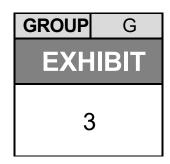


NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD Investigative Hearing

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

# NTSB

Title

# Interview Transcript – Charles Day, Senior Project Manager, Specialized Response Solutions, March 1, 2023

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	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
	NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
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	* NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN DERAILMENT *
	IN EAST PALESTINE, OHIO * Accident No.: RRD23MR005 ON FEBRUARY 3, 2023 *
	* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
	Interview of: CHIP DAY, Senior Project Manager Specialized Response Solutions
	via Microsoft Teams
	Wednesday,
	March 1, 2023
	FREE STATE REPORTING, INC. Court Reporting Transcription D.C. Area 301-261-1902
	D.C. Area 301-261-1902 Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

#### APPEARANCES:

MARK DOUGHERTY, Hazardous Materials Accident Investigator National Transportation Safety Board

PAUL STANCIL, Senior Hazardous Materials Accident Investigator National Transportation Safety Board

PAUL CAREY, Retired Fire HAZMAT Chief International Association of Firefighters

TERRY HEIDKAMP, Vice President GATX Corporation

RON LAWLER, Senior Director Mechanical Services Trinity Leasing

RANDY KELTZ, Manager of Tank Car Safety Programs Federal Railroad Administration

ROBERT WOOD, System Manager Hazardous Materials Norfolk Southern Railway

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1	<u>interview</u>
2	(10:01 a.m.)
3	MR. DOUGHERTY: Well, good morning. Today is March 1st,
4	2023. The time is 10:01 Eastern Time. This is a Microsoft Teams
5	interview that is being conducted in connection with the Norfolk
6	Southern Railway train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, on
7	February 3rd, 2023. The NTSB number is RRD23MR005. My name is
8	Mark Dougherty, that's D-o-u-g-h-e-r-t-y, and I'm a Hazardous
9	Materials Accident Investigator with the NTSB. This is an
10	interview of Mr. Chip Day of Specialized Response Solutions or
11	SRS.
12	And we'll now go around and do introductions. If you could
13	state your name, spelling of your last name, and company name and
14	position? And we'll start with Mr. Stancil.
15	MR. STANCIL: Yes, my name is Paul Stancil, spelled S-t-a-n-
16	c-i-l. I'm a Senior Hazardous Materials Accident Investigator
17	with the National Transportation Safety Board.
18	MR. DOUGHERTY: Chief Carey?
19	MR. CAREY: Good morning. My name is Paul Carey, last name
20	C-a-r-e-y. I'm a retired Boston Fire HAZMAT Chief. I'm here
21	representing the International Association of Firefighters.
22	MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay, great. Mr. Heidkamp?
23	MR. HEIDKAMP: Good morning. This is Terry Heidkamp, H-e-i-
24	d-k-a-m-p. I'm Vice President at GATX Corporation.
25	MR. DOUGHERTY: Thank you. And Mr. Lawler?
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1 MR. LAWLER: Ron Lawler, L-a-w-l-e-r. Trinity Leasing, 2 Senior Director Mechanical Services. 3 MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay. Mr. Keltz? 4 MR. KELTZ: Yes, Randy Keltz, K-e-l-t-z. I'm FRA's Manager 5 of Tank Car Safety Programs. 6 MR. DOUGHERTY: Mr. Wood? 7 MR. WOOD: Robert Wood, W-o-o-d, System Manager Hazardous 8 Materials, Norfolk Southern Railway. 9 MR. DOUGHERTY: And Mr. Day? 10 MR. DAY: My name is Chip Day, last name D-a-y. Legal name 11 I'm the Senior Project Manager for Specialized Charles Day. 12 Response Solutions out of Fort Worth, Texas. 13 MR. DOUGHERTY: All right. Thank you for that. 14 So for the interview and recording, it is very important that 15 we all speak loudly and clearly. 16 BY MR. DOUGHERTY: 17 Ο. Okay, Mr. Day, are you aware that this interview is being recorded? 18 19 Yes, sir, I am. Α. 20 0. Okay. If any question is unclear or you don't understand the 21 question, please ask the questioner to clarify or restate the 22 question. And if you don't know the answer to any questions, it's 23 okay to tell us that you don't know. We don't want you to 24 speculate or if you don't know the answer to a question. 25 The sole purpose of this investigation is to improve safety, FREE STATE REPORTING, INC. Court Reporting Transcription D.C. Area 301-261-1902 Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

not to assign fault, blame, or liability. Our mission is to improve transportation safety and prevent accidents. As such, the NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality, immunity from any legal proceedings by any other agency, whether it's state, local, or federal.

A transcript of this interview will be placed in the public
docket for this investigation, which will be available via the
NTSB website.

9 So, Mr. Day, just to start, first, I'd like to thank you for 10 agreeing to speak with us today and any information that you can 11 give us.

12 If we could start off if you could tell us about your 13 background, education, and expertise?

14 Okay. Again, I'm Chip Day, Senior Project Manager for Α. Specialized Response Solutions, a HAZMAT response organization 15 16 based in Fort Worth, Texas. Been in this business for coming up 17 on 42 years as commercial (indiscernible) response with a 18 background in fire service. I grew up in the fire service as a 19 volunteer, became a paid firefighter in Arlington, Texas for about 20 seven years, and the whole time I was still -- my dad and I 21 started our own emergency response company based in Keller, Texas, 22 back in '81. And I've always loved my chosen career path, and 23 firefighting just wasn't everything it was cracked up to be, so I decided that I needed a little more excitement and became a -- got 24 25 into hazardous materials. And I've worked for several different

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1	companies from owning my own business to working for some of the
2	fastest growing first response companies, always based in Fort
3	Worth or Houston, Texas. And that's pretty much it. I spent
4	almost ten years with Holcher (ph.) Services as a Senior Director
5	of Operations for their HAZMAT group and that's where I really got
6	into train wrecking and understanding the ins and outs and ups and
7	down of all that stuff. And that's it.
8	Q. All right, perfect. Thank you for that. And so what all
9	positions have you held with SRS?
10	A. With SRS I've always been a Senior Project Manager, $a/k/a$ a
11	Response Manager.
12	Q. And can you repeat for how long have you been
13	A. I've been with, I've been with SRS for five years, coming up
14	on six years in August.
15	Q. And so what are your duties as a Senior Project Manager for
16	SRS?
17	A. Emergency response projects as they come in. We've got a
18	large list of clients that rely on us for helping, assisting,
19	troubleshooting, HAZMAT incidents, containers, and providing both
20	internal and external training for tank car loaders, tank car
21	unloaders, responders, first responders, and planned response,
22	planned response teams.
23	Q. All right. And then so who do you currently report to?
24	A. I report to a gentleman named Bobby Breed, last name Breed,
25	B-r-e-d.
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1 Q. Okay. All right, thank you. So if we could start -- if you 2 could explain what your role was in the East Palestine train 3 derailment?

I -- the times and stuff I'm kind of off on. But on Saturday 4 5 following the incident, obviously it was a, it was a big incident, 6 so I was watching it pretty closely, listening to what was going on. I have a lot of friends in the industry that were calling, 7 8 going, hey, are you going to this thing? And I hadn't gotten any 9 calls -- I received a phone call -- I sent a text to 10 Mr. Schoendorfer with the NS and asking what was actually on fire, 11 and he replied back VCM. And within a minute or so, he called me 12 and said we need some -- we possibly need some assistance if 13 you're available in East Palestine. And he connected up Mr. Wood 14 with the NS and I. We spoke about the VCM that was on fire and the -- what they were needing assistance-wise from SRS. 15

We put a -- put four guys on the road with our big response truck heading to East Palestine, and then myself, Terry Rockwell (ph.), and Kent Farcar (ph.), our Safety Officer, boarded a jet and we flew to Pittsburgh.

We got there late, late, late Saturday night. We were told to go to bed and be on site bright and early Sunday morning. We arrived in East Palestine Sunday morning, went to the command center for additional safety briefing, and met up with several folks from the NS and then wound up going down to the site and beginning a damage assessment of the VCM cars and the other cars

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1 that were (indiscernible).

2	There was, there was a lot going on, so I don't remember all
3	the different things and different directions that we went. But
4	we started talking about what had been seen, what the responders
5	saw, what the SPSI guy saw, what the NS guys saw, and we started
6	formulating plans on beginning some offensive operations or
7	figuring out could we get in and do some offensive operations to
8	begin clearing the wreck and identifying loads versus empties and
9	such to start to really continue the initial response to the
10	derailment.
11	Once that just kind of went on throughout the day. Lots
12	of meetings, lots of discussions coming up with plans to present
13	to incident command because the incident command the state IMT
14	was coming in was being brought in to, I guess, start the true
15	incident command system for the city and all the resources that
16	were destined for it. So that's kind of what transpired on most
17	of Sunday.
18	Q. Okay. Anything else? How about into Monday?
19	A. Well, one of the things that we got we brought in when

Mr. Wood and I originally spoke with Mr. Schoendorfer -- we were -- I was advised that some acrylates had been spilled, unknown the volume, but butyl acrylate and ethylhexyl acrylate were involved and we've got a material that is available at a manufacturer in Houston that kills acrylates and helps neutralize some of the odor. And we got that stuff blended and loaded and

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shipped up to the SPSI warehouse in Washington, Pennsylvania. So
 as the, you know, the day progressed, we were watching the fires
 pretty closely. We studied the video that was caught on the PRD
 that did operate for 70 minutes.

5 And just based on previous training with monomers and polymers from the manufacturers of those two products, one of the 6 7 things that we all teach first responders is that you're dealing 8 with a stabilized product, being a monomer or polymer, i.e. vinyl chloride monomer, styrene monomer, that if you -- if your PRD is 9 10 going off and it's cycling like it should, and then everything 11 stops, the PRDs stop operating, that is a really bad sign that 12 polymer could be being formed inside the tank if nothing has 13 changed on the outside. If you're not super cooling and taking 14 all the heat away, you can start forming polymers inside. Those 15 polymers can feed on themselves and exponentially increase 16 pressure and basically pop open the car if the PRD operates and 17 then stops.

So we looked very closely at the timeline between the 18 19 operating of the PRDs -- and I have my directions all messed up on 20 this incident for some reason. So there were four cars to the 21 west and there was one car to the east end. So we're watching the 22 lazy fires on the two cars to the west end and they were 23 operating -- I'm being told they were operating about every two 24 minutes for about 30 seconds. They relieve pressure, they reseat 25 (ph.), everything keep on going. They'd relieve pressure, they'd

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1 reseat, and then keep on going.

2	And then I think, I think the timing was somewhere around six
3	hours the one that was cycling really, really well stopped
4	cycling. Some people think, hey, that's a really good sign.
5	Because nothing was done, the car wasn't in the clear, there
6	wasn't massive amounts of water applied, to a train response
7	manager that indicates that we've got problems. We could
8	seriously have a plugged PRD. When the PRD went off for 70
9	minutes, the response managers, Mr. Wood and Dave Schoendorfer,
10	both said we need some more help because this was becoming a lot
11	bigger incident.

12 So with that being said, we knew we were forming polymer --13 we believed we were forming polymer in the cars, so the decision 14 was made to at least seriously entertain the idea, look at the 15 idea of venting and burning the VCM cars. The car to the -- the 16 individual car to the east, the single car to the east, was -- we 17 went in several times taking pressures, taking temperatures, doing 18 assessments. We found that the temperature in the eastern car, 19 because the jacket was well -- pretty well removed in a couple 20 areas, they could get contact thermometer temperatures of the 21 shell of the car and it was in the 100- to 130-degree range both 22 on the heads and the side. The temperature, at times, seemed to 23 be going up; at other times it was -- seemed like it was just kind 24 of maintaining.

25

So that led some discussion thinking that there's a

possibility that the hot ground was actually being absorbed by the car. That's why it was in the 130 range and not much, much higher. We still had some ground fires around that car, some product fires on the back side of a hopper car, and we were, you know, considering or thinking about possibly the plastic pellets, PVC resin, whatever was in that covered hopper car, was acting as a heat (indiscernible) transferring heat to the tank car.

8 There was some pretty short discussions but it happened 9 multiple times about could the individual car on the east end of 10 the derailment actually be empty or almost empty? Because the 11 fire had gone out I believe -- I don't know the exact time, but I 12 believe it had been out for probably around 12 to 18 hours. There 13 had been no fire in the protective housing.

14 The crew went up on -- one of the assessment crews went up on the covered hopper car, got within a few feet of the protective 15 16 housing with a photo ionization device, and they were getting elevated readings of VOCs. If I remember correctly, it was around 17 18 135 ppm of VOCs, which could have been almost anything because of 19 the acrylates and other organic materials that had been spilled 20 and burned, but 135. They couldn't hear any hissing or whistling, 21 but they did observe a lot of damage to the protective housing of 22 that individual car.

23 So we were starting to get into Monday night. You know, 24 crews were getting tired. So some of the fires in the plastic 25 pellet cars were dying down on the west end, so the decision was

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1 made to start getting -- working through incident command, get 2 approval to start bringing some heavy equipment in to start pulling, you know, the covered hopper cars off the west end, get 3 4 them into the clear so we could possibly upright and move one of 5 the VCM cars, the first car in line -- I don't know which car that 6 was -- the first one that was pretty much still perpendicular to 7 the tracks that we had been taking pressure readings on. We felt 8 that car was fairly stable, so we worked closely with the wrecking contractor, pulled the, pulled the plastic pellet cars into the 9 10 clear, and we were sent to bed because it was getting, it was 11 getting late and we had been up in PPE for an extended period of 12 time. So the plan was we gave a good safety briefing to the 13 wrecking operations crews to clear the plastic pellet cars and, if 14 possible, upright and clear the first VCM car that is still 15 perpendicular to the tracks. So the -- we were sent to bed. 16 I got a phone call several hours later and they said that the 17 car, the first VCM car, was -- which they couldn't move it because of -- they couldn't move that car because of damage to the bolster 18 19 assemblies on both sides of the car, so they chose to leave that 20 car in place for the next phase of the operation. 21 Previous to actually starting the train wrecking operation,

21 We had several meetings with incident command and we, as a -- I 23 guess if you want to call us a technical group -- myself, Drew 24 McCarty (ph.), Robert Wood, and several other folks agreed to then 25 burn what was going to be the chosen method for taking care of

1 these VCM cars because of the (indiscernible) nature of the 2 product and the reason -- and the PRDs had operated but had since 3 ceased operations.

So the phone call was made to Explosive Service International in Baton Rouge. They had been notified early on in the incident that it was going down and there was a possibility they were going to be needed. So the call was placed to Jason Poe (ph.) and he started gathering his supplies, and we planned on five cars additionally. He brought enough material for -- to make six cars if we had to or if we had a shot go bad.

11 So overnight they couldn't move the VCM car that was at 60 12 psi, so the decision was made to go ahead and take them all out at the exact same time, take out the five VCM cars, and then there 13 14 was a lot of dirt work, a lot of prep work for ground to contain 15 the total volume of liquid in all five cars. The western cars we 16 had a pit that was about -- I think we measured it, figured it 17 about 158,000 gallons capacity. And the eastern car we channeled it -- the product flow away from the car because there was 18 19 isobutylene car in somewhat close proximity. So we channeled it 20 to the drainage ditch and along the north edge of the derailment 21 and prepared for the vent and burn operation.

I'm going to hold right there because you probably have questions.

Q. So just to clarify, what day did the vent and burn actually happen?

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A. Vent and burn, if my memory is correct, I believe it was
 Monday. We got there on Saturday night, Sunday for prep, and the
 vent and burn occurred, I believe, on Monday.

Q. Okay. So can we go into the discussion that led up to the
vent and burn? Were there other options aside from the, from the
vent and burn that were discussed?

7 So vent and burn is the final option. All the training Α. classes that I put on, that Explosive Service International puts 8 9 on, SCRTC (ph.) out at Pueblo puts on, vent and burn is the last 10 option. So there's basically re-rail, transfer, hot tap, followed 11 by vent and burn. Those are, kind of, the four top. You can 12 break each one of those down into individuals and stuff like that. 13 But vent and burn is not something we, as a response community, a 14 contractor community or HAZMAT specialist group, go at lightly. 15 It is literally the final option. We have no other options. 16 There's -- we've tried everything else and we can't. When you 17 look at a risk-based management structure, the risk that we were 18 going to expose was just to step back one step from the, from the 19 vent and burn; the hot tap.

The hot tap operation was underway. They were planned, cocked, locked, and ready to go do the work when the PRD of the -- of one of -- of the one car went off for 70 minutes. They were planning on, they had the equipment on site, they had the personnel on site. I heard Drew talking to his welder several times during our assessment going, hey, just stand by; we may

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1 still do this, we may still do this.

2	So transfer, we could have transferred it. Yeah, not a
3	problem. Transfer is one of the first options. Obviously, we
4	couldn't re-rail it because they were very heat-damaged. We had
5	two cars that were we had active lazy fires in the protective
6	housing. We had one that had a fire and went out. So now you
7	start you look at that and you go, okay, all the valves and
8	fittings, gaskets on those cars are heat-damaged, so we're not
9	going to be able to seal this stuff up. We're not going to be
10	able to seal up and facilitate a transfer.
11	VCM is a compressed flammable gas. A compressed flammable
12	gas this type of compressed flammable gas you can transfer by
13	pump, but the boiling point is so low that you're flashing at the
14	same time you're pumping, and you get a very, very slow transfer,
15	if at all. If everything was burned out in the protective
16	housing, there's no way you could actually have any kind of
17	pressure inside that car, so transfer is kicked out.
18	Another part of the transfer because you've got to have a
19	place to go with that material, transfer it into another vessel.
20	Now you have a un-stabilized material that you're going to put on
21	the road, on the railroad, and ship to another facility. Nobody's
22	going to take a potentially reactive, un-stabilized material, so
23	transfer is literally out the window.
24	Hot tap, hot tap is a transfer to a or pump to an open
25	pit. Great, fine and dandy. Great thought process. Let's go
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1 through the steps: You've got to get down very, very low in the 2 liquid phase. These cars have been exposed to lots and lots of heat for extended periods of time. We have active fires inside 3 4 the protective housing of a couple of the cars. We don't know 5 where the liquid level is in the car. So now we have to dig into 6 the ground, create an almost-confined space to allow the welder to 7 weld a fitting on the bottom of the car to allow us to tap through to the inside and have an operational valve on the bottom of the 8 9 car at the lowest point. The volume of fire water, the volume of 10 flammable liquids that were released, we don't know what's there. 11 We -- if we don't have a fire at the west end and dig a hole, 12 throw somebody down in there to start welding, he strikes an arc 13 (ph.) and could light up the whole -- relight the entire 14 derailment site. We have running fires up and down the ballast rock while we're walking around doing our assessment. 15 16 So now hot tap -- and one of the last steps of hot tap is 17 once you break through -- let's just say we're in the liquid phase. You break through that car, we don't know what's on the 18 19 back side. Are we into polymer? Are we into something that's 20 going to be just like plastic? Is that going to plug the hole 21 bringing liquid out? Or are we going to get the hot tap machine 22 closed or caught inside with the polymer inside the car where we 23 couldn't break it loose? Now we have to put it -- make another 24 All these steps, the risk is too great to individuals. hot tap. 25 Now we've been through transfers -- or re-railing. We've been

1	through transfers. We've been through hot tapping. Now we're
2	literally at the final step which is a vent and burn.
3	Nobody in all the people that were on site wanted to do it,
4	but we all knew based off experience that this was, this was the
5	last step. This was the we had no other options available to
6	us.
7	Q. Okay. Well, I appreciate that information. So how many cars
8	were in question as far as the heat rising out of the VCM cars?
9	Were they all in question or was it
10	A. The heat?
11	Q. Um-hmm.
12	A. Go ahead. I started to answer before you were finished the
13	question.
14	Q. So out of the VCM cars so let me ask let me kind of
15	rephrase this a little bit. Out of the five VCM cars, let's
16	start: Were they all venting from the PRDs?
17	A. I do not know if the PRDs operated on the two westernmost
18	cars initially. Once the operation was done, we had the cars in
19	the clear and we were actually able to get up and spend time on
20	all five of the cars. Yes, all the PRDs operated at some time.
21	The cars that were laid over on their side with the protective
22	housing down at the 2, 3, 4, 5 o'clock position, they all showed
23	evidence of the PRDs operating. The ones that we know that they
24	were laid over and the PRDs operated in the liquid phase, there
25	was a lot more heat damage to those cars than there was the cars
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1 that were still somewhat upright like the easternmost cars. 2 So the -- we looked at the car that we knew had 60 psi on it, 3 on the west end, the first one that we seriously considered 4 getting into the clear so we only had to take out four cars rather 5 than five, after looking at the heat signature on the car, the heat damage to that car, just based on risk, we didn't feel 6 7 comfortable saying we're going to take out these four and we'll 8 transfer this one, because there -- again, you're with a -- you've 9 got materials that if exposed to extremely high heat and based on 10 experience and based on training that we continuously do with 11 people in the monomer and polymer business, you've got PRDs 12 operating that are -- you've got material that is -- has been 13 exposed to elevated heat, so the potential for forming polymers is 14 greatly enhanced, if you will, so the decision was made that based 15 on damage we're not going to be able to ship this stuff down the 16 road so we might as well just -- we might as well, based on a risk 17 management scenario, vent and burn all five cars at one time. Do you know what the highest reading was on the 18 Okay. Ο. 19 temperature readings when you were -- the car -- the highest 20 reading on any of the cars? 21 There were a lot of different heat guns used, temperature Α. 22 guns used. We were never able to put a thermometer, a drop-in 23 thermometer down the thermometer well of any of those cars. 24 The -- we did a pretty detailed assessment of all of the -- all 25 the SRS guys, Drew's initial response team, and one other FREE STATE REPORTING, INC. Court Reporting Transcription

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1 gentleman from another response organization, we all went in at 2 different times to gather that information so that the highest 3 temperature I remember was somewhere in the 140-, 150-degree range 4 on the easternmost car. That temperature, over time, the first 5 night, was actually starting to go down, but it also started to 6 come back up the closer you got to the bottom, so it was still 7 absorbing heat from the, from the ground and from the covered 8 hopper car to the -- just west of it. So I believe either an SPSI or incident command actually may 9 10 have the temperature readings, because I know it was -- that 11 information was gathered. But 140, 150 was the highest I remember 12 hearing. 13 Okay. That was going to be one of my questions, if there is Ο. 14 a record or timeline somewhere of the temperature readings or 15 thermal imaging, if someone has it. Do you happen to have a copy 16 of those? 17 Α. I do not. 18 MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay. All right. So let's open it up for 19 some questions, if we could. Let's start with Paul Stancil. BY MR. STANCIL: 20 21 Okay, sir, thank you very much for that detailed narrative as Ο. 22 to what you observed out there. I do have a couple more follow-up 23 questions about these VCM cars. First of all, when you say east 24 versus west cars, you mentioned the car that had the highest 25 temperature was in the eastern car or the western car? FREE STATE REPORTING, INC. Court Reporting Transcription D.C. Area 301-261-1902

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1	A. The highest temperature that I remember hearing was on the
2	eastern car, the individual car, which is what we called car 5.
3	Q. Okay. So is that the east-west? So is west the direction
4	that the train was traveling or east the direction the train was
5	traveling? Do you know?
6	A. I can tell you that the one closest to the blue building, the
7	individual car closest to the blue building or Brave (ph.)
8	Industries was what we considered the fifth car. The two covered
9	hopper cars followed by four VCM cars is what I am considering
10	that was right behind Leake Oil. That is the western car.
11	Q. Okay, okay. So for you, west was
12	A. If I'm, if I'm turned
13	Q. For you, west is the head of the train and east is the rear
14	of the train, correct?
15	A. Sure. I really don't know. I don't I know that north
16	side of the tracks if you're, if you're standing on Leake Oil
17	property looking at the derailment, directly across from you is
18	north. If you're on if you're at Leake Oil, you're on the
19	south side of the tracks. To the right would be what I'd consider
20	the west, and to the left would be considered east.
21	Q. Okay. I'm not sure, but I
22	A. I've been screwed, I've been screwed up this entire
23	derailment on east and west.
24	Q. Okay. So when you're talking about the single car to itself,
25	that's the number 5 car, the fifth one, the fifth vinyl chloride
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1 car back in the derailment, correct?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay. I think we understand the meaning there. Some of us
4 are calling that the west side, but we'll continue with your
5 direction there for the purpose of this conversation.

6 When you -- you mentioned you did a damage assessment of the 7 vinyl chloride cars. Can you tell us a little bit more about that? What exactly did you look at and what did you see? 8 9 Α. Well, the assessment was the condition of the protective 10 housing because, you know, that would be our only way of getting 11 access to the product, and two of the five cars were still 12 actively burning. That was on the -- that was the pile of four. 13 The individual car that was still parallel with the tracks hooked 14 up to the -- or in close proximity to the two covered hopper cars 15 was -- the protective housing was in -- it was in okay condition 16 if it allowed us to install -- allowed SPSI to install a 17 (indiscernible) and pressure gauge to be able to monitor internal pressure. And then the pressure, if my memory is correct, 18 19 internal pressure was somewhere in the 60 psi range. It may have 20 gotten up, you know, up into the 65, almost 70, but I remember the 21 60 psi range.

We were looking at -- obviously looking for jacket damage to get temperatures to the -- of the shell, and several cars had some decent-sized rips that we could pull insulation back and get up against the shell. There weren't a lot of -- it didn't appear to

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be a lot of dents, scores and gouges. Dents, yes. 1 Scores and 2 gouges, not as much. But just the heat effect, the flame impingement, if you will, to those tanks was significant. 3 There 4 was some dents where the -- in between the second and third VCM 5 cars there was a pretty good V pattern, so we got a good, broadside view of what we would -- I would consider car number 2 6 7 and 3. There was some significant denting around the bolster 8 The bolsters of pretty much all the cars were twisted assembly. 9 or bent away, so wrecking operations were going to be hampered 10 considerably if we were going to try to move those cars 11 whatsoever.

12 One of the other concerns that led us to finally choosing the 13 final option was just wrecking operations in general. It's not, 14 it's not finite. It's not gentle and easy, no matter how much 15 emphasis you put on equipment operators. You can't move cars that 16 way very easily. So had we had -- we would have had to have 17 rolled several of these cars a considerable amount, twisted them 18 to get them off the pile. The derailment occurred with, you know, 19 a decent amount of force, so there was a lot of compression and 20 the cars were going to have to be forced apart pretty hard. So 21 that, coupled with the existing damage to the protective housings, 22 just the twisting action, we could have -- you know, had we -- we 23 know we had at least two cars that were somewhat whole but they 24 were heat impinged, heat damaged, which could have created a lot 25 of issue if we had twisted something and sprung a leak and had all

those ignition sources of heavy equipment and personnel exposure
 in the, in the immediate area.

3	So we did the did as detailed a damage assessment as we
4	possibly could moving, you know, ballast rocks and stuff like that
5	to get up close and personal to the to all these cars. And we
б	found that the damage was pretty severe and but not so severe
7	had it been a non-polymerizable (ph.) product, we may have chosen
8	to go a different direction. But based on the assessment and the
9	product itself, we all agreed and felt that vent and burn was the
10	correct choice.
11	Q. Okay. When you talked about the car that had the 70-minute
12	PRD release, first of all, what day was that?
13	A. I believe the PRD operated for 70 minutes on Saturday.
14	Q. And after that it closed and did not reopen; is that correct?
15	A. It closed. It did not reopen even though there continued to
16	be a (indiscernible) in the protective housing.
17	Q. Okay. And do you remember which car that was? Was it the
18	first, second, third, fourth, fifth car?
19	A. I don't I think it was the two cars that were on fire was
20	3 and 4. No, hang on. Yeah, 3 and 4.
21	Q. Okay. Which one was it; do you remember?
22	A. Which one? We had fire in the protective housing of both 3
23	and 4.
24	Q. Okay. Which one vented for 70 minutes? Was it 3 or 4?
25	A. I believe it was 3.
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Q. And then regarding the VCM cars, was there any evidence of
 breaching damage other than the PRD releases?

3 A. Ask that question again?

Q. Regarding the vinyl chloride cars, was there any evidence of breaching damage to the car? Were there any leaks or releases of material other than through the pressure relief device?

7 A. Not that I noticed, no, sir.

8 What was burning around those cars? You mentioned Ο. Okay. that they were exposed to fire. What was the source of that fire? 9 10 Well, everything wooden, plastic pellets, railroad cross Α. 11 ties, flammable liquids that were released, I'm guessing the butyl 12 acrylate, the ethylhexyl acrylate, because we continuously had 13 ignition shooting back and forth in the ballast rock going through 14 the derailment site while we were setting up for the operation. 15 Okay. With regard to the other tank cars and other materials Ο. 16 on side, did you do an assessment as to what was breached? 17 We did. We -- because of us thinking that the vent and burn Α. 18 was the option we were going to have to go with to handle the VCM, 19 we went through and did as good a detailed assessment as we 20 possibly could of everything around it, and that's when we found 21 the breaches in the ethylhexyl acrylate car, the butyl acrylate 22 car. We had a continuous fire from I believe it was the luboil 23 (ph.) car. I don't know that for a fact. There was just, you 24 know, a pile of cars and there was still some active fires, some 25 of the -- possibly the glycols in some of that area between the

1	fifth VCM car, the plastic pellet car, and the isobutylene car, in
2	that general vicinity. In the center of the tracks there were,
3	there were still some active fires from released commodities.
4	Q. Did you record any of that information anywhere?
5	A. Record? No, I did not. I'm pretty positive the information
6	that was gathered of the assessment I didn't keep track of notes,
7	but I believe SPSI would have some of those notes.
8	Q. Okay. Tell us
9	A. But I don't know that for fact.
10	Q. Tell us a little bit how you worked with SPSI. What were the
11	two roles and how did you interact with them?
12	A. Oh, we worked I mean, you couldn't tell where one ended
13	and the other started. We were you know, we're professional
14	contractors. We're friends. And we're fierce competitors until
15	you have a major incident and then we work very, very well
16	together. Our crews work together and we train together at
17	different times of the year at different training events across
18	the country. So we do you never know where one ends and the
19	other begins because of that. So we work very, very well.
20	Everybody had a say in the, in the direction. Drew was in charge
21	of the SPSI guys. Myself and my one of my coworkers, Terry
22	Rockwell, we swapped back and forth. There were times that Terry
23	went in, there was times that I went in, and whenever we decided
24	that there was an operation needed to occur, we took what we
25	considered at the time the best of the best, whether it was from
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	27
1	SPSI or SRS to go in and address the whatever the task is.
2	Q. Okay. So from what I'm hearing, then, is you guys were
3	basically doing the same role out there, fulfilling the same need
4	for the railroad; is that correct?
5	A. We were working as a team. When something needed to be done,
6	we put together the best crew to be able to take care of it,
7	whether it was an SPSI crew, a SRS crew, or a combination thereof.
8	Q. Okay, understood. So with respect to the temperature
9	monitoring, who was actually doing that and how were they doing
10	it?
11	A. There was one person that was in charge of taking
12	temperatures and communicating back to a central person. When we
13	sent the when we did the last very detailed assessment and
14	temperatures, one crew went in to the individual car, car number
15	5, and did those cars. And then two other groups went in on what
16	I consider the west end and did two cars apiece. And each group
17	had an infrared temperature gun, laser pointer temperature gun,
18	and just called back and said, you know, this car number, this is
19	the temperature.
20	Q. Okay. So they were measuring the temperature of the shell,
21	the exposed shell where the jackets were torn; is that right?
22	A. That is correct, yeah. None of the temperatures that were
23	taken that were relayed were from a jacket. It would have been
24	bolstered up against the shell of a car or a ripped-open part of
25	the jacket so we could get to the shell with the insulation
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1 removed.

2	Q. Okay. And who was that one person that was in charge of
3	keeping track of the temperatures?
4	A. I don't remember. There was a lot going on. I don't
5	remember who was copying that information down.
6	Q. Was it someone at SPSI or SRS?
7	A. Like I said, I do not remember. There was a lot going on. I
8	just know that we there were calls on the radio that, hey, this
9	is the temperature of this car. I don't remember where it went.
10	Q. So you all were communicating the temperatures via radio?
11	A. Or telephone, yes, sir.
12	Q. To whomever this one person was?
13	A. I do not know, sir.
14	Q. Okay. You personally weren't involved in that or were you?
15	A. I was involved, but I didn't I wasn't copying that
16	information.
17	Q. All right. So you mentioned there was evidence of
18	polymerization. If I understood you correct, it was because the
19	valve had stopped operating. Was how many of the cars would
20	you say had evidence that polymerization was occurring?
21	A. Okay. So before the vent and burn operation, there was
22	not the only (indiscernible). You have to understand the
23	chemistry side of VCM and what we're taught in HAZMAT schools
24	that for people that are dealing with monomers and polymers.
25	So a very brief chemistry class, basically styrene monomer, vinyl
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1 chloride, butadiene, they all have either on the side of the car 2 either inhibited or stabilized, which basically means the exact They're -- the inhibitor prevents any kind of runaway 3 same thing. 4 reaction from occurring. Once the cars get to -- once the product gets to an end user, that inhibitor is taken away, it's taken out, 5 6 to allow it to become a, become a material that, when added to 7 catalysts, when added to having pressure or temperature increased, 8 will make something else like vinyl chloride is used to make PVC, 9 PVC resin.

10 From the early days of me going to the HAZMAT schools, they 11 always said -- the instructors have always preached that the 12 inhibitor can go away. You never know where it goes; it just goes 13 away with pressure, with heat, and when in contact with a catalyst 14 will do it in a lot faster rate. So you learn that. You get it 15 beat into your head enough times you finally start believing that 16 that -- any time you're dealing with a monomer or a polymer 17 material, you can have a reaction, a runaway reaction, 18 polymerization, if you have excessive heat and pressure applied to 19 So we learned it early on and we still live by it. it. And 20 anybody that goes to HAZMAT schools for these materials will 21 agree.

So based on what we were seeing, excessive heat, high temperatures, unable to get good pressures on the cars, we had to make a judgment call that a reaction, a polymerization potential was extremely elevated. So that was the decision that was made

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1 based on those facts.

2	Q. Okay. Have there been any other incidents that you've been
3	involved in where a vent and burn was necessary on a monomer?
4	A. We've done a lot of we've done a lot I've worked with
5	ESI a lot on different products. There's materials, acrylic acid,
6	it is a polymerizable material. We vent and burned that at
7	Eunice, Louisiana. We've done butadiene cars. We've had runaway
8	reactions in cars. We've had runaway reactions in plants. The
9	cause of the plant explosion in Fort Neches, Texas, just before
10	Thanksgiving 2019, was a butadiene plant that had a runaway
11	polymerization forming polymer in the plant, in the plant. So
12	that was not a, not a vent and burn operation. That plant just
13	blew up.
14	Q. Any other incidents that come to mind?
15	A. Those are the ones that are fresh to my mind.
16	Q. Okay, all right. Just shift gears just a little bit.
17	A. Oh, let me hang on, hang on, hang on just one second.
18	Shepherdsville, Kentucky. We didn't vent and burn but we liquid
19	flared four or five butadiene cars on the CSX because that was a
20	polymerizable material.
21	Q. Okay. The difference there was? What was the difference
22	there that it made those available for vent and you said, I'm
23	sorry, you said flaring?
24	A. We flared those two. We liquid flared those. And the reason
25	we chose to liquid flare those cars was we had, we had fire we
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1	had heat on the cars but the protective housings were at the 12
2	o'clock position and they were in excellent shape.
3	Q. Okay, very good. Just to shift gears a little bit. You
4	mentioned that you had some chemical to neutralize the acrylates
5	ordered and was brought to Washington, PA. Was that ever used?
6	And how did that work out?
7	A. The acronyl (ph.) was brought to Washington and we have since
8	started using it. We got it in scrubbers. They're on site. I
9	don't there was there's a plan after we got released to come
10	home to do some testing to see if they could kill some of the
11	odor, but initially the because of the caustic nature of the
12	material, it was used for odor control and scrubbing of some of
13	the, some of the pick-up points where water wastewater is being
14	recovered.
15	Q. Oh, I see. So this wouldn't be something that would have
16	been used during the fire or the initial response?
17	A. No, that would not have been used for the fire.
18	MR. STANCIL: Okay. Well, that's all I have. Appreciate it.
19	Appreciate it very much, sir.
20	And I'm going to pass it on to the next person here.
21	MR. DOUGHERTY: Let's pass it off to Chief Carey, please.
22	You're muted, Chief.
23	BY MR. CAREY:
24	Q. How you doing, Chip?
25	A. I'm doing good, sir. How about you?
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- Q. Good. It was nice to meet you last week at the site.
   2 Appreciate all your help that day.
- 3 A. Not a problem, sir.

4 Q. And thank you, thank you for your service.

5 So, yeah, nice description of the whole monomer/polymer 6 thing. I used to teach chemistry HAZMAT at the National Fire 7 Academy. I don't know if you ever took that class. Maybe we 8 crossed paths. I don't know.

But anyways, so just a couple of questions. Actually, I had 9 10 a bunch of notes I was taking. Very nice description of the 11 incident and the tactics and operations. Paul actually hit on a 12 lot of things I was going to ask, so I crossed them out, but just 13 a few things. What was the -- you said -- you mentioned the use 14 of PPE when they were going in with the, with the meters and stuff 15 like that. What kind of PPE were you guys dressed in? 16 We were in -- let's see. We were in basically bunker gear. Α. 17 Some people were in SCBAs. Other people were in full-face 18 respirators.

19 Okay, 10-4. And the -- as far as the assessments that were Q. 20 done and things like that, and you talked about getting pressure 21 readings on the cars, can you just kind of walk us through that 22 briefly as far as how many cars they were able to get pressure 23 readings from and what was the actual method they used to do that? 24 There were only pressures -- pressure taken on the Α. 25 isobutylene car and the first VCM car to the west end. There was

	33
1	a stub (ph.) out. We call them stub outs. Basically, a piece of
2	pipe, two by one, reducing (indiscernible) piece of pipe.
3	Q. Yeah.
4	A. Teed off. Gauge goes one direction, a block valve goes on
5	the opposite direction.
6	Q. Right.
7	A. So you can hook it up, open the valve, take your pressure
8	reading, close the car valve off, and then bleed the pressure
9	through your block valve on the outside. So basically it's a T-
10	assembly stub out.
11	Q. Yeah. And where on the car was that placed?
12	A. On the isobutylene car it was put on the vapor valve. On
13	the actually, on both cars, both the isobutylene car and the
14	one VCM car it was put on the vapor valve because of
15	Q. Okay, and
16	A heat damage excuse me.
17	Q. Yeah. So the, so the damage on the other cars, on the other
18	VCM cars negated the ability to be able to do that on them, right?
19	A. That is correct. We had three of the cars had impinging
20	fire. The fourth or the third car, the third car we had we
21	put the pressure gauge on. Excuse me, the third car I believe the
22	protective housing was buried to a point we couldn't get the
23	they couldn't get the lid open. And the last VCM car is the one
24	they put the pressure gauge on. We considered that the
25	(indiscernible).
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FREE STATE REPORTING, INC. Court Reporting Transcription D.C. Area 301-261-1902 Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947 Q. 10-4, okay. Excellent, great. And who actually was moving the tank cars? You talked about making a decision early on to get some of the other cars out of the way, maybe some of the hopper cars and things like that. Who actually moved those cars and who dug the trench and the containment area where the material was burned off?

7 A. So the east end of the derailment they had three wrecking 8 contractors on site. They had Holcher Services, Crane Masters, 9 and Corman (ph.). Those are the three big ones. Crane Masters 10 and Holcher was set up on the west end and -- hang with me just 11 one second. Traffic is getting a little to be a pain in the 12 posterior here. Excuse me just one second.

13 So Holcher and Crane Masters were on the west end. Corman 14 was on the east end. Crane Masters pulled the plastic pellet cars 15 out because they had the right type of equipment, the cranes, to 16 pull that -- move those cars. And then Holcher was going to be 17 the ones that were assigned the operation of moving the VCM car if 18 it was feasible. And then both contractors, both Holcher and 19 Corman, actually built the containment areas for the vent and burn 20 operation.

Q. 10-4, good. I don't think I have any other questions for you, Chip. Appreciate everything you've done and appreciate your being here today and giving us all this information.

24 A. No problem.

25 MR. DOUGHERTY: All right, great.

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MR. DAY: Hey, and thank you for your service. 1 2 MR. DOUGHERTY: All right. If we could move on to 3 Mr. Heidkamp? 4 MR. HEIDKAMP: Chip, thanks for walking us through. That was a very valuable description. I don't have any questions --5 6 additional questions. 7 MR. DOUGHERTY: All right, Mr. Keltz? BY MR. KELTZ: 8 9 0. Yeah, hi, Chip. It's Randy. Hey, yeah, thanks for the 10 assist out on site there last week. I think it was last week. Ι 11 don't even know what day it is anymore. And, yeah, for the 12 description. Yeah, we were reviewing some of the footage while we 13 were on site together there in the fire hall. So, yeah, thanks 14 for all the effort and working with Drew and the crew. 15 So, yeah, Paul's going to make my job easy. I only have the 16 one question because Paul -- he must have been reading everybody's 17 mind this morning. But early on you mentioned the single car, the 18 car that was up against the hopper, that there was damage to that 19 protective housing. Do you recall what that damage was to that 20 protective housing? And was that protective housing opened or was 21 it in a closed -- was it enclosed when this observation was made? 22 What's your, what's your intel on this? 23 The protective housing of the individual car --Α. 24 Something's going on. Can I put, can I put you on MR. DAY: 25 hold for just one second? I've got to take a phone call. I have FREE STATE REPORTING, INC. Court Reporting Transcription D.C. Area 301-261-1902 Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

	36
1	to.
2	MR. DOUGHERTY: Sure.
3	MR. DAY: It's my wonderful wife.
4	MR. DOUGHERTY: No problem.
5	MR. DAY: Can you guys hang on just one second?
6	MR. DOUGHERTY: Sure, go ahead.
7	(Pause)
8	MR. DAY: Okay, I'm back.
9	MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay.
10	MR. DAY: Life is good again.
11	MR. DOUGHERTY: Appreciate it.
12	MR. DAY: And if you could ask that question one more time,
13	I'll answer it.
14	BY MR. KELTZ:
15	Q. Yeah. The I guess it's car number 5 as you're referring
16	to it, the single car that was up against the hopper car, you
17	mentioned early on in your description that there was some damage
18	observed to that protective housing. What type of damage was that
19	and was that do you know if that protective housing cover was
20	opened or was it in a closed position when that damage was
21	observed?
22	A. I do not know. I don't remember the condition of the
23	protective housing. But I do know that there was excessive heat
24	to that car and that we had elevated VCM or, excuse me,
25	elevated VOC readings when the crew climbed on top of the plastic
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		37
1	pelle	et car and walked down to within a few feet of the protective
2	hous	ing because the fire had observed in that protective housing
3	but t	the fire had gone out.
4	Q.	Okay. Do you know if that housing cover was open or closed?
5	Α.	I do not know that for a fact.
6	Q.	Okay, all right. Yeah, that's all I had. And again, thanks
7	for,	thanks for everything.
8	А.	Not a problem, sir.
9		MR. DOUGHERTY: All right, Mr. Lawler?
10		BY MR. LAWLER:
11	Q.	I've just got one question. The thermal imaging that you
12	were	using, was that, like, a flare gun? And does that
13	A.	We had
14	Q.	Does that model have recording slash history capabilities?
15	A.	We had, we had several different kinds of temperature guns,
16	lase	r pointer-style and contact. I did I never saw a Tic (ph.)
17	or a	Fleer (ph.) type gun used on any of the entries for the
18	asses	ssment.
19	Q.	All right. Appreciate your efforts. Thanks.
20	A.	No problem.
21		MR. DOUGHERTY: Any additional questions for Mr. Day?
22		MR. STANCIL: Yeah, Paul Stancil here once again.
23		BY MR. STANCIL:
24	Q.	Yes, Chip, thank you so much again. That's been some
25	exce	llent information that's been conveyed here. And just to
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1 follow up with what Ron asked, were any of those instruments that 2 were used to monitor temperature, was any of that data recorded at 3 all on the instrument itself?

4 A. I'm talking away and you guys are not making any, not making5 any noise.

6 Hey, so none of the instruments that we used have recording 7 capabilities. They're just the standard go to Home Depot type 8 temperature guns with a laser pointer that have really good 9 accuracy as long as you're within 3 feet of the source. 10 Okay, very good. Well, thank you, sir. That's all the Ο. 11 questions I have, Mr. Day. Thank you very much again. 12 No problem. Α.

MR. DOUGHERTY: All right, great. So we've gone over, obviously, a lot of information today, a lot of questions. I appreciate your time and everything that you've given us.

So just one final question for you. Is there anything that we didn't ask today or any additional information that you may have that you could give us that would be helpful in our

19 investigation?

20 MR. DAY: No, not really. I think -- I mean, the facts are 21 the facts, and the good part about it is you've got some of the 22 best folks, the NS sent some of the best folks to the site to help 23 get this thing resolved. And, you know, if you guys have 24 questions while you're doing this investigation, you know, feel 25 free to reach out and say, hey, what about this? What about this?

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1	Because, you know, we've seen, we've seen a lot of, a lot of
2	stuff. Then you guys walking around looking at all of those cars,
3	looking at the vent and burn holes that were blown in, you took
4	some, you know, thickness measurements. I'd like to know, you
5	know, what kind of thickness we had. I never heard that because I
6	was too busy doing other things trying to take care of you guys
7	while you were there, but, you know, I'd like to read the final
8	report and figure out, you know, is there a way to make these cars
9	safer? Because I think that the cars did their job and it's the
10	product that we had concerns with. It wasn't so much the car.
11	MR. DOUGHERTY: Yeah, absolutely. And, yeah, the information
12	will be available once the final report comes out here sometime in
13	the future, and so I appreciate it.
14	And likewise, if you can think of anything throughout the
15	course of the investigation or you happen to have a question or
16	have any additional information for us that would help us out,
17	feel free to reach out.
18	And thanks again for your time. Go ahead.
19	MR. DAY: No, I was going to say thanks. You know, you guys
20	be careful and let me know if there's anything else you need.
21	MR. DOUGHERTY: Yeah, absolutely. And this will terminate
22	the interview. And I will stop recording. The time is 11:18 a.m.
23	(Whereupon, at 11:18 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
24	
25	
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#### CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

#### NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN DERAILMENT IN EAST PALESTINE, OHIO ON FEBRUARY 3, 2023 Interview of Chip Day

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD23MR005

PLACE: via Microsoft Teams

DATE: March 1, 2023

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

> Angie Duray Transcriber

0

**National Transportation Safety Board** 

Washington, D.C. 20594

## **Transcript Errata**

### TABLE OF CORRECTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH: Charles "Chip" Day RECORDED ON March 1, 2023

		RECORDED ON Warch	
PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
6	17	(indiscernible)	emergency
7	4	Holcher	Hulcher
8	18	Farcar	Farquhar
9	1	(indiscernible)	involved
12	7	(indiscernible)	Heat sink
15	9	SCRTC	SERTC
20	25	Eastern car	Western car
20	25	Western car	Eastern car
21	10	Western car	Eastern car
22	17	(indiscernible)	Stub out
24	16	(indiscernible)	Lazy fire
25	22	luboil	Lube oil
27	16	West	East
30	9	Fort	Port
31	7	acronyl	Acronel
32	25	west	east

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEED.

Initials

Printed Name of Rerson providing the above information

Signature of Person providing the above information

Date



National Transportation Safety Board Washington, D.C. 20594

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		CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CORRENT WORDING	
33	2	(indiscernible)	bushing
33	25	(indiscernible)	West car
34	8	Holcher	Hulcher
34	10	Holcher	Hulcher
34	10	West end	East end
34	13	Holcher	Hulcher
34	14	east	west
34	16	Holcher	Hulcher
34	18	Holcher	Hulcher
37	17	Fleer	FLIR

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEED.

Initials

Printed Name of Person providing the above information

Signature of Person providing the above information

Date