

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN COLLISION *

AND DERAILMENT NEAR EASTON, *

PENNSYLVANIA ON MARCH 2, 2024 *

Accident No.: RRD24FR009

* * * * *

Interview of: MAURICE CLARK, Conductor (19G)
Norfolk Southern

Tuesday,
March 5, 2024

APPEARANCES:

RICHARD SKOLNEOVICH, Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

RON SABOL, National Safety Team
SMART Transportation Division

BOB BEATON, Chief, Systems Safety Division
Division of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials
National Transportation Safety Board

G. W. SCOTT BROWN, Safety Taskforce
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

JOSH QUILLEN
Federal Railroad Administration

DON CRAINE
Norfolk Southern Transportation

RANDY HUNT, Safety
Norfolk Southern Transportation

BRIAN McLAIN, Safety Department
Norfolk Southern

VINCE MEANS, Regional Road Foreman (Observer)
Norfolk Southern

DANIEL CADOGAN, Safety Taskforce (Observer)
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

JORDAN GIBSON (Observer)
Federal Railroad Administration

KEVIN BANKS (Observer)
Federal Railroad Administration

PAUL HULBURT, Road Foreman (Observer)
Norfolk Southern, Keystone Division

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: All right. Good morning. My name is
3 Richard Skolnekovich. I'm the NTSB operations group chairman for
4 this accident.

5 We're conducting an interview today on 5 March 2024 with
6 Maurice Clark who works for Norfolk Southern. This interview is
7 in conjunction with the NTSB's investigation of the accident that
8 occurred 2 March 2024 at Easton, Pennsylvania. The accident
9 reference number is RRD24FR009.

10 The purpose of this investigation is to increase safety, not
11 to assign fault, blame or liability.

12 Before we begin our interview and questions, we'll go around
13 and introduce ourselves. Please spell out your last name and
14 title. I'll start off, and then I'll pass it again to my left.

15 Again, my name is Richard Skolnekovich, S-k-o-l-n-e-k-o-v-i-
16 c-h, NTSB investigator.

17 MR. SABOL: Ron Sabol, S-a-b-o-l, Sheet, Metal, Air, Rail and
18 Transportation Workers, Transportation Division, national safety
19 team.

20 MR. BEATON: Good morning, Maurice.

21 MR. CLARK: Good morning.

22 MR. BEATON: My name is Bob Beaton. I'm with NTSB. My last
23 name is B-e-a-t-o-n, and my position is chief of the system safety
24 division.

25 MR. BROWN: Good morning. I'm G. W. Scott Brown, with the

1 BLET safety taskforce. That's B-r-o-w-n.

2 MR. QUILLEN: Josh Quillen, Q-u-i-l-l-e-n, FRA.

3 MR. CRAINE: Good morning. Don Craine, Norfolk Southern
4 Transportation, C-r-a-i-n-e.

5 MR. HUNT: Randy Hunt, H-u-n-t, Norfolk Southern Safety.
6 Good morning.

7 MR. CLARK: Good morning.

8 MR. BUCHALA: Maurice Clark, 19G conductor, C-l-a-r-k.

9 MR. McLAIN: Brian McLain, Norfolk Southern Safety
10 Department, M-c-L-a-i-n, observer.

11 MR. MEANS: Vince Means, M-e-a-n-s, Norfolk Southern,
12 regional road foreman.

13 MR. CADOGAN: Good morning. Dan Cadogan, C-a-d-o-g-a-n. I'm
14 with the safety taskforce of BLET.

15 MR. GIBSON: Jordan Gibson, G-i-b-s-o-n, FRA, observer.

16 MR. BANKS: Kevin Banks, B-a-n-k-s, FRA, observer.

17 MR. HULBURT: Paul Hulburt, H-u-l-b-u-r-t, Norfolk Southern,
18 Keystone Division, road foreman, observer.

19 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Okay. Thank you. Maurice, first of all,
20 I appreciate you coming in and cooperating with the investigation.
21 Before we started, you know the interview is being recorded.

22 MR. CLARK: Yes.

23 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: And that it will be transcribed and that
24 you'll get a copy of that transcription.

25 MR. CLARK: Yes.

1 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Okay. And you know that it will
2 eventually be put out on a public docket.

3 MR. CLARK: Yes.

4 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Okay. Very well.

5 INTERVIEW OF MAURICE CLARK

6 BY MR. SKOLNEKOVICH:

7 Q. All right. Maurice, if you don't mind, what I'd like to do
8 is just start a little bit with your railroad -- background of
9 your railroad career. So when were you hired?

10 A. I was hired maybe May, June of 2018. I marked up January
11 3rd, 2019, and I've been conducting in that capacity since.

12 Q. Okay. What division did you get marked up and qualified in?

13 A. I believe it was the Harrisburg Division, but now it's the
14 Keystone.

15 Q. Okay. All right. And what lines did you get qualified on?

16 A. Everything from my -- I worked on the extra list for most of
17 my career thus far. So anything that Allentown went to and did, I
18 was qualified on.

19 Q. Okay. So are you still working the extra board now?

20 A. No, I recently got off last year, maybe October.

21 Q. Okay. You've been working --

22 A. About that.

23 Q. -- regular since then.

24 A. And I was on the 19G -- well, 1819G since, yes.

25 Q. So you've been on that the whole time, 1819G.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. So can you kind of start off -- so with 1819G, where
3 do you sign up at?

4 A. Allentown, Pennsylvania.

5 Q. Allentown. And where do you normally work to?

6 A. Timewise.

7 Q. No, destination-wise.

8 A. Destination. Okay. We build our train at Allentown. Then
9 we proceed to Oak Island, that yard, Conrail territory, shared
10 assets. We usually make a setoff and sometimes there's a pickup
11 and then we proceed to the final destination of Croxton --

12 Q. Croxton.

13 A. -- in New Jersey, Jersey City, New Jersey.

14 Q. Okay. This route, it's always across the ley line?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. So how familiar are you with the ley line?

17 A. Pretty familiar.

18 Q. Okay. Do you take any type of physical qualification testing
19 on the ley line?

20 A. Yes. My last one was a qualification -- territory
21 qualifications for where we go.

22 Q. Okay. And can you give me an idea of what's on qualification
23 testing? Just generally, what you can remember.

24 A. Yeah, they ask you about certain switches, you know, certain
25 rules in certain yards and some of the things don't particularly

1 pertain because it's -- that area is so large, and we only go over
2 a section of it. So, there's some things that don't exactly
3 pertain to where I go, but --

4 Q. So it's just general across the territory?

5 A. Yeah, general across the territory.

6 Q. You mentioned some of the switches. Mainline switches, yard
7 switches.

8 A. Mainline and yard switches.

9 Q. Mainline and yard. What about like industry?

10 A. No, that's one of those things when we go out there, we
11 wouldn't be servicing any industries --

12 Q. Gotcha.

13 A. -- unless you worked in those terminals.

14 Q. What about like if you had a (indiscernible) car? Do they go
15 over any of that?

16 A. I don't believe so, but I think that would be more like a
17 rule, the rules exam that that could be on.

18 Q. Gotcha.

19 A. Not the territory.

20 Q. Gotcha. What about like were CP red, timeout posts and
21 intermediates?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Do they ask you any questions about that?

24 A. Yeah, there's that, yeah.

25 Q. Okay. Is it mostly just CPs or is it just random?

1 A. Mostly CPs but then there's, you know, there's some speeds,
2 you know, what's -- how fast is it at a certain part of our
3 destination you have to go. And then this was a while ago. I
4 can't exactly remember but --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- yeah, it's things of that nature.

7 Q. Okay. No. That's great. All right. The day of the
8 accident, what time did you sign up?

9 A. 9 p.m. Yeah, it's 8:30 in the van for 9 p.m.

10 Q. Did you do any setoff work in Oak Island or pickups?

11 A. Pickup, yes.

12 Q. Pickup.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. How much of a pickup? Just general.

15 A. A large pickup.

16 Q. Large.

17 A. It requires to go DP.

18 Q. Okay. Did you pick up the DP there, too?

19 A. No, we had the DP.

20 Q. Okay, Maurice. That's all I have for now. Thank you.

21 A. Okay.

22 MR. SABOL: Ron Sabol, no questions at this time.

23 MR. BEATON: Bob Beaton.

24 BY MR. BEATON:

25 Q. Just a few questions. I want to follow up on what Rich was

1 asking you. You signed up that day of the accident at 9 p.m.?

2 A. Yes. The night before.

3 Q. The night before. And you worked throughout the night?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Can you give me just a general description of the
6 activities on that night before or leading up to the time of the
7 accident.

8 A. Okay. Got to the office around 8:45, 8:50. Looked over, you
9 know, bulletins and -- we'll waited until 9 p.m. and then looked
10 over our -- it's like a section of -- it's called an OWP where
11 they have the division superintendent bulletins and emails and
12 such, and went over that to make sure there was nothing new going
13 on in the area, and retrieved my NS bulletins, got my Conrail
14 bulletins and my work order. And then spoke -- said hi to the
15 trainmaster, and then spoke to the yardmaster about our work for
16 the night.

17 We got on our train. It was at the middle crossing already
18 put together at Croxton. We departed. We waited at Marion for
19 maybe 15 or 20 minutes, proceeded to Oak Island, tied our train
20 down at stock, and then it was about 4,000-ish feet, maybe a
21 little less, pulled the Valley, shoved into Oak Island and --
22 well, at alley, we received our yard instructions and then shoved
23 into Oak Island and proceeded to put our train together, called
24 the yardmaster on the phone as far as the DP (ph.) placement, and
25 then we went back out at Valley. Got permission to pass the stop

1 signal at stock for our train. Put our train back together with
2 our Croxton section. Then proceeded west to Allentown.

3 Q. Okay. So, tell me a little bit more as you're proceeding
4 west into the area where the accident happened.

5 A. Just a normal uneventful day. It was absolutely nothing out
6 of the ordinary.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. You've been through that territory a lot I take it?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Can you estimate times you've gone east and west through
12 there?

13 A. No, because it's over the course of 6 years and -- no.
14 Honestly, I couldn't give you a proper number.

15 Q. Okay. Yeah. All right. As you, as you approached Redington
16 CP, did you hear any radio traffic?

17 Q. We heard nothing.

18 A. Nothing.

19 Q. Nothing.

20 A. The only thing I noticed physically at Redington was I
21 believe the -- it was a blue trash train with the head end going
22 west. So I believe it was 63V.

23 Q. Okay. And then you passed 63V and at what point did you
24 encounter 24X?

25 A. See, that's the thing. To this day, I don't know which

1 train, which train was which. I -- we -- I initially thought it
2 was one train. We were going past a stacked train which was the
3 intermodal train, and -- wow. We heard a loud bang. This is the
4 events leading up to the accident. We heard a very loud bang, and
5 it was cold and rainy. And the only reason why we were on alert
6 was because all of the water that was on the train, it looked like
7 there was a ghost train on top. It just -- it was exactly boxes
8 of water, and we, you know, we're all like, you know, what is
9 that, you know?

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. So we thought maybe they, you know, they separated their
12 train, they were coming against it and they just made a hard hitch
13 or something like that. Then we came around, we're -- this is a
14 corner now. So we're coming around a corner, coming around a
15 corner, and we come against an engine. And, you know, we thought,
16 you know, it's together. So we thought that, you know, that was
17 their DP. I still don't know if that was DP or not but I'm
18 thinking that it wasn't DP, and it appeared to be smoking like
19 there was either smoke or mist or I don't know. I still don't
20 know what that was because it's -- there's no reason why a train
21 should be smoking out of the front, you know. It was -- it almost
22 looked like a New York City subway grate was coming out from in
23 between the engine and the cars.

24 So now we're on like kind of a high alert and, you know,
25 we're like okay. Maybe -- we didn't say anything to each other

1 because everyone's now, you know, trying to gather -- we're still
2 wondering what that was, and I'm just, you know, I'm thinking
3 maybe, you know, they popped a truck off from that, you know.
4 Usually when you make a hard hitch like that, there's a potential
5 for a truck to pop off the track. So now I'm essentially
6 inspecting the train because they don't pull and, you know, derail
7 it more or yank it more. So if I see something, you know, hey,
8 you know, yada, yada, yada. There's so far back a truck popped
9 off.

10 Q. But you didn't see anything.

11 A. No, not until it was a stacked car perpendicular on the
12 tracks.

13 Q. Right. Yeah. All right. Did you ever determine that
14 initial pop was that you heard? Did you --

15 A. I can only imagine now it was them -- once we saw, once we
16 saw that engine, I thought maybe, you know, the DP, maybe -- like
17 the DP, you know, maybe malfunctioned or they -- or, you know,
18 they did a bump test and, you know, bumped and it did that, you
19 know, but that was an extremely large hit. So I was leaning on
20 like a malfunction type of deal.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But now I've come to know it was them running into the back
23 of a freight train, somebody.

24 Q. All right. Thank you for that. That's all I have for the
25 moment.

1 MR. BROWN: Scott Brown. I don't have any questions at this
2 time.

3 MR. QUILLEN: Josh Quillen, no questions.

4 MR. CRAINE: Craine. No questions at this time.

5 MR. HUNT: No questions right now. Hunt.

6 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Maurice, you doing okay.

7 MR. CLARK: Yeah.

8 BY MR. SKOLNEKOVICH:

9 Q. Okay. I've just got a couple of questions. I kind of want
10 to go back to, if you're okay, I'd like to kind of go back to the
11 incident. So you're at CP Redington, and you saw a -- was there a
12 train there when you hit CP Redington?

13 A. Yes, there was the 63V.

14 Q. Okay. What track was it on?

15 A. Track 2.

16 Q. Okay. And you were on?

17 A. Track 1.

18 Q. Okay. All right. And you continued on. Any idea about how
19 fast you were going?

20 A. No, not after the large bang.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I was preoccupied with, you know, we were all on alert trying
23 to figure out what because no one's experienced something like
24 that.

25 Q. Yeah. No, I gotcha. Did you hear any communications on the

1 radio between that time?

2 A. I heard nothing.

3 Q. Okay. Previously going to that, did you hear any
4 conversation between any of the crews and dispatcher?

5 A. Nothing.

6 Q. Okay. Who's the dispatcher out there?

7 A. Not that I remember. Excuse me.

8 Q. Who's the dispatcher out there?

9 A. Harrisburg East.

10 Q. Okay. So now when you get to the point where you think the
11 DP unit was, is this before or after you saw the large blocks of
12 water coming down?

13 A. This was after, real shortly after.

14 Q. And was that all water just coming off the top of the
15 intermodal cars?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Was it pouring down like a water fall or --

18 A. It just -- all the water going up like a silhouette of the
19 train and then whoosh.

20 Q. Okay. So it went up.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And then fell. Okay. So did you see above the containers?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Once again, I think that's the only reason we were on

1 alert --

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. -- because it was just very strange.

4 Q. So now, did the engineer put on the air or anything or were
5 you just watching what happened? To the best of your
6 recollection.

7 A. When we saw the car across the tracks then, yes, that's when
8 everyone took action.

9 Q. Okay. And what was that action? What happened?

10 A. So we were coming around the corner. We see an intermodal
11 stack perpendicular to the track. John, the engineer, said hang
12 on. He put the air on. At this point, we're all standing up, and
13 we realized that we're going to hit. It's all happening very
14 fast. So I just sat everybody down, and then that's when I
15 believe before the conductor trainee went down, I believe that's
16 when he pulled the emergency handle.

17 Q. Okay. And you guys all hit the floor?

18 A. Yes, we turned our backs to the collision, and we got down
19 and braced ourselves.

20 Q. What did the engineer do?

21 A. Same thing. He braced himself.

22 Q. Okay. Did he stay in the seat or did he jump down on the
23 floor?

24 A. No, no, no, I believe he was down. Yeah, I could see his
25 body.

1 Q. Gotcha. Okay. Now, the next question is kind of after the
2 event. So once everything stopped, you know, and you guys were
3 going down the embankment, how long until you were able to start
4 calling anybody?

5 A. I don't know. I had my eyes closed. We -- everything was
6 just going on. I had my eyes closed. I didn't want to move at
7 all until everything stopped, but then John said, you know, we're
8 in the river, and then you can feel the engine sinking and so I
9 look up and it's just water everywhere and then now it's a mad
10 scramble to try and get out.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So once we were -- once I was on the ground, once we scurried
13 out the back, John was right behind me, and then that's when I
14 called Harrisburg East on my handheld. I still had my handheld
15 round my chest.

16 Q. Did you have any problems reaching them with your handheld?

17 A. Excuse me.

18 Q. Did you have any problems reaching Harrisburg East with your
19 handheld?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. No.

23 Q. Did they respond pretty quickly?

24 A. I would say yes. It was within definitely a normal amount of
25 time.

1 Q. Okay. What instructions did they give you?

2 A. There were no instructions. I stated what happened. I
3 stated what I saw, and then I believe he, you know, he repeated
4 what I said. I do believe it was a male. And he said that, you
5 know, he was going to get emergency responders, you know, out
6 there. They're on the way.

7 Q. To the best of your recollection, how long did it take for
8 first responders to get out there?

9 A. Five minutes, not even. They were -- I would think maybe 10,
10 less though I would say.

11 Q. Did they check you guys out and treat you and the move you or
12 did they move you?

13 A. Well, we were trapped between two tank cars and hopper. So a
14 police officer and a first responder, they were -- they helped us
15 through a covered hopper, got our bags. We took a ride in the
16 ambulance to I guess the command center. They asked us, you know,
17 how we were doing, how we were feeling, but obviously emotions are
18 high. Everyone felt nothing. But, you know, I guess they did.

19 Q. How did they get you out? So there's a right of way there.
20 Did they bring the equipment on the right of way or did they walk
21 you over the hill?

22 A. You know, I really can't remember but I know the ambulance --

23 Q. That's fine.

24 A. -- the ambulance was on the road.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And I believe we went up the hill.

2 Q. Okay. Did any of your crew have any problems making the trip
3 over to the ambulance? Did anybody need assistance?

4 A. No, we were all --

5 Q. No, I got it.

6 A. Just in general, adrenaline. I mean --

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. Maurice, I know this has been hard, and I really
10 appreciate you're help. That's all I have.

11 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Is here any more questions? We'll go
12 around the table.

13 MR. SABOL: No.

14 MR. BEATON: Yeah, I have a few. Bob Beaton.

15 BY MR. BEATON:

16 Q. So I just want to make sure I've got this correct about the
17 communications. As you came into -- on approach to the accident
18 area, I believe you stated you didn't hear anything. Was that
19 because your attention was focused on the issues at hand or --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- was it truly radio silence?

22 A. No, I -- honestly, I was -- and I still am confused as to
23 what was going on. And if there was something happening, it was
24 more than likely I blocked it out because I'm trying to deal with
25 the situation going around a corner, and I'm like, you know, is

1 there something? Is there not something? We've got, I believe it
2 was a 12,000 train going through an interlocking and over a
3 detector, you know. So I don't, you know, I think it was just a
4 combination of things.

5 Q. Okay. Thank you for that. In situations like this, would
6 you normally continue to run at speed or because there's some
7 uncertainty in your --

8 A. It was too much uncertainty.

9 Q. Too much uncertainty. So what could you have done or did you
10 do anything to slow down?

11 A. Me, personally.

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. No.

14 Q. No.

15 A. No, I didn't do anything to slow the train down.

16 Q. Okay. What could you have done?

17 A. I don't think anything. It happened too fast.

18 Q. Too fast.

19 A. Way too fast.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And I certainly wasn't going to pull the handle either, and
22 that's the thing. I trust John McHale with my life. He was the
23 first person -- when I marked up, I marked up on the 18G, and he
24 was the engineer on the 18G. He has many, many years of
25 experience and a lot more than me. Given the situation that was

1 happening, and when he put the air on, and it didn't dump the
2 train, I fully trusted what he was doing, and I didn't want to
3 undermine, you know. I didn't know his thought process. So I
4 didn't want to pull the handle, and we go through this thing too
5 slow or, you know, next thing you know, we've got, you know, an
6 intermodal cab crushing us, you know. My thoughts was honestly I
7 would rather plow through it, you know, but --

8 Q. Okay. If I asked you just a general question, I'd appreciate
9 hearing your thoughts as to the role of the conductor on a NS
10 train, can you kind of give me a general overview of your
11 thoughts?

12 A. Well, as per the rule, the conductor's in charge of the
13 train.

14 Q. Okay. And what does conduct in charge of the train mean in
15 terms of daily operations or in this situation?

16 A. Essentially responsible for everything and also delegation.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yep.

19 Q. So by delegation, you mean --

20 A. Meaning I did not pull the handle because I fully trusted his
21 abilities.

22 Q. Understood.

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. Okay. Got it.

25 A. And I didn't want to -- no, that's not my -- now, on the

1 caveat, there are certain people where I would have pulled the
2 handle if had been on that job. So given the person that I was
3 working with, 100 -- I was ready to -- whatever happened, I'm not
4 going to question it.

5 Q. Okay. Thank you for that. Let me ask you one other -- talk
6 about one other topic here. If you were running through this
7 accident area in the opposite direction, running east, on a
8 morning with the weather conditions that we had here, what would
9 you have expected your speed to be through those turns from was it
10 CP 87 into CP Redington?

11 A. For running east?

12 Q. Yeah. Do I have the direction correct? You were running --

13 A. We were going west, yes. All right. East. We were on the
14 opposite. Are we were going the opposite direction.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. And are we on the track 1 or 2?

17 Q. It would be on the track that 24X was on?

18 A. Restricted, not exceeding 20, stopping within half the
19 distance of sight.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. We probably would have been doing 5, 6 miles an hour creeping
22 up, not even.

23 Q. Okay. You've been through that territory --

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. -- many times.

1 A. Yeah, creeping. Probably would have stopped farther back.

2 Q. Okay. And by creeping you mean how many miles per hour?

3 A. Like I said about 6 miles an hour.

4 Q. Six miles an hour.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. With the same train, maybe less. Once again, also with the
8 length of the train, probably holding back.

9 Q. Okay. How much does the weather affect that judgment as to
10 what the appropriate speed is? This morning it was raining, but
11 suppose it was a bright, dry, sunny day.

12 A. Bright, dry, sunny day. Not much, maybe a mile or 2 faster.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Still operating under the same, you know, thoughts especially
15 if there's a train in front of us, yes.

16 Q. Okay. The limiting factor there in determining the decision
17 as to how slow to go is what? It's not weather.

18 A. No, it's definitely weather, but like I said, it wouldn't
19 have been much faster. We probably would have been going a little
20 bit more faster but not, not too much.

21 Q. Okay. And --

22 A. There was still a train ahead of us. That's when you're on a
23 restricting.

24 Q. Okay. You want to make sure you can stop.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Is that what you're saying?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. All right. Thank you very much, Maurice.

4 MR. BEATON: That's all I have.

5 BY MR. CRAINE:

6 Q. Maurice, one quick question just to clarify on this morning,
7 running west on 19G at Redington, do you remember what signal you
8 were running on?

9 A. I do not.

10 Q. Okay.

11 MR. HUNT: Hunt. This is Hunt. No questions.

12 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Okay. This is Skolnekovich. I have just
13 a few follow on questions with Don.

14 BY MR. SKOLNEKOVICH:

15 Q. As a conductor in your job, what authorizes a train for
16 movement?

17 A. What authorizes a train?

18 Q. Yeah. So what gives your train authorization to move down a
19 track?

20 A. The dispatcher and signal indication.

21 Q. Okay. What governs your speed?

22 A. The posted, you know, the posted I guess limits for the
23 territory.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And signal indication.

1 Q. Okay. So track, track speed and then signal indication. So
2 as a conductor your responsibility is for governing the speed of
3 the train. What is the NS rule as far as if an engineer is
4 speeding? What's the mile per hour that you have to take action?

5 A. Immediately, as soon as -- honestly, I think before.

6 Q. But if he starts creeping over.

7 A. Oh, yeah.

8 Q. Let's say the speed is 30 and he's creeping.

9 A. Well, once I see it -- let's say if it's 30, and I see him
10 bumping between 30 and 31, I'm looking over at him, and if he goes
11 up to 32, hey, but I do believe the threshold is 4 miles an hour
12 especially speeding.

13 Q. Okay. So by the rule, you're supposed to what, give the
14 engineer a warning.

15 A. Yeah. And the PTC also is --

16 Q. Is going to take action.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. And then if it reaches 4 miles an hour, what are you
19 supposed to do?

20 A. You're being enforced.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. You know, you're on that threshold of being enforced as a
23 ready account ongoing.

24 Q. So let me ask you. The track speed at the time was what --
25 30 miles an hour?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. So at 30 miles an hour, how long was your train?

3 A. 12,000 feet-ish.

4 Q. 12,000 feet.

5 A. More or less.

6 Q. What is the risk when you dump a train that's 12,000 feet
7 long into emergency at 30 miles an hour?

8 A. It all depends on where you're at.

9 Q. Okay. Just on straight track.

10 A. Straight track, I mean it could still derail.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. It's a long train. There's a lot going on.

13 Q. So with -- typical with Norfolk Southern, is it typical with
14 the engineer operate the train, if he's operating it without being
15 in accordance with track speed or operating rules, do you just
16 typically let the engineer run the train and just monitor his
17 speed or do you control his speed?

18 A. One more time. I didn't get that.

19 Q. Do you ever control the engineer's speed?

20 A. Do I ever control the engineer's speed?

21 Q. Do you tell the engineer what speed he's supposed to be going
22 at, at any given point in time?

23 A. I mean we're supposed to know that but they -- I mean that's
24 his job to know the speeds.

25 Q. Yeah. And so your job is to do what?

1 A. Just to monitor everything --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- keep everything in check.

4 Q. All right. And then you don't remember what signal you were
5 on at CP Redington?

6 A. No. Things are very weird, and I think I've blocked that
7 out.

8 Q. Okay. That's not a problem. All right. I have no more
9 questions. Thank you, Maurice.

10 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Going around the table one more time.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm good.

12 BY MR. CRAINE:

13 Q. I just had one more question. If -- you mentioned you saw
14 some things that didn't look right or that had you on high alert.
15 If in a situation where there's an emergency, if you were to have
16 heard you know, one of the other crews involved announce the
17 emergency on the radio, when you guys were aware of something
18 strange, is it fair to say you guys probably would have taken some
19 kind of action?

20 A. Absolutely, if we're right there.

21 Q. Okay. That's all I have.

22 A. Or if I heard anything, yeah, or if we heard anything.

23 Q. And you guys didn't hear anything on the radio?

24 A. I didn't. I personally didn't hear any chatter or anything.

25 Q. That's all I have. Thank you.

1 A. Um-hum.

2 BY MR. SKOLNEKOVICH:

3 Q. Okay. Maurice, once again, I appreciate you coming in. Is
4 there anything you'd like to add to the interview?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. Is there anything that you think based on what you
7 know might have helped prevent this accident?

8 A. Honestly, no. It happened to fast.

9 Q. Gotcha. All right. In the future, if we ever have any
10 questions, do you mind if we contact you?

11 A. Sure.

12 Q. Okay. All right. Well, if you have nothing else, I
13 appreciate the time that you've taken to come in here. And on
14 behalf of the NTSB, thank you.

15 A. Thank you.

16 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: That concludes this interview.

17 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

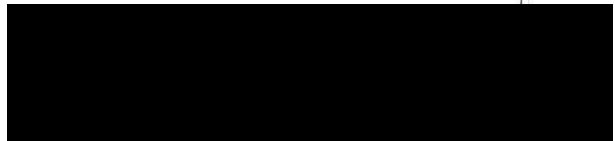
This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN COLLISION
 AND DERAILMENT NEAR EASTON,
 ON MARCH 2, 2024
 Interview of Maurice Clark

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD24FR009

DATE: March 5, 2024

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.



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber