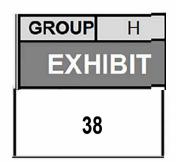


## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD Investigative Hearing

Norfolk Southern Railway general merchandise freight train 32N derailment with subsequent hazardous material release and fires, in East Palestine, Ohio, on February 3, 2023



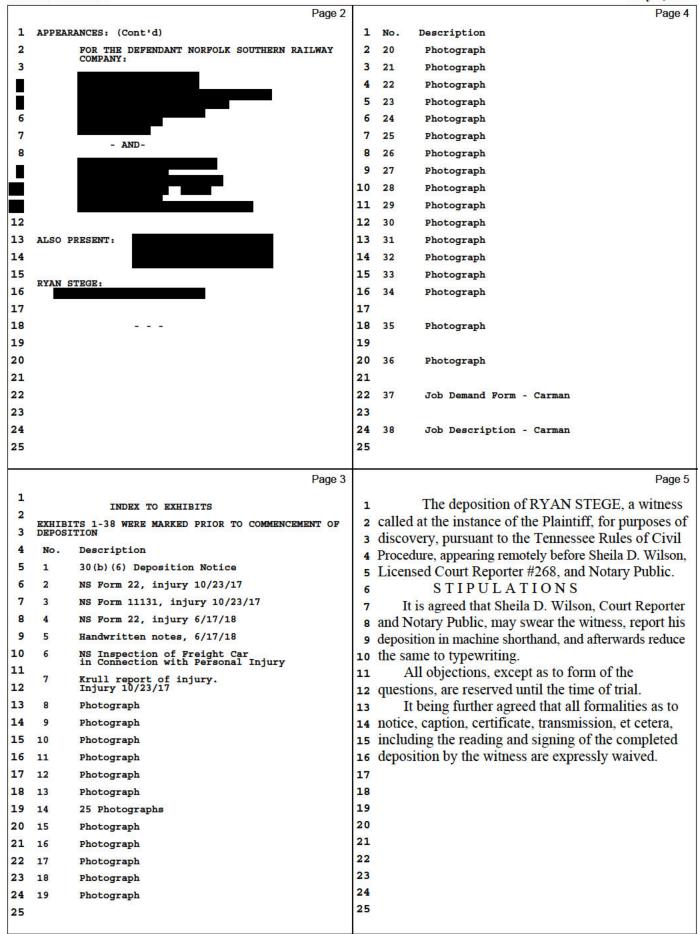
Agency / Organization

**Transportation Communication Union (TCU/IAM)** 

Title

## **Submisison to Hearing Ryan Stege Deposition**

Docket ID: DCA23HR001



Min-U-Script® (1) Pages 2 - 5

Page 6 Page 8 RYAN STEGE, Number 5 and number 12. 2 called as a witness at the instance of the Plaintiff, Q Okay. And no other? 2 3 having been first duly sworn remotely at 9:50 a.m., was A That's correct. 3 4 examined and testified as follows: 4 MR. TUCKER: Craig, on our exhibit, earlier **EXAMINATION** today you emailed us what items the two deponents today (Exhibits 1 through 38 were marked prior to are going to testify about. But you mentioned that 6 deposition.) number 16 through 19 are not relevant because there was 7 BY MR. TUCKER: 8 no surveillance camera capturing the accident scene. Am Q Please state your full name and employment and job 9 I right about that? title for the record, please. MR. ALLEN: You are correct. 10 10 A Yes, sir. My name is Ryan Stege. I'm director, MR. TUCKER: All right. If you will look at 11 11 locomotive maintenance and operations. 16, 16 doesn't concern surveillance cameras. It's a 12 12 O For Norfolk Southern? different whole question about why those three tracks 13 A That's correct. I work for Norfolk Southern. were being used to build, inspect, test and forward 14 15 Q All right. And are you being presented today to 15 freight trains, and some details about that. Is that speak on behalf of Norfolk Southern pursuant to our going --16 16 deposition notice? MR. ALLEN: Yeah. So, it should be 17 17 17 A Yes, sir, I am. 18 through 19. 18 MR. TUCKER: All right. Craig, before we get 19 MR. TUCKER: Okay. So is Aaron Watkins going 19 to testify about 16? started, I'm going to mark as exhibits in this deposition 20 20 numbers 1 through 38, which are the ones that we got to MR. ALLEN: Yes. 21 21 MR. TUCKER: Okay. I figured it was probably you a while ago this morning. 22 22 MR. ALLEN: I still don't have them. I 23 23 a typo. Okay. That's all right. understand they're being printed right now. Now, do I understand that number 20, issue 24 24 25 MR. TUCKER: Okay. You have a copy of number 20, "The facts and source of facts upon which Page 7 Page 9 Exhibit No. 1, though, the notice. Correct? defendant bases its assertion that the incident made the bases of the complaint did not occur," is that being MR. ALLEN: I do have that one. 2 dropped as a defense? MR. TUCKER: I'll start with that, because 3 that's going to take a minute anyway. MR. ALLEN: It is. 4 4 BY MR. TUCKER: MR. TUCKER: All right. Is anybody going to 5 5 Q Mr. Stege, has anything changed about your be able to -- will Mr. Stege or Mr. Watkins be addressing employment, job title, duties, or your age other than a when and why that changed? 7 7 few days, since I deposed you last Friday? MR. ALLEN: No. That's a legal department 8 9 A No, sir. There have been no changes since last 9 decision. MR. TUCKER: Well, I don't think that's a week. 10 10 good excuse. But we'll -- if they're not designated, O All right. Have you seen the deposition notice and read the deposition notice which is **Exhibit 1** to this we'll save that back and we'll fight about that later. 12 deposition? Is either one of them going to testify upon 13 13 A Mine is not marked with the exhibit number, but I which facts -- what facts that defense was based, up 14 have seen the deposition notice and I have reviewed it, until the time it was withdrawn? MR. ALLEN: Again, that was the legal 16 Q Okay. And would you please tell me for which department, and it's outside attorneys who drafted that 17 17 items or issues you have been designated by Norfolk pleading early on in this case. 18 MR. TUCKER: Well, I understand that. But it 19 20 A The ones regarding the rules and bulletins. So, I has to be based on some facts. And is anybody going to

A I think it was number 12. Yes, sir, that was it. 25 why you said that it didn't happen. That's what I'm

22

23

address those that were --

be happy that we're dropping that.

MR. ALLEN: Not today. I would think you'd

MR. TUCKER: I'd be much happier to find out

21 believe it's item number 5. And there was one other one

22

23

24

25

numbers here.

O Twelve?

that asked something very similar. Let me look at the

Min-U-Script® (2) Pages 6 - 9

Page 10

- 2 right.
- BY MR. TUCKER: 3
- Q Mr. Stege -- I'm going to say "Ste-gee," and I

1 interested in. Okay. So, we've got 5 through 12. All

- apologize. I'm sure I'm not the only one --
- A You're not. And I answer to all of it, but you
- said it exactly right there. So, you're on a roll
- 8 already.
- Q I answer to anything at dinnertime. 9
- A Especially the bell. 10
- 11 Q You are an officer of Norfolk Southern; is that
- 12 correct?
- A Yes, sir, that's correct. 13
- Q And am I correct you have been designated by and 14
- you consent to testify on behalf of Norfolk Southern 15
- Railway Company, Mr. Tom Rader's employer? 16
- A That is correct. 17
- Q And are you prepared to provide all information 18
- known or reasonably available to Norfolk Southern with
- respect to items 5 and 12 as listed on our deposition 20
- notice? 21
- A Yes, sir, I am. 22
- Q All right. Tell me everything you have done to
- learn everything Norfolk Southern knows about items 5 and 24
- 12. 25

for the locomotive operations, system operations center,

Page 12

Page 13

- which is our locomotive control center; our locomotive
- reliability group; our locomotive technology group; our
- parts distribution network for both the mechanical
- department, subdepartments, as well as some C&S
- equipment; and then the -- some of the process
- improvement and other groups; as well as locomotive
- routine maintenance planning.
- Q Would you tell me what jobs you have had in your
- career that required that you work, manage -- work with
- and manage car operations such as car inspection and
- 12 repair?
- A So I was the division manager mechanical 13
- operations for the Virginia and Pocahontas divisions a
- few years back, based in Roanoke and Bluefield.
- Q And as a DMMO, did you have responsibility for 16
- locomotive and car operations, repairs, utilization, all 17
- of those features, for both locomotives and cars?
- A Yes, sir. Some of both. 19
- Q All right. How long did that assignment last? 20
- 21 A About two years.
- 22 Q What else -- and I got astray there. Sorry. What
- 23 else have you done to prepare for this deposition?
- A That's about it. 24
- 25 Q Do you know Tom Rader?

- A No, sir, I do not. 1
- Q Did you ever have car responsibilities? And when
- I say "cars," I'm talking about the inspection and
- repair, the car department functions. Did you ever have
- responsibility for those functions, while you were
- assigned to work in Chattanooga?
- 7 A No, sir, I did not. Both times I was assigned to
- Chattanooga I was at the locomotive shop.
- Q Thank you. Do you wish you were here with us in 9
- 10 Chattanooga today?
- A Chattanooga was a wonderful place to live. 11
- 12 Q It is that. And if you knew Tom Rader, it'd be 13 even better.
- You said earlier that you had gathered some rules 14
- 15 and such. What documents, papers, pictures, reports,
- anything, did you look at about Tom's injuries and the 16
- subsequent incident before today? 17
- A The pictures that were produced, I saw those, as 18
- well as the comprehensive personal injury report dated
- October 23rd, 2017. I saw those, as well as Mr. Rader's 20
- Form 22, and a career -- a copy of his career service
- record that was included with it. That's the packet I 22
- 23 saw.
- Q Okay. Do you know whether there was a 24
- comprehensive injury report produced after the incident

Page 11

A So, I've reviewed the safety rules that were in effect at the time of the incident and I have helped

- provide those, and copies of those, to what was submitted
- to you in the answers.
- O What else? 5
- A I checked with Aaron Watkins regarding any local
- bulletins and those sort of things they may've also had

regarding that area, and he's doing some research. So

- for that side of things, he may be the one that has to
- answer that, because I haven't gotten the answer back 10
- 11
- Q So as you sit here today, you don't know whether 12
- there were any bulletins about working in the class yard
- that were in effect at the time of this incident?
- A That's correct. Not the local bulletins. What I 15
- was able to conduct was the systemwide search for rules 16 that apply. 17
- Q Okay. Just, if you would, so this deposition will 18
- be a little more complete, would you tell me what your 19
- job is right now? 20
- A My title again? 21
- Q Yes. Your title and what you do, what you're in 22
- 23 charge of.
- A So, once again, my title is director, locomotive
- operations and maintenance. And so I have responsibility

Page 14

- 1 of June 8th, 2018?
- 2 A I don't know. I did not see one for that date.
- Q Did you look for one, or did you just read what 3
- was provided to you by counsel or the railroad or
- somebody in the claim department?
- A I did not look for one. I reviewed what was on
- here, and then based on the topics I focused on the 7
- 8 rules.
- Q You told us earlier that you looked for the rules
- and you looked at the pictures and you looked for some 10
- 11 bulletins, correct?
- 12 A Yes, sir.
- Q All right. Is it your understanding that this 13
- incident of October 23, 2017 occurred while Mr. Rader was 14
- 15 inspecting cars, doing mechanical inspection and a brake
- test, for a train that was being built for forwarding but 16
- was being built in the classification yard at DeButts 17
- Yard, as opposed to the forwarding yard in DeButts yard?
- A I don't know anything about the destination of the 19
- train and why it was in certain tracks over the others, 20
- but I do know that this was in the classification yard, 21
- 22

1

- 23 O And you've worked here at DeButts Yard. You're
- familiar with it, are you not? 24
- A Yes, sir. 25

ended up to be sorted, that they needed that capacity at

- Chattanooga.
- MR. ALLEN: I was going to object to the form 3
- of that question. When you say "they," if you could
- identify who you're talking about there. He went ahead
- and answered it. 6
- 7 MR. TUCKER: "They" being the railroad.
- 8 Q The hump at Sheffield was shut down. Are you
- aware of that? 9
- A Yes, sir. 10
- Q The hump at Linwood Yard, Salisbury, was shut 11
- 12 down. Are you aware of that?
- A Well, I don't know that I consider it Salisbury. 13
- Q Well, it -- all right. Linwood. The big hump 14
- 15 yard at Linwood, the hump was shut down and --
- 16 A That's right.
- Q -- the operations were transferred back to the old 17
- 18 Spencer Yard?
- A That's correct. 19
- Q All right. And the hump -- did I say Knoxville? 20
- It was shut down, too, I think, right? 21
- A Knoxville had been shut down way prior to 22
- 23 precision scheduled railroading.
- Q Now, that's just the southern Railway. And I 24
- think the hump at Macon, at Brosnan Yard, has been shut

Page 15

- Q When were you last assigned to Chattanooga?
- A It would've been at least 13 years ago. 2
- Q Are you familiar with precision scheduled 3
- railroading? 4
- A Yes, sir. 5
- 6 Q Tell us what that is, please.
- A So, precision scheduled railroading is about 7
- keeping the equipment moving, reducing terminal dwell,
- and serving the customers in a way that keeps the
- equipment turning at a rate that its utilization 10
- 11 increases.
- Q It also increases profit, right, you hope? 12
- A That's the plan. When you reduce the waste out of 13
- the process, then you can get more for the money that's 14
- invested into the process.
- Q As a part of that process, were a great many yard 16
- hump yards closed on the Norfolk Southern system? 17
- A Yes, sir. There were a few that were closed. I 18
- 19 don't categorize it as a great many. We still have quite
- Q Well, the hump at Chattanooga was shut down for a 21 while, was it not?
- 23 A It was. Yes, sir. It was idle for a little bit.
- Q And then they found out they had to put it back? 24
- A There was too much congestion at where the cars 25

- down too, has it not?
- A Yes, sir. That's one of the more recent ones. 2
- Q So what are the active hump yards left on Norfolk 3
- Southern as we sit here? Birmingham, Chattanooga. And
- they put something back in at Inman in Atlanta, correct? 5
- A Yes, sir. Correct. Also, in Enola, Conway,
- Elkhart are also all still active.
- Q Now, those are off the old Conrail, though,
- 9 correct? I was just talking about the old Southern
- Railway property. But that's --10
- A Oh, okay. Yes. The ones that, the ones that I 11
- 12 mentioned are not on the old Southern Railway.
- Q They're off the old Pennsylvania and New York 13
- Central systems?
- A Correct. 15
- 16 Q They even shut Roanoke's hump down, didn't they,
- the railroad? 17
- 18 A Yes, sir. That was actually shut down while I was
- 19 in Roanoke. So that, that predates PSR as well. That's
- 20 close to the time that Knoxville was shut down.
- Q All right. Tell me what is required by your rules 21
- for an outbound car inspection and brake test, such as
- 23 Mr. Rader was doing.
- A So, you're inspecting the train for any FRA safety 24
- defects. You're also checking that the train line is

Page 17

Page 16

a few.

20

22

Page 18

- 1 connected up, that the train is ready to have air
- applied. And then they're applying yard air and
- performing a brake test on that train on that track.
- Q And I'm -- are you aware of how the train he was
- inspecting was going to be built?
- A No, sir. I don't know where. 6
- Q That's okay. Assume for a minute he was 7
- inspecting 21 cars in class track 3 at DeButts Yard in 8
- Chattanooga, which was going to be a fill out on another
- part of the train from another track. That's a common
- 11 occurrence in car inspecting work, is it not?
- 12 A Yes, sir.
- Q All right. Tell me what the brake test would --13
- how would you do that? You've got to do a brake test;
- you've got to do the inspection. Would a car inspector
- have to walk around all those cars, inspecting both 16
- sides, at least once or twice? 17
- A Yes, sir. It depends on how many carmen might've
- been working the track. That would, that would vary, of
- course, because then they'll usually split sides. 20
- O Correct. 21
- A But --22
- 23 O Only one in this occasion.
- A Then that one man is going to walk both sides if 24
- he's inspecting by himself.

Q So if he's going to have to walk around the entire

Page 20

Page 21

- train twice, is it 30 seconds each trip?
- A That's a good question. I have to double-check on 3
- 4 that.
- There could be some variance based on where the 5
- cars and the hoses are laced up ahead of time and when
- yard air is connected. But it's one man minute per car
- with the inspection.
- Q And that's whether the car is 40 feet long or 90 feet long? 10
- 11 A Yes, sir, it is. In time studies that we've done,
- 12 a car can be walked in 30 seconds. So they gave one
- minute, average, per cut of cars, per car, to give time
- for those length differences and other differences that
- 15 may be found along the way, if hoses need to be laced,
- those sort of things. 16
- Q Okay. Tell me this, what would a car inspector 17
- coming -- doing his or her work, comes to a car, what is
- that person required to look for? 19
- A Well, the first thing they're looking at is safety 20
- appliances, anything that's called out in the FRA 21
- regulations regarding safety appliances for cars and 22
- railroad equipment.
- Q What are the safety appliances? 24
- A The sill steps, anything that a man would grab to 25

Page 19

- adjust or hold or climb a car. All of those things are
- safety appliances.
- Q So the sill step --3
- A The brake equipment, the --4
- Q -- the ladders, the hand-holds, that sort of 5
- 6 thing?
- 7 A Yes, sir. That's correct.
- Q All right. 8
- 9 A Cut levers as well. And then brake system, brake
- shoes. 10
- O What about the hand brake? 11
- A Yes, sir. They would look at the hand brake as 12
- well. 13
- Q Would they look at the coupler? 14
- A For what they could see of it, yes. But most of
- the time, if it's a cut of cars they'll be coupled up, 16
- obviously. 17
- Q Right. But you could still tell if you've got 18
- cracks or something that you can see, or a missing
- coupler pin, even when they're coupled up; isn't that 20
- correct? 21
- A Yeah, that's right. You would see that. 22
- 23 I lost your audio there, sir.
- Q And you would have to go in between the coupled
  - cars in order to do that?

Q And he would have to do it -- he would have to

- walk it again after he put the brakes on and set them up
- and released them, correct?
- A Yes, sir. Usually there's at least two times to 4
- walk. 5
- Q Okay. And these are federally mandated vital
- safety functions, are they not? 7
- A The inspection, yes, sir. Yeah, the inspection is 8
- 9 required by the FRA.
- Q And it's, I mean it's -- the proper performance of 10
- these inspections and brake tests are vital to railroad
- safety, are they not? 12
- A Yes. 13
- Q Is there a -- well, tell me, what is Norfolk 14
- Southern's goal for the proper time, per car, to inspect
- a train. 16
- A An individual car can be walked in about 30 17
- seconds. So, the goal that we set is a man minute per 18
- 19
- O A man minute? 20
- A Meaning one man, one minute, per car. 21
- Q Okay. And that's to inspect it. That's not the 22
- 23 brake test, though, correct? Or is that the brake test?

A That's including -- the one minute is including

the brake test, yes, sir.

Page 22

- 1 A Yes, sir. And if the air brake hoses were not
- 2 laced up, if the train line was laced up, you would have
- 3 to be in between to lace those up as well.
- 4 Q Right. So you'd do it while you're there.
- 5 A Yes, sir.
- 6 Q All right. Would you check, what you could see of
- 7 the -- what I used to called the key and the cotter on
- 8 the key, the draft system of the cars, depending on what
- 9 kind of draft system you've got?
- 10 A Yes, sir, you would. That's -- that makes sure
- 11 that the coupler stays in the car during the trip.
- 12 Q It's not a good thing if a train is going down the
- 13 track and the coupler comes out, right?
- 14 A No, sir, it's not.
- 15 Q Okay. And he would check the piston on the air
- brake system, but he wouldn't do that until after the air
- 17 had been applied. Have I got that sequence correct?
- 18 A That's correct. You would want brakes on to see
- 19 the travel of your piston.
- 20 Q Because there's a certain length -- it can't be
- 21 too far but it can't be too short when it's applied?
- 22 A Yes, sir.
- 23 Q And then they're checking the running gear; they
- 24 check wheels, don't they, thin flanges, wear plates?
- A They're giving a visual inspection on those

1 making your initial inspection, are you also checking

Page 24

Page 25

- 2 that the air brake, that is, the piston, is all the way
- 3 in so that you know the air is off before you start
- 4 pumping the air back up later?
- 5 A Well, I disagree a little bit with the way you
- 6 worded that. Because as you know, on the train line, the
- 7 car -- when the car is fully pumped up to operating
- 8 pressure, that's your actual release position, and that's
- 9 when your piston would be in and your brakes off. And
- the way you said that was when you have air on. So Idisagree with how you worded that.

But yes, I mean, during the air test you're going to check that you get a good release.

- Q Maybe I -- I may've misstated. I'm sorry. What I was getting at was, when the carman -- the car inspector
- 16 is making the initial inspection of all these things
- 17 we're talking about, in his minute, looking at that car,
- would he not also look to see that the piston is all the
- 19 way in, if he assumes that the car has been bled off in
- 20 the receiving yard and sent over a hump, so he would be
- 21 sure that he knows the car does not have sticking brakes?
- 22 A That's correct. At the point when they're
- 23 checking for the release of their -- of their brake test,
- 24 he's going to see that the piston is going in.
- 25 Q Now, are you prepared to tell us what was the

Page 23

aye 23

- . .
  - centerline of track 2 to the centerline of track 3 where
  - 2 those retarder boxes and hoses were?
  - 3 A No, sir. I do not have that information.
  - 4 Q Is that a standard or a rule which applied to the
  - 5 track and roadbed at the site of the October 23, 2017
  - 6 incident? Look at issue number 5.
  - 7 A I'm looking at it.
- 8 Q You didn't get the standards for track clearances
- 9 in yards for us, that we're asking for here?
- 10 A No, sir. I didn't realize that's what you were
- 11 asking for, as I read that.
- 12 Q What did you think we were asking for?
- A For any rules and guidelines that have to do with
- working in those areas, around track and roadbed.
- Q Okay. Well, that -- it said "apply to the track
- 16 and roadbed." But if you ain't got it, you ain't got it.
- 17 We'll argue about that later.

Tell me what standard rules and guidelines existed applying to the track and roadbed at that site.

- 20 A So, at that time, safety rule number 1050 part A
- 21 covers employees walking and working in areas -- in that
- 22 area and in areas like that.
- 23 Q That's just the general watch out for where you're 24 going?
  - 25 A Yes, sir. That's right.

1 things, yes, sir.

- 2 Q And you look under -- you'd have to bend down and
- 3 look under to see a lot of that, don't you?
- 4 A Yeah. Depending on the car type, yes, sir.
- 5 Q You're also checking that cup that the center
- 6 plate and the -- where it fits down over the -- where the
- 7 truck bolster attaches to the car?
- 8 A Yes, sir. You're making sure that all of that --
- 9 that the car is centered on the trucks.
- 10 Q And you don't want that -- looks like a cup or
- 11 bowl, that shouldn't be -- you don't want that broken or
- 12 cracked; is that correct?
- 13 A That's correct.
- 14 Q All right. And then if it's a car with doors on
- 15 it or gates, like a hopper car, you're checking to be
- sure that the door tracks, the gates and such, all appear
- workable, they're not hanging off, they're not broken,
- 18 door tracks -- the door is not going to fall off?
- 19 A That's right. They have to be closed.
- 20 Q Boxcar doors are pretty heavy, are they not?
- 21 A Yeah. Boxcar doors are.
- 22 Q You wouldn't want one falling off going through
- 23 town.
- 24 A No, sir, you wouldn't.
- Q While you're going down the car -- when you're

Page 26

Q Are there any rules -- well, you've seen the

pictures of it, correct, the site? 2

A Yes, sir, I did. 3

4 Q All right. And could you get exhibits -- do you

have Exhibits 8 through 13 available to you, which are

the NS photos taken the day of the incident?

A Mine are not marked, but I do have photos. So, if

we could show them on the screen, that would help me 8

9 identify them.

10

16

(Exhibits 8 through 13 displayed on screen.)

A Yeah. Mine are not marked as exhibits, but I 11

12 think those are the same photos I have, from what you

just showed me. 13

Q All right. Number 8, the one that I'm showing 14

15 you, do you see it?

(Exhibit 8 displayed on screen.)

A Yes, sir, I do. 17

Q Is that safe to have carmen work in that area, 18

with cars in both tracks, while inspecting cars? 19

A I'm going to answer your question, to say that can 20

it be done safely there? One hundred percent yes. 21

That's the reason the rule is written the way it is, to 22

be looking out for hazards such as this.

Q I thought it was written so that you can make a 24

man work wherever you wanted to, and if he fell it's all

that at one point.

Q And the fact that no one's been hurt there before

3 doesn't mean that it's a safe place, does it?

4 A No, sir. I didn't say it was a safe place. I

said it could be done safely.

Q Okay. So what should've been done to prevent this

accident, besides Mr. Rader staying home?

A Mr. Rader stepping over the hose instead of

tripping on it.

Q What could the railroad have done to prevent this 10 11

accident?

12 A Well, I think the railroad trusted that Mr. Rader

could step over this without tripping on it. 13

Q That's not what I asked you. What could the

railroad have done to prevent this accident? 15

A I don't know that there's a good, easy answer to 16

that, or else it would've been done. 17

O Well, what's not an easy answer? 18

A Well, just as you used the example of Mr. Rader 19

staying home from work, the railroad could shut down 20

operations and not run trains. 21

Q Okay. The railroad, under the law, has a duty to 22

provide Mr. Rader with a reasonably safe place to work.

Am I correct about that?

A Yes, sir. And we take that very seriously.

Page 27

1

2

his fault. Why isn't that what it means?

MR. ALLEN: Object to the form.

Q That's what it sounds like, doesn't it, Mr. Stege? 3

A No, sir. I disagree. 4

O Okay. 5

A This is no different than if you were washing your

car in your driveway and you pulled the garden hose out

and you made sure that you didn't trip over your own

garden hose. It's the same as why the rule is written.

Employees need to look out for where they're going. 10

This track is pretty straight through here. And

looking down in advance, you could see this coming and 12

what to look out for multiple times. And I think many 13

employees have worked down through here, including 14

Mr. Rader, safely in the past. 15

Q Have you ever heard of Safe by Accident? 16

A Yes, sir, I have. It's a book, correct? 17

Q That's right. By whom? 18

A I don't remember the author, but I have heard of 19

20 it.

11

Q In fact, you were given a copy of it, weren't you? 21

Was it ADM books, and one of them was Safe by Accident,

wasn't it? All that training y'all went through about

six or eight years ago?

25 A Yes, sir. I'm pretty sure I did have a copy of O I'm glad to know you've started.

MR. ALLEN: Objection.

Q That's a start. 3

Let me ask you this, does the railroad, as you 4

understand it, have an obligation to inspect its

workplaces in order to determine whether or not they are

safe for employees to work?

A Yes, sir. And we even ask the employees to report

issues and conditions. That's, that's a regular part of

10 the daily safety meeting, for those very reasons. The

additional eyes and ears out there help us to take care

of issues when they come up. 12

Q Okay. You keep wanting to shift all the safety

onto the men and women that work there. Don't you think

management has some obligation? 15

A I think it's the obligation of each employee, 16

including the manager. 17

Q All right. So what inspections of this area -- of 18

the class yard had been done to determine whether it was

safe for carmen to inspect trains in this area, prior to

the time that cars -- trains were built in the class yard 21

instead of the forwarding yard? 22

23 A Well, first off, I don't know that they were built

in the class yard instead of the forwarding yard. I

think they were built in both locations.

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Q So go ahead and answer the question then.

- A As far as the last inspection date, I do not have 2
- that information. 3
- 4 Q Okay. Would it -- should Mr. Watkins or Norfolk
- Southern management have walked in this area, before it
- was to be used for inspecting trains, to determine if it
- was a safe place for the car inspector to work?
- A No, I don't agree with that completely. For as 8
- many locations that carmen are asked to perform duties --
- for instance, if they were called to an industry, we 10
- wouldn't waste time to have a supervisor go check the 11
- 12 industry first. That's why it's important that employees
- can recognize their own safety hazards and take 13
- appropriate responsibility for their own safety too. 14
- 15 Q So management -- you consider that management
- inspecting the place where their employees work is a 16
- waste of time? 17
- A No, sir. That's not what I said. 18
- Q Yes, sir, it is. I'm sorry, but it is. 19
- 20 MR. ALLEN: Object to the form.
- Q We won't argue about it. The record will speak 21
- 22
- Would you agree with me that these boxes and these 23
- hoses make this a -- surely you'll agree with this: That
- these boxes and hoses make this a less safe place to walk

being more aware of where you put your feet and how you

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- step through this area, whether or not the boxes are
- 3 there.
- 4 Q So you -- so when the carman goes through here,
- he's assuming -- you say he assumes the risk of walking
- through this area, because Norfolk Southern chooses to
- inspect trains there?
- 8 A In a way, I think that's partially true.
- 9 Q Okay.
- 10 A The employee is responsible for where he steps.
- There's a point where an employee could trip over his own 11
- 12
- Q Well, you mention earlier about a garden hose. 13
- Mr. Rader didn't put these boxes here or put those hoses
- 15 down, did he?
- 16 A No, sir, not that I know of. Most likely not.
- Q Okay. And would you also agree that when you're 17
- washing your car in your driveway, it may be gravel I
- guess, but probably paved, would you agree with that? 19
- A That would vary. I could say it could be either, 20
- 21 yes, sir.
- Q I agree with you. But -- depends. You don't see 22
- 23 gravel at car washes, do you?
- A Not a commercial one, no, sir. 24
- 25 Q And would you agree that if you were going to park

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- 1 and work while inspecting trains and doing air brake
- tests than if they were not there?
- A I would say that if I was walking down through 3
- here, this is an area where I would use additional
- caution and pay attention to where I'm stepping, one
- hundred percent.
- Q Sir, that's not what I asked you. If the boxes 7
- and hoses were not there, would it be safer than if they 8
- 9 are there?
- A I don't like the characterization of "safer," 10
- because I could transition this or anybody paying
- attention to where they're walking could transition this 12
- safely. So, I agree that less caution would be needed if 13
- the boxes were not there. 14
- 15 Q So you -- are you not going to answer my question, if it would be safer not to have them? 16
- MR. ALLEN: I object. He answered it as best 17 he could. 18
- 19 MR. TUCKER: Please don't tell the witness
- 20 how to answer. That's coaching the witness.
- Q Please answer my question, sir. Is it -- would it 21 22 be safer without them than it is with them?
- 23 A I think it can be safe either way, is my answer for the third time. 24
- 25 The difference is how much caution is needed and

your car in your driveway to wash it, you would not park

- it next to those two big boxes and those conduits and
- those hoses and those skates and have a freight car on
- the other side of you. Would you agree you wouldn't do
- 5 that?
- A Yes, sir. I wouldn't think anybody lives that
- close to the railroad.
- Q All right. Now, tell me, please, sir, what the --
- I've used some phrases that I think you and I know what
- we're talking about but a jury may not. We talked about
- an inbound yard. Is the inbound yard the long tracks at
- DeButts Yard here in Chattanooga, or pretty much any hump
- yard, where trains pull in off of the line of road in
- order to be broken apart and the cars classified
- according to where their next destination is to build 15
- other trains? 16
- A Yes, sir. In most cases. The names of the tracks 17
- also serve to denote the function, in most cases. 18
- Q They're called inbound or receiving yards. 19
- 20 A That's what they call them at a lot of locations,
- you're correct. 21 Q And when they do that, when the engine's cut off
- the train, when they cut away, that puts the train into
- emergency so it doesn't move, and the locomotive is cut
- away, and then the cars are turned over at some point to

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the mechanical department. Correct?

- 2 A Yes, sir. And that's where the inbound inspection
- is usually performed. 3
- 4 Q And inbound inspections are done by carmen -- car
- inspectors like Mr. Rader. And those would -- they'd
- have to blue-flag the track, that is, establish the
- positive protection so that no engine can come in there
- and move the cars and kill people because they're in and
- around between those cars inspecting them and doing their
- work? 10
- A In industry it's very similar to lockout/tagout. 11
- 12 Q Okay. It's a safety precaution.
- A Correct. It's to keep equipment from moving that 13
- you would be on, under, or in between. 14
- 15 Q And certainly you could, you could do that safely
- without the blue flags, if you just got people to say 16
- they won't move an engine in there, wouldn't you? You 17
- could do that safely?
- A As long as you were preventing any movement. 19
- 20 That's what it's for, to prevent equipment from moving.
- Q What you're trying to do is to prevent any kind of 21
- accident at all. 22
- A Yes, sir. 23
- Q Because -- all right. Now, car inspectors would 24
- then walk those tracks and they would take a look at the

- A That's, that's correct.
- Q All right. And at -- and that's -- and it rolls 2
- out into what I've always heard called "the bowl."
- 4 A The lower part of the classification tracks is
- considered the bowl. At most hump yards that's what
- 6 they'll call it.
- 7 Q I've never heard one that wasn't. But anyway.
- And the bowl of the yard has sort of a -- if you 8
- could see it from the side, it's got a dip in the middle
- because that tends to make the cars stay there so they 10
- don't roll out on the end, away from the hump. 11 12
- A That's correct. There's also usually what we call 13
- retarders at the end, similar to, you know, what we're
- talking about here. 14
- 15 Q Which leads us to these boxes and control --
- hoses, that's what they call the retarders or the skates,
- at the very end of the hump yard or classification yard,
- to prevent cars from rolling out of the yard and damaging
- 19 the track, hitting people. Lots of problems when that
- 20 happens.
- A That's correct. 21
- 22 Q All right.
- 23 A That's their purpose, is to prevent cars from free
- rolling past the end of that class track. 24
- Q So this track -- well -- so, we've got our cars

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- 1 cars and they would do what's called bleed the cars, that
- is, to pull the bleed rod on the air system so that the
- brakes are completely released and all the air is out of
- the system so those cars could be then -- blue flags
- down, engines get behind them, shoves them up over the
- hump where they're automatically sorted into one of 40 or
- 50 tracks, which is the classification yard; is that
- correct? 8
- 9 A That's, that's describing most of the hump yards.
- Yes, sir, that's correct. 10
- O Okay. And that's the way Chattanooga essentially 11
- 12 works also, is it not?
- A From what I remember, yes. 13
- Q By the way, did you ever walk -- when you were in 14
- Chattanooga, did you ever walk in this area, between
- class track 2 and 3? 16
- A No, sir. I did not walk those specific tracks. 17
- Q Now, the class yard is what we just described. 18
- 19 Those cars go over the hump. They roll over in either
- 20 one or groups, depending on where they're going, to
- the -- and their switches are thrown by computer --21
- 22 You can take Number 8 down, if you would.
- 23 And the computer throws the switches, and they go
- down into the classification yard and, by wherever
- they're going, the computer has assigned tracks?

- into the classification track. And the normal operation
- then would be when that -- the next train is to be built,
- what they call a pullback engine or another switch crew
- would get permission, they would open up the switch and
- they would go in, couple up to a cut of track, pull those
- cars out and put them into what's called the forwarding
- yard. Is that true?
- A In a lot of instances that's right. Because as --
- I think you might've mentioned earlier, but different
- 10 class tracks will be put together to make an outbound train. 11
- Q Right. And the transportation department does 12
- that. They put them into the forwarding yard. And
- generally these are pretty long, because you have some
- long trains. And when they have all the cars in there
- that are going to make up that outbound train, they
- turn -- the transportation department turns it over to
- the car department, and I've always heard they plug the
- 19 cut or plug the train. Is that the proper sequence and
- 20 terminology?
- 21 A No. When I say -- and this might be because I'm
- coming from locomotive shop experience. When we say
- 23 "plug a train," that means that the train is ready but
- they don't have power to pull it yet. So, plugging is a
- little bit different than the way you described it, from

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what my experience of the term is.

O Well, after it's over you go check, and I think

you're going to see I had it right. But I know -- I

- understand, you being from locomotives and not cars, why
- you would say that.
- But in any event, at that point, when it's turned 6
- over to the transportation department, we're now really
- into the dwell time you talked about with precision
- scheduled railroading, because now the railroad has
- established a time that's due out, and that train has got 10
- to be inspected and made ready to turn over to 11
- 12 transportation and, as they say in the NFL draft, the
- mechanical department is on the clock. 13
- A That's, that's correct. 14
- 15 Q And when they -- so they have to do -- the
- transportation -- excuse me. The car department plugs
- the train by hooking it up to yard air. That's where I 17
- use the term "plugging." You've never heard that
- expression? 19
- A No, sir, I haven't. 20
- Q All right. But they put it -- they do their 21
- mechanical inspection, they couple it up to air, they
- build a train line up to -- what is it, 90, or at least
- 75? Do you remember the proper -- for initial terminal
- test? 25

- A Yes, sir. Once the train is released back to
- transportation, then it's on them for the outbound crew

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- to get on and depart. 3
- 4 Q All right.
  - A Or double up. Usually they end up doubling up,
- depending on what track they're coming from.
- Q Yeah. And depending on the length of the train. 7
- 8 A Yes, sir.
- 9 Q And in precision scheduled railroading, the trains
- have gotten fewer and much, much longer. 10
- 11 A Yes, sir. They're longer trains.
- 12 Q How many more broken knuckles per train do you get
- under precision scheduled railroad, as you used to? 13
- A I don't know those numbers, but we definitely --14
- 15 we're definitively seeing them, that's for sure.
- Q Why, given the particular functions of each of 16
- these three separate yard components of a big hump
- terminal, would you choose to inspect cars in the yard
- that was designed for classifying them, not inspecting 19
- 20 them?
- A There are lots of reasons. And first off, I don't 21
- know specifically on the day in question why they were on
- those tracks. But it could be anything from the
- forwarding yard being full. It could be that it was just
- going to be two class tracks' worth of cars for a local.

- There could be lots of reasons that it didn't make sense
- to take them to the forwarding yard and putting an extra
- move. Depending on the direction that it was going to
- depart out of the yard could also be at play. There's
- lots of reasons that cars would be inspected in the class
- yard instead of the forwarding yard.
- Q Certainly you would not expect, would you, that
- the locomotives would be put on a departing train in the
- class yard and the road locomotives have to pull it back
- up over the hump and down on the other side out through 10
- the inbound yard, would you?
- A No, sir, not over the hump. It would be the other
- direction. Most likely not over the hump. Like I said,
- I don't know specifically in this instance where they
- 15 went.
- Q I understand. I understand. I'll ask 16
- Mr. Watkins. 17
- Okay. Well, let's go back. If the railroad 18
- 19 wanted to take the safest course -- is that one of your rules, "When in doubt, take the safest course"? 20
- A No, sir. I don't know of one that reads that way. 21
- 22 Q What does it read?
- 23 A Give me a second.
- The general notice reads "Safety is of the first 24 importance in the discharge of duty."

- A Yeah. So it's, it's less than 90, because 90 is
- what you'll use for the locomotive itself. The outbound
- train will use 90, but the yard air is usually set to
- something closer to 80.
- Q Okay. But that's appropriate for the air brake 5
- test? That's fine, as long as it's at least that?
- A Yes, sir. And the reason for that is, once you
- couple the locomotives to it and then the locomotive is
- 9 pumped to 90, that provides the release that you want to depart. 10
- O Okay. So they do their thing. And if there's a 11 bad order and it's got to be pulled out, that creates --12
- but we didn't have that here. 13
- And that's all done in the forwarding yard. They 14
- get through, and when the -- you have to take the blue flags -- because this all had to be blue-flagged, right? 16
- A For that, for that outbound inspection and yard 17
- test? 18
- O Yes, sir. 19
- 20 A Yes, it has to be blue-flagged for that.
- Q And then the car department takes down their blue 21
- 22 flags and they release it to transportation, and now the
- mechanical department is off the clock and the transportation is back on the clock. Am I right about
- that? 25

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Q Isn't there a rule that says "When in doubt, take

- 2 the safest course"?
- 3 A No, sir. Not that I know of.
- 4 Q Okay. Now, that rule, about safety is the first,
- 5 that you just read, that applies to you and everybody
- 6 else, from the lowest car inspector at DeButts yard to
- 7 whoever is the head guy today, right? Or gal.
- 8 A Everybody that draws a paycheck, yes, sir.
- 9 Q All right. Were there any rules -- now, turning
- 10 to number -- well, let me ask you this before we go on.
- 11 If you have the choice as a manager, would you rather
- 12 your men inspect cars in this area, or try to have them
- not have to inspect cars in this area?
- 14 A I think in the specific area -- I would have
- 15 them -- if I had my choice, I would have them not do it
- 16 right where those retarders are. I'd take -- seeing the
- 17 track spacing and the rest of the information -- which I
- 18 don't have the exact measurements, but judging from the
- 19 pictures, I would have no issues in other locations along
- 20 those track.
- 21 Q It's tight in there because the cars on either
- 22 side reduce the space between the edges of the cars to
- 23 not much more than shoulder width; isn't that correct?
- A I'd say it's wider than -- the cars on the tracks
- 25 do reduce the space, but it's wider than shoulder width,

- 1 walking toward the camera, in Number 11, that he would be
- 2 inspecting the cars in track 3 to his right, or the left
- 3 of the photographer? Is that your understanding?
- 4 A That's my understanding, yes.
- 5 Q Okay. Would you agree that it is physically
- 6 impossible for him to walk to his -- to the right side of
- 7 the boxes, because of the overhang of the car being so
- 8 close to the edge of those two big boxes?
- 9 A It's hard to judge the scale in the picture. It's
- 10 hard to judge the scale in the picture, but I would say
- it possibly may've been easier to go to the left of the
- 12 boxes in the direction he was coming.
- Q Well, he's got the same problem there, doesn't he,
- because he's got to try -- he's got to fit between the
- 15 cars, the car side of that tank car and the box. And
- 16 would you agree he shouldn't be stepping on those braces
- 17 which are part of the skate retarder system which are on
- 18 the ground there, bracing against the rail that car is
- 19 sitting on?
- 20 A I would agree with you if we're talking about
- 21 boxes that were six feet tall. I mean, there's
- 22 definitely opportunity to step around and even lean over
- 23 toward the center, between the two tracks, over the boxes
- as you're carefully walk around them.
  - 5 Q Okay. So stepping over the boxes is about his

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from what I can see in the pictures.

- 2 Q But you don't know how wide?
- 3 A No, sir. I didn't -- I don't have those
- 4 measurements.
- 5 Q Would you agree with me that those cars as shown
- 6 in Exhibit 8 -- well, let's look at Exhibit 11.
- 7 Would you agree with me that the way number 11 is
- 8 set up, that would be unsafe to try to walk up -- go
- **9** ahead. I take that question back.
- 10 (Exhibit 11 displayed on screen.)
- 11 Q You see it now, Mr. Stege?
- 12 A Yeah.
- 13 Q Okay.
- 14 A It's up on the screen.
- 15 Q Okay. Can we agree that walking through there --
- 16 and by the way, do you understand that this picture was
- 17 taken on the day of this incident?
- **18** A No. I did not know when the picture was taken for **19** sure.
- -- O W 11 I '11
- 20 Q Well, I will represent to you we've been told it
- 21 was the same day. And if you'll look down in the right
- 22 lower corner you'll see the date that the camera, when it
- was taken, printed on it. Do you see it?
- A I do. I see the date down there.
- 25 Q All right. Would you agree that as Mr. Rader was

1 only option.

- **2** A No. I said leaning over them. I, I don't know
- 3 what these boxes were made of. Certainly stepping on the
- 4 boxes could've been an option too.
- 5 Q So it would be okay to step on the box?
- 6 A As long as they would support him, yes, sir.
- 7 Q How does he know? Step on it that first time, and
- 8 if you don't fall through it's okay?
- 9 A No, sir. I mean, if -- I'm sure this isn't the
- 10 first time any employee has walked through here. And if
- 11 that question came up, they could ask and find out from
- 12 the department that maintains those.
- Q Should he have done that that day? Well, let
- 14 me -- strike that. I don't need to ask that. I'll ask
- 15 it a better way.

Were you aware that complaints have been made by carmen for a long time about having to work in the area

- 18 of these retarder boxes?
- 19 A No, sir, I was not -- or am not.
- Q Would you agree with me that these boxes and components, these hoses, lines, exist between every pair
- 22 of tracks in the class yard because each track in the
- 23 class yard has a retarder skate system at the end of it?
- 24 A Meaning that every other walkway in between is
  - 5 going to have the boxes? Is that what you're saying,

Page 45

2

3

5

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1 Mr. Tucker?

2 Q Yes. You said it better than I did.

They may be between every pair. It may be only every other pair. But this is not the only place in the

5 class yard where these kind of boxes, hoses and

6 components exist?

7 A No. They're going to be next to other skate

8 retarders, correct.

9 Q And you were not aware that complaints had been

10 made about these boxes and the walking conditions caused

11 by them when there are cars in both tracks?

12 A That's correct. I am not.

13 Q Assume for a moment that such complaints had been

**14** made to management by employees such as Mr. Rader. What

should management have done?

MR. ALLEN: Object to the form.

17 Q Go ahead, please, sir.

18 A So, typically, if we got a complaint like that we

19 would talk first to the department that maintains them

20 and confirm that the boxes are, you know, in a condition

21 as they were designed. Then the next thing would be to

22 check on whether the cars had to be inspected at that

23 location.

16

24 Q Okay.

25 A And then depending from there, if the boxes are as

1 witness. He's your corporate defendant.

MR. ALLEN: He's not your --

MR. TUCKER: I can cross-examine however I

4 want to.

MR. ALLEN: No, you can't.

6 BY MR. TUCKER:

7 Q Go ahead, Mr. Stege.

8 A I'm at a point now I need you to repeat the

9 question, please, Mr. Tucker.

10 Q It sounds to me that it is more important, under

your scenario, if the cars have to be inspected, that

12 it's more important that they get inspected than to move

13 them to a place where you wouldn't have to walk around

14 those boxes.

15 A No, sir. That's not what I'm saying at all.

16 Q All right. So if we had our druthers -- if you

17 could wave a magic wand and make changes, would the first

way to get rid of this -- well, strike that.

You would agree -- is it your contention that this situation is hazardous enough that you would've told your

21 employees "This is a hazardous place, you must be more

22 careful"?

A Not in those words. But this is all going back to

24 what you said before. If the employees had said that

5 there were tripping hazards in this area, when they

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1 they're supposed to be and the cars, because of whatever

2 was going on that day or those days, needed to be

3 inspected at that location, then we would review the same

4 safety rules as we discussed earlier to make sure

5 employees pay attention when they're working in these

6 areas.

10

12

18

22

7 Q So you put it back on the employees instead of

fulfilling the railroad's obligation to provide a safe

9 place to work?

MR. ALLEN: Object to the form.

11 A No, sir. That's not what I said.

Q Okay. Sounded like it to me, but we'll have that

13 argument later.

Certainly, it sounds like if the car -- it's more

important that the cars get inspected than to provide a

16 walking area that did not have these boxes and components

in them. Am I correct about that?

MR. ALLEN: Object to the form.

19 Q When he objects to the form, Mr. Stege, that means

20 he doesn't like the question. So please, for your sake,

21 be careful, he's trying to tell you something.

MR. ALLEN: Mr. Tucker, that's enough of

that. You talked about coaching a witness. That's totally improper.

MR. TUCKER: The heck it isn't. He's not my

reported it before, like you said, and the answer from

2 the other departments was that there physically wasn't

3 another place to put the cars, then yes, my words to the

4 employees would be to explain why the cars don't have

5 another place to go, and then review how to work through

6 there safely.

7 Q So if you could wave a magic wand and remove the

8 boxes and hoses and those components, is that what you

**9** would do?

10 A If I had a magic wand that powerful, I'd make it

11 so the cars didn't ever break.

12 Q So you -- if you had a magic wand, you wouldn't

13 remove those boxes so Tom Rader and others wouldn't have

14 to walk in and around them performing their duty?

15 A No. I think if, if we could go for perfect

conditions everywhere, who wouldn't take that option.

17 But I think we're definitely in the world of fiction

18 here.

19 Q But isn't -- would you agree with me that that is

20 more hazardous to try to work around those boxes than it

21 is without them?

A Yes, I do agree with that.

Q Okay. So the best way to eliminate a hazard is to

24 get rid of it, correct?

25 A That's what eliminate means.

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1 Q Okay. But let's -- the boxes aren't going to be

- 2 moved; you can't, you can't wave a wand and move them.
- What would be your next best solution?
- 4 A Repeat that question. I'm sorry.
- 5 Q So assume you can't move the boxes, that they're
- 6 there and they can't be moved. What would be the next
- 7 best solution for eliminating the problem?
- 8 A The next best would be that the cars wouldn't be
- **9** stopped alongside the boxes.
- Q Okay. Do you know how long class track 3 was?
- 11 A No, sir, I don't.
- Q Were you aware that this was only 21 cars?
- A Only because you mentioned it earlier.
- 14 Q Well, knowing it's 21 cars, why would they have to
- 15 be spotted right there? Why couldn't they be spotted,
- 16 moved down a little bit?
- 17 A Well, you have to remember, they were not spotted.
- 18 Most likely, if they're in the class tracks, they came to
- 19 a stop at this point, rolling without power or an
- 20 employee controlling the movement.
- 21 Q Well, isn't that why your transportation
- 22 department has engines? They could just go in there,
- 23 shove them down a little bit, clear those boxes, get out
- 24 of there, and let Mr. Rader and everybody else do their
- job and not have to walk around all this stuff?

- 1 the boxes. The next best case, you would just have the
- 2 cars not spotted there. Am I right about that?
- 3 A Yes.
- 4 Q All right.
- 5 A That's what I said.
- 6 Q Okay.
- 7 A The only difference is what I mentioned before.
- 8 I, I would not use the word "spotted," because most
- 9 likely in the class track the cars roll to that spot off
- 10 of the hump.
- 11 Q You don't know that, though, do you?
- 12 A No. No, sir, I don't.
- Q Let me ask you this. This is an outbound
- 14 inspection, right? Correct?
- 15 A From what I understand, correct.
- 16 Q These cars come over the hump and they're in class
- 17 track 3. You don't know whether they were put there from
- 18 other tracks. But use your scenario, that they are just
- 19 all rolled in there off the hump and you're going to make
- 20 a train out of them. Would not it be required that the
- 21 transportation department send an engine with a crew in
- 22 there and shove those cars together and then stretch them
- 23 to be sure that they were all coupled before you allowed
- 24 carmen in to make the inspections?
- A Not necessarily. But definitely at some point

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- 1 A That could be one option.
- 2 Q Did you notice that in the pictures that Mr. Rader
- 3 took the day after the accident that the boxes had had
- 4 reflector tape put on them?
- 5 A I don't think I saw those pictures. I did hear
- 6 that the boxes had reflector tape put on them, though.
- 7 But I haven't seen the pictures of it.
- 8 Q Okay. Let me -- take a look at Number 14(b). Do
- 9 you see that, Mr. Stege?
- 10 A It's up on my screen now. Yes, sir.
- 11 O I'm going to tell you that Mr. Rader testified
- 12 yesterday that he took this picture the day after. It
- does show there's reflective tape on it. It was not in
- 14 the Norfolk Southern picture, right?
- A It was not in the picture we were showing earlier,
- 16 yes, sir. Correct.
- 17 Q And the hoses are in different places, too, are
- 18 they not?
- 19 A It looks like -- yeah, it looks like that one hose
- 20 I can see in this picture is under the supply line in
- 21 this picture, and it was on the supply line in the other
- 22 picture.
- Q On top of it, in other words. Over it, I guess.
- 24 A Yeah. Over it. That's what I mean by on, yes.
- 25 Q So, if you had your best case, you wouldn't have

- 1 you'd want to have them coupled before the train
- 2 departed. And you'd want to confirm they were coupled.
- 3 Q Well, wouldn't you want to try to confirm they're
- 4 coupled before you buckle the air?
- 5 A Well, it would make most sense, if you had any
- 6 that were not coupled, that you'd want them coupled
- 7 before you buckle the air; otherwise, that hose getting
- 8 buckled was a waste of time.
- 9 Q That's exactly my point.

MR. TUCKER: Give me just a minute, Craig.
Can we just have a short pause to run down the hall and get more coffee and such?

MR. ALLEN: That's fine. Let me ask you

this. Do you want to just -- I don't know how much

15 longer you have with him. But do you want to just move

on and do Mr. Watkins after another short break, or do

17 you want to wait until lunch?

MR. TUCKER: Let me talk to my crew here. That's a good question.

THE REPORTER: Can we go off the record? MR. TUCKER: Yes.

(Brief recess.)

23 BY MR. TUCKER:

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Q Mr. Stege, earlier you talked about you had looked for bulletins systemwide. Did you find any bulletins

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- 1 about working in and around retarders? Any bulletins,
- 2 guidelines, or anything anywhere on the system during
- 3 your search?
- 4 A Not for the skate retarders. There are bulletins
- 5 around hearing protection and the main retarders, because
- 6 of ambient noise level.
- 7 Q Oh, yeah. I know that, yeah. But that's the
- 8 retarders up on the hump?
- **9** A That's the retarders on the other sides of these
- 10 tracks, yes, sir.
- 11 Q While we were out, by any chance did you go back
- 12 through your safety and general conduct rule book and
- 13 check to see if there was a rule that said in case of
- 14 doubt, take the safest course?
- 15 A Yes, sir. And I still did not find anything.
- 16 Q Okay. Do you remember that such a rule used to
- 17 exist in the olden days when I first started doing this?
- 18 A I don't remember. When I searched for that term
- 19 or similar terms, the only thing I came up with was
- 20 related to environmental rules and instructions, and it
- 21 says "When in doubt, call for help." But that's related
- 22 to environmental rules and inspections.
- Q Okay. Earlier in our discussions when we were
- talking about stepping over the boxes, you said to lean
- 25 over the boxes. How do you lean over -- leaning over

- 1 looking at the pictures and the different angles, I think
- 2 you could fit between there. In fact, this was not the
- 3 first time the employee or other employees had walked
- 4 through there.
- 5 Q But you didn't make -- you don't know how they
- 6 walked through there, do you?
- 7 A How they got through there the first time?
- 8 Q Or however many hundreds of times they've had to
- 9 do it. Whatever the number is.
- 10 A No. I don't know how many times they've gone
- 11 through there in total over multiple days, or how they
- 12 did it each time.
- Q Well, let me ask this, would you agree with me
- 14 that based on the standard width of ties -- do you know
- what the standard width of a crosstie is?
- A When you say "width," are you talking about --
- 17 Q Length. Length. I'm sorry, length. I
- 18 apologize. Length. The width of the track.
- 19 A Yeah, that's what I meant.
- 20 Q Okay.
- 21 A All right. We're thinking the same thing.
- 22 Q We are.
- 23 A So across -- from one side of the track to the
- 24 other side of the track, is what you're asking?
- 25 Q Yes. The gauge of the rail is four feet eight and

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- 1 sounds like not getting around it or over it and never
- 2 moving forward. How -- if you assume you've got to get
- 3 by those boxes, how does leaning over them help you?
- 4 A So, that was in response to your question when you
- 5 said depending on the car type that was there, if he
- 6 couldn't fit between the box and the car, that would7 assume that the box was tall enough that he couldn't
- 8 physically fit his body between it. And my response was
- 9 to say that you would still -- well, obviously to your
- 10 point, yes, you'd have to still be moving your feet. But
- 11 if the car was preventing you from keeping your body in
- 12 that spot, then you could lean in over the box as you
- 13 walked past the box.
- But to your point, it would require walking past the box still.
- 16 Q But if you did that, you would be placing your
- 17 posture, your rear end, or whatever you want to call it,
- 18 toward the car that you would've been working on and lean
- over, forward over the box and sidle or edgewise by thebox with the car to your rear.
- A In my scenario that I'm talking about, that's what I'm saying, yes, sir.
- But this is all contingent on the fact that you
- couldn't fit between there. And I can't tell from the
- 25 picture that you couldn't fit between there. I would --

- 1 a half inches, right?
- 2 A Yeah. That's right. A tie is almost -- or about
- 3 eight feet long. They're pretty long.
- 4 Q Would you also agree with me the standard width
- 5 of -- pretty much the plate C width of a freight car is
- 6 about ten feet six inches or ten feet eight inches, of
- 7 the widest part to the widest part, of each car?
- 8 A Yeah, with some variance. But that's, that's
- 9 pretty close to the max size they can be within that10 plate.
- 11 O And would you agree that that gondola car that's
- shown in those NS photographs appears to be a plate C
- 13 car?
- 14 A Yes. I do think that's true.
- Q All right. So if it's -- if the car is ten feet
- wide, ten feet six, ten feet eight, and the ties are
- 17 eight feet long, that's a foot overhang off the end of
- 18 the ties, where the side of the car is, correct?
- 19 A It's going to be plus or minus some inches there.
- 20 But yes, I agree there would be an overhang.
- 21 Q Right. And if the width of those tracks is 14
- 22 feet centerline to centerline and there's cars in both
- 23 tracks, can you tell me real quick what would be the
- 24 distance taken up by the two cars? Do you see what I'm
- 25 getting at? Assume the track centers are 14 feet.

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- A Yeah. So, if the cars are -- you'd have about ten
- 2 feet of that taken up by the cars. So there would be
- four feet in between them.
- 4 Q Okay.
- 5 A Right about that.
- 6 Q All right.
- 7 A If the cars are ten -- let me walk through how I
- 8 got to that. If the centerline is 14 feet and the cars
- 9 are ten feet each, then from the centerline hanging over
- 10 your car is going to have about five feet. And you've
- 11 got a car on each side, so that's -- five and five is
- ten, and out of the 14 feet centerline you're going to
- 13 have four feet left.
- 14 O I think we did this last week, didn't we?
- 15 A I don't think we talked much about centerlines.
- 16 That was surrounding a derailment.
- 17 Q I thought we were talking about how much overhang
- 18 there was.
- All right. Now, are you sure you've never met
- 20 Mr. Rader? You didn't meet him --
- 21 A Not that I remember. Did he work at the
- 22 locomotive shop before?
- 23 Q No, no.
- 24 A If he was an engine carpenter I might've.
- 25 Q No, you didn't meet him that way. Didn't you meet

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1 him with Mr. Ivey at a safety meeting in Norfolk about

2 14, 15 years ago?

3 He does have a forgettable face, I will tell you

4 that?

- 5 A If I did, I certainly apologize to him. I just
- 6 don't remember meeting him. I don't remember meeting
- 7 him, if I have.

8 MR. TUCKER: All right. That's all we've

9 got, Craig.

10 MR. ALLEN: Okay.

11 (Signature waived.)

**DEPOSITION CONCLUDED AT 11:42** 

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COUNTY OF HAMILTON:
I, Sheila D. Wilson, Licensed Court Reporter #268
and Notary Public, in and for the State of Tennessee, do

hereby certify that the deposition of RYAN STEGE was reported by me, and that the foregoing 59 pages of the transcript is a true and accurate record to the best of

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

my knowledge, skills, and ability.

I further certify that I am not related to nor an employee of counsel or any of the parties to the action, nor am I in any way financially interested in the outcome

of this case.

I further certify that I am duly licensed by the
Tennessee Board of Court Reporting, as evidenced by the

LCR number and expiration date following my name below. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 23rd day of August 2021.

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STATE OF TENNESSEI

Shella D. Wilson, LCR # Expiration date: 6/30/2022. Notary Public Commission Expires: 1/25/2023.

W. 1520/W. 18 17 18

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