



SURVIVAL FACTORS ATTACHMENT

NTSB Interview of Delray Beach Fire Rescue's Incident Commander

Delray Beach, Florida

HWY23MH006

(30 pages)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL GRADE CROSSING COLLISION
IN DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA ON
FEBRUARY 8, 2023

Accident No.: HWY23MH006

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Interview of: JOHN WOERTZ, Captain
Delray Beach Fire Rescue

Delray Beach, Florida

Tuesday,
February 14, 2023

APPEARANCES:

JASON ZEITLER, Survival Factors Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

JOHN HUMM, Survival Factor Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:58 a.m.)

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2
3 MR. ZEITLER: Today is February 14, 2023. Time by my watch
4 is 9:58 a.m. Currently taking recorded statement at 501 West
5 Atlantic Avenue, Delray Beach, Florida, at Delray Beach Fire
6 Rescue Station regarding the Brightline crash with the 2015 Nissan
7 Rogue that occurred on February 8, 2023, approximately 2006 hours.
8 My name is Jason Zeitler. I'm with NTSB Survival Factors Group
9 Chairman. Also present in the room is Dr. John Humm, Survival
10 Factors, NTSB.

11 Purpose of this interview is to take recorded statement with
12 the Captain of the Delray Beach Fire Rescue.

13 Captain, would you state your full name just for --

14 CAPT WOERTZ: John Woertz.

15 MR. ZEITLER: Thank you. John, Captain John, John Woertz.
16 Is it okay if I call you Captain --

17 CAPT WOERTZ: John.

18 MR. ZEITLER: John. Okay. Is it okay if we, we record this,
19 this interview?

20 CAPT WOERTZ: Yes, sir.

INTERVIEW OF JOHN WOERTZ

21
22 BY MR. ZEITLER:

23 Q. And then I just want to get basic background about you, the
24 Department. And then during this interview we're going to ask
25 questions about mass casualty. And I recognize that this case in

1 particular might not meet the threshold of a mass casualty
2 response for most agencies, and we recognize that. We'll just get
3 into some basic questions regarding policies about mass casualty.
4 But most importantly we're just trying to understand the culture
5 of the agency. And then our main focus of this interview is the
6 response to the Brightline crash with the, the Nissan, you know,
7 how you guys responded, how you responded in conjunction with
8 Delray Police Department, and just the steps that Delray Police
9 Department took, whether it's the initial response, arriving,
10 pronouncing, from extrication, attending to the two occupants of
11 the vehicle, and things like that. That's what our main focus is
12 for this interview. So let's get into it. How long have you held
13 the position of captain?

14 A. About six years.

15 Q. Six years. And what's, what's best, best description of your
16 current function as a captain with Delray?

17 A. I'm the EMS captain on A shift. I've been in that position
18 for about six months. I respond to all the high priority EMS
19 calls, and then all of the other major incidents.

20 Q. Okay. And then prior to this role with Delray, how long have
21 you been with Delray all together your whole career?

22 A. This March will be 16 years.

23 Q. 16 years. Did you work for other agencies prior --

24 A. No, sir.

25 Q. Okay. Prior to your current role that you just described can

1 you just briefly touch on some of your past experience with other
2 roles Delray Fire Rescue?

3 A. I was EMS captain for six years -- or six, about six months.
4 I've been a captain for about six years. Prior to that, I was a
5 driver engineer for about two to three years. And the rest of the
6 time was a firefighter paramedic.

7 Q. Okay. Very good. And regarding your agency Delray Fire
8 Rescue, do you guys have any, any volunteers? You guys all
9 full --

10 A. No. We're all full-time.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Full-time paid.

13 Q. Full-time paid. And about how many firefighters do you guys
14 employ? I'm not going to hold you to --

15 A. 160, I think. I know right now we're 23 short from our max
16 staffing.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Which I think is 160.

19 Q. About 160. Okay. And how many -- as a, as a captain in your
20 current role how many people -- approximately how many employees
21 do you oversee on a given, given shift approximately?

22 A. I'm kind of the supervisor on the medical calls. So however
23 many it would be responding I would be in charge of the
24 lieutenants, and normally it's one lieutenant on a typical call.

25 And then the crew, two paramedics. So it's be, like, three on the

1 same --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- or if a engine responds as well then it would be six;
4 three per unit.

5 Q. Okay. Makes sense. And then -- talk about your typical
6 shift, I would say not the three to six that you currently
7 supervise, but just in general say on a given night, like, like on
8 February 8th or any night, what's the typical makeup of the
9 personnel that would be working on a night? About how many
10 paramedics, firefighters, EMTs?

11 A. We have six stations, and then a rescue and a suppression
12 unit at each station. So that's three per unit. So 30, 36, 37 --
13 39 is our typical staffing per shift. Our Special Ops Station on
14 15 has a Special Ops Unit which is housed by one person. And then
15 at Headquarters here we have myself as EMS, one-person unit, and
16 the battalion chief is one-person unit.

17 Q. Okay. And then just basic paramedic --

18 A. We currently have two EMTs throughout our whole department.
19 All the rest are paramedics.

20 Q. Okay. And do you guys -- what type of schedule do you guys
21 work?

22 A. 24 on, 72 off. Or 24 on, 48 off. Sorry.

23 Q. You guys (indiscernible)?

24 A. We are actually (indiscernible).

25 Q. And then how does the typical employee, let's say a typical

1 paramedic, EMT, firefighter, how would they start their shift? Do
2 you guys start with, like, a, a lineup or how do they --

3 A. No. We don't really do lineups. Come in, and whatever
4 position you're filling that day you would relieve that person
5 and, obviously, your officer would be on that unit. So he just --
6 he knows who is on his unit. He checks, makes sure they're there.

7 Q. Okay. So it's not like a daily, daily briefing they have to
8 attend or they just, they --

9 A. We did have morning briefings sent out to us every day, and
10 depending on the captain of the station they'll do like a -- get
11 with their crew real quick. Hey, this is what we've got going on.
12 But there's nothing formal set up.

13 Q. Okay. And I guess, you know, might send out a blast this is
14 what encounter -- was encountered the last shift or you know?

15 A. Sometimes. If it was something that wasn't typical --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- then they'll send out like a -- usually it will go
18 department-wide. Hey, we encountered this. These are learning
19 incidents from it.

20 Q. Okay. And then as far as radio usage, so we got some
21 questions about radio stuff. Does your agency use English or 10-
22 code signals?

23 A. Plain English.

24 Q. Plain English on the radio. Okay. And do you guys have your
25 own dispatch center?

- 1 A. We go through Palm Beach County Fire Rescue.
- 2 Q. Okay. Is it the one up by there -- like a gun club --
- 3 A. Yeah.
- 4 Q. -- okay. So you guys -- are you guys on the same channel --
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. -- as Palm Beach?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. You guys share, share a common channel. Okay. And then as
- 9 far as actual radio channels, you guys have your main channel, but
- 10 I imagine you get your calls on --
- 11 A. We get dispatched on 6A. Our working channel is 4A. And
- 12 then you request a TAC channel. You go to that which is usually
- 13 7A through 11A.
- 14 Q. So if you guys are working multiple, let's say, bigger
- 15 incidences, do you possess the ability to kind of switch to, like,
- 16 a second channel?
- 17 A. Yeah. I believe for this call we actually did. We went to a
- 18 TAC channel, request a TAC channel on the way, and they -- or for
- 19 like fires and larger incidents they'll automatically put you on a
- 20 TAC channel.
- 21 Q. Okay. And do you, do you possess the ability to -- it's my
- 22 understanding, correct me if I'm wrong, if -- you guys used to be
- 23 on the same channels as their PD or same dispatch center?
- 24 A. We used to be -- yeah, our dispatch used to be Delray PD, but
- 25 we've switched away from them.

1 Q. Okay. Now, do you possess the ability to go to, like, an
2 (indiscernible) channel to patch if you needed the ability to talk
3 to them on the same channel?

4 A. They would have to go -- it would have to be -- go through
5 probably county-wide dispatch --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- to get a patch channel.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Because we patch with other fire agencies.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- respond to it. But it's not typical that that happens.

12 Q. It would have to be, like, a huge event --

13 A. And more or less than it would just be a joint command setup.
14 So that they would -- the two chiefs would be in the same command
15 post, and they would just communicate that way.

16 Q. Okay. Makes sense. Let's see. So, okay, so you're with
17 Palm Beach County Fire Rescue as far as radio channel. You're on
18 the same channel as them. Do they break the channels by
19 geographic location?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So we're, like, the South Region.

23 Q. And then do you know how many departments you're on the same
24 channel with, with them, where the dividing line is?

25 A. It's us and Palm Beach County on that. I don't know the

1 exact dividing line, but it's the South Region.

2 Q. Okay. Then is it -- how often do you guys co-respond to,
3 let's say, large-scale incidents with Delray Police Department?
4 Let's say you're not on the same channel, but how often are you
5 guys going to, to kind of hazmat situations or large-scale
6 incidences?

7 A. We go to multiple incidences a day with them.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I mean, they respond to all cardiac arrests, any major
10 pediatric call, any violent situation they respond.

11 Q. Okay. So you guys are running, running calls --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- them very frequently. And then we're -- some mass
14 casualty stuff. I recognize that this is a single vehicle verse a
15 train. Most agencies this probably wouldn't constitute a mass
16 casualty. For you guys did this constitute a mass casualty?

17 A. No. Just typical train verse vehicle response.

18 Q. Okay. And some of these questions might, might seem more
19 geared to mass casualty. Those are typically what cases we're
20 investigating, and kind of going through. So apologies in advance
21 if some of these kind of seem little bit, you know, larger
22 questions than what the case kind of calls for. But we're just
23 trying to understand just the culture of the agency, and how you
24 guys respond to mass casualty type events. We've requested from
25 the City of Delray their emergency management mass casualty plans.

1 We haven't seen them. We're just waiting for them still. But
2 does your agency have any, any policies regarding mass casualty
3 response? Do you -- to know the policy I'm talking about?

4 A. Yes, we do.

5 Q. You guys, just, you guys have policies regarding response in
6 general. Okay. And then let's see, regarding this case
7 specifically so the Brightline and the Nissan collision how did
8 you guys receive or get notified about this call?

9 A. Through dispatch. Typical dispatch.

10 Q. -- like 911 calls?

11 A. I would assume it was a 911 call.

12 Q. Okay. And then so take me through, take me through how you
13 get, you get the call from dispatch. From the time you get the
14 call from dispatch, take me through what, what's going through,
15 you know, what's, what's happening as far as response from that
16 time to the time you guys are arriving on scene.

17 A. Make sure we have appropriate units going. Couple questions
18 are asked to dispatch on the way. I ask because I've been on
19 other train incidences do we know which side of the tracks the
20 vehicle was on? So because we didn't get what type of train it
21 was either. So sometimes we'll get exits blocked for a mile. So
22 you want to make sure we have majority of our response going to
23 one side, but also other units staying on the opposite side so we
24 can easily handle any situation.

25 Q. Okay. So, okay. So you're getting some preliminary

1 information as you guys are responding. You're asking certain
2 questions to dictate the amount of units that you guys need, and
3 how, how you're deploying those units. Do you know if you guys
4 -- I say you guys -- fire rescue or police arrived first on the
5 scene?

6 A. I am not sure. I know our first arriving unit was Rescue
7 113.

8 Q. Rescue 113. And what is Rescue 113 comprised of as far as
9 personnel?

10 A. Lieutenant and two paramedics.

11 Q. Okay. And then so as you guys are responding you have at
12 least that, that ladder, that unit. And then about how many other
13 units do you have?

14 A. It was myself, battalion chief, typically our Special Ops
15 Station, and two other, two suppression units. Two rescues, two
16 suppression units, Special Ops Station, the battalion chief, and
17 the EMS captain.

18 Q. Okay. So you guys have a lot of people going. When you
19 arrive on scene, you know -- let me, let me take it back one
20 second. How long would you say it took the first unit for fire
21 rescue to kind of arrive on scene, estimate?

22 A. Four or five minutes, four minutes.

23 Q. And then how long before you personally arrived on scene?

24 A. Probably six minutes.

25 Q. And what did you see? Kind of describe, describe the scene

1 that you saw when you arrived.

2 A. None of the train tracks were blocked by the train because it
3 was going southbound, and it stopped just past the train track
4 going into the county that's south of us. There was a large
5 police presence, and the -- I remember seeing the gates down, and
6 the lights activated still.

7 Q. Okay. So the gates were down still; the lights were
8 activated. You said the, the train was already into, like,
9 Broward?

10 A. No. To Boca.

11 Q. Oh, to Boca. Okay.

12 A. Yeah. It didn't go all the way into Boca, but it was heading
13 that way southbound.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And it stopped right over the water that separates our
16 cities.

17 Q. And then you see, see a vehicle. Was the vehicle on its --

18 A. The vehicle was on its side.

19 Q. On it's side. Do you --

20 A. So --

21 Q. -- remember --

22 A. -- wheels showing north, to the north.

23 Q. To the north. Do you remember if it was on its driver or
24 passenger side? If you don't remember --

25 A. Engine compartment was in the front. So it would have to be

1 on the passenger side.

2 Q. Okay. Passenger side. Do you remember where the, the male
3 occupant was seated upon you guys arrival?

4 A. He was impaled with the crossing guard --

5 Q. Gate?

6 A. Yeah, the crossing gate. Slumped over the, maybe the
7 passenger seat.

8 Q. Front or rear passenger seat -- the front?

9 A. The back.

10 Q. Oh, the back.

11 A. The back rest of the front passenger seat.

12 Q. Okay. So he's kind of, kind of sitting -- so the vehicle is
13 on its passenger side. So he's behind the front seat.

14 A. He was folded on top of the front seat with the arm impaled
15 through him, and then into the back of the driver's seat.

16 Q. Okay. And then the female, the female occupant, where was
17 she?

18 A. She was from my understanding ejected, and she was on the
19 south side of the car on the ground right there.

20 Q. Okay. And were there any bystanders present on the scene
21 when you guys arrived?

22 A. Not around the general working area. PD had cordoned off a
23 pretty good area.

24 Q. Okay. So they had -- it sounds like Delray Police Department
25 secured the scene, kind of made it safe, and backed off any, any

1 persons that might have been in the, I guess we'll call it the
2 crime scene for now. So when you got there, there was no, no
3 people, no bystanders working on or attending to the occupants of
4 the vehicle?

5 A. No. The rescue had already been there, and had already
6 addressed the patients. So they were the ones.

7 Q. Okay. And then as far as medical response to the two
8 individuals, can you describe that response from fire rescue?

9 A. I spoke to the lieutenant, and he said that he had one of his
10 -- they saw the lady on the ground, checked her pulse. She didn't
11 have a pulse. They were doing (indiscernible). He went and
12 checked on the guy in the vehicle that was impaled.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Pretty much had injuries incompatible with life.

15 Q. So the occupant, the male occupant that was impaled,
16 incompatible with life. He was pronounced on the scene; is that
17 correct?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And then the female passenger, you guys checked pulse, didn't
20 receive one. Did you guys transport her or pronounce her on the
21 scene?

22 A. Pronounced on scene.

23 Q. Okay. So both occupants were pronounced on the scene. What
24 about train passengers? Did you guys have the opportunity to
25 check to see if anyone was injured?

1 A. I spoke with the train conductor, and asked him, and he said
2 that there was no report of injuries on the train.

3 Q. Okay. So no one requiring any type of assistance?

4 A. No.

5 Q. No was transported --

6 A. No.

7 Q. -- from the train?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. And then understand that after looking at the vehicle
10 that there was extrication process that was performed on the
11 Nissan. Can you just kind of take me through fire rescue's
12 response as far as any extrication efforts that were performed on
13 the vehicle?

14 A. Since there was no living victims inside the care we waited
15 for the medical examiner to show up.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And he has to document the scene. And then we kind of go at
18 his pace on when he wants to take pictures as part of our
19 extrication process.

20 Q. Okay. And then specifically, I saw the roof was removed. It
21 looks like all the, the pillars were cut. Was that done by --
22 towing efforts was that done by fire rescue?

23 A. Fire rescue.

24 Q. And then what type of equipment did you guys utilize to --

25 A. They utilized our TNT extrication equipment, and the saw is

1 all. Mainly the cutters and the saw is all.

2 Q. Okay. And you were able to remove the roof free kind of the
3 trapped occupant or the --

4 A. Yeah. They took the driver's side pillars first, and then
5 the A post and the D post, and flapped it down, and then cut the
6 pole, and then cut the rest of the roof off to remove the victim.

7 Q. And the police that was impaling you said that was stuck into
8 the back of the front seat, and then what -- do you remember where
9 the other end was?

10 A. Yeah. It was in the ground.

11 Q. In the ground.

12 A. Like bent down into the ground, and then bent up impaling
13 him, and then into the back of the driver's seat.

14 Q. When you say, when you say ground, you talking about the
15 bottom of the vehicle or the actual ground?

16 A. The ground.

17 Q. The ground like outside of the vehicle?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Outside. It went through the window --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- to the ground.

23 Q. To the ground.

24 A. So that was what was holding him up in the chair.

25 Q. Okay. And then the, the personnel that typically perform the

1 extrication process is that people that are part of your, your, I
2 guess span of control or is that a different division or special
3 division?

4 A. They would be under my span of control. Normally I'm
5 assigned safety officer when I respond to a larger scene or
6 extrication like that.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So I'm in charge of the overall safety.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. They have a, a captain who is usually put in charge of the
11 actual extrication.

12 Q. Okay. And were there any specialty units that Delray Beach
13 Fire Rescue deployed?

14 A. Our Special Ops Unit came, but he's part of our extrication
15 response that typically goes to a vehicle verse train.

16 Q. Okay. And was there any hazmat issues or leaking fuel or
17 anything that you guys had to attend to?

18 A. There was a smell of fuel. So we had dry chemical
19 extinguisher out there, but we didn't actually see anything
20 leaking. The end of the engine block and battery were hundreds of
21 feet away.

22 Q. Quite a distance off?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Let's see. On a typical -- let's, let's kind of backtrack.

25 Actually, one more question. Did you guys respond with any other

1 fire rescue department as part of mutual aid for this particular
2 incident?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Did you employ any type of ICS?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Can you describe that?

7 A. First unit on scene established command as part of our daily
8 operations, anything like that, first officer on scene establishes
9 command. When the battalion chief arrived he took command. And I
10 normally become safety officer. And that was the -- I think you
11 sign that lieutenant medical. And the bodies were pronounced
12 right then. So it was kind of -- after that it was more of a
13 slower down, check and make sure there's no other bodies ahead
14 possibly been ejected or anything like that.

15 Q. So you canvassed the scene; didn't find anybody else?

16 A. Yeah. Walked all the way to the train, and made sure nothing
17 was still in the train, across the train or anything like that.

18 Q. Yeah. I understand. Did you guys used like flare or
19 anything like that?

20 A. Yeah, we had -- I had my TIC lights.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. TIC is thermal imaging camera.

23 Q. And then now we get into kind of makeup of -- you have couple
24 EMTs, the rest are paramedics. How many would you say are ALS
25 versus ELS?

- 1 A. We -- all of our units are ALS.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. Except the Special Ops because (indiscernible).
- 4 Q. Okay. Sounds good. Do you have any other kind of let's say
5 specialties beyond ALS that these paramedics are trained in?
- 6 A. Like medical-wise or --
- 7 Q. Just in general.
- 8 A. I mean, we have a hazmat team. We're -- so we do hazmat. We
9 do specialty rescue. We do dive rescue, confined space. We have
10 tox medics for the hazmat team. Those are our, our hazmat teams
11 regional and state asset. Cool, very cool stuff.
- 12 Q. And then I think you, I think you answered. About how many
13 engines fire trucks responded to this?
- 14 A. Should be two suppression units, two rescues, battalion EMS,
15 and then their Special Ops Station.
- 16 Q. Okay. And then this is more for mass casualty. I don't
17 think it's really necessary for this case. But when treating the
18 victims for this particular case did you guys have to use triage
19 or color-coding system, tagging system or anything --
- 20 A. No.
- 21 Q. And then nobody was transported.
- 22 A. No.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. No, sir.
- 25 Q. And then as far as patient care it sounds like everyone was

1 pronounced on the scene. So nobody was transported. You
2 described the extrication process. Specifically I just have a
3 couple follow-up questions more for the damage that I saw on the
4 vehicle. And this is more to kind of aid us in the -- in not the
5 first response, first responder response, but more as we try to
6 piece together the reconstruction of this. Are you aware of or
7 did, did you or anyone at fire rescue that you're aware of change
8 any of the controls on the vehicle? Like, did you turn off the
9 lights, like the controls on the lights, or put the vehicle in
10 park or anything like that?

11 A. No. I don't believe anybody did.

12 Q. Okay. And the vehicle it was on its side so, you know, at
13 least in my mind it again would have -- we're just trying to
14 narrow down, you know, kind of what, what went wrong with this,
15 this vehicle, and why, why it landed on the tracks. And this is
16 one of the things that will help us kind of solve that. With
17 regards to the seatbelt I notice on the passenger side the B
18 pillar there was multiple attempts to cut it to separate the roof
19 from the structure of the vehicle. Looked like there was a lower
20 cut that might have hit a bolt or something like that. When
21 looking at the seatbelt we initially thought it was cut maybe for
22 extrication purposes. We lined up the seatbelt. It lined up to
23 the first cut which was the lowest cut. Did you guys cut the
24 seatbelt for any reasons to remove any occupants or for
25 extrication purposes?

1 A. For taking the roof we will always cut all the seatbelts and
2 all the wires. Because that will hang you up when you're trying
3 to pull the roof off.

4 Q. Okay. And I noticed that there was -- that cut wasn't --
5 didn't go through the pillar all the way. There's a cut a little
6 bit higher which also didn't clear. I think it hit maybe the
7 D-ring of the -- that was attached to the pillar. And there was a
8 higher cut that cleared. Kind of safe to say that the first cut,
9 cut the seatbelt as well, and that wasn't a cut that was intended
10 for -- to remove an occupant from the vehicle more or less? Like
11 the first, the first cut -- like you didn't cut the seatbelt to
12 remove anyone more or less?

13 A. No. Nobody was in that seatbelt. We cut in the seatbelt to
14 remove the roof.

15 Q. Okay, perfect. And then let's see. So you established kind
16 of a command post. Sounded like --

17 A. Yeah. There was never really a command post established, but
18 there was just command. Battalion chief was command, and he was
19 there.

20 Q. And who is the battalion chief?

21 A. Chief Bradford.

22 Q. Bradford. Okay. And then following the, the response for
23 this, did you guys conduct any type of verbal debriefing or
24 written kind of after action plan or anything?

25 A. Just a brief one after the incident.

1 Q. Take me to that. Was everyone kind of, you know, all the
2 personnel there on scene kind of just meet, and you guys discuss
3 the response or how does that work?

4 A. Well, several of the units were, were cleared pretty early in
5 the scene just because they weren't needed.

6 Q. So those units just left, and then it was more of when we
7 canvassed the area, and didn't find anyone else, it was more of a,
8 you know, hey, what's the plan going forward for the rest --
9 taking the roof after the ME comes and all that. And then all the
10 other units cleared except for Special Ops Station and myself.

11 Q. Okay. This is just verbal kind of conversation --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. And then with this particular response, I understand it's
14 kind of smaller in comparison to a mass casualty incident, but did
15 you guys face any, any anomalies or any, any strong difficulties
16 whether it's hazmat or just the response in general with this
17 particular case? Was there any kind of adversities that you guys
18 faced in this case?

19 A. Not, not real responding to it because all the -- none of the
20 streets were blocked from the train which we've run into before.
21 That creates a difficulty (indiscernible). Once we started to
22 actually extricate there was -- it was a little confined on the,
23 the crossing guard arms and stuff, like, with object impaled, and
24 took care of that, and all that, but not the actual response to
25 it.

1 Q. Okay. And then as far as -- because it involved the
2 Brightline did -- was you guys fire rescue or police did anyone
3 make contact with say FEC or Brightline to kind of notify them to
4 stop all train --

5 A. Yeah. That was done immediately.

6 Q. Was that fire rescue?

7 A. Probably both. I know we always request it on the radio.
8 Battalion chief did.

9 Q. Okay. Do you guys have -- let's say, say there's an incident
10 on the tracks. Do you guys have like a direct line to FEC and/or
11 Brightline where you can immediately get in contact with someone
12 that has the ability to shut down traffic?

13 A. We just go through our dispatch, and they take care of that.

14 Q. Do you know if they have a direct number or if there is more
15 -- they have to call someone, call someone --

16 A. I assume they have a direct number but --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- I can't give it to you. Because every time we ask them
19 they'll say we'll get back to you, and get the answer and --

20 Q. Okay. And the any anomalies with this case that you feel the
21 department and, you know, adversities that you felt you had some
22 particularly a really good with you had maybe the past --
23 something new on this case?

24 A. No. I think the initial crews did a good job of assessing
25 the scene, and addressing the separate patients simultaneously,

1 and --

2 Q. And then as far as training do you guys do mass casualty
3 training? Is that something you guys have to do?

4 A. Yeah. Usually yearly we'll -- some kind of --

5 Q. Very brief overview of what type of training you might have
6 done in the past.

7 A. I know there's a, there's a county-wide training that goes on
8 every year that they do. They actually last week just did a
9 active shooter training county-wide, which sent several of our
10 units through. But every year there's usually some kind of mass
11 casualty county-wide incident. And then we'll do department-wide
12 target solution stuff.

13 Q. Very good. And then -- almost done. As far as response to
14 (indiscernible) crashes, railway crashes, Brightline crashes, how
15 often would you say in the past that you've -- you guys had to
16 respond to train crashes in general?

17 A. Well, in the past six months since I've been in this position
18 I've responded to two. So --

19 Q. Including, including this one?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay.

22 MR. ZEITLER: And then --

23 MR. HUMM: Two small things just to --

24 BY MR. HUMM:

25 Q. Two small things just to wrap it up. There was a report

1 there was some flying debris that may have struck a car. So I
2 just want to confirm that you guys didn't treat anyone else on
3 scene?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. Thank you. And then can you just tell me what the
6 makeup of a suppression unit is? Like what --

7 A. Three, we have three people on all of our suppression units.
8 So there would be -- on a suppression unit there would be a
9 captain, a driver, and a firefighter. All of them are paramedics
10 except for the two EMTs we have total.

11 Q. Okay. And then any other -- anything you'd like to add to
12 this interview that you feel we haven't touched on or spoke about?

13 A. No. I think the, the only kind of different thing about this
14 was that there was two trains going by that may have -- I don't
15 know, changed the dynamics of why the incident happened. But,
16 obviously, you don't park on the tracks either way. But --

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. -- I guess a freight train had went by first, and the
19 conductor of the Brightline said that guy called him ahead, and
20 said there's a car on the tracks, and he said he hit the emergency
21 brake, and wasn't able to stop on time, and still hit the car.

22 Q. You have any questions for me?

23 A. No, sir.

24 MR. ZEITLER: It is -- time by my watch is 10:29 a.m. We're
25 going to go ahead and conclude this interview with Delray Beach

1 Fire Rescue captain.

2 (Whereupon, at 10:29 a.m., on February 14, 2023, the
3 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: FATAL GRADE CROSSING COLLISION
IN DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA
ON FEBRUARY 8, 2023
Interview of John Woertz

ACCIDENT NO.: HWY23MH006

PLACE: Delray Beach, Florida

DATE: February 14, 2023

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.


Katherine Motley
Transcriber