

25 A. Heard the radio, listening to my assistant chief, Gary,

1 he's telling me that he's looking for it. He's standing on two
2 legs and he's having a conversation with me, so protective --
3 breathing apparatus didn't even come into my mind because, again,
4 we didn't know that there was a breach in the car. So it didn't
5 even come into my mind and once we found out that there was a
6 release it was almost like the horse is already out of the barn.
7 We're not closing -- you can't close the gate now, it don't help.
8 So it was -- we left the -- we didn't go into SCBA mode or
9 anything like that. I don't believe the hazmat team did either.

10 Q. And what sort of led to that happening that way? Was it
11 the fact that you all were already in the fog?

12 A. We didn't -- we really didn't know that it was a
13 release. I mean, the fog came out. The fog went away. We didn't
14 smell anything -- or, at least, I didn't. I didn't smell
15 anything. I didn't taste anything. I didn't -- no eye watering.
16 My throat wasn't getting scratchy. I didn't show any signs that I
17 needed to put respiratory protection on.

18 Q. And once you learned that it was vinyl chloride, did the
19 conditions change to the point where you thought you were okay
20 without it?

21 A. Yeah, because the levels that they were reading and the
22 metering that they were getting back and, like I said, they were
23 constantly metering the area, didn't warrant putting a SCBA on.

24 BY MR. EL-ZOGHBI:

25 Q. What type of measurements were they obtaining? I mean,

1 the numbers that you were hearing, do you recollect anything?

2 A. I don't remember if I got specific numbers or if I got
3 we're good.

4 Q. Okay. Just a status. Okay.

5 A. We're good. Nothing here. We're good. I don't
6 remember any specific numbers because, again, early on in it there
7 were only VOC meters. There was no --

8 Q. Vinyl chloride --

9 A. -- vinyl chloride. There was no Draeger tubes or
10 anything like that that we were -- that we had.

11 Q. You say, at what time did you feel that, you know, you
12 had the scene characterized pretty well in terms of the type of
13 materials that were -- you were dealing with and then, you know,
14 ensuring or accounting for all the remaining hazmat on the train?
15 If you could talk about that a little more.

16 A. When we move -- when we made the decision, we went back
17 to the command post I felt that we were getting -- we went back to
18 the church to have a meeting to figure out what we -- what our
19 next step was.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I felt at that point that we were fairly stable.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. We were getting in -- we were getting better. We were
24 stable. Had the hazmat team there. I had the Paulsboro Refining
25 Company there, and at that point I didn't believe I had a need to

1 be out there directing operations. I figured they were -- at that
2 point we were stable, hazmat was doing their thing --

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. -- the refining company was doing their thing, so we
5 went back to formulate a game plan. I felt -- when I left there
6 and went to Borough Hall, left the scene, I felt okay that I was
7 leaving it with my assistant chief to handle operations and report
8 back to me. The scene was stable.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Because the reason we went to St. James' Church was I
11 wanted to be there, I wanted be hands-on, I wanted to make sure
12 that the actions that were being taken I was going to be
13 responsible for and I didn't want to leave it on somebody else.

14 And at the point that we stopped being there and we went
15 back to Borough Hall I was comfortable with -- the scene was
16 stable enough that I could leave it with my assistant, not that
17 he's not capable --

18 Q. Um-hum. Sure.

19 A. -- but I could leave the responsibility with him that
20 the mechanism was set in place that we can -- that hazmat and
21 everybody that was there, that we were good.

22 We were going to be -- we were lending resources now to
23 the hazmat team and the Paulsboro Refining Company. We were now
24 their resource because we were allowing them more of the control
25 the hazmat scene and just tell me what to do. Tell me where to go

1 because you're the players that are in there, the training people
2 were there, so --

3 Q. So how did that communication continue, given that once
4 you left St. James and went to the hall, were you getting
5 information relayed to you through the operation, your assistant
6 chief --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- or was it directly through the Paulsboro Refinery?

9 A. No, it was through because Pat gave -- Pat came to me
10 with -- to Borough Hall --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- the Refining Company's chief and he left his manpower
13 there with his equipment. He came to Borough Hall with me. He
14 was actively helping me get the command structure together to
15 manage the incident. So his people were out there. They were --
16 we're not on the same radio system --

17 Q. A different one. Okay.

18 A. -- and he was getting communications back from his
19 people and passing it on and the hazmat team was -- I was
20 listening to them on the radio but they were in contact with my
21 operations guy who was in contact with me through radio
22 communications of what was going on and what was being done and
23 where they were and --

24 Q. Okay. Were the -- given that you had the CBRNE team on
25 scene and Paulsboro Refinery, were they in communication with each

1 other or were they -- did they have specific tasks --

2 A. More face to face. They had separate tasks.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. CBRNE was more at the rail site --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- at the railroad and the refining company was in on
7 Jefferson Street where the house was and where the release was.
8 They were doing the monitoring in that area there where the
9 firefighters were plus the CBRNE team was doing their own
10 monitoring where they were.

11 Q. Okay.

12 MR. STANCIL: How large of a contingent was the CBRNE
13 team?

14 MR. GIAMPOLA: Eight to 10 guys, I believe, and again
15 I'd have to ask Pat Dossi.

16 MR. STANCIL: And Pat, again, his position was?

17 MR. GIAMPOLA: I think he was the -- I don't know his
18 exact title but I think he was the commander of the CBRNE team.

19 MR. STANCIL: Okay.

20 BY MR. EL-ZOGHBI:

21 Q. Do you conduct any joint exercises with the CBRNE team
22 or, you know, what level of interaction do you normally have on --
23 I mean, how familiar were you with this personnel and operations
24 and --

25 A. We have trained together before, not on a regular basis.

1 But we have trained together before and we know what their
2 capabilities are and through Gloucester County --

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. -- and our response plans, they are first notification.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. We're in a unique situation being in an industry that we
7 have -- for them to deploy, because it comes out of Clayton, I
8 believe, which is 45 minutes, possibly an hour away from us --

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. -- for them to deploy it's usually an hour and a half to
11 2 hours before they deploy and get on location. The refinery, I
12 can usually have them in 5 minutes.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. They're there and especially at 7:00 in the morning
15 they've done shift change and their day shift is in and I get all
16 the resources I want out of them.

17 Q. Let me ask, on that day, do you recall there being fog
18 or anything, that early in the morning or before the incident as
19 you were driving to the incident?

20 A. I just woke up out of bed. I --

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. -- my wife had went to work and I had rolled back over
23 and I was sleeping. It went off. I got my normal up, tux,
24 shirt --

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. -- threw my jumpsuit onto the car, paying attention more
2 to the radio and not hitting anything on the street, didn't
3 really --

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. -- didn't do an observation. I was just -- I was more
6 focused on what I was going into, where fire hydrants were at the
7 location, where I needed to be, where I needed to stage apparatus,
8 that type thing. I was not really focused on the surroundings I
9 was coming in.

10 BY MR. STANCIL:

11 Q. If you had a do-over again, is there anything that you
12 would like to have seen happen differently?

13 A. Other than better placarding so we could have got the
14 car information quicker and knew what we were coming into versus
15 -- I don't believe that my assistant chief got the placarding
16 number easy enough to be able to know what it was and, like I
17 said, 3 to 5 minutes after the initial call and he had already
18 been there. He had just gotten home from work. So with
19 -- I'll go conservative. It was 5 to 10-minute window before we -
20 - before I got there and the initial incident because I believe
21 his wife called it in. I believe Raelynne called it in or seen
22 it, so five to ten-minute window before I got there and probably
23 another five to ten minutes before we got a placard. So now we're
24 20 minutes into an incident that we haven't identified the --
25 what's involved in it.

1 That would be the only thing that -- better able to
2 obtain, and I know it's wreckage, you know, and you can't put it
3 at every inch of the car, but readily obtainable to be able to
4 catch the placard number to try to speed that process up.

5 Usually, going into a hazmat you look for winds which,
6 to the best of my knowledge remembering it, they were fairly calm
7 that morning and, again, speaking with my assistant chief on the
8 radio he was okay. He wasn't asking for SCBA air or anything like
9 that so we weren't -- we didn't know that there was a breach or
10 leak and not knowing what the chemical was.

11 Going in, if I had knew earlier, I probably -- if I knew
12 the chemical earlier and had the idea that that it was a breach I
13 probably would have staged -- have my assistant chief out there
14 staged everybody out of the area.

15 BY MR. EL-ZOGHBI:

16 Q. Is there -- would you say, are there any capabilities
17 that you wish you had on the scene during the response or things
18 that, you know, were not available to you that you feel like you
19 would have been able to have more information, make more --

20 A. Not really. I mean, I -- we had the tools there to do
21 it. I mean, I don't know of anything that I would've wanted to
22 run and grab that I didn't have.

23 Q. Okay. Could you tell us a little more about your
24 cooperation between the railroad and yourself? Are you -- do they
25 provide you with detailed information about the type of hazardous

1 materials that normally come through the tracks or --

2 A. Not usually --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- like a regular business that's stationary in
5 Paulsboro that's sends their data sheets in, you know, for what
6 chemicals they have in their store or whatever. We don't get that
7 from the rail lines because, again, it's a transport twice a day
8 through town so they would have to give us a book this high with
9 what's going through on a daily basis. We're all aware of it.
10 Born and raised in Paulsboro, 35 years in the fire department,
11 lived there for 53 years. We're all aware of the train.

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. As firemen, and I know we've all done it when we've
14 gotten stuck at the train for 20 minutes waiting for it to go
15 through, we've written numbers down and you go back through your
16 guidebook and you look to see what came through town. It's, you
17 know, that fire thing that you just do it.

18 Q. Uh-huh.

19 A. But it goes through. It goes through in the morning.
20 It goes through at night. I think we usually get three to four
21 trains a day, a couple going south, a couple going north. You
22 just know if you go down Delaware Street and you hit the train you
23 may as well figure on being there for 15 to 20 minutes because
24 they're usually long.

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. If you hear the whistle, (makes noise), go to
2 Billingsport Road so you can go over the bridge. If you go -- if
3 you go into town you're -- if you go into Commerce Street or
4 Chestnut Street, Delaware Street, Penn Line, you're going to catch
5 the -- you're going to get caught by the train and if you're going
6 to Billingsport you're stuck.

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. So that's -- but, yeah, I mean, I don't know if there's
9 a mechanism in place that would allow us to see every train car
10 every day going through and, as a volunteer, I don't think I would
11 want to try to get that data every day, that this is the potential
12 that's going through your town. I think it would just either blow
13 up my computer or blow up my mind.

14 I just don't think it would -- I don't think it -- I
15 don't think, logistically, it would work to be able to do that.
16 It would end up being one of those things where you got the
17 information and after a week of reading it and when you got it you
18 circle-filed it or deleted it off your computer.

19 Q. If you can say, is the fire department an all-volunteer
20 fire department?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. All volunteer?

23 A. Yes.

24 MR. STANCIL: Anyone have anything else?

25 BY MR. STANCIL:

1 Q. Is there anything that you would like to add that you
2 think might be useful for our investigation?

3 A. Not really. I mean, it -- from my point of view, and
4 I'm one of those guys that I have the philosophy, "stuff happens."
5 I think it was a tragic crash. I mean, it's why it's -- it was an
6 accident. Hindsight would I have wanted the car -- if, in fact,
7 it was a red light that was there, would I have wanted them to go
8 through the red light? No. If I'm coming up to the railroad
9 tracks and the arms were down and the lights are flashing red, if
10 I go around the arms I just ran a red light and I'm subject to a
11 ticket. If the light was red and -- I mean, two years ago, three
12 years ago we had a guy come out of Valero, at the time, and turn
13 across the railroad tracks. When he did -- he was one of the
14 security guards -- he came out at the red light, he made the quick
15 left. Train hit him, drove him down the tracks. Unfortunately,
16 he passed away. It killed him.

17 You don't run across -- if the lights are flashing,
18 ding-ding, you don't go across the railroad tracks. It's one of
19 those idiot-proof things. Ding, ding, ding, ding, lights are
20 flashing, you don't go across. You don't run red lights on main
21 -- on regular streets; don't do it there.

22 That would be the only thing that I would really want to
23 go back and why was it such a necessity -- if, in fact, it was
24 truly red, why was it a necessity to make the train go through
25 there before they got somebody technically out there to make sure

1 that it was just a malfunction and there wasn't -- the lock didn't
2 lock or whatever the case may be. That's -- that would be the
3 only thing that I would truly go back and --

4 BY MR. EL-ZOGHBI:

5 Q. Can I ask, have -- were there any complaints or concerns
6 to the fire department or the police, that you're aware of,
7 regarding the bridge?

8 A. No. We had the collapse back in 2009 where the bridge
9 gave way and they came in and did the repairs and life went back
10 to the train going back and forth.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. You know, it was -- while it was being repaired over
13 those few months it was being repaired, it was quiet. There was
14 no whistles in the middle of the night but that went back to
15 normal and life just went on.

16 I don't think anybody truly went oh, geez, the bridge
17 was built in the 1800s and it's -- we're used to it. We're -- it
18 cuts through the middle of town and -- a quick story. The bridge
19 that goes over Billingsport Road was my mom's doing. My mom was
20 on the council --

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. -- and Rob Andrews had just got elected and she beat him
23 up about the train goes through town and it cuts our town in half
24 and if there's an emergency on the other side of town we can't get
25 to it. If a derailment happens we can't get people out of

1 Billingsport if it's all the way across the town and eventually
2 the bridge was built, so --

3 MR. STANCIL: Anybody? No? Is there anything else to
4 add?

5 MR. GIANPOLA: No. I'm good.

6 MR. STANCIL: Okay, excellent. Let's see, it's 1:03
7 p.m. I think we're finished with our interview and, Chief, we
8 appreciate you taking time out of your very busy schedule from the
9 incident command to come speak with us today.

10 MR. GIAMPOLA: Thank you.

11 MR. STANCIL: Thank you very much.

12 MR. GIAMPOLA: Thank you.

13 (Whereupon, at 1:03 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: TRAIN DERAILMENT/CHEMICAL SPILL
 NOVEMBER 30, 2012
 PAULSBORO, NEW JERSEY
 Interview of Alfonso Giampola

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-13-MR-002

PLACE: Clarksboro, New Jersey

DATE: December 5, 2012

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.

Beverly A. Lano
Transcriber