



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

GROUP	G
EXHIBIT	
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Agency / Organization

East Palestine Fire Department

Title

Interview Transcript – Deputy Fire Chief

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,
May 2, 2023

APPEARANCES:

RICHARD DOWNS, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CYNDI LAKE, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MARC DOUGHERTY, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

PAUL CAREY, Retired Boston Fire Chief
IAFF Representative

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I N T E R V I E W

(12:05 p.m.)

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3 MR. DOWNS: Good afternoon. Today's date is May 2nd, 2023;
4 the time is approximately 12:05 p.m. This Microsoft Teams
5 interview is being conducted in connection with the Norfolk
6 Southern Railway train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, which
7 occurred on February 3, 2023. The NTSB accident number, reference
8 number, is RRD23MR005. This is an interview of Mr. Rick Gorby,
9 Deputy Chief, East Palestine Fire Department.

10 Chief Gorby, could you please spell -- state your name and
11 spell your last name and state your title for the record?

12 MR. GORBY: Yeah, it's Deputy Chief Rick Gorby, G-o-r-b-y.

13 MR. DOWNS: Very good, thank you. And your current job
14 title, you said, is deputy chief of the department?

15 MR. GORBY: Deputy chief, yes, sir.

16 MR. DOWNS: Very good, thank you. All right. Do you
17 understand that this interview is being recorded?

18 MR. GORBY: Yes.

19 MR. DOWNS: Thank you. Now, before we start the interview
20 and questions, I like to advise the interviewee that the NTSB
21 interview procedures under 49 C.F.R. 831.7 afford interview
22 witnesses the opportunity to be accompanied by one representative
23 of their choosing in which that representative can be anyone or
24 the interviewee can elect not to have any representative present
25 at all. So I'll ask our interviewee, have you elected to have a

1 representative participate in this interview?

2 MR. GORBY: No, sir.

3 MR. DOWNS: Thank you. Now, the purpose of this
4 investigation is to improve safety, not to assign fault, blame, or
5 liability. Our sole mission is to improve transportation safety
6 and prevent accidents and as such, NTSB cannot offer any guarantee
7 of confidentiality or immunity from any legal proceeding by any
8 other agency, whether it's local, state, or federal.

9 Now, with the above admin items covered, let us go around and
10 introduce ourselves. Please spell your last name, who you're
11 representing, and your work title. Mr. Gorby, we've already done
12 you, so we can proceed around the room. And I would like to
13 remind everyone to speak clearly for the recording and
14 transcription. I'll start off with myself, Richard Downs, Jr.
15 I'm an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board
16 out of Washington, D.C. My specialty is survival factors,
17 emergency preparedness, emergency response, and crash worthiness.
18 Go around the room.

19 Chief Carey.

20 MR. CAREY: Good morning, my name is Paul Carey, last name
21 C-a-r-e-y. I'm a retired Boston Fire Department district chief
22 and hazmat chief and I'm here representing the International
23 Association of Fire Fighters.

24 MR. DOWNS: Thank you, Chief. And your contribution here is
25 well appreciated.

1 Next, we have Mr. Dougherty.

2 MR. DOUGHERTY: Marc Dougherty, the spelling of my last name
3 is D-o-u-g-h-e-r-t-y and I'm a hazardous materials accident
4 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

5 MS. LAKE: And my name is Cyndi Lake, last name is spelled
6 L-a-k-e, and I work in our safety division for the National
7 Transportation Safety Board.

8 MR. DOWNS: Very good. Okay. Mr. Gorby, if any question is
9 unclear or you don't understand the question, please ask me or the
10 questioner to clarify or restate the question. And if you don't
11 know the answer to any of the questions, it's okay to tell us that
12 you don't know. Of course, we don't want to speculate. A
13 transcript of this interview will be placed in the public docket
14 for this investigation, which will be available via the NTSB
15 website.

16 INTERVIEW OF DEPUTY CHIEF RICK GORBY

17 BY MR. DOWNS:

18 Q. Now, Mr. Gorby, can you please tell us your background,
19 education, and experience -- oh, let me -- I almost forgot. We
20 understand this is -- you've had multiple interviews prior to
21 this, for this investigation, is that correct?

22 A. Just one.

23 Q. Just one. Okay, very good. And we're going to be referring
24 to that transcript and we try not to be redundant here, but there
25 may be a little overlap and apologies for that in advance. So if

1 the question had been previously asked, to your recollection, in
2 that transcript, don't hesitate to let us know.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. We can move on to the next question.

5 A. Fine.

6 Q. Okay. Your background, education, and expertise, Chief
7 Gorby.

8 A. Well, background, I've been on the fire department for 33
9 years, roughly.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I just had the basic training; I've learned on the job, I
12 have my 36, that's all I have.

13 Q. Okay. Firefighter 1 and 2 and incident command, those kind
14 of training courses?

15 A. Just what we have here in our department.

16 Q. Okay, very good. What positions have you had with the fire
17 department there?

18 A. I was a lieutenant and then I went from lieutenant to
19 assistant chief and then from assistant chief to deputy chief.

20 Q. And prior to that, you were a firefighter?

21 A. A firefighter, yes, sir.

22 Q. Very good. How long in your current position?

23 A. Current position, roughly 5 years.

24 Q. Close enough, very good. Again, we're trying to get the
25 background and generalities here and we're not splitting hairs on

1 timeline.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. What are your duties?

4 A. Everyday things at the firehouse, I guess, assignments, if
5 the chief's not there, of course, I'm incident command and when
6 the chief is there, I'm in his back pocket and doing my thing.

7 Q. Very good. Okay. And you report to the chief?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Very good. Okay, that's good. Let's see, I have your
10 background. Outside of the fire department, do you have any other
11 professional education, college or anything like that?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. Okay, very good. And have you had hazard tech-level training
14 before or hazard operations training?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. All right. I'm going to be referring here to the
17 transcript, so bear with me a little bit. I'm showing on page 8
18 -- again, what we're trying to do here is to get the -- set the
19 scene here in terms of the response to the event and we got your
20 testimony in the transcript step by step, that you got the call
21 and so on. Page 8 --

22 A. Yeah, I never received my transcript.

23 Q. Okay, we can look into that off line when we conclude that,
24 how's that?

25 A. All right, thank you.

1 Q. Very good, thank you.

2 MR. DOUGHERTY: Just for the record, this is Marc Dougherty,
3 it was sent to you with an errata sheet via Chief Drabick's
4 e-mail.

5 MR. GORBY: Okay, sir, I'll check with the chief.

6 BY MR. DOWNS:

7 Q. Very good. Okay, yeah, we can address that off line in more
8 detail in a little bit. Water application, on-scene emergency
9 response guide, was that reviewed and consulted by you when you
10 arrived on scene?

11 A. Verify what you're asking me.

12 Q. The emergency response guide, are you familiar with that?
13 It's put out by the Department of Transportation and it's got an
14 orange cover.

15 A. Oh, yeah, yeah, we have. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay, great. Do you remember what revision date that was?
17 It comes out every 5 years.

18 A. I do not, sir.

19 Q. Okay. And the scene, as we understand it, was quite
20 stretched out along the railroad, is that correct?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Okay. It went on for what, two or three city blocks. Did
23 you happen to know, off hand, what the lading was, what the cargo
24 was, on the train?

25 A. At the time, no. No, sir.

- 1 Q. Not at the time. Okay. And we're going to get into the
2 manifest in a little bit. Was an incident command post
3 established upon your arrival at the scene?
- 4 A. About 20 minutes after I got on scene. Roughly.
- 5 Q. About 20 minutes. Okay, good enough. And approximate
6 location where it was set up, is there a cross-street or a
7 landmark we can identify on that?
- 8 A. It was just on Leake's property, in a building they have.
- 9 Q. Lake's property?
- 10 A. Leake's. Yeah, that's where the wreck happened, behind a
11 business called Leake's.
- 12 Q. L-a-k-e-s?
- 13 A. No, it's L-e-a-k-e.
- 14 Q. Oh, Leake's, L-e-a-k --
- 15 A. Yeah, but it's pronounced Lake's, believe it or not.
- 16 Q. Okay, I'll pronounce it Leak's, just for our purposes.
- 17 A. Everybody out of town does, so you're good.
- 18 Q. Okay. And what does Leake's do, what is their business?
- 19 A. Gasoline. Home heating.
- 20 Q. Oh, gasoline.
- 21 A. Everything to do --
- 22 Q. Oh, so it's a fuel oil --
- 23 A. Petroleum. Yeah.
- 24 Q. It's a fuel oil --
- 25 A. Yeah.

- 1 Q. -- depot, okay.
- 2 A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. That's not a good thing to have when you've got a big fire
4 like that, obviously.
- 5 A. Correct.
- 6 Q. Okay, so you established your incident command post there.
7 What does the incident command post consist of, do you have a
8 deputy chief buggy or how is that set up, is there a command
9 vehicle?
- 10 A. No, there is not.
- 11 Q. Okay, so the establishment of the incident command, was there
12 a radio transmission, by chance, that was established at that
13 location?
- 14 A. I don't recall.
- 15 Q. You don't recall, okay. We can check the recording. Let's
16 see. And you arrived on scene, did you immediately contact the
17 chief by phone or did you size up?
- 18 A. I did the size-up.
- 19 Q. Okay, tell us about the size-up.
- 20 A. Well, I got -- I was like roughly 5 to 6 minutes behind the
21 first truck in and I was at the neighboring town, at my family's
22 and --
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. -- when I got there, I realized what we had.
- 25 Q. Okay.

1 A. So I did what I had to do, put -- tried to put the people in
2 place and I had one of my -- oh, actually one of my assistant
3 chiefs beside me, and I said I have to call the chief on this one.

4 Q. Okay, very good. And do you have a time stamp, by chance, on
5 your phone or anything of that?

6 A. I do not, sir.

7 Q. Okay. And you determined, when you talked with him, he was
8 going to be turning around and heading back to the -- to your
9 location there?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. Okay, very good. Let's see. Norfolk Southern on-scene
12 representative, approximately what time did that person arrive, do
13 you happen to recall? Was there anything to jog your memory in
14 terms of when that person arrived?

15 A. No, sir, it was before evacuation.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But I don't have a timeline for him. It was fairly soon.

18 Q. Fairly soon, okay. Do you remember the name of that person,
19 by chance?

20 A. I do not.

21 Q. Okay, very good. Let's see, you indicated on page 10, you
22 set up a command. Time and location. Oh, CHEMTREC. You did not
23 have a manifest at that time. Are you familiar with CHEMTREC?

24 A. Yes. A little bit. A little bit. We just started talking
25 about that actually about 6 months before the --

1 Q. Was this before the accident?

2 A. About 6 months before the derailment.

3 Q. Okay, so you have a little familiarity with CHEMTREC. Have
4 you ever used them before?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. But you're familiar with them and what they can do.
7 Was CHEMTREC contacted before you got the manifest, by chance?

8 A. No, sir.

9 Q. Okay. All right, I'll go to my next page of notes here.
10 Okay. The evacuation, tell us about the evacuation. Had you
11 initiated an evacuation, because evacuation guidance is provided
12 in the emergency response guide.

13 A. Okay. Well, after we found out what we had, we --

14 Q. Right.

15 A. -- evacuated, we evacuated roughly a hundred to 200 yards
16 away.

17 Q. A hundred, 1 to 200 yards away from the --

18 A. Yards, yards.

19 Q. Yards away from the perimeter of the fire?

20 A. From the tanks.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And then with further investigation, we realized we need to
23 be a lot further.

24 Q. Okay. And is that --

25 A. But I can't give you timelines, I can't remember the times.

1 Q. No problem, we're just trying to get a general flavor here as
2 to how things transpired. We're trying to construct, to your
3 benefit, the timeline, that we're going to be taking a look at the
4 CAD download of dispatch --

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. -- and the radio calls, things like that.

7 A. That's fine.

8 Q. So I may get back to you off line on the timeline.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. We don't want to fuss with that right now. The establishment
11 of moving in the evacuation zone back, was that in concert with
12 the NS representative that arrived on scene?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Very good. And what did they tell you was the good distance
15 to go?

16 A. Not at that time. We were told to move, to evacuate the
17 area, so that's when we decided to set up at the Main Street fire
18 station.

19 Q. At the Main Street fire station, okay, that's --

20 A. Yeah. It's more the police station, but we have -- we use it
21 a couple days.

22 Q. That's a combination police --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. I guess it's your original fire station, now it's --

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. -- a combination backup station and police department.

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Great, okay. And that's on East Taggart Street?

4 A. No, that is on Main Street.

5 Q. Main Street, okay. And East Taggart --

6 A. Taggart Street would've been the first command center.

7 Q. Oh, that's the one with the Leake organization.

8 A. Yes, correct.

9 Q. Okay. L-e-a-k (sic), okay. Very good. And you set up on

10 the Main Street setup and that was your -- that was your

11 communication center --

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. -- established there?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Okay. But the fire department I'm showing on the map is at

16 67 East Clark Street. There was a little confusion I had reading

17 the transcript in terms of the contradictory locations.

18 A. Well, Clark Street --

19 Q. Did you ever set up in your fire department --

20 A. Clark Street is our main -- is our main fire station.

21 Q. Okay. And you never set up a command center there?

22 A. No, sir.

23 Q. Okay, that's the confusion, I'm glad we got it sorted out.

24 Okay. When did you discover there was hazmat on the train? Was

25 it when --

- 1 A. Timelines, I'm not -- the timeline I'm not sure of, sir.
- 2 Q. Was it when the NS guy came to the site to support?
- 3 A. Yes, sir.
- 4 Q. Okay, so it was about at that time when you had discussions
5 on train consists and things like that?
- 6 A. Correct.
- 7 Q. Okay. And it looks like, in your transcript, you mentioned
8 that it was about an hour into it. Does that sound about right?
- 9 A. Okay.
- 10 Q. All right. Okay. And when the hazmat -- generally, in
11 firefighting -- I'm an old firefighter myself, many decades back.
12 The general guidance we had was don't apply water until you really
13 know what material is burning. Did you follow any of the
14 emergency response guidance in terms of the water application?
- 15 A. The water application, the water application was mainly on
16 exposures.
- 17 Q. Exposures, that's what I wanted to hear, make sure that we --
18 it's not really, you're saying, on the cargo itself.
- 19 A. Unsure, sir.
- 20 Q. Okay. Thank you.
- 21 A. I'm going to say not very much, if any at all.
- 22 Q. Okay, very good. It was mentioned in the transcripts, on
23 page 13, the NS guy mentioned the BLEVE situation.
- 24 A. Correct.
- 25 Q. And you're well familiar with what a BLEVE is?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. Okay. And did that really cause a concern?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Okay. And what was your reaction to that?

5 A. I got every personnel that I had away from the scene.

6 Q. So you stretched out and you further evacuated?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And you set up -- according to your transcript, you set up
9 unmanned monitor nozzles on the extended ladder trucks and things
10 of that sort?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Okay, very good. I'm showing on page 24 a WENS message,
13 W-E-N-S message. What is that?

14 A. Unsure.

15 Q. Okay, I'll go back and check that later with you. The
16 weather, what was the weather at the time?

17 A. Cold.

18 Q. Cold. Was it snowing, was it raining or just --

19 A. At the time of the incident, it was just cold.

20 Q. Just cold, okay. And darkness, this happened at night?

21 A. Yeah, 12 minutes until 9:00, I believe, sir.

22 Q. Right, okay. Was the weather checked while you were running
23 your incident command operations? Did you put somebody on
24 checking what the weather prediction was supposed to be,
25 particularly like, say, the wind direction?

1 A. No, sir.

2 MR. DOWNS: Okay. Okay. All right, I think that's the --
3 yeah, that's the end of my questions. Any thoughts that you --
4 any thoughts or questions you might have, Chief, before we
5 continue?

6 MR. GORBY: No, sir.

7 MR. DOWNS: Okay. I'll turn it over next to Chief Carey, our
8 guest participating in the interview here.

9 BY MR. CAREY:

10 Q. Good morning, Chief Gorby, how are you doing?

11 A. Good, sir.

12 Q. I think we spoke once before in your previous interview.

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Well, thanks for taking the time for us today, really
15 appreciate it. So I'm just a little confused about a few things
16 and I'm sure you can clear it up for me. So when you arrived
17 there and established command, I know, typically, with any
18 incident like this, one of the first things you do, especially
19 with the rail, is initiate some actions to get your hands on a
20 consist. Tell me a little bit about that.

21 A. When I arrived on scene, that was the first thing I asked my
22 engineer, who had one of our trucks working at the time, I said
23 where is it and he said, well, we don't have one. So I said okay,
24 where's the engineer? We haven't seen him. So I sent one or two
25 guys, I can't remember, down to the rail up from the derailment to

1 see if they could see the engine. There was nothing there. So we
2 did not have one in our hand at that time.

3 Q. Okay. Did you reach out to dispatch and ask Norfolk Southern
4 to send over a consist, by any chance?

5 A. I believe so, sir.

6 Q. You believe so?

7 A. Not a hundred percent sure on that, I'm --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. It was a crazy night.

10 Q. Yeah. No, I understand that. And did you have an Emergency
11 Response Guidebook in the chief's car with you?

12 A. Well, we have one in every vehicle we have.

13 Q. All right. And did you use the guidebook to kind of get
14 going on this, to find out --

15 A. Well, that was the problem, we didn't know what we had.

16 Q. Right. Well, there is a guide in there for unknowns. That's
17 why I'm just wondering if you had a chance to do any of that.

18 A. No, sir.

19 Q. Okay. And as far as your initial actions, I understand that
20 you worried about exposure control and that's what the water
21 application was about?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Okay. So you really weren't putting much water on the
24 railcars or the flammable liquid pool fires around the trains?

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. Okay. And was there any discussion about once you figured
2 out what you had on the trains, those other flammable liquids that
3 leaked out of the other cars that were on fire, it was a flammable
4 liquid fire, was there any consideration given to applying foam?

5 A. Not on my part, sir.

6 Q. Okay, because the chief told us that there'd been some foam
7 used briefly.

8 A. There was some foam used, but it was by a different
9 department down probably a hundred and 50 yards, 200 yards away
10 from me. I didn't know that they did that on their own.

11 Q. Was that because the communication was difficult between
12 departments, maybe?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay. And I assume you -- according to your chief, you said,
15 prior to his arrival, you set up a unified command with all the
16 different agencies?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. And can you tell me a little bit about how that
19 worked, the unified command, whether you had the commanders from
20 the other fire departments with you or trying to communicate with
21 each other?

22 A. Yes. What we did was we took -- I took a couple from
23 Pennsylvania and I had our locals here, our neighbor and the ones
24 that we work with all the time, and tried to get communications
25 set up that way.

1 Q. All right. And how did that go?

2 A. It was coming together then and then we got evacuated, so --

3 Q. When you say you got evacuated, who --

4 A. Well, we made a decision to evacuate when we heard and
5 Norfolk recommended that.

6 Q. So Norfolk Southern recommended the evacuation distance to
7 you?

8 A. Yes, I believe.

9 Q. That did not come from the Emergency Response Guidebook?

10 A. I can't answer that at this time. I'm trying here, I'm
11 thinking.

12 Q. All right, that's fine. As far as this, the chief told us
13 that prior to his arrival you had sent a recon team in. What was
14 the objective and what were they told to do on their recon?

15 A. To see if we could find some placards of them tankers.

16 Q. Okay. And you found that those were melted off?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. And tell me a little about this training, this
19 tabletop exercise that was done prior to this event with the
20 railroads, that training you guys went to.

21 A. It was put on by the local EMA and all the neighboring
22 departments were invited. We went down and we had one person from
23 Norfolk who is their hazmat guy and then there's a -- they have
24 outside service that comes in and puts this training on and we
25 pick out a scenario, or they actually pick out a scenario and

1 we're broke up in teams and like I got -- I was in logistics and
2 you have, you know, fire or you have police, you know, and we just
3 went over what we would do.

4 Q. Right. And do you remember, during that training was the
5 railroad there?

6 A. Yes, the railroad was there. The guys in charge of the
7 hazmat for the railroad.

8 Q. Okay. Did they introduce you guys in the class to the
9 AskRail app and tell you how that works?

10 A. They actually did, sir.

11 Q. And did anybody in your fire department actually follow
12 through with that as far as getting the app and going as far as
13 how to use that moving forward?

14 A. We had not made it that far. That tabletop was, oh, my
15 goodness, less than a month from the accident.

16 MR. CAREY: Right. Okay. All right, I guess that's all I
17 have at this point. Thanks very much, Deputy Chief, appreciate
18 it.

19 MR. GORBY: Thank you, sir.

20 MR. DOWNS: Thanks. Thanks, Chief Carey. We can go with
21 whoever's next, one or the other jump in here, is that going to be
22 you, Ms. Lake?

23 MS. LAKE: Yes, it is.

24 BY MS. LAKE:

25 Q. Deputy Chief Gorby, hello.

1 A. Hi.

2 Q. I just have a couple follow-up questions. So as far as
3 understanding the on-scene communication, it sounds like you did
4 not use radio comms on scene?

5 A. We did. Radio communication right here, everybody has
6 different frequencies.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. So I could talk to the majority.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. But the other ones I couldn't.

11 Q. So during that event, but I guess probably on a regular
12 basis, which departments can you communicate with when you're
13 responding?

14 A. Our neighboring, our neighboring -- do you want me to name
15 them?

16 Q. If you know off the top of your head the names.

17 A. I'll give you our major ones that we work with.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. New Waterford. Negley, N-e-g-l-e-y.

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. Columbiana. Springfield. Well, Springfield Township.

22 Q. Okay. Great. And is Springfield part of -- is it the
23 Western Reserve Fire District?

24 A. Yes, in Mahoning County.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. And thank you for that clarification, I'm just trying
3 to understand kind of the different entities. So you were able to
4 communicate with some of the departments, but there were other
5 departments that did not -- were not able to patch into the
6 correct frequency, right?

7 A. Mainly Pennsylvania.

8 Q. Okay, great. So how did you -- like when the decision was
9 made to pull the firefighting groups back, how did you communicate
10 with those folks? I guess if it was mainly the Pennsylvania
11 responders.

12 A. I had some Pennsylvania officers beside me and they relayed
13 it to their people.

14 Q. Okay, great. So all the companies that responded, did they
15 all check in initially at the incident command post for
16 accountability?

17 A. I can't answer that at this time.

18 Q. Okay. Just a guesstimate off the top of your head, do you --
19 like how many different jurisdictions responded? And jurisdiction
20 could mean county or fire district.

21 A. They say I had over 50 departments there.

22 Q. Oh, wow. Okay. Okay. And do you have mutual aid agreements
23 with all of those departments?

24 A. No, just New Waterford and Negley.

25 MS. LAKE: Okay, those are the only ones, New Waterford --

1 MR. GORBY: Um-hum.

2 MS. LAKE: -- and Negley, okay. Okay. I think that's all I
3 have. Thank you, sir.

4 MR. DOWNS: Okay, thank you, Ms. Lake.

5 Next, Mr. Dougherty.

6 BY MR. DOUGHERTY:

7 Q. Hello, Mr. Gorby.

8 A. Hi.

9 Q. Just one quick question. Can you tell us what some of your
10 biggest challenges were during the response to the East Palestine
11 derailment?

12 A. The biggest problem I had, I thought -- or what we had,
13 everything was going well, except I was worried about water. But
14 as of our mutual aids and everything, I thought, for the size of
15 what we had, that we never dealt with before, everything was going
16 well by us.

17 BY MR. DOWNS:

18 Q. So Chief, you say -- if I may interject here, a quick follow-
19 up, you say water, meaning volumes of water?

20 A. Yes. Our water system in town is old and --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- we were at the end of it. That building where the
23 derailment was, you walk 50 feet and you're in Pennsylvania.

24 Q. Right. Do you have hydrants or --

25 A. The water system, the water volume out of there is horrible.

1 Q. Yeah, do you have hydrants or when you say water supply --

2 A. Yes, sir. We have hydrants, but we wouldn't have been able
3 to feed it with all the hydrants. That's why --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- I called so many tankers.

6 Q. And you pulled in tankers to respond and support?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Okay, great. Now, do you have any rivers or such around that
9 you could tap into for direct draw?

10 A. Close to the scene we had one small pond.

11 Q. Small pond. And best guess, that would not have been
12 sufficient, do you think?

13 A. No, sir.

14 MR. DOWNS: Very good. Okay, sorry to interrupt you there,
15 Marc.

16 MR. DOUGHERTY: No worries, I just had that one question.

17 MR. DOWNS: Okay, thank you, Mr. Dougherty. I'll follow
18 up --

19 MS. LAKE: I have one -- oh, sorry.

20 MR. DOWNS: Go ahead, go ahead, Cyndi.

21 BY MS. LAKE:

22 Q. I just had one follow-up, Deputy Chief Gorby. So do you
23 regularly -- I know you talked about the tabletop exercise, but do
24 you regularly train and exercise and drill with your surrounding
25 jurisdictions outside of your mutual aid partners?

1 A. We train with Darlington every once in a while, but --

2 Q. And that's in Pennsylvania?

3 A. That's in Pennsylvania, but they're right there, I mean --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- we're close. And roughly, that's it.

6 MS. LAKE: Okay, great. Thank you.

7 MR. DOWNS: Thank you.

8 MS. LAKE: That's all. Sorry, Rick.

9 BY MR. DOWNS:

10 Q. The follow-up question I have, has NS provided you further
11 guidance since the accident on how to address a major derailment
12 and fire such as this?

13 A. We're in the process, we've had some training, we got a lot
14 more coming.

15 Q. Okay. Prior to the accident, had they provided any guidance
16 to you on responding to this?

17 A. Explain.

18 Q. I'm going to see if I can share my screen. Bear with me a
19 second here. It's not sharing. Okay. Well, let me see. No.
20 Well, I was going to share my screen, but I'll just read it to
21 you. NS has an HM-1 manual called "Hazardous Material
22 Instructions." They have since put out -- they have a revision
23 dated April 15. They also have an earlier revision dated 2019.
24 Did they provide that to you? It's got a red cover.

25 A. I believe we have that, yes.

1 Q. Great. Did you receive it prior to the accident, do you
2 recall?

3 A. I believe so.

4 Q. Okay, great, because that manual gives some good guidance in
5 terms of some of the commodities that they ship and so on and it
6 was somewhat revamped based upon a side-by-side comparison, the
7 revision in April here versus the original one in 2019, where
8 there's additional guidance. A lot of it is kind of paralleled to
9 the emergency response guide and I was just curious if you had
10 received that.

11 A. I do not know that, no.

12 Q. Very good, thank you. Last question I always like to give --
13 two questions I always like to give our interviewees. One, are
14 there any lessons learned you'd like to share with the
15 professional firefighting community? An event like this, you
16 know, it's kind of a once-in-a-lifetime activity, hoping never to
17 do it again, obviously. But any lessons learned you could share
18 with the -- with the professional firefighters out there that
19 might encounter a huge event like this? It was stretched out for
20 what, three-tenths, four-tenths of a mile where there were --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- multiple fire scenes, that kind of thing. Unknown
23 products. Can't find the train, the locomotives, that kind of
24 thing. Share your insights, if you might, please, sir. We
25 welcome to hear any lessons learned.

1 A. Lessons learned.

2 Q. In other words, in retrospect, knowing what you know now.

3 A. Personally, there's nothing that I would've changed that
4 night.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I thought all my neighboring departments and our department
7 did a good job communicating to each other and putting -- for me
8 to put another department's chief or an officer and say go to that
9 location, handle that, and another department to go to that -- I
10 feel everybody did a great job. Right now, it still hasn't wore
11 off yet, but I wouldn't change, I wouldn't change nothing.

12 Q. Very good. And your fire department's going to be preparing
13 a NIFERS report on this?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Is that in process?

16 A. I believe so, I believe so.

17 Q. Is that in process? It's quite a lengthy form, I've played
18 with it myself, and that's in process?

19 A. You'd have to ask the chief that, sir.

20 Q. Okay. Yeah, I'll follow up with him on that. That sometimes
21 has a lot of data elements that, unless you're prompted by a given
22 line item in the questionnaire, sometimes you overlook it.

23 Lastly, but not least-ly, is there anything else that you'd like
24 to offer in terms of the discussion here before we close?

25 A. Not at this time, sir.

1 MR. DOWNS: Very good, okay. Well, I'm going to go down my
2 checklist of stuff here to address. As we've made our round of
3 questioning, I'd like to thank our participants and you
4 particularly, Chief, for your participation here. And this
5 concludes our interview. The time is now 12:45 p.m.

6 (Whereupon, at 12:45 p.m., the interview concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

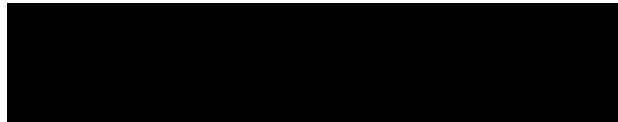
IN THE MATTER OF: NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN DERAILMENT
 IN EAST PALESTINE, OHIO
 ON FEBRUARY 3, 2023
 Interview of Rick Gorby

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD23MR005

PLACE: Via Microsoft Teams

DATE: May 2, 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.



David A. Martini
Transcriber



National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations
Washington, D.C. 20594

Date: May 19, 2023
Interviewee: Rick Gorby / Village of East Palestine, OH, Fire Department
Reference: **Errata Sheet Transmittal / Transcribed Interview**, regarding the February 3, 2023, Norfolk Southern Railway train derailment and fire, in East Palestine, OH – NTSB Investigation number RRD23MR005

As indicated during the subject interview, attached for your attention and response, please find a copy of the transcript of your interview that was conducted on May 2, 2023, which was compiled as a preparation activity [element], of an NTSB Public Hearing, that is being scheduled to address the above referenced accident. Kindly please review the enclosed transcript for accuracy, and please utilize this sheet to convey (to the investigation) any necessary editorial changes.

Your response in this may be either ...

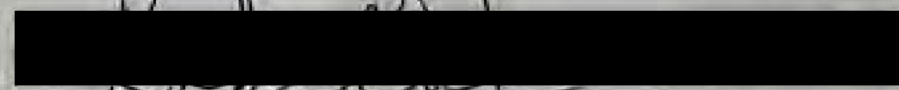
- [1] submission of an 'itemized tabulation' of your suggested transcript changes (i.e., in a tabulation format, cite the relevant page and line number, along with any suggested change(s)), – or –
- [2] you may 'redline' (i.e., manually, or digitally markup, with an inserted corresponding notation) any suggested changes to a copy of the transcript, to which kindly please initial any changes cited, in which only the individual pages containing the cited changes need to be returned in your response.

When replying, please use this transmittal sheet for your response, even if there are no changes identified in your review, to which, please be sure to apply a checkmark to one of the three statements below, and please affix your signature and date. It's requested that you kindly please submit your response to me, via reply email, by not later than the CoB of May 24, 2023.

I have reviewed the enclosed transcript(s) from the above referenced accident, and ...

- I have no comment(s) to offer,
 my comments are submitted herewith (as an itemized tabulation), — OR —
 my comments are indicated on the attached / marked-up ("redlined") transcript copy.

Respondent's signature


[Handwritten signature]

Date

MAY 24, 23

Please note that investigation transcripts must be maintained as confidential at this time, in which the transcript [provided at this time, for your accuracy review] is for your use only, and not for release outside of the investigation. Upon NTSB receipt of your errata sheet response to this, a copy of the transcript and corresponding errata sheet may be placed in the public docket. If you have any questions, I welcome you to contact me by phone, or by reply email.

Thank you for your support to the investigation, and for your assistance and cooperation in this response.

– Richard Downs, Jr. / Technical Panel 1 – Emergency Response Efforts



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