



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

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>EXHIBIT</b>	
9	

Agency / Organization

**NTSB**

Title

**Interview Transcript – Rick Gorby, Deputy  
Chief, East Palestine Fire Department,  
February 28, 2023**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN DERAILMENT  
IN EAST PALESTINE, OHIO  
ON FEBRUARY 3, 2023

Accident No.: RRD23MR005

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Interview of: RICK GORBY, Deputy Chief  
East Palestine Fire Department

via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday,  
February 28, 2023

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 Chief  
International Association of Firefighters

TERRY HEIDKAMP, Vice President  
GATX Corporation

KEITH DRABICK, Fire Chief  
East Palestine Fire Department

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Rick Gorby:		
By Mr. Dougherty		5
By Mr. Stancil		13
By Mr. Carey		20

I N T E R V I E W

(11:01 a.m.)

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3 MR. DOUGHERTY: And good morning. Today is February 28th.  
4 Time is 11:01 a.m. It's a Microsoft Teams interview that is being  
5 conducted in connection, in connection with the Norfolk Southern  
6 Railway train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, on February 3rd,  
7 2023. The NTSB number is RRD23MR005. My name is Mark Dougherty,  
8 that's D-o-u-g-h-e-r-t-y, and I'm a Hazardous Materials Accident  
9 Investigator with the NTSB. This is an interview of Mr. Rick  
10 Gorby of the East Palestine Fire Department.

11 And we will now go around and do introductions. If you could  
12 state your name, spelling of your last name, and the company and  
13 position that you're with. Starting with Mr. Stancil?

14 MR. STANCIL: Yes, Paul Stancil, Senior Hazardous Materials  
15 Accident Investigator, NTSB. My last name is spelled S-t-a-n-c-i-  
16 l.

17 MR. DOUGHERTY: Chief Carey? You're on mute. Chief, you're  
18 on mute.

19 MR. CAREY: How's that?

20 MR. DOUGHERTY: That's better.

21 MR. CAREY: Good morning. My name is Paul Carey. Last name  
22 is C-a-r-e-y. I'm a retired Boston Fire Chief, and I'm here on  
23 behalf of the International Association of Firefighters.

24 MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay. Mr. Heidkamp?

25 MR. HEIDKAMP: Yeah, I'm Terry Heidkamp, Vice President, GATX

1 Corporation. My last name is spelled H-e-i-d-k-a-m-p.

2 MR. DOUGHERTY: Chief Drabick?

3 MR. DRABICK: Chief Keith Drabick, East Palestine Fire  
4 Department, K-e-i-t-h, D, as in Dog, r-a-b, as in Boy, i-c-k.

5 MR. DOUGHERTY: And, lastly, Mr. Gorby?

6 MR. GORBY: Rick Gorby, Deputy Chief, East Palestine Fire  
7 Chief -- Fire Department. Gorby, G-o-r-b-y.

8 MR. DOUGHERTY: All right, great. Thank you. So it's very  
9 important for the recording that we all speak loudly and clearly.

10 BY MR. DOUGHERTY:

11 Q. And, Mr. Gorby, are you aware that the interview is being  
12 recorded?

13 A. Yes, I am.

14 Q. Okay. If there's any question that is unclear or you don't  
15 understand the question, please ask the questioner to clarify or  
16 restate the question. And if you don't know the answer to any  
17 questions, it's okay to tell us that you don't know. We don't  
18 want you to speculate if you don't know the answer to the  
19 question.

20 The sole purpose of this investigation is to improve safety,  
21 not to assign fault, blame, or liability. Our mission is to  
22 improve transportation safety and prevent accidents. As such, the  
23 NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality, immunity from  
24 any legal proceeding by any other agency, whether it's state,  
25 local, or federal.

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

4 Okay, Mr. Gorby, first, thank you for agreeing to speak with  
5 us today. We appreciate any information you'll be able to give us  
6 today.

7 So if we could start off if you could tell us about your  
8 background and education and expertise?

9 A. Well, I've been on the East Palestine Fire Department for 30-  
10 plus years. Became Deputy Chief four years ago. Prior to that, I  
11 was the Assistant Chief for three years, so been an officer for  
12 about seven years now. Just been here a long time.

13 Q. Okay. How about any education?

14 A. Yes. Matter of fact, I just took a tabletop in East  
15 Liverpool, Ohio, for -- with --

16 MR. DRABICK: EMA?

17 MR. GORBY: EMA for train derailments. Didn't think I'd be  
18 using it.

19 BY MR. DOUGHERTY:

20 Q. Actually, so I guess while we're on that topic, would you  
21 mind explaining to us a little bit about that tabletop exercise  
22 and things that -- some takeaways and just anything you learned  
23 from that tabletop?

24 A. Well, the tabletop was a group of people, Highway Patrol,  
25 local, state, (indiscernible), and we split up in groups. I was

1 in logistics. And we -- they did a scenario of a train derailment  
2 down by the Ohio River. And then as groups we would have to try  
3 to figure out what we were doing. Like, my job was figuring  
4 getting trucks there with dirt, you know, dam any liquids running  
5 off, equipment, heavy equipment in; things of that nature. It was  
6 only a two-hour class.

7 Q. Okay. All right. And so what are your current duties?

8 A. Current duties are mainly just to assist the chief with  
9 anything that he needs me to do. If he's -- like right now, with  
10 this going on, I'm kind of manning the station while he's doing  
11 all his political stuff.

12 Q. Okay. And so who do you currently report to, just for  
13 reference.

14 A. Chief Drabick.

15 Q. Okay, perfect. Thank you for that. So if you could start us  
16 off and just walk us through the East Palestine train derailment  
17 from the time that you were called up and through the vent and  
18 burn process until today, to your best recollection.

19 A. Okay. I was, I was the only incident command until Chief  
20 Drabick got there roughly five and a half hours, and then he took  
21 over, and I just kind of got in his back pocket whenever -- went  
22 to wherever he went. So you want me to give you the five and a  
23 half hours or you want me to give you the whole scenario?

24 Q. Any and all information that you can give us from the time  
25 that you were incident commander up and even after -- as much as



1 you can recall.

2 A. Okay. Well, the call came in. I had my radio with me. I  
3 was in a neighboring town on the way back to East Palestine. This  
4 call came in as an engine fire. We have them -- had them in the  
5 past. No big deal. We go pull up. And I was about two minutes  
6 out, three minutes, and our first engine arrived and they called  
7 me on the phone and said -- asked me where I was. And I said,  
8 well, I'm on my way. What's up, you know. Well, we got some fire  
9 here. Well, I got there. We definitely had some fire. My wife,  
10 like, she dropped me off. I sent my wife on her way and I went  
11 down to walk down to the scene, and I started placing our ladder,  
12 our engine to put on as much water as we could. So while I'm  
13 there, the fire became much larger than I personally have ever  
14 seen.

15 So I started calling all my mutual aid for all the water  
16 because I knew the water source (indiscernible) in town isn't the  
17 best. We do have water but it's just not the best. I  
18 couldn't -- I knew I couldn't handle the volumes of water that we  
19 were going to need, so I started calling mutual aid.

20 So I set up a couple people down in -- there's some  
21 businesses right to the west of where them tankers were and, to  
22 me, from my position, looked like the fire was getting to them  
23 buildings. So Springfield Township was on their way, and they had  
24 their ladder and an engine and tanker. I had them set up down  
25 there in the building to try to protect that structure. Well, our

1 captain, he was on the north side of the tracks. He came down,  
2 and there's structures on that side. Him and a couple other  
3 departments, Perry Township and I think maybe Beaver Falls or  
4 Chippewa, they went to that side and they protected that. Well, I  
5 knew we weren't getting anywhere fast, so I started having  
6 dispatch call -- in so many words -- everybody and their brother  
7 who had a tanker to get water here and manpower.

8         So we fought that for a while and I had gave the command to  
9 Springfield Township for that -- them buildings down there to  
10 protect. And Assistant Chief now Foster, he handled the north  
11 side of the tracks. And then Lieutenant Minamyer (ph.) on our  
12 department got there a little bit later, like 15 minutes, 20  
13 minutes late. He got -- called me and said we have heavy fire at  
14 the Pleasant Crossing. So I put him down there in charge of that.  
15 And as the mutual aids were rolling in, I was trying to divide  
16 everybody up as best I could so everybody had a good amount of  
17 water. That was my concern: water and manpower. So that went on  
18 a while.

19         And then I called my chief and tried to explain that I was --  
20 told him what we had going on. Well, he was on his way home. And  
21 he asked me what's on the train. I said, well, we've been trying  
22 to look but all the placards were, you know, buried or twisted up.  
23 We couldn't read them. So I said two guys packed up everything,  
24 got a little bit closer to see if they could read anything. Well,  
25 they weren't down on the scene very long because -- I mean down by

1 them cars that long because, quite frankly, I didn't want them  
2 down there because didn't know what was burning. So they came  
3 back, and just then a Norfolk gentleman pulled in. So I went  
4 directly over to him. I said, what is on them tankers? Because  
5 your engine -- your engineer is not here with the manifest. I  
6 don't know what's on it.

7 Well, his first thing to me is: I don't know. Now, I  
8 happened to be on the chief -- on the phone with the chief. He  
9 said give me that damn phone. Get him on the damn phone and let  
10 me talk to him. Well, in about, I don't know, roughly 5, 10  
11 minutes later, we knew what was on that train. And we was already  
12 on the scene for a while and Norfolk told us to back up a little  
13 bit, you know, don't get, you know -- so we just used our ladder  
14 to get water out there as best we could. We used our deck gun and  
15 our manpower stayed back. So we fought it like that for a while.

16 I set up a command -- well, it started out too many chiefs  
17 setting up their own command center. I went up to it and there  
18 was -- it was just a cluster. So I walked away and I grabbed two  
19 other chiefs and we went and set our command center up like we  
20 should have. And I told them guys to shut down their command  
21 center because, quite frankly, I was the one in charge and I had  
22 two good guys with me to help me through, you know, if I was  
23 screwing up or missing something there to back me. And we set up  
24 a command center in a building out there by the site.

25 We went through the scenarios, what we were going to do, how

1 much more water. And I was still calling tankers. Quite frankly,  
2 I had a big response coming. And about -- I'm not sure about the  
3 time. So I want to say around 2:00 Norfolk says we have to  
4 evacuate the area. They said drop your equipment. Disconnect.  
5 Get your apparatuses out of there. You have to evacuate. Don't  
6 lose your apparatuses. So we backed, we backed out onto -- it's  
7 called Taggart Street. This is the main road that runs through  
8 there. And we kind of were lost there for a minute what to do.  
9 We evacuated. We got one hell -- I mean one heck of a fire going  
10 on.

11 But then we already knew what was burning, supposedly what  
12 was burning. Well, I didn't want any of my guys -- I didn't want  
13 no -- I didn't want any of the guys there. We weren't prepared  
14 for that kind of chemical. So we went to the Main Street Fire  
15 Department and we set up a command center.

16 Chief arrived. I have to admit I was very happy to see him.  
17 And he took over the scene and I basically -- wherever he went, I  
18 went. When he had meetings what was going on, I stood there to  
19 listen, make sure if he missed something I caught something. And  
20 through the rest until that morning I just followed him around and  
21 listened to whatever he listened to. I kind of just turned all  
22 the -- you know, the whole scene over to him, and whatever he  
23 needed I would go do. Which the command center was set up and it  
24 was pretty -- I think Norfolk was there. I think -- I can't  
25 remember who was who. But there was a decent amount of

1 (indiscernible) there. And pretty much after that, I never went  
2 back to the scene. I -- if the chief would leave to go somewhere,  
3 to do -- I stayed and became the chief of that building just in  
4 case something would happen. So I had a lot of seat time after  
5 the chief got there. I really didn't go out and direct anything  
6 anymore. And basically that's my story. I mean --

7 Q. Okay. Well, thank you for that. So I'm just going to ask a  
8 couple of follow-up questions, and then we'll go around to others  
9 who have questions as well. So let's talk about the hazardous  
10 materials that's on the train if we could a little bit, if we can  
11 go into some detail. At what point -- and can you give us a  
12 timeline on when you discovered there were hazardous materials on  
13 the train after arriving on scene?

14 A. Hour into it?

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And let me add something on that. We have a chemist on our  
17 department. He happened to be standing beside me when we were  
18 told what it was, and his eyes got big and I -- what? He says we  
19 need to get out of here.

20 Q. Okay. Who is, who is the chemist that's on the --

21 A. His name is Dan Kibler (ph.). He's a firefighter on the  
22 department and also a chemistry teacher at the high school.

23 Q. Okay. And so who did you eventually receive the hazardous  
24 materials information from, from Norfolk Southern?

25 A. I cannot answer that. I didn't know who the guy was.

1 Q. Okay. So when you initially found out about the hazardous  
2 materials on the train, what were your next steps?

3 A. My next step was to back all the manpower to a -- which I  
4 felt at the time was a safe distance back. Then I found out later  
5 we needed to be a little bit further. That's when we cleared the  
6 whole area. We staged at different areas across town. Everybody  
7 stayed and just staged in case it got out of hand or worse or if  
8 they needed us. We just -- they all stayed.

9 Q. Okay. And so how did you identify the distance that you  
10 needed to be from that?

11 A. Basically, by that gentleman from Norfolk. He told us it was  
12 based on a BLEVE. If it would blow we needed to be a mile away.

13 Q. Okay. Do you know what he used to determine that?

14 A. I do not, sir.

15 Q. Okay.

16 MR. DRABICK: If I may, part of that conversation was on the  
17 phone between Rick and I and Mr. Kibler utilizing the ERG based on  
18 the ERG and the Wiserat (ph.) based on the chemical that Norfolk  
19 had provided to them while they were on the phone with me.

20 MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay. All right, let's open it up to some  
21 other questions. Paul Stancil, if you want to start?

22 MR. STANCIL: Yes.

23 BY MR. STANCIL:

24 Q. Good morning, Chief. Appreciate it. Appreciate you being  
25 here and helping us sort through this incident. Let's talk a

1 little bit about the hazard communications to the first  
2 responders. You mentioned that after Norfolk Southern got there  
3 on site and you had the conversation that took about five to ten  
4 minutes before you had the train consist. Do you remember about  
5 how long that was after you first got the call that you were able  
6 to get the train consist?

7 A. Roughly half hour, 45 minutes.

8 Q. Okay. And was that electronically or did they give you a  
9 paper --

10 A. That was by voice of mouth, the guy who came in a truck. We  
11 asked for one as soon as we got there and the engineers were not  
12 around to provide that to us.

13 Q. Okay. Do you ever ultimately get an actual copy of the train  
14 consist?

15 A. I did not that night, but I do believe the chief got it way  
16 after the fact.

17 Q. Okay. But you never had one in your possession?

18 A. No, sir.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. No, sir.

21 Q. So the only way you knew what you were responding to was word  
22 of mouth from Norfolk Southern; is that accurate?

23 A. Well, what we were responding to was just a simple engine  
24 fire that we've had in the past, which are very minor. And then  
25 we set up and fought a fire and were -- we didn't have the

1 manuscript in front of us. And that's why when Norfolk pulled up  
2 we went directly over to him and started asking him questions, and  
3 he didn't have the answers when he first pulled up.

4 Q. Okay. So half an hour into the incident they tell you what's  
5 on the train. Do you remember what they told you?

6 A. It was that vinyl chloride and benzene.

7 Q. Okay. Anything else?

8 A. Not that I remember. They might have, but I apologize.

9 Q. Okay. That's fair enough. What about -- you mentioned the  
10 placards were buried or you were unable to read them. Can you  
11 tell us a little bit more? Did you, did you try to find placards  
12 so that you could get an idea where the hazardous materials were?

13 A. Yes, sir. I sent a crew of two down there to get as close as  
14 they could and to be safe but sometimes that's hard to do there.  
15 They looked. They could not see a placard, a visible placard  
16 anywhere. They came back reporting to me that they didn't find  
17 one. And we just moved forward from there until we were told by  
18 Norfolk what was on it.

19 Q. Okay. So during the five and a half hours you were managing  
20 the incident, at any time during that time did you learn where the  
21 hazardous materials were in the train or in the pileup?

22 A. Yes, sir. They told us that group of tankers in that area  
23 was the bad stuff, and the rest were cargo. Find out later it was  
24 full mainly of beer so --

25 Q. Okay. So you met the group of tankers. Are you referring to



1 any particular location in the train or in the pileup?

2 A. Yeah. It would be the beginning of the derailment. In front  
3 of that group that was all piled up there was a couple in front of  
4 that, but there was a group that were all a tangled mess. And  
5 then behind all that was the less harmful stuff.

6 Q. Okay. And the more harmful stuff would be what?

7 A. Was the chloride and the benzene.

8 Q. Okay. You mentioned the tabletop exercise. During that  
9 exercise, did the railroad offer you access to an app called  
10 AskRail (ph.)?

11 A. I don't think at that time. They did mention it way past  
12 that, but he never gave us the use of it.

13 Q. Okay. So at the time of this incident, had you ever used  
14 AskRail before?

15 A. Oh, never.

16 Q. Never? Did you even know about it?

17 A. I knew about it by listening to people but I -- we never had  
18 the app in our hand.

19 Q. Okay. And since this incident have they given you access to  
20 it?

21 A. I believe they have.

22 MR. DRABICK: Paul, they've given me access. I have it on my  
23 phone. Apparently working on being able to put access to that on  
24 our iPads in the engines, but I have to get some -- on my part get  
25 some education for my guys so that they know not just to go

1 punching in cars whenever a train goes past.

2 MR. STANCIL: Understood. All right.

3 BY MR. STANCIL:

4 Q. So Chief Gorby, how many railroad incidents involving  
5 hazardous materials have you handled prior to this incident?

6 A. That's -- that would be none. That was the big one.

7 Q. Okay. And you mentioned the two-hour tabletop. Was there  
8 any other training that the railroads had offered to your  
9 department prior to that?

10 A. Yes. We've had guys come from the railroad just talk to us  
11 about railroad procedures and stuff like that but never this --  
12 anything like we just went through the other day.

13 Q. And you knew already that in order to get the train consist  
14 to contact the engineers. What -- tell me a little bit more about  
15 that (indiscernible).

16 A. Well, I asked where the engineers, I asked where the  
17 engineers were because they would have that with them. Well, they  
18 weren't, they weren't on the scene. To my knowledge, they  
19 disconnected. And I don't know if they went back to the yard or  
20 they just went down -- too far down the tracks and stopped, but we  
21 did not have that in our possession when we needed it.

22 Q. Did anyone go looking for them? Or were you expecting them  
23 to come to you? How does that work?

24 A. Well, I knew they were in the engine and the engines were  
25 gone because that was, like, car 25 or whatever it was. And we

1 looked down the tracks for the engine. It was, it was not in  
2 sight. I'm not saying they stopped down out of our sight but they  
3 weren't in our sight to talk to anybody.

4 Q. Understood, okay. One last thing I'd like to go into. Did  
5 you have any recollection of the events or did you participate in  
6 any of the conversations that led to the decision to conduct that  
7 vent and burn?

8 A. No, sir.

9 Q. So that did not involve you in any way?

10 A. No, sir.

11 MR. STANCIL: Okay. All right. That's all the questions I  
12 have. I'll pass it on to the next person, Mark. Thank you.

13 MR. GORBY: I was in, I was in that meeting, but I didn't  
14 have a say-so.

15 BY MR. STANCIL:

16 Q. Well, can you tell us what you heard?

17 A. (Indiscernible).

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Pardon me?

20 Q. Can you tell us what you heard at the meeting?

21 A. Well, what I heard the -- was Norfolk said they have five  
22 options. The first four were no good; the fifth one is -- what  
23 they're recommending was to release the blow hole in the tank and  
24 release it. My chief had a million questions. And I think the  
25 governor was, I think the governor was involved in that and his

1 assistant and EPA and quite a few, quite a few departments were  
2 involved. And Norfolk recommended that would be the safest way to  
3 release the -- what was in the cars. It went around and everybody  
4 was -- mostly everybody said, yeah, do it. My chief was the last  
5 one to give it. He had a lot of questions. But in the end, I  
6 think everybody in that room felt that was the safest thing to do.  
7 And the rest is history.

8 Q. And do you, do you remember anything about what the options  
9 were, the five options you mentioned?

10 A. Well, I remember a couple of them. One was to let it go and  
11 hopefully nothing happened, which they were explaining that the  
12 heat levels -- after the heat level got to a certain -- they were  
13 going to back all their crews out and wait for the explosions.  
14 And there was a couple -- and I can't remember the first couple,  
15 but they were not even really on the table. It wasn't -- they  
16 (indiscernible) classified them as an option.

17 Q. Do you remember what the heat level was that was driving this  
18 concern?

19 A. I think 185 was going to let it -- it would probably end up  
20 blowing up. And when they were talking, it was already going up  
21 and down. I think the highest it got up was, I don't know, 140,  
22 139, something like that. And they were afraid when the sun came  
23 out it would, you know, make the temperature rise.

24 Q. And what time frame are we talking about where the  
25 temperature was 139, 140? What time frame is that?

1 A. I honestly can't give you that answer.

2 Q. Okay. Anything else you remember about that, that you think  
3 might be important?

4 A. No, sir. I just was hoping we were making the right move and  
5 nothing else seriously happened.

6 Q. Okay. What about the evacuation? Can you tell us anything  
7 about that, the decision to evacuate and --

8 A. The evacuation, in my opinion, went very well. The Highway  
9 Patrol did an excellent job. And I think we had 100 percent --  
10 not 100 percent. We had a couple stubborn people that wouldn't  
11 leave. But we had, we had almost everybody out of the evacuation  
12 zone. People in town listened to what we were saying, and they  
13 moved for a while so --

14 Q. You -- okay. Well, thank you very much.

15 MR. STANCIL: I'm going to hand it off to Chief Carey now.

16 MR. GORBY: Thank you.

17 MR. STANCIL: Thank you very much.

18 MR. CAREY: Can you hear me?

19 MR. DOUGHERTY: There we go.

20 MR. GORBY: Yes, sir.

21 BY MR. CAREY:

22 Q. Good. Hi, Paul Carey, Boston Fire IAF. How you doing,  
23 Chief?

24 A. Good. How are you today?

25 Q. Good. So that was one hell of an incident, you know, you had

1 to deal with.

2 A. Yes, sir. We're -- we don't get calls like that.

3 Q. Yeah. So are you a career firefighter or a volunteer?

4 A. Oh, no, sir. I've been a volunteer all my life.

5 Q. Okay. And what kind of HAZMAT training and certification  
6 level do you possess?

7 A. Just tech level.

8 Q. Tech level meaning what? Like how many hours?

9 A. (Indiscernible) tech.

10 MR. DRABICK: He has HAZMAT operations.

11 MR. GORBY: Yes, operations.

12 BY MR. CAREY:

13 Q. Operations, right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. That's pretty much what most firefighters have is the ops  
16 level training. So anyways, you get there, like, within two to  
17 three minutes, and you have an engine and a truck on scene?

18 A. Yes, sir. We get -- for our little department, volunteer, we  
19 got out the door pretty quick.

20 Q. Okay. And how many, how many firefighters did that give you  
21 on the scene initially?

22 A. Actually, we had a pretty good turnout. I would say roughly  
23 25 of our guys.

24 Q. Okay. And pretty much you said that, you know, you had,  
25 what, a lot of fire and you were worried about water and manpower

1 and exposure protection, correct?

2 A. Yep.

3 Q. Was there, was there a lot of pool (ph.) fires on the group  
4 that you -- they were trying to extinguish, as well, with either  
5 water or foam?

6 A. No, sir. We could not see it. After we seen drone footage I  
7 did see that, but my position I was, all we saw was cars on fire.

8 Q. Okay. Looked like the cars were on fire, okay. And as far  
9 as this -- I understand the placards were unreadable and you  
10 weren't able to locate the engineer and get a consist, but you  
11 said that somebody from Norfolk Southern shows up and they, at  
12 first, had no information for you?

13 A. Yes, sir, that's correct.

14 Q. Okay. And then when did they finally get the information to  
15 you as far as the consist? Did that arrive, you know, in a paper  
16 form, electronically, or what?

17 A. No, that -- at first it came as a person-to-person. He was  
18 on the phone telling us what it was.

19 Q. All right.

20 A. And then when the higher-ups go there, they had all the  
21 paperwork with them.

22 Q. Okay. And then they -- at some point, Norfolk Southern says  
23 that you have to back up, right?

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. Okay. So you abandon the efforts with applying water, right?

1 A. Well, no, sir. We had a ladder set up on our exposures  
2 down -- and we left the water run to keep them buildings as cool  
3 as we could, and we did it on the north side to another. But we  
4 abandoned -- it was all -- we can't -- no manpower was there.

5 Q. Okay. You just continued with exposure protection  
6 (indiscernible)?

7 A. Correct, correct.

8 Q. Okay, good. So somebody makes a decision that you should  
9 evacuate. And was that a one-mile evacuation?

10 A. Correct, sir.

11 Q. Okay. And we're thinking that came out of the ERG?

12 A. Yes, yes, sir.

13 Q. Because they're worried about BLEVE, right?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Okay, good. And at some point do you remember the railroad's  
16 contractor SPSI coming in and kind of taking over mitigation  
17 efforts?

18 A. They did do that, but they did that when Chief had come in.

19 Q. Okay. So the chief was there by then?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 MR. CAREY: Okay. Is the chief there? Chief, do you have  
22 any --

23 MR. GORBY: Yes, he is.

24 MR. DRABICK: Yeah, I'm here.

25 MR. CAREY: Okay. So did they -- so the contractor comes in



1 and they start doing mitigation efforts. And do you remember them  
2 using any foam on those fires?

3 MR. DRABICK: So the -- to the best of my knowledge and what  
4 we have found in our internal investigation, the only foam that  
5 was used by any entity down there --

6 MR. CAREY: Yeah.

7 MR. DRABICK: -- was by Chippewa Township Fire Department,  
8 and they used 40 gallon of a class B foam, A Triple F, and we gave  
9 that information to the NTSB and everybody else.

10 MR. CAREY: Okay.

11 MR. DRABICK: But I had not heard from SPSI that they had  
12 used any foam.

13 MR. CAREY: Yeah.

14 MR. DRABICK: Their mitigation efforts on my arrival -- the  
15 only part that was confusing is the one minute they wanted water  
16 still being poured by unmanned master streams and, you know,  
17 aerial devices, and the next minute they did not.

18 MR. CAREY: Okay, good. So the, so the evacuation was  
19 handled by the police as far as civilian evacuation?

20 MR. DRABICK: Police, along with the coordination of the EMA  
21 sending out what's called a WENS (ph.) message.

22 MR. CAREY: Okay.

23 MR. DRABICK: A lot of that was coordinated by the EMA in  
24 conjunction with the Highway Patrol and local law enforcement.

25 MR. CAREY: Okay, good. Sounds good. Well, thank you very

1 much for your time and thanks for answering our questions. We  
2 really appreciate it. Thanks for your service.

3 MR. GORBY: Thank you.

4 MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay, Mr. Heidkamp?

5 MR. HEIDKAMP: Well, thanks for your service. No questions  
6 from me.

7 MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay. How about any follow-up questions?  
8 Paul Stancil, anything?

9 MR. STANCIL: No, no further questions, Mark. Perhaps Keith  
10 Drabick might -- as a party might have some questions of his own.

11 MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay.

12 MR. DRABICK: No, I'm good at this point, guys. Thank you.

13 MR. STANCIL: Okay, thank you.

14 MR. DOUGHERTY: All right, great. Again, appreciate the  
15 information, your time. We went over a lot today. And just one  
16 final question for you. Is there anything that we didn't ask  
17 today or any additional information that you may have or could  
18 provide to us that would be helpful in our investigation?

19 MR. GORBY: No, sir, I can't think of anything.

20 MR. DOUGHERTY: Okay. All right, well, thank you again, for  
21 everything. This will terminate the interview, and I will stop  
22 the recording now. The time is 11:41 a.m.

23 (Whereupon, at 11:41 a.m., the interview was concluded.)  
24  
25

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 Rick Gorby

ACCIDENT NO.:               RRD23MR005

PLACE:                        via Microsoft Teams

DATE:                         February 28, 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