

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

DERAILMENT OF UNION PACIFIC \*

RAILROAD TRAIN UEBLTG 20 WITH \*

Accident No.: RRD19FR007

SUBSEQUENT FIRE AND HAZARDOUS \*

MATERIALS RELEASE, FORT WORTH, \*

TEXAS, APRIL 24, 2019 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: BATTALION CHIEF JEFF NOVAK and  
CHIEF SULLIVAN

Fort Worth Fire Station 17  
Fort Worth, Texas

Friday,  
April 26, 2019

## APPEARANCES:

KEIRAN STEWARD, Accident Investigator  
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration  
(PHMSA)

I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. STEWARD: All right. This is Keiran Steward from the  
3 Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration conducting an  
4 interview with Chief Novak and Chief Sullivan, at Station 17 in  
5 Fort Worth, Texas.

6 All right. It is April 26, and the time is --

7 FD#1: Looks like 12:27 --

8 FD#2: I got 12:28.

9 MR. STEWARD: 12:28. And we begin.

10 INTERVIEW OF CITY OF FORT WORTH

11 FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL (FD#1)

12 BY MR. STEWARD:

13 Q. When you received the call, what was it first reported as?

14 A. Commercial structure fire --

15 Q. A commercial --

16 A. -- on Berry.

17 Q. On Berry?

18 A. Yeah. Right. Which is the main road adjacent to the --  
19 where the tracks would cross.

20 Q. So you responded to the fire as if it was going to be a  
21 normal, regular -- well, nothing's ever normal --

22 A. Sure.

23 Q. -- or regular. But --

24 A. Yes --

25 Q. -- same assets usually go out for a structural?

26 A. Yes. A one alarm --

1 FD#2: A commercial structure, yes.

2 FD#1: -- commercial structure fire.

3 BY MR. STEWARD:

4 Q. And what were those assets that went out?

5 A. We have -- do you want the specific units or just the --

6 Q. Was it two pumpers, a --

7 A. Right. We had two trucks, three --

8 FD#2: Four.

9 FD#1: Four engines? Four engines and a safety officer and  
10 two battalion chief. The first unit on, which was Engine 4,  
11 requested a brush alarm because of access. But that was after he  
12 got on the scene and realized that it was not a commercial  
13 structure fire.

14 BY MR. STEWARD:

15 Q. And then he once he realized --

16 A. Right.

17 Q. -- then someone made a determination that we're going to  
18 switch gears?

19 A. Yeah, it's at -- relatively early into the incident, I  
20 announced on the radio that this was going to be a hazmat incident  
21 and that we're going to approach it as such. And our primary  
22 goal, initial goal, was going to be site control and determining  
23 what we were dealing with. So we did, we changed gears, we slowed  
24 down, and then proceeded as you would on a hazmat incident as  
25 opposed to a commercial structure fire.

1 Q. Commercial structure fire. So communication wise, at that  
2 point who were you contacting, other than --

3 A. Well, initially the communications were between the units on  
4 scene and our alarm office. When it switches over to hazmat, they  
5 have a protocol, list of notifications they would make from our  
6 alarm office. But I additionally requested environmental -- I had  
7 our Support 2, which is -- they're down in our main hazmat  
8 station. I had them respond with a foam truck. Once we figured  
9 out it was ethanol, then we knew we were going to need an alcohol-  
10 resistant foam, and we have a trailer. The railroad showed up  
11 with a trailer themselves. And they had a quick response.

12 Q. So there was plenty of foam on scene to --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So was there a problem when you were coming up? You had four  
15 trucks, I'm guessing maybe a 1,000 gallons of water for each truck  
16 or so?

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Was there a hydrant or anything with --

19 A. There is a hydrant there on -- at the end of Yuma, where we  
20 wound up setting up command. So there was a hydrant.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. There was water, but the decision was made not to --

23 Q. Right, right.

24 A. -- put water on it.

25 Q. Just --

1 FD#2: And one of the thing that's out of the norm is our  
2 emergency operation center was being staffed -- it began about 9  
3 p.m., but it was based on the potential, the severe storms coming  
4 in. So we did have a fire department representative at the EOC  
5 when this happened. And we used them when we started calling for  
6 the evacuation, if we were going to need to do that, they're the  
7 ones that helped set up -- made the contact with the Red Cross,  
8 got us a bus, that if we -- anyone evacuated needed a ride, you  
9 know, to wherever we were taking them. So they're our point of  
10 contact for doing that. That's outside the normal functions of  
11 the on-scene companies. And they just happened -- we just  
12 happened to have somebody down there because of the storm.

13 FD#1: And we had -- also, obviously, we had PD was involved.  
14 They were helping with traffic control and the site info on the  
15 perimeters of the incident and aiding with evacuation. We never  
16 moved to mandatory evacuation. It was -- well, it was by choice,  
17 but --

18 BY MR. STEWARD:

19 Q. Right.

20 A. It was offered to the residents. We were fortunate that it  
21 wasn't a highly or densely populated area. It was -- to the south  
22 were basically barns. There's a big, large horse barn that was an  
23 exposure that was burning early on in the incident, if not before  
24 we got there. It was --

25 Q. And that's where the animals were destroyed?

1 FD#2: Yes.

2 FD#1: Yes.

3 MR. STEWARD: Yeah.

4 FD#2: I believe --

5 FD#1: I was told one horse. I don't know if there were  
6 more.

7 FD#2: Well, we had confirmation of one that evening, but now  
8 through the news media and all that, we heard three, but that  
9 there are some that they actually did get out. But I haven't  
10 heard a number on that.

11 BY MR. STEWARD:

12 Q. Was assets able to get around to the other side where that --

13 A. We did start. I set up a south division with Quint 42,  
14 Engine 22, Brush 22, and Brush 42.

15 FD#2: One was -- yeah.

16 FD#1: They came with the brush alarm. And then -- yeah,  
17 once -- as the -- that was around the time it was transitioning  
18 into a hazmat, so you -- we were setting up the scene differently  
19 than we --

20 FD#2: Right. It's this area here.

21 MR. STEWARD: And what is this? What are we looking at right  
22 here?

23 FD#2: This is -- there he's -- the horse barns were over  
24 here and this is the area where we sent --

25 MR. STEWARD: On the Diaz farm, right?

1 FD#2: The company's over here. Yeah, company's over here.  
2 Let's see. Let's see. The incident was here, roughly in here.  
3 So it was this area.

4 MR. STEWARD: So they had to come down McClure Street?

5 FD#2: Yeah. I believe so. To get --

6 FD#1: And some of them came off up there.

7 FD#2: But it's this -- this area here and this area down  
8 here, correct? Yeah. Where the --

9 FD#1: Well, this is -- okay, this first little road closest  
10 to the railroad is Atkins, and then Riley. Those -- the horse  
11 barn was right there on Atkins. This is about as close as you can  
12 get to the tracks.

13 BY MR. STEWARD:

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And we recon'd and offered evacuation to this neighborhood.  
16 They -- we didn't feel like they were in imminent threat, but we  
17 did stage two apparatus in that neighborhood in the event that  
18 there was a change in the -- if we had a sudden release of the  
19 ethanol and --

20 Q. Right.

21 A. -- the fireball that -- if nothing else, it would've  
22 scared --

23 Q. Were you able to see -- how intense was the fire when you all  
24 realized that it was a railcar, the incident?

25 A. It was -- there was a berm. We pulled forward once to just,



1 just to get a --

2 FD#2: Barely see it.

3 FD#1: Yeah. Yeah, it was --

4 FD#2: But -- you could barely see it, but you could tell it  
5 was big just from the glow. And actually, the railroad, they had  
6 a drone, and based off what they were able to tell from their  
7 drone pictures, at some point they were reporting flames 150 to  
8 175 feet.

9 MR. STEWARD: Do you recall what color?

10 FD#1: Orange.

11 MR. STEWARD: Orange?

12 FD#2: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

13 FD#1: Orange.

14 FD#2: I was talking about what was on the camera was that --  
15 yeah. Yeah, it was all -- it has orange flames, the whole --

16 FD#1: That's what I recall.

17 FD#2: Yeah.

18 FD#1: I mean --

19 FD#2: I mean, what we could see.

20 BY MR. STEWARD:

21 Q. That would be accurate. Denatured, yeah, the ethanol.

22 And how did you all determine your isolation distances and --

23 A. We -- our squad was using their research team and they  
24 looked, they were looking at -- I assumed they looked at the ERG  
25 and they -- I think we referenced a few sites on the Internet, and

1 it was determined that -- was it -- do you remember what they  
2 were?

3 FD#2: Quarter.

4 FD#1: Is it a quarter mile for evacuating --

5 FD#2: A quarter mile.

6 FD#1: -- and then up to a mile for if there were -- it gave  
7 two different instances, I guess, or --

8 BY MR. STEWARD:

9 Q. One would be -- in the ERG?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. So one would be spilled and the other one would've been when  
12 it was on fire.

13 A. That sounds accurate.

14 Q. Yeah. Did anybody use Ask Rail?

15 A. I'm not aware of --

16 Q. You're not familiar?

17 A. Well, our squad would be doing that --

18 FD#2: They might have. I don't know what their --

19 FD#1: -- independently. They -- we don't, we wouldn't  
20 dictate -- we just say research this; find out what it is and how  
21 we should set up accordingly.

22 BY MR. STEWARD:

23 Q. Right.

24 A. We don't ask them -- we don't tell them why don't you look in  
25 this book, I want three resources, I want to know what they are.

1 We just -- the guys are trained to do that and I trust in their  
2 ability to do that without micromanaging or anything.

3 Q. Gotcha. That was a question that they wanted me to ask you  
4 all, if you all used -- well, actually that, my administrator --

5 A. We can find out. I mean, now we can find out after the fact.  
6 But I couldn't -- I don't know specifically which sources they  
7 used.

8 FD#2: Yeah, it can -- like I said, the thing is the squad  
9 officer is off today that was out there, and he would probably be  
10 able -- he would be able to let us know what resources were --

11 FD#1: Yeah. In other similar incidents I've seen, they have  
12 apps and -- on their -- links on their phone.

13 BY MR. STEWARD:

14 Q. Right.

15 A. And well, obviously we have mobile computers and -- the squad  
16 has a whole research section, books and -- so we could over -- we  
17 got plenty of resources to research that.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. But I -- Ask Rail, I don't know.

20 FD#2: But to ask you -- to ask us specifically which ones  
21 they used, I don't know.

22 MR. STEWARD: Yeah. I can understand that.

23 FD#2: Yeah. It's kind of like get us the info --

24 MR. STEWARD: Um-hum.

25 FD#2: -- whatever you feel is appropriate.

1 BY MR. STEWARD:

2 Q. So you set up your incident command post by the street near  
3 the hydrant, correct?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And at that point there was an incident command system being  
6 put into play, and when other people got involved, did those other  
7 people -- what I'm referring to is like rail or did any of those  
8 people participant in that incident command structure at all?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. They did?

11 A. I gave Michael Moore one of our radios, and we -- he visited  
12 us in the -- we had several meeting throughout the event, but he  
13 introduced himself, explained what his role, who he was with. We  
14 had -- and we had multiple Union Pacific representatives  
15 interacting with us. They were part of what I'll call unified  
16 command --

17 Q. Okay. Sure.

18 A. -- at that point.

19 FD#2: Yeah. They weren't -- I wouldn't say -- they weren't  
20 given a specific command role, but they -- we were talking to them  
21 the entire time.

22 MR. STEWARD: Right.

23 FD#2: They were in discussions and decision making as a  
24 group.

25 BY MR. STEWARD:

1 Q. So once the incident happened to the command post, what was  
2 the backup plan from that point?

3 A. We used -- we have a rehab unit, which is -- oh, it's just a  
4 large, looks like an RV again, but it's set up for rehabbing  
5 firefighters, which we sat in there.

6 FD#2: It's got, it's -- yeah, it's got benches in there,  
7 heating and air conditioning. They bring drinks, and typically  
8 what we use it for is, on a fire, for people to get out of the  
9 elements. And we just -- we would just transition into there to  
10 be out of the rain, and quiet and we could get every -- and the  
11 people we needed in there were in there discussing and going over  
12 our plan.

13 (Intercom interruption)

14 FD#1: Let me turn that down.

15 BY MR. STEWARD:

16 Q. Then the decision was made that it was best to let it run its  
17 course?

18 A. Yes. That was a joint decision between --

19 FD#2: Yes.

20 FD#1: -- fire department and --

21 MR. STEWARD: Union Pacific?

22 FD#1: -- Union Pacific.

23 FD#2: Yes.

24 FD#1: And we agreed that based on the nature of the  
25 chemicals involved and the ethanol --

1 FD#2: Yeah.

2 (Intercom interruption)

3 FD#1: And -- yes, that was a -- that was our --

4 MR. STEWARD: Is that a code?

5 FD#2: I'm sorry?

6 MR. STEWARD: Is that code?

7 FD#2: Quint. They started a call for them.

8 MR. STEWARD: Oh.

9 FD#1: Yeah, one of our -- yeah, Quint's got a call.

10 Yeah, that --

11 BY MR. STEWARD:

12 Q. So was any -- were you all able to put any foam on it or was  
13 that all UP?

14 A. That was -- the plan was that once the -- once we had  
15 stabilized the incident and we felt like we understood that  
16 because of the type of railcars and the content they weren't going  
17 to BLEVE necessarily, it wasn't going to -- the incident was  
18 stabilized, that we were going to support Union Pacific's foam  
19 trailer with an engine and a line from a hydrant. So we were  
20 going to pump their trailer. We were waiting for morning, and  
21 just let the -- let a lot of the product burn off, and at that  
22 point they were going to begin foam operations. And I was told  
23 they were bringing other tank trailers out so that they could  
24 start offloading some of the product. So, so between the two,  
25 they were going to do that.

1 Q. When Union Pacific decided to come in and start doing  
2 transloads or offloading the tank cars, was that a concern with  
3 the weather conditions or anything like that with -- what were  
4 your thoughts?

5 A. Well, it was lots of lightning, poor visibility, rough  
6 access, so I think it -- for safety, a lot of the -- a lot of our  
7 -- I think a lot of that was going to wait until daylight.

8 FD#2: Yeah. And I left around 4 a.m., and as I was leaving  
9 -- it was a little after 4, I think. But, anyway, when I left,  
10 they were bringing in the heavy equipment to like make the roads  
11 or make the access to be able to get to it. So I believe any  
12 offloading or anything that they were planning on doing would have  
13 been, I would say, probably --

14 FD#1: Not until well into it.

15 FD#2: -- 6, 7 a.m. I would think it would've taken at least  
16 2, 3 hours. You know, they're just getting there then. They  
17 still had to get unloaded off the trailers and -- but there was a  
18 long line of trailers and equipment coming in about 4. And that's  
19 what they were going to use that for, is to get the area kind of  
20 prepped to do whatever they're offloading or -- getting better  
21 access to the site.

22 BY MR. STEWARD:

23 Q. When you all arrived on scene, was there an issue with like  
24 homeless people or anything like that?

25 FD#2: I don't think that's an issue in that area.

1 FD#1: I don't --

2 FD#2: Because it's kind of --

3 FD#1: I wasn't aware of any.

4 FD#2: Yeah, if there is, I didn't hear anything about it.

5 MR. STEWARD: Okay. I -- just checking.

6 FD#2: Yeah. Yeah, that's not a --

7 FD#1: I don't remember -- that didn't -- I was not aware of  
8 it if that -- didn't see any, didn't hear about any, so I would  
9 say no.

10 FD#2: And that's not a big area that we have any homeless.  
11 I'm basing that off any kind of incidents like camp fires and  
12 stuff back in that area.

13 MR. STEWARD: Right, right.

14 FD#2: I don't know, do you hear Forest going back there very  
15 much on anything like that?

16 FD#1: I can check with the Forest and -- they've been back  
17 there on grass fires, which -- I don't know how they -- but I  
18 don't, I don't -- on this incident, I'm not aware of any. Didn't  
19 see any, didn't -- and did not -- none were reported. There was  
20 no, no homeless.

21 BY MR. STEWARD:

22 Q. So once the decision was made that you guys were just going  
23 to stand back and let it run its course, were people on air or  
24 were people just standing by? How were you all working?

25 FD#2: They were not on air and they were standing by in



1 those areas. It was for in case something changed, the conditions  
2 changed.

3 MR. STEWARD: Right.

4 FD#2: You know, we -- in case someone came out and saw it,  
5 we were -- there's a presence there that they can come talk to us  
6 and find out what's going on. So a presence in the neighborhood  
7 if any of the citizens, there was any concern, we'd be there and  
8 be able to talk to them directly. That's two of the big reasons  
9 that we were where we were at.

10 FD#1: As far as being on air, we did have -- the squad was  
11 monitoring the neighborhood to the south off Atkins and -- both  
12 areas were monitored with the PIDs for flammability and just  
13 whatever they could monitor for. And I -- the Union Pacific had  
14 AreaRAEs, which they were going to deploy.

15 BY MR. STEWARD:

16 Q. Multi-gas --

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And to just monitoring the area --

20 Q. Checking for the --

21 A. -- as best we could.

22 Q. -- VOCs and PID and --

23 A. Right.

24 Q. Okay.

25 FD#2: And one of the things I did notice which was kind of,

1 I thought, odd with the storms and everything, it wasn't that  
2 windy but the column of smoke was going straight up.

3 FD#1: Um-hum.

4 FD#2: It was not banking down, going into any neighborhoods.  
5 So that was actually working in our favor. So, yeah, I mean,  
6 access was horrible and all that other, but one of the few -- I  
7 guess maybe the few things that did, I felt, work in our favor was  
8 that, you know, we didn't have strong winds. So, like I said, the  
9 column of smoke went straight up in the air.

10 BY MR. STEWARD:

11 Q. How did you all get the shelter in place for the communities  
12 out there -- or evacuation. Excuse me.

13 A. The message was, we had -- I set up a south division, a west  
14 division and -- so we had it separated with fire crews on all  
15 sides beside -- except for where the lake was. And they went door  
16 to door advising people that -- you know, they told them the  
17 situation, offered to -- offered evacuation. We had a bus and we  
18 had Red Cross that was going to provide a room at hotels. So they  
19 -- we were going to -- they were going to be taken care of and it  
20 was, you know -- but most of them chose -- some people left in  
21 their cars on their own and other people just chose to stay in  
22 their homes.

23 FD#2: Yeah, the majority stayed. The -- we had the buses  
24 set up that if someone needed to leave and couldn't leave, they --  
25 we had a community center available that we were taking them

1 directly to. And then if they were at the community center and  
2 needed a hotel room, that's where we were going to process them  
3 from the community center to a hotel with the assistance of the  
4 Red Cross.

5 MR. STEWARD: And Red Cross was at the community center  
6 setting all that up?

7 FD#2: I don't know. This came -- that was part of what our  
8 EOC was handling for us.

9 FD#1: Yeah, that's the --

10 FD#2: Made the contact with the Red Cross.

11 MR. STEWARD: And what was that guy's name?

12 FD#1: That's the way I understood it.

13 FD#2: Which?

14 MR. STEWARD: At the EOC.

15 FD#1: That was McAmos?

16 FD#2: McAmos, chief. James.

17 FD#1: James McAmos? Is it James?

18 FD#2: Yeah, he goes by James. McAmos. And actually our  
19 fire chief, prior to this incident, was at the EOC but it was  
20 because of the weather.

21 MR. STEWARD: Right.

22 FD#2: Weather -- you know, they -- I don't know if you were  
23 aware of that, but they were just predicting real, real heavy  
24 rains. And one came through and then another was supposed to come  
25 through later, and --

1 FD#1: There was lots of flooding, and we -- prior to this  
2 call, I was -- we were hopping from one high water or swift water  
3 call to another. So it was a busy evening leading up to this.

4 FD#2: Oh, and back again on the notification, our PIO made  
5 the scene relatively early. I can't tell you when he showed up  
6 timewise, but it was pretty early into the scene. Local news were  
7 there early into the scene, and we were -- excuse me -- and we  
8 were getting with them about the evacuation.

9 I believe the first newscast in this area comes -- I would  
10 say they get on the air about, local news, about 4:30, I believe.  
11 So we were using that also as an avenue in addition to the door to  
12 door.

13 BY MR. STEWARD:

14 Q. The fire's going, evacuation's in place, not everybody -- so  
15 Red Cross would probably, most certainly have the information on  
16 who actually evacuated?

17 FD#2: No one evacuated to the Red Cross.

18 FD#1: Yeah, we -- our report is -- our report was zero.

19 MR. STEWARD: Zero?

20 FD#2: Well, we got zero -- zero evacuated through the means  
21 that we had set up for evacuation.

22 MR. STEWARD: Interesting.

23 FD#2: If they left, they left on their own. But we had the  
24 bus there. We were ready to take them to the shelter, and our  
25 crews reported to us that, you know, everybody's aware of it and

1 they -- no one was using what we had sent out there. So we  
2 actually -- I believe it was about, I'd say around 4 -- 3:30 or 4  
3 o'clock, we had someone on scene from our emergency management  
4 office made the scene and we were talking directly to him, and we  
5 had him contact the EOC to tell them that they could stand down  
6 the bus, the community center, and Red Cross, that no hotel rooms  
7 would be needed.

8 MR. STEWARD: And that was --

9 FD#1: I can't remember --

10 MR. STEWARD: -- at about what time?

11 FD#2: Close to 4. I would say somewhere probably between  
12 3:30 and 4. I --

13 FD#1: I'm going to request the radio traffic from Alarm. I  
14 think they can -- I've done it -- I know there were some changes.

15 FD#2: Well, we can do -- yeah.

16 FD#1: Can we still get that?

17 FD#2: I think so (indiscernible).

18 FD#1: Oh.

19 FD#2: But yeah, he -- like I said, he was on scene and we  
20 needed those people out there. It's like, yeah, we talked to  
21 them, no one wants to -- you know, either they left or they're --  
22 in their private vehicle or they're staying. No one's taking  
23 advantage of the bus that we sent out there.

24 MR. STEWARD: Hmm.

25 FD#1: Yeah, that was -- so in addition to the crews that

1 were standing by in the neighborhood, I did form an evacuation  
2 group with Quint 17 and Engine 14, and they were -- so those are  
3 some resources that were dedicated to that.

4 FD#2: I need to get all those from you for that report  
5 later. So I can contact them and tell them to do that --

6 FD#1: Okay.

7 FD#2: -- deal.

8 BY MR. STEWARD:

9 Q. And you did state that you had your own people out there  
10 doing air monitoring?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And what do they use? Do they -- what kind of -- what air  
13 monitoring --

14 A. It's a PID device.

15 Q. Okay. Oh, yeah, you did say that.

16 A. It's a PID. We have AreaRAEs as well, but the railroad, they  
17 showed up with an amazing amount of equipment pretty quick. It  
18 was pretty impressive. I was like, where did you all come from?  
19 But it was -- and they had all that. So they were rolling in with  
20 18-wheelers and trailer after trailer, bulldozers and track  
21 loaders. It was a pretty impressive response.

22 Q. How long were you on scene by -- with you-all, just by you-  
23 all self?

24 A. Let me think. It would have --

25 FD#2: Totally? I mean, like --

1 FD#1: Without -- before the railroad showed --

2 FD#2: -- how long before the first railroad guy shows up?

3 MR. STEWARD: Yeah.

4 FD#1: Well, the conductor showed up within 30, 45 minutes.

5 FD#2: Oh, he -- yeah, that -- yeah.

6 FD#1: I mean, he was here --

7 FD#2: He was talking to you all by the time I got there, I  
8 think.

9 FD#1: Yeah. So he showed up pretty quick.

10 FD#2: So he may have -- he got the information we needed and  
11 got to us like -- probably as soon as possible.

12 BY MR. STEWARD:

13 Q. And he gave you all the consist then?

14 A. Yes.

15 FD#2: Yes.

16 BY MR. STEWARD:

17 Q. Okay. Awesome.

18 A. Yeah. I have that here.

19 Q. Awesome.

20 A. Yeah, they -- I was impressed by their --

21 FD#2: Yeah, they were all --

22 FD#1: -- response. It was --

23 FD#2: And then, like I said, then you'd have one, and then  
24 just -- next time you looked up, there was three more of them, and  
25 then the next time you look up, there's another five or six. And

1 they were, you know, all helpful --

2 FD#1: Knowledgeable.

3 FD#2: It went -- yes, it went well.

4 BY MR. STEWARD:

5 Q. And at what point was it decided that you couldn't do anymore  
6 that you could do and you all started to de-mob?

7 A. That was -- that started before he left, right, the -- when  
8 we were --

9 FD#2: Yeah, we --

10 FD#1: We were going to transition to a support role for the  
11 railroad at 4.

12 FD#2: We had -- okay, we did a --

13 FD#1: -- 4 --

14 FD#2: At 5 a.m. we had relief companies come out to relieve  
15 the on-scene companies. And again, they were just in the  
16 neighborhood mainly to monitor if anything changed. At that point  
17 we felt it was pretty well stabilized, but --

18 FD#1: Right.

19 FD#2: -- we just wanted to make sure. And then again,  
20 another big part was that we -- you know, when somebody gets up to  
21 go to work at 5 o'clock or 6 a.m. and they're looking at a big  
22 train derailment in the backyard, they're not going "What happened  
23 here?" and we're there to answer any questions they may have, let  
24 them know what's going on. And, you know, just kind of get them  
25 whatever information they might be asking for.



1 FD#1: Yeah. Yep.

2 BY MR. STEWARD:

3 Q. The relief company, was it from this department or from this  
4 station? Was it the other shift?

5 FD#2: No, no, we --

6 MR. STEWARD: No?

7 FD#2: No, we had --

8 FD#1: They were -- they came from various parts of the city.

9 FD#2: Yeah, our --

10 MR. STEWARD: Okay, okay.

11 FD#2: We told our EOC, our guy at EOC, this is what we want.

12 We -- you know, I think six companies to come out and relieve --

13 or five. I believe it was five companies come out and relieve

14 these on scene. We want two here, two here, and one here. And

15 just get with our alarm office, tell us what we want, and then

16 they go through and they make the assignments. We didn't call

17 specifically for anybody.

18 FD#1: And we replaced them again at shift change, and that

19 was --

20 FD#2: Roughly 8.

21 FD#1: -- just because of the shift change.

22 FD#2: Eight to 8:30.

23 MR. STEWARD: Eight to 8.

24 FD#2: Or 8 to 8:30 is when they -- by the time they -- by

25 the times the crews got there and they got people swapped out and

1 they got them setting out there. So it was about 8 a.m. And  
2 that's -- I was -- you know, I left and I don't know what time --

3 FD#1: I was there till 8, somewhere between 8:15 and 8:30.  
4 Because -- and that's when I -- I just came over here and tagged  
5 the oncoming BC, gave him a report, drew him a picture, explained  
6 what the plan was, and kind of -- he responded out there and took  
7 over as command. And that was Jeff Covert.

8 FD#2: And then my relief, Derrick Thomas, when he came in, I  
9 briefed him on, you know, what had happened, what our plan was up  
10 to this point, that we had just done -- you know, this is about  
11 6:30, and I told him, you know, we just done a relief swap about 5  
12 and that -- you know, just kind of what -- you know, that Covert  
13 was or that Battalion 1 was going to be going out there, and I  
14 suggest to him that he let him go out there and assess what our  
15 needs are and then go from that point on based on, you know,  
16 daylight --

17 MR. STEWARD: Right.

18 FD#2: -- and everything, and the situation, where we were in  
19 the incident, and just let -- base off his recommendation and do,  
20 you know, whatever they did from that point. And from that point,  
21 I don't know.

22 MR. STEWARD: Right.

23 BY MR. STEWARD:

24 Q. So when did units start leaving? At -- during shift change?

25 A. Well --

1 Q. Oh, they got swapped out, but did you all start --

2 A. When did we start reducing at?

3 Q. -- did you all start scaling -- reducing, yes.

4 A. Well, I did -- at the 8 o'clock shift change replacement, I  
5 went from -- so we had six units and we were keeping them in  
6 pairs. At that point it was daylight, I had one unit, one  
7 company, come out and replace two. So we cut our force in half at  
8 that point.

9 Q. Right. Okay.

10 A. So then we had -- and then we just had one company in the  
11 neighborhood; that's Shaw and Todd is that intersection. Then we  
12 had one company over in Atkins and Riley, and one company over  
13 near the command post that was going to support the water supply  
14 operation for the railroad foam trailer.

15 Q. Did you all want to stop real quick and --

16 A. Eat?

17 Q. Yeah, just --

18 A. If we can.

19 Q. Yeah, yeah.

20 FD#2: That's fine.

21 MR. STEWARD: Yeah, we can -- we're going to stop. It is --  
22 what time is it? It is --

23 FD#1: One o'clock.

24 MR. STEWARD: It's 1 o'clock.

25

1 (Off the record.)

2 (On the record.)

3 FD#1: Oh, you want --

4 FD#2: We might (indiscernible) that from here.

5 FD#1: From VisiNet or --

6 FD#2: Yeah.

7 MR. STEWARD: 1349. Starting again.

8 FD#1: You want the good numbers, I can try -- I can get on  
9 there and try.

10 FD#2: Yeah, pull up -- if you can, pull up the assignment.  
11 If he can --

12 MR. STEWARD: Yeah, that'll work.

13 FD#2: If he can pull up the assignment, we can just give  
14 that to you and you can do the math.

15 MR. STEWARD: Yeah, yeah. That'll work, too.

16 FD#2: Okay.

17 FD#1: I still want to get -- I want to hear the radio for my  
18 own --

19 MR. STEWARD: Yeah.

20 FD#1: -- for training and my own purposes, I want to hear --  
21 I think it went well, but I just want hear what it sounded like.

22 FD#2: Yeah.

23 FD#1: So -- and I've asked for that before, but I -- it  
24 seemed like it -- they have to go in and take out all the -- they  
25 take out the --

1 FD#2: Space.

2 FD#1: Yeah, the space.

3 BY MR. STEWARD:

4 Q. So at -- it was between 8 and 8:30 when you guys went from  
5 six units and you went to three units covering everything, when  
6 you scaled down?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And then --

9 FD#2: At 8:30 relief?

10 FD#1: Yeah, six companies, we still had --

11 FD#2: Three on --

12 FD#1: Squad may have still been there. So then that  
13 would've been four, and then you had a battalion chief. So that  
14 would've been --

15 FD#2: But the companies sitting in the neighborhoods --

16 MR. STEWARD: Right. Doing the monitoring and --

17 FD#1: The (indiscernible) --

18 FD#2: Yeah, yeah.

19 FD#1: Right.

20 BY MR. STEWARD:

21 Q. And then about what time did you all start scaling that back?

22 FD#2: The scale-back from that point probably would've been  
23 closing the incident.

24 FD#1: Yeah, I heard them -- I was, I was still here when  
25 they announced -- this one. This is the -- I don't know. I don't

1 think that's it. That's not really -- that's not VisiNet.

2 FD#2: No. You need to --

3 FD#1: Let's see. That's what I'm looking for.

4 FD#2: Yeah.

5 FD#1: Oh. But -- all right, I stayed over the next day and  
6 was -- I ate and started writing that. And I left around 11 the  
7 next day and I heard -- before I left, I heard on the radio the  
8 incident was shut down. So it was prior to 11 --

9 BY MR. STEWARD:

10 Q. In the evening?

11 A. Around -- no, in the morning. So it only continued from the  
12 fire department's standpoint for another 3 hours -- 3, 4 hours,  
13 and then it was all railroad at that point.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And I don't -- but I wasn't here, so I just heard that on the  
16 radio. I don't --

17 FD#2: Yeah, I didn't hear anybody --

18 FD#1: I don't know if they would've --

19 FD#2: Well, I had like --

20 FD#1: -- if they were using us for water, a water supply,  
21 but --

22 FD#2: Yeah, just -- because that should show the -- all the  
23 units on scene, when they got on scene, and the last unit to clear  
24 the scene, which will, for us, close it out.

25 MR. STEWARD: Close it out?

1 FD#2: Yeah.

2 No.

3 FD#1: No, I just got to -- I got to remember my password. I  
4 have way too many passwords.

5 FD#2: I do, too. I got one of them password keepers.

6 FD#1: I kind of do. They're -- I got a file, but I've also  
7 got it on my phone. But I'll try to --

8 MR. STEWARD: Yeah, we can run down there and get that CAD.

9 FD#2: Well, if he can pull it up here, we won't have to go  
10 down there.

11 MR. STEWARD: That'll work, too.

12 FD#2: Yeah, that's the thing, unless we can get it right  
13 here.

14 MR. STEWARD: Yeah. I actually need numbers --

15 FD#2: Numbers, right, and that's --

16 MR. STEWARD: -- (indiscernible) numbers.

17 FD#2: Like I said, if he can get it pulled up, we can -- we  
18 can do it. Well, let me see if I can sign in real quick.

19 FD#1: Okay.

20 FD#2: If I can remember my password.

21 FD#1: Yeah. I'm going to look for mine in the meantime.

22 Yeah, I might need to get one of those keeper apps like you have  
23 because I have way too many.

24 FD#2: There you go. All right.

25 FD#1: You got it?

1 FD#2: Yep.

2 MR. STEWARD: Can I get a copy of this?

3 FD#1: What is it? What is that?

4 FD#2: What is that?

5 MR. STEWARD: Standard operating procedures for --

6 FD#2: For?

7 MR. STEWARD: -- hazardous material incident.

8 FD#1: Yeah, let me look at it and make sure that it is an  
9 actual -- our actual, and it's not an update. But, yeah, I mean,  
10 you would be able to get a copy of it, anyway, because it's under  
11 the Freedom of Information Act and stuff. So we --

12 FD#2: That's --

13 FD#1: Yeah. We have a much -- this is -- this one is for  
14 EMS. We have -- so, but you would probably --

15 MR. STEWARD: Oh, I see.

16 FD#1: You probably want our hazmat hazmat. I don't know if  
17 I printed that or -- high-rise -- I don't know if I printed out  
18 one of those recently. Staging. I can print a copy of that up  
19 easy enough, our actual hazmat SOP.

20 MR. STEWARD: Yeah, that'd be awesome if I can --

21 FD#1: Yeah.

22 MR. STEWARD: -- get it.

23 FD#1: And I think we -- yeah.

24 FD#2: Okay. So this came in when?

25 FD#1: This was on -- this was at 12:38 or 0038 on the 24th.



1 FD#2: 12:38 or 28?

2 FD#1: It was on the -- it was at --

3 FD#2: Here we go.

4 FD#1: -- 38 minutes after midnight.

5 FD#2: Here we go, hazmat. Right here.

6 FD#1: Yeah. That's --

7 FD#2: And that's the number I need, too. Let me write this  
8 down before I lose where I'm at.

9 FD#1: Yeah.

10 FD#2: Okay. Let's see. All right. I got it. I was trying  
11 to get a piece of paper. There we go.

12 MR. STEWARD: Okay. So that's -- incident number is?

13 FD#1: 19114.

14 MR. STEWARD: 19114.

15 FD#2: Get that paper -- right on top of it.

16 MR. STEWARD: 91140017.

17 FD#2: Okay. That's what I need. And let's see if I can --  
18 all right. So, see, it's got description -- oh, this has got the  
19 whole --

20 FD#1: Yeah, you should be able to --

21 FD#2: Here we go. Battalion 2, 17, Rehab --

22 FD#1: That's got a lot of information and it's all -- yeah,  
23 it's all going to be chronological and --

24 MR. STEWARD: Yep.

25 FD#2: Okay. So let's do this -- file, go to print.

1 FD#1: Make sure that you choose this one. Is it giving you  
2 this printer (indiscernible)?

3 FD#2: 11209? Yep.

4 FD#1: Yeah.

5 FD#2: And -- yeah.

6 FD#1: Can you print up two copies of that?

7 FD#2: Okay. There we go.

8 FD#1: Because I've got a file I started on it. Add that to  
9 mine.

10 MR. STEWARD: Okay. 10:34 -- okay, and this -- okay. That  
11 it?

12 FD#2: Um-hum.

13 FD#1: Yeah, this is -- you can look at this and see if it --  
14 I mean, it's got -- it's got a lot of information, hopefully, I  
15 would imagine.

16 MR. STEWARD: And it has -- got all the, all the units?

17 FD#1: And it shows when they got on, order of arrival and --

18 MR. STEWARD: -- (indiscernible) so Truck 1 was there -- and  
19 it looks like Engine 8 left at 8:23. They were there 20 minutes.

20 FD#1: There were a few that were in -- we kept in staging.

21 FD#2: Yeah, it was truck 8.

22 FD#1: Because I did have -- initially I had Engine 28 set up  
23 staging on area Yuma. But then they we wind up using them --

24 MR. STEWARD: Okay. Did you get yours?

25 FD#2: Yeah.

1 FD#1: Yes.

2 FD#2: Okay. If you want -- okay, if you want to look at the  
3 resources assigned -- okay. And right beside it, because -- okay,  
4 like you got Truck 8, Engine 4, Engine 10, Engine 5, Engine 14.  
5 Now Brush 22 --

6 FD#1: No, they were over on the -- they were in the south  
7 division with Engine 22.

8 FD#2: They were there with Engine -- but the thing is, if  
9 you got Brush 22, you got one person on that because you got  
10 Engine 22 with three people. That's kind of going back and forth  
11 on the numbers. That's what I want to kind of --

12 FD#1: Yeah, if you're wanting people or equipment, that's  
13 two different things. Because, yeah, if it says -- if there's a  
14 brush and an engine or a quint with the same number, like Quint 42  
15 and Engine 22, and --

16 MR. STEWARD: So Brush 42 has --

17 FD#1: They took part of -- they split their crew for that  
18 brush engine.

19 FD#2: Right. Remember I said they were four across?

20 MR. STEWARD: Right.

21 FD#2: So Quint 42 has four people on it.

22 MR. STEWARD: Right.

23 FD#2: But if Brush 42 is with him, Quint 42 has three and  
24 Brush 42 has one.

25 MR. STEWARD: I see.

1 FD#2: And then like the battalion chiefs have -- are one.

2 FD#1: I had Kyle with me.

3 FD#2: Oh, had two.

4 FD#1: So I had a driver.

5 FD#2: Yeah, that's what I mean. You know, let's -- or if  
6 you want to go on the back, I can go through these and just tell  
7 you who and how many people are on them. I mean, do you think  
8 they want that kind of numbers?

9 MR. STEWARD: Yeah. Yeah.

10 FD#1: That'll work.

11 FD#2: That help?

12 FD#1: Yeah.

13 FD#2: Okay. So Battalion 1 and 2 -- I'm starting at the --  
14 I'm -- yeah, at the top and going down.

15 MR. STEWARD: All right.

16 FD#2: Battalion 1 had two.

17 FD#1: That's me. So two by Battalion 1, two people.

18 MR. STEWARD: Yeah, it's --

19 FD#1: It was me and Kyle.

20 FD#2: Driving it. Okay. Battalion 2 had one.

21 MR. STEWARD: Battalion 1 had --

22 FD#1: Had two.

23 FD#2: Battalion 1 had two.

24 FD#1: And Battalion 2 had one. That's almost --

25 FD#2: Battalion 2 had one. Quint 17 --

1 FD#1: Four.

2 FD#2: -- Truck 8, Engine 4, Engine 10, all had four.

3 MR. STEWARD: Okay.

4 FD#2: Engine 5 and 14 had four. Safety 1 had two. Brush 22  
5 28 and 42 had one. Engine 22, Quint 42, and Engine 28 had three.  
6 Squad 2 had three. Support 2 had one.

7 FD#1: Are they -- well, is that -- does a squad normally run  
8 with three? Because --

9 FD#2: Well, if it -- but (indiscernible) --

10 FD#1: But I don't if -- I mean if -- I'm trying to -- I  
11 thought I called in Support after the --

12 FD#2: Well, the Squad came -- okay, I'm sorry. Let's back  
13 up. Put four on Squad 2.

14 FD#1: And then I called for the Support.

15 FD#2: And then one on Support 2. So that -- they probably  
16 brought up the engine or whatever.

17 FD#1: Yeah.

18 MR. STEWARD: So Squad has -- Squad 2 --

19 FD#2: Squad 2 had two -- Squad 2 had four. Support 2 had  
20 one. Ops 2 is one, which is me. PIO is one. Mobile Command,  
21 they --

22 FD#1: That would be zero.

23 FD#2: Two guys went back and brought -- so don't count them.

24 FD#1: Yeah, that's the same as Safety.

25 FD#2: Yeah. Rehab had one. Okay. Service 99 is -- are

1 mechanics, so we don't need to count them.

2 FD#1: I saw two of the -- well, Jeff come out and another  
3 guy.

4 FD#2: Engine 12, Truck 1, Engine 18, 29, Quint 16, Engine  
5 36, Quint 12, Engine 6 -- everything after that has four.  
6 Everything below Service 99 had four people on it. And those were  
7 the -- that's -- so those, the bottom -- 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 --

8 FD#1: Does Ellman need to be included in that?

9 FD#2: -- 10,11.

10 MR. STEWARD: And then Engine 10, 5 and 8 are all four?

11 FD#2: Yes.

12 FD#1: Correct. Does Ellman need to be included in that or  
13 is that --

14 FD#2: Yeah. I mean, the fire chief was there; he came out.  
15 Our department photographer came out, you know. But that was --  
16 those are, as far the trucks and all who's listed, that's the  
17 numbers. And that gave me the number I needed to put on that, so  
18 it got -- so I can do the report. You know, that  
19 (indiscernible) --

20 FD#1: Yeah, that was a good, that was a good thing to get.

21 MR. STEWARD: Yeah. So you stated that the last unit got  
22 pulled out at --

23 FD#2: It should be the last, very last page -- second to the  
24 last.

25 FD#1: I can tell you.

1 FD#2: Okay. Let's go back to -- oh, that's the, that's  
2 the --

3 FD#1: Covert, yeah, I heard him closing -- close it around  
4 (indiscernible) --

5 FD#2: Time we would have closed it, 10:34:08. That's the  
6 complete -- that's the latest time. There's a 10:35 for PIO unit,  
7 and then a 10:35 for Service (indiscernible) -- that looks like  
8 he --

9 FD#1: Right around 10- --

10 FD#2: 10:35 a.m., looks like our last, last ones.

11 MR. STEWARD: Okay.

12 FD#1: Yeah, we weren't involved a whole lot longer than that  
13 because --

14 FD#2: Yeah, that -- the 10:35, that's -- they probably came  
15 out for a couple hours on that last relief to make sure everything  
16 was squared up and good to go and --

17 BY MR. STEWARD:

18 Q. So last question. If this happened again, is there anything  
19 that you would do different?

20 A. Well, our initial -- in our initial conversation we said no.  
21 Obviously, you can always do something different. I don't know  
22 without reviewing it what exactly -- oh, I would have -- in  
23 hindsight, I knew not to (indiscernible) -- I didn't do it. Our  
24 command vehicle parked somewhere else.

25 Q. Right.

1 A. But that was not, that was not our responsibility.

2 Q. Right, right.

3 FD#2: Part of what you're asking me -- I'm taking our  
4 command truck piece out of it.

5 MR. STEWARD: Right, right.

6 FD#2: Okay. And --

7 FD#1: Yeah, that was separate.

8 FD#2: And like I said in there, thinking about it, there's  
9 nothing that I sat down and thought, I was like, yeah, oh, man, I  
10 wish we would have done that.

11 MR. STEWARD: Right.

12 FD#2: Now that being said, that's not to say someone else  
13 who reviews this and goes, hey, you might've tried this, and I  
14 just go, no, that's -- you're wrong; we did it perfect. I'm not  
15 saying that by any means either. But just for me, in my  
16 experience, what we did, how we did it, how thing played out, I  
17 can't think of anything I would have done different. But I'm open  
18 to suggestions if anybody's got any.

19 FD#1: Yeah, that's a good answer. That'd be my answer as  
20 well.

21 MR. STEWARD: Yeah.

22 FD#1: Yeah, the -- I like that answer.

23 MR. STEWARD: Well, thank you so much, gentlemen.

24 The interview is over at 1405.

25 (Whereupon, at 2:05 p.m., the interview was concluded.)



CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:            DERAILMENT OF UNION PACIFIC  
RAILROAD TRAIN UEBLTG 20 WITH  
SUBSEQUENT FIRE AND HAZARDOUS  
MATERIALS RELEASE, FORT WORTH,  
TEXAS, APRIL 24, 2019  
Interview of Chief Novak and  
Chief Sullivan

ACCIDENT NO.:                RRD19FR007

PLACE:                         Fort Worth, Texas

DATE:                          April 26 , 2019

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.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kay Maurer  
Transcriber