

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

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NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAIN COLLISION \*

AND DERAILMENT NEAR EASTON, \*

Accident No.: RRD24FR009

PENNSYLVANIA ON MARCH 2, 2024 \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: DEVIN BROWN, Conductor (268)  
Norfolk Southern

Monday,  
March 4, 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  
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G. W. SCOTT BROWN, Safety Taskforce  
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VINCE MEANS, Regional Road Foreman (Observer)  
Norfolk Southern

DANIEL CADOGAN, Safety Taskforce (Observer)  
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KEVIN BANKS (Observer)  
Federal Railroad Administration

PAUL HULBURT, Road Foreman (Observer)  
Norfolk Southern

MATT THOMPSON, Investigator (Observer)  
National Transportation Safety Board

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Devin Brown:	
By Mr. Skolnekovich	6
By Mr. Sabol	12
By Mr. Beaton	12
By Mr. Brown	15
By Mr. Quillen	16
By Mr. Craine	17
By Mr. Hunt	18
By Mr. Skolnekovich	21
By Mr. Sabol	34
By Mr. Beaton	35
By Mr. Quillen	39
By Mr. Skolnekovich	41

I N T E R V I E W

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

5 We're conducting an interview today on 4 March 2024 with  
6 Devin Brown who works for Norfolk Southern. This interview is in  
7 conjunction with the NTSB's investigation of the accident that  
8 occurred at Easton, Pennsylvania, on 2 March 2024. The NTSB  
9 accident 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 interviews 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 to my left.

15 Again, my name is Richard Skolnekovich, NTSB operations, and  
16 spelling of my last name is S-k-o-l-n-e-k-o-v-i-c-h.

17 MR. SABOL: My name is Ron Sabol, S-a-b-o-l. I am with SMART  
18 Transportation Division, Sheet, Metal, Air, Rail and  
19 Transportation Workers. I am part of the national safety team.

20 MR. BEATON: Good morning. My name is Bob Beaton. I'm with  
21 the NTSB. I serve as chief for the system safety division in the  
22 Division of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials.

23 MR. BROWN: G. W. Scott Brown. I'm with the Brotherhood of  
24 Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen on their safety taskforce.

25 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Spell out your last name.

1 MR. BROWN: B-r-o-w-n.

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

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

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

6 MR. KREIS: Robert Kreis, K-r-e-i-s, SMART representative for  
7 Devin.

8 MR. BROWN: Devin Brown, conductor for NS, B-r-o-w-n.

9 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Okay. Now, we have some observers in the  
10 room. Vince.

11 MR. MEANS: Vince Means, regional road foreman, Norfolk  
12 Southern.

13 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Spell out your last name.

14 MR. MEANS: M-e-a-n-s.

15 MR. CADOGAN: Daniel Cadogan, C-a-d-o-g-a-n, safety  
16 taskforce.

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

18 MR. HULBURT: Paul Hulburt, H-u-l-b-u-r-t, Norfolk Southern,  
19 road foreman.

20 MR. THOMPSON: Matt Thompson, NTSB investigator, T-h-o-m-p-s-  
21 o-n.

22 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: All right. Thank you very much. I want  
23 to thank you, Devin, for coming here and helping us out. This  
24 interview is being recorded. Do we have your permission to record  
25 it?

1 MR. BROWN: Yes.

2 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: All right. And you understand that at  
3 some point in time this will be transcribed. It'll be put in the  
4 public docket and at some time will be available to the public.

5 MR. BROWN: Okay.

6 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Okay. And that's -- do you have any  
7 questions before we begin?

8 MR. BROWN: No.

9 INTERVIEW OF DEVIN BROWN

10 BY MR. SKOLNEKOVICH:

11 Q. All right. What I'd like to do, Devin, is I'd like to start  
12 off with a little bit of your background and history with the  
13 railroad.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. So what railroad you started with and what year?

16 A. Norfolk Southern, it was around November 2021.

17 Q. November 2021.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And you've been a conductor the whole time?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. All right. You didn't get engineer promoted or anything like  
22 that?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. All right. Where did you get qualified at?

25 A. Croxton.

1 Q. Where at?

2 A. Croxton, New Jersey.

3 Q. Croxton.

4 A. Croxton Yard.

5 Q. Yard. Where are you qualified at right now?

6 A. Jersey, Hagerstown, Harrisburg, Enola, Philly. I'd say  
7 that's about it.

8 Q. Okay. Are you working the board or an extra job or regular  
9 job?

10 A. Yeah, I'm working a regular job right now.

11 Q. How long have you been on the regular job?

12 A. Well, I just came back from the go team. I'd say at least  
13 about 2 weeks now.

14 Q. About 2 weeks. Okay. So now the jobs you've been working,  
15 how much time have you spent on the ley line?

16 A. You mean like hours or --

17 Q. Just months, weeks, days. Okay. So you qualified on the  
18 territory.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Right. So how long ago did you qualify on the territory?

21 A. Maybe about a few months ago.

22 Q. Okay. A couple of months ago.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. And then how many trips do you think you might have made over  
25 that line since that time?

1 A. Fifteen, twenty.

2 Q. Fifteen, twenty. And you've always worked two man crews?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. And where's your home base at? Where do you sign up  
5 at?

6 A. Croxton.

7 Q. Croxton.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. And is it an overnight job or is it --

10 A. Overnight.

11 Q. Okay. So where do you end up getting relieved at?

12 A. Harrisburg.

13 Q. Harrisburg. Okay. Are you pretty much returning home the  
14 next day or you get some layovers?

15 A. Yeah, the same day, when we're rested, get a train going back  
16 to Jersey.

17 Q. Okay. So you don't stay overnight. You just go out to  
18 Harrisburg and come back or do you stay overnight in Harrisburg?

19 A. No, we stay overnight.

20 Q. Okay. Now, let me ask you this. So, when did you take the  
21 last qualifying exam? So was it 2 months ago?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Or before?

24 A. We just had one. I can't really tell you the exact time but,  
25 yeah, I would say a few months ago, I just had the qualifying.



1 Q. Okay. Was it a written test or was it like a computer test?

2 A. It was a computer test.

3 Q. Computer test. And was it just on that territory or was it a  
4 host of territories or lines?

5 A. It was just on that territory.

6 Q. Just on that?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. So what does -- can you kind of describe ley line,  
9 where's it start and end at? Just -- this isn't a quiz. What you  
10 know is what you remember.

11 A. I mean it's kind of hard. I mean starting and ending. I  
12 mean we start in Jersey and we end in Harrisburg.

13 Q. Okay. Well, that's fine right there.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. New Jersey to Harrisburg. Where at in New Jersey? Is there  
16 a yard? Croxton.

17 A. Yeah, Croxton.

18 Q. Okay. Now, tell me about like class rules exam? When's the  
19 last time you took a rules exam?

20 A. The same time we did the qualification.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. A few months ago.

23 Q. Okay. So you got qualified in this, in this area recently.

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. But were you working away at a different crew base or -- so

1 you've been there since 2021.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Why is it you just got qualified on ley line? Was it a bump?  
4 Was it a --

5 A. No, there was no bump. I mean we -- I'm just trying to  
6 understand the question there. I mean when we come out as a CT,  
7 once we leave training, we, you know, we automatically qualified  
8 there.

9 Q. Okay. Let me rephrase it then. When did you get marked up?

10 A. I got marked up on the 21st of November.

11 Q. Of last year?

12 A. No, no, 2021.

13 Q. 2021.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. So between '21, November of '21 until a couple of months ago,  
16 where were you working at?

17 A. I was in Harrisburg.

18 Q. You were in Harrisburg.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Working the yard?

21 A. Working the yard, road.

22 Q. What road jobs were you working? Like what areas?

23 A. Hagerstown, Philly.

24 Q. Hagerstown, okay.

25 A. Morrisville.

1 Q. Okay. And you said a rules exam was in November of -- yeah,  
2 November '21 was your last rules exam.

3 A. No, my last rules exam, we -- you know, we have to certify,  
4 you know, every 2 years.

5 Q. Every 2 years?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. So when was the last time you recertified?

8 A. So recertification, you know, like I said, I can't remember  
9 the last date, but it was a few months ago. It was --

10 Q. Okay. Just a couple of months ago.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay. All right. Now, the crew you were working with, is a  
13 regular crew, you and the engineer you were working with?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. How long have you been working with him? Just a  
16 couple of months?

17 A. Well, he just came onto the job. So I would say, I would say  
18 about 2 weeks.

19 Q. About 2 weeks.

20 A. On this job, yeah.

21 Q. Okay. How many trips do you think you've made with him?

22 A. About 10.

23 Q. About 10 trips. Okay. That's all I have for right now.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. SABOL: Ron Sabol, SMART TD.

1 BY MR. SABOL:

2 Q. Good morning, Devin. I want to thank you for coming out  
3 today.

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. I just have maybe a couple of questions here. You said that  
6 you made about 15 to 20 trips on the ley line.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Were those trips complete on the ley line? In other words,  
9 did you end up getting recrewed somewhere or something like that?

10 A. No, those trips were straight to our destination.

11 Q. Straight to your destination.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. In those 15 or 20 trips that you made --

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. That you said, were they all in -- were they in both  
16 directions? So in other words, if you did 20 trips, you had 10  
17 trips going east and 10 trips going west?

18 A. Yeah, yeah. So that would be, yeah, going and coming.

19 Q. Okay. You had about 10 trips going and coming?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 MR. SABOL: No more questions at this time.

23 BY MR. BEATON:

24 Q. Good morning, Devin. My name is Bob Beaton, B-e-a-t-o-n --

25 A. Good morning.

1 Q. -- with NTSB. I'd just like to find out your impression at  
2 the time of the accident. Can you offer me some description of  
3 what you see as what transpired there that caused this collision?

4 A. I mean we had a lot of different signals. Signals was  
5 updating as we were coming through Bethlehem there and, you know,  
6 we had an approach and me and the engineer actually had a brief  
7 moment about, you know, if dispatch is going to light us up or  
8 not. And as we were going, you know, clearing Bethlehem to, you  
9 know, we started getting different signals, and we came into  
10 restrict at the 85 after we had the approach at the 87 and, you  
11 know, just coming around that bend, we didn't -- I mean, you know,  
12 coming around that bend is when we basically saw the cars there.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And it just led into, you know, everything that happened.

15 Q. What was the weather?

16 A. It was raining.

17 Q. Raining.

18 A. It was raining, yeah.

19 Q. Did you have trouble seeing the train ahead?

20 A. No, I mean we had, we had a good vision of it. It actually  
21 stopped raining as we was leading into it.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But it was just coming around that corner. We can't see  
24 what's around that corner until we actually come around it and,  
25 you know, even coming into it, we still had plenty of, you know, I

1 felt like we still had plenty of room to stop, but I guess the  
2 rain on the rails and everything else, it just, it just didn't  
3 grip good enough and it happened.

4 Q. Okay. I appreciate that. Let's stay with the moments just  
5 before the impact. What were you doing and what was the engineer  
6 doing? Can you give me some description of that?

7 A. Before the impact or leading into the impact?

8 Q. Well, leading into the impact.

9 A. Well, we was having a brief conversation just about life. We  
10 were just talking and, you know, we was just having a little  
11 conversation there and, you know, once -- you know, like I said,  
12 once we came around that bend is when we noticed it, and the  
13 engineer did everything he could to, you know, to stop the train,  
14 pulling the independent brake and, you know, I thought he had  
15 control of it, and as we was coming in, it -- I mean everything  
16 was happening so fast, I kind of just felt like the way we was  
17 coming in, the windows being there, I didn't want to be in the  
18 seat. So I just of braced for impact.

19 Q. Okay. Okay. And then I appreciate that description. Can  
20 you give me a description of what happened after the impact?

21 A. After the impact, and I got off of the floor, we just kind of  
22 settled into what just happened, and the engineer made the call to  
23 the dispatcher. He called him on the radio. He didn't answer,  
24 and then the train ahead of us also called. So we basically  
25 called around the same time and he answered 24X first and, you

1 know, they explained that we just felt a bump. I don't know  
2 what's going on but we just felt a bump. And then my engineer  
3 interrupted, came in and said we just hit the 24X and, you know,  
4 and that was that.

5 Q. Okay. So, the engineer called the dispatcher and 24X called  
6 the dispatcher.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. The dispatcher answered 24X.

9 A. Answered the 24X first, yeah.

10 Q. Okay. All right. Thanks. That's it for right now. Thank  
11 you.

12 BY MR. BROWN:

13 Q. G. W. Scott Brown. I'm with the BLET safety taskforce.  
14 Thanks for coming today. How long were you away on the go team?  
15 Did you say you were --

16 A. I would say about 8 months, 7, 8 months.

17 Q. Eight months.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And what location was there?

20 A. I was working -- I was on the Enola extra board list, yeah.

21 Q. Okay. On the date that you were on the 268, can you tell me  
22 what time you were on duty?

23 A. 2:15.

24 Q. 2:15 in the AM?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And do you remember how much rest you got?

2 A. I had my 10 hours.

3 Q. You did?

4 A. Yeah.

5 MR. BROWN: That's all I have right now.

6 MR. QUILLEN: Josh Quillen, FRA.

7 BY MR. QUILLEN:

8 Q. Let me see. I have a couple of questions. You tell us how  
9 long you were qualified on it. Do you feel you was properly  
10 qualified on it, and had enough resources?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. I used to be an engineer, too. So I know how it is being out  
13 there when you're following trains.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. Like how long had you been -- how long was you guys following  
16 this 24X? Was it kind of right on their heels or rear end?

17 A. Well, not really. He ran us -- they ran the 24X because we  
18 had to stop in Rutherford and do some work. So he ran them past  
19 us and they were well ahead of us before we even left out of  
20 Rutherford.

21 Q. Rutherford.

22 A. Rutherford Yard, yeah.

23 Q. All right. Do you feel there was any, you know, getting your  
24 (indiscernible) restrictions, any distractions or anything like  
25 that, that would cause you guys, you know --



1 A. No distractions.

2 Q. Let's see. I want to follow back on, just to make I  
3 understand your qualifications and where you worked at. Is your  
4 home terminal Croxton or is it Harrisburg?

5 A. Croxton.

6 Q. It's in Croxton. You said the last few months though, you  
7 was, or many I misunderstood, you had been working in Harrisburg.

8 A. I was on the travel team with the go teams.

9 Q. Oh, go team.

10 A. I was working out of Harrisburg.

11 Q. I don't know what the go team is.

12 A. Yeah, it's a travel team. So I was working out of  
13 Harrisburg.

14 Q. Okay. I gotcha. Like safety, stuff like that?

15 A. Say it again.

16 Q. Like safety.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay.

19 MR. QUILLEN: All right. That's all I have.

20 BY MR. CRAINE:

21 Q. Good morning, Devin. Don Craine. Do you recall during your  
22 time on the go team how long you spent in Harrisburg on the go  
23 team?

24 A. It was about 8 months.

25 Q. Okay. And during that 8 months, did you make any trips back

1 to Croxton?

2 A. I did.

3 Q. And estimation?

4 A. I would say about three or four trips, something like that.

5 Q. Okay. In the whole 8 month period or --

6 A. Say it again.

7 Q. In the whole 8 month period --

8 A. In the whole 8 months, I would say at least 10 trips in the  
9 whole 8 months, yeah.

10 Q. Okay. Just recalling from my recollection, you said you had  
11 87 was approach and 85 restricted. Did I hear that correctly?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. All right. And the conversation in the cab at the  
14 time, do you have any recollection of that?

15 A. Just about alike. We wasn't, you know, we both saw the  
16 signal and, you know, we were just, you know, we was in our  
17 conversation, and he was just going at restricted speed.

18 Q. Okay.

19 MR. CRAINE: That's all I have at this time.

20 MR. HUNT: All right. Randy Hunt, H-u-n-t, Norfolk Southern  
21 safety.

22 BY MR. HUNT:

23 Q. A couple questions about the territory because I'm not really  
24 familiar. At 85 --

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. -- you had a restricted, didn't you?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And the next interlocking is Redington. Is that right or --

4 A. After 85, we have -- after the 85 is Redington.

5 Q. Which is a control point.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. Did you have -- did you know that you were following a  
8 train or why you got the restricted?

9 A. We did not know. I mean there was a lot of talk going on  
10 with the dispatcher and multiple trains that was in and out of  
11 yards, coming out of Allentown and, you know, coming west. But  
12 normally when we see a restricting, that means -- that tells us  
13 that there's something in the block. So we kind of, you know,  
14 just off the top just know that there's something ahead of us, not  
15 knowing how far it is or what we're coming into, that was the  
16 point there.

17 Q. Okay. And you said you saw the rear end of the train ahead,  
18 the engineer started to take actions to slow down.

19 A. Started to take action, yes.

20 Q. You thought he could stop?

21 A. Yeah, I thought he had control.

22 Q. At any point did either of you put the train in emergency?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I don't know if he did. I know I didn't.

1 Q. Okay. And, was there some point where you guys realized  
2 we're not going to get stopped, and you said you got on the floor.

3 A. Yeah, it was, you know, once I felt like, because we had a  
4 pretty decent distance to stop but, you know, everything was just  
5 happening so fast. So once I, you know, once I kind of felt that  
6 it wasn't going to stop and, you know, I saw how close we were, I  
7 just braced there.

8 Q. And so you don't know if the train was ever in emergency?

9 A. I don't, no.

10 Q. Okay. Fair enough. And then just for clarity on the go  
11 team, the go team is a group that is taken out of a terminal when  
12 there's a need at another terminal --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- to supplement that workforce, right?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. So you essentially volunteer and then you go work somewhere  
17 else --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- for some period of time. All right. So it's working as a  
20 conductor at a different location?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. That's all I've got right now. Thank you.

23 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Richard Skolnekovich. Devin, you doing  
24 okay?

25 MR. BROWN: Say it again.

1 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Are you doing okay?

2 MR. BROWN: Yeah, I'm fine.

3 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: You need a break or anything?

4 MR. BROWN: No, I don't.

5 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Okay. Then I'll keep going then.

6 MR. BROWN: Okay.

7 BY MR. SKOLNEKOVICH:

8 Q. So I'd like to go back to the incident. So prior to -- the  
9 day of the accident, so prior to reaching the -- so prior to  
10 reaching the approach, were you getting any radio communications  
11 from dispatch about what trains were in front of you or when?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. Did you get anything from dispatch?

14 A. Not that I can recall.

15 Q. Okay. What dispatch were you working with?

16 A. I don't know. I don't know the name.

17 Q. Do you know what channel that line is on?

18 A. Channel 2.

19 Q. Channel 2.

20 A. 6464.

21 Q. 6464.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. Okay.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can we take a little break please?

25 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Certainly. One second. The time is now

1 9:38, and we're pausing.

2 (Off the record at 9:38 a.m.)

3 (On the record at 9:45 a.m.)

4 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Okay. The time is now 0945, and we're  
5 going to go ahead and resume the interview with Devin Brown,  
6 conductor, Norfolk Southern.

7 BY MR. SKOLNEKOVICH:

8 Q. So, back to what we were talking about before. I was kind of  
9 talking about the accident day.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. So as you approach and we got the approach. Where did you  
12 get the approach at? Do you remember?

13 A. 87.

14 Q. 87.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. All right. Do you know what before then?

17 A. We had another approach at 79 (ph.).

18 Q. So when you were passing Bethlehem, you just probably caught  
19 up with 24X. Is that what happened?

20 A. No. They were already stopped.

21 Q. They were already stopped?

22 A. Yeah. So we were just getting the signal leading up to I  
23 guess where their hind end was.

24 Q. Okay. All right. So that's the first time you had the  
25 signal drop.

1 A. Say that again.

2 Q. Was that 87? Was that the first place where you started  
3 getting restricted signals?

4 A. Yeah, after the 87.

5 Q. After 87. Okay. All right. So prior to that you were  
6 running on regular track speed or not?

7 A. 30 miles is what the approach is.

8 Q. 30 miles. Yeah, but prior to 87. So when did you first get  
9 your approach?

10 A. Coming down to, you know, at Bethlehem.

11 Q. At Bethlehem?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay. So Bethlehem, you got your first approach.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And then from there, you worked all the way down to 87 pretty  
16 much on approach?

17 A. Yeah, on approach, yeah.

18 Q. Okay. And then when did you get the restricting?

19 A. At the 85.

20 Q. At the 85. Okay. So, now you didn't get any -- in between  
21 that time when you started getting your reduced signals, you  
22 didn't get anything from dispatch?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. All right. Did any of the other train crews talk  
25 about what was going on? Did 24X go, you know, did they call out

1 any signals?

2 A. They was stopped. I didn't hear anything from 24X.

3 Q. Okay. Did you hear them say that over the radio or --

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. So you just knew they were in front of you.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. But you didn't know where they were stopped at?

8 A. We don't know where they were stopped, yes.

9 Q. Okay. Now, you said you and the engineer talked about it a  
10 little bit. Can you kind of -- just kind of walk me through the  
11 conversation you had with the engineer, what the engineer -- when  
12 you started getting restricted signals?

13 A. After the restricted, we jus -- I was telling him about my  
14 son's travel team. He was telling me about how his grandkids were  
15 doing. It was just a conversation about family and things like  
16 that.

17 Q. Okay. Now, this is all wayside. So, did you know, did you  
18 know about how far the next signal was going to be between 85 and  
19 -- so the next one was what? A CP. After 85 is a CP?

20 A. Yeah, yeah, it would be a control point. That would be  
21 Redington.

22 Q. Next CP Redington.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. About how far is that from 85 to CP Redington?

25 A. I would say at least 2 miles from 85.



1 Q. Okay. So did you guys talk about CP Redington at all, you  
2 and the engineer?

3 A. We did not, no.

4 Q. Okay. So you hit the 85, you hit the restricting.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. What did the engineer do? Did he slow down? Did he --

7 A. Yeah, yeah, we went at the restricted speed.

8 Q. Restricted speed. Just for my knowledge, what is restricted  
9 speed?

10 A. Up to 19 miles. We was going 15.

11 Q. Restricted 19 miles. Is there anything else associated with  
12 restricted speed?

13 A. Being able to stop half the distance.

14 Q. Okay. Do you know if you had any problems with the brakes on  
15 this train?

16 A. Not that I know of.

17 Q. Okay. Did you notice -- I don't know if you would know this,  
18 but did you know if he was using air or was using dynamic?

19 A. I don't know.

20 Q. Okay. Do you know the difference between the two? The  
21 dynamic and the air.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. Do you know what the dynamic sounds like?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Okay. All right. And you said when you -- at some point,

1 you guys came around the curve.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. That -- just based on your recollection, about how far do you  
4 think you saw the train?

5 A. I was say at least five to seven, five to seven cars.

6 Q. Five to seven cars?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Okay. All right. And did you say anything to the engineer  
9 when you saw it?

10 A. Well, I did curse. I said, oh, goddammit, when we saw it --

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. -- when we saw it in the block, and that's when he just took  
13 action --

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. -- and tried to get it down.

16 Q. Do you know if he used air then or --

17 A. I do recall him -- well, hearing the air, yes.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. So I would assume he used air and full dynamics to --

20 Q. The bit blow of the air?

21 A. It was loud, yes.

22 Q. Okay. And you said you thought he had it?

23 A. I thought he had it under control, yes.

24 Q. Yeah. So you hit the floor, right?

25 A. Yes, as we -- you know, because everything was happening so

1 fast.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. So, yeah, I hit the floor before impact.

4 Q. How soon before impact do you think you did that? Just to  
5 the best of your recollection?

6 A. Yeah, I would say at least a minute or so after because I  
7 just wanted to make sure what he was doing was good, that he, you  
8 know, that he had full control, and as we were coming in, I was  
9 watching him and didn't pay any attention to where we at, and it  
10 just kind of happened.

11 Q. I gotcha. So you saw it, you both yelled out.

12 A. Yeah, we both yelled out. I'm watching him. I'm seeing what  
13 he's doing, and I'm, you know, but it was just, you know, it just  
14 wasn't gripping.

15 Q. I gotcha. Okay. So then you impacted the other train. What  
16 was your guys next action after that? So after you hit, you  
17 stopped moving. What happened then?

18 A. Yeah, once we kind of, kind of collected our thoughts of what  
19 just happened, I got off the floor and, you know, we just got our  
20 thoughts together a little bit and then he called the dispatcher,  
21 and then, you know, the 24X called as well.

22 Q. When he called the dispatcher, what did he, what did he tell  
23 dispatch?

24 A. Yeah, he just said Harrisburg East, you know, he called out  
25 the symbol, 268 Harrisburg East, and we were just waiting on the

1 response.

2 Q. How long do you think until they did respond?

3 A. Well, he responded to the 24X first.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Because they kind of called right after, you know, right  
6 after us.

7 Q. So you guys called and then 24X called.

8 A. Yeah, 24X called, yeah.

9 Q. And then Harrisburg East responded to 24X.

10 A. To 24X, yes.

11 Q. Okay. Based on your recollection, what did 24X say?

12 A. The engineer just said, I don't know what's going on but we  
13 just got hit. I just felt a bump. And then my engineer just came  
14 in and kind of interrupted and said, yeah, we ran into the back of  
15 the 24X.

16 Q. Okay. Did Harrisburg East ever respond back to your  
17 engineer?

18 A. He did respond. He said, okay, 268 ran into the back end,  
19 you know, and that was that. That's all I remember.

20 Q. All right. Now, do you know if the -- now, he threw on the  
21 air. Do you know if he put it in emergency or not?

22 A. I do not.

23 Q. Okay. But you heard the big blow of air?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. Did he say anything about PCS or anything like that?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay. Do you know what PCS is?

3 A. I don't.

4 Q. Okay. Now, you got, you got a screen in your front. Are you  
5 able to see the air gauges from your screen?

6 A. Air gauges, no.

7 Q. Okay. You just get (indiscernible) from that screen or --

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. So if you saw air gauges, would you know what the air  
10 pressures were supposed to be?

11 A. As far as stopping?

12 Q. Well, just like -- I don't know if you've been or not to look  
13 at air gauges. Like if you looked at a typical train air gauge,  
14 would you know what to look for?

15 A. Yeah, I would know what to look for on the air gauge, yes.

16 Q. Okay. So what's brake pipe pressure normally? Like I said,  
17 it's not a quiz. I'm just --

18 A. Yeah, no, no, no. I would say 75 psi.

19 Q. So did the engineer say anything about having problems with  
20 his air?

21 A. He didn't, no.

22 Q. Okay. All right. And then -- so then you had 19G that was  
23 going west.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. About how long after the impact do you think 19G went by?

1 A. Five, ten minutes.

2 Q. Okay. Minutes you said.

3 A. Minutes, yes.

4 Q. Okay. All right. Now, did -- with that kind of impact, is  
5 there any requirement that you have to make sure all your stuff is  
6 still on the rails? Is there any rule or anything like that?

7 A. A impact like that, we, you know, we normally just check the  
8 training.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And, you know, we will make sure that the air is coming back  
11 up which is did. I mean we did -- the air, you know, the air was  
12 lost during impact and then, you know, and this was a conversation  
13 that he was having with the dispatcher that the air was restoring.  
14 So.

15 Q. Okay. You said that the air was restoring on the train?

16 A. The air was restoring, yes.

17 Q. Okay. So did that make you think everything was intact  
18 normally?

19 A. That would make it seem that, yeah, there's no disconnects.

20 Q. Okay. Do you know if he ever got his air up, recovered?

21 A. I don't know if it was 100 percent recovered but he just said  
22 the air is restoring. So I don't know if it recovered 100 percent  
23 or not.

24 Q. Okay. Did you get any later communications from the  
25 westbound train, 19G?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay. Did you guys talk to 24X at all?

3 A. No, not -- you know, after the impact, we didn't speak to  
4 nobody, no.

5 Q. Okay. At any point, did anybody talk to 24X or was it they  
6 just called Harrisburg East?

7 A. They just call, you know, after the impact.

8 Q. Gotcha. Okay. So then 19G went back and they stopped. Did  
9 you know why they stopped initially? That was the westbound  
10 train.

11 A. Why they stopped after they passed us or --

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. They must have -- something must have been on the tracks and  
14 they --

15 Q. Gotcha. All right. Now afterwards, did you go out and walk  
16 the training at all?

17 A. I did not.

18 Q. Okay. Were you given any instructions over the radio what  
19 you guys were supposed to do from either Harrisburg East or from a  
20 manager?

21 A. After that point, no.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Once we made the call that was about it.

24 Q. Okay. All right. So who relieved you then? How did you  
25 guys get relieved?

1 A. The trainmaster came. They had the fire rescue. They got us  
2 off the engine and --

3 Q. Fire rescue got you guys off the engine?

4 A. Yeah, they got us off the engine.

5 Q. Were you guys injured?

6 A. We were not.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I wasn't.

9 Q. Gotcha. Did they come down to the locomotive or did you guys  
10 go to them, the EMS?

11 A. They came down.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. It was kind of like on a cliff.

14 Q. Gotcha. And they just -- did they just walk you out?

15 A. No, they, they had a mat and we had to put on harnesses and  
16 we went up the ladder there with our bags and --

17 Q. Okay. Now, how long after the impact do you think EMS showed  
18 up?

19 A. I would say about 15 minutes, but it was more so like a drive  
20 by. I mean once we, I mean once we said we were, you know, we was  
21 good and safe, I think the main focus was the 19G.

22 Q. Gotcha. Okay. So they stopped, checked on you and then they  
23 went --

24 A. Yeah, they stopped and checked and yeah.

25 Q. Gotcha. So how long do you think you guys were remaining in



1 the cab until you got pulled out or climbed up the ladders?

2 A. We was there for a few hours.

3 Q. Okay. Then did the trainmaster meet you up where the EMS was  
4 at?

5 A. Yeah, he did come. He was on the engineer's side. So the  
6 engineer was talking to him. I didn't really recall what they  
7 were saying. But he just told us to standby and kind of just wait  
8 for the rescue then.

9 Q. Okay. All right. Did the trainmaster give you instructions  
10 or talk to you guys about what had happened at all?

11 A. No, it was just a standby.

12 Q. Okay. Do you know what the trainmaster's name was?

13 A. I do not.

14 Q. Okay. Had you ever met him before?

15 A. I've seen his face.

16 Q. Okay. All right. So after the impact and everything, did  
17 you and the engineer talk about what had happened?

18 A. Yeah, we did.

19 Q. What did the engineer tell you?

20 A. I mean he was more so just a little upset that it happened --

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. -- and more so worried about the 19G because, you know, the  
23 car came over and they went in the water. So he was just kind of  
24 panicking about that.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. You know, just talking about, you know, how everything  
2 occurred.

3 Q. Did you guys hear them on the radio at all?

4 A. Yeah. Once, once they had impact and then -- yeah, they did  
5 say, because he did call and checked on me and then I called and  
6 checked on him and just basically said, you know, I want to keep  
7 hearing your voice because they're in the water.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. So I just wanted to make sure that they were safe.

10 Q. Yeah. That's great. So you were talking to the conductor on  
11 19G?

12 A. I did not know if it was the conductor or the engineer.

13 Q. Okay. That's a good way. And then were you still around  
14 when they got pulled off the equipment?

15 A. The 19G?

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. Yeah, we were still around.

18 Q. About what time was that? Do you know?

19 A. I don't.

20 Q. Okay. All right, Devin. Thank you.

21 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Ron.

22 MR. SABOL: Ron Sabol, SMART Transportation Division.

23 BY MR. SABOL:

24 Q. Devin, I haven't been inside the cab of the locomotive yet.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. Is that a conventional stand locomotive where you actually  
2 can't see the engineer, you know, at the control stand, comes  
3 across him in this fashion?

4 A. No, it wasn't. It was a wide body.

5 Q. Could you see his face?

6 A. Yeah, yeah, I could see his fact from my seat. I could kind  
7 of --

8 Q. Could you see his controls and everything?

9 A. No, I can't see his controls. No.

10 Q. Okay. All right. At any point during your trip or any other  
11 trips working with him, did you feel that he operated okay and he  
12 was a safe engineer?

13 A. Yes.

14 MR. SABOL: Okay. No further questions.

15 MR. BEATON: Okay. This is Bob Beaton, NTSB.

16 BY MR. BEATON:

17 Q. Devin, I just want to follow up on a couple areas here. You  
18 were talking about you -- that 24X was stopped ahead of you. Can  
19 you tell me when you learned that 24X was stopped?

20 A. We didn't know that they were stopped. My thing is if, you  
21 know, coming across that restricting, there's something in the  
22 block, I mean we --

23 Q. Oh, okay.

24 A. -- I mean we knew after we left Rutherford that they were  
25 going to be the train ahead of us because we, you know, we didn't

1 hear anybody else coming around us or going ahead of us at any  
2 time during, you know, after we left Rutherford.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So in my mind, I would automatically assume that they would  
5 be the train that we was coming behind.

6 Q. Understood. Okay. And no radio traffic that indicated that  
7 24X was stopped?

8 A. We -- there was radio traffic, you know, it was a lot because  
9 there was a few trains all around coming out of Allentown. So we  
10 did hear that the 24X was ahead. I didn't know that they was -- I  
11 don't recall them saying. There was a lot of communication. So I  
12 don't really recall if he said that they were stopped. He just  
13 said that they were ahead.

14 Q. Okay. You mentioned that you had been through this territory  
15 here about 15 times I think it was?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And you had been by this 87 and 85 before?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Were you aware of the sort of limited sight distance going  
20 into the area between 87 and 85?

21 A. The sight distance?

22 Q. Yeah, how far you could see. You had mentioned that there  
23 was a turn there.

24 A. Yeah, there was a turn. Yeah, I really -- I mean it's kind  
25 of hard to -- can you repeat the question?

1 Q. Okay. What I'm trying to get a handle on is, you know, just  
2 how familiar you were with that area that had a limited visibility  
3 around that curve. I mean you had been there before.

4 A. Yeah, we had been there before.

5 Q. Was there anything striking about that curve that you  
6 remember or said, hey, when I go through here I have to watch,  
7 watch my speed?

8 A. No, not really. I mean we just wasn't expecting the cars to  
9 be -- the hind end to be where it was. So it was like coming  
10 around that curve, it was, it was more so just a, you know, kind  
11 of a decision to just bring it to a stop but, yeah, we didn't have  
12 like a straight distance to kind of see how far ahead they were --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. -- you know, wherever it was. We just came around that bend  
15 and, you know, we saw the hind end.

16 Q. Okay. Let's let me talk to you a little bit about restricted  
17 speed. Could you tell me again what your understanding of  
18 restricted speed is?

19 A. Being prepared to stop.

20 Q. How fast or how quickly?

21 A. Within half the distance. I mean restricted speed is up to  
22 19 miles. So it's --

23 Q. What does that mean within half the distance to an  
24 obstruction?

25 A. Just being able to stop within half the distance of when you

1 could see what's ahead of you.

2 Q. So after you had the approach and you got the restricting --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- at 85, and you had limited view down the track because of  
5 the curve, did that cause you to slow down or want the engineer to  
6 slow down?

7 A. Yes. I mean once we saw it, it was -- yeah.

8 Q. Now, I know you started to slow once you saw the hind end --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- of 24X but I'm talking about just the territory. Was  
11 there anything in the territory there that would have caused you,  
12 other than the signals --

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. -- put you at restricting, were you just running at less than  
15 19 on restricted?

16 A. Yeah, we was. Yeah, we was at 15 --

17 Q. Fifteen.

18 A. -- 15 miles an hour.

19 Q. Yeah. So the territory -- the fact that you couldn't see  
20 that far --

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. -- down the track, that didn't resonate with you or mean  
23 anything to you?

24 A. At the moment, no.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah, at the moment, no.

2 Q. Are there other blocks along this territory that you have  
3 limited sight distance that you're -- that you've gone through it  
4 15 times. You're pretty familiar with the territory. Is there  
5 any other areas of limited sight distance?

6 A. Maybe the Redington, coming up to that Redington before you  
7 can see that signal there.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. You know, there's a bridge there, you know, when you get  
10 around there, it's pretty tight to actually see the signal.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. But that would be the only, the only --

13 Q. Only place.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. So I just want to make sure that as you were coming  
16 down from Bethlehem at the 87 to 85, you heard a lot of radio  
17 traffic, but there was no dispatcher call that says -- that you  
18 heard, about 24X being stopped.

19 A. Not that I can recall, no.

20 Q. Not that you can recall. Okay.

21 MR. BEATON: Okay. That's all I have for the moment.

22 MR. BROWN: G. W. Scott Brown with the BLET, and I have no  
23 further questions.

24 MR. QUILLEN: John Quillen, FRA.

25 BY MR. QUILLEN:

1 Q. Going back to radio communications, there was a lot of  
2 chatter, but is there a rule or anything that says you would have  
3 said emergency or anything like that?

4 A. There is. You know, there is depending on the circumstance,  
5 you know, there is.

6 Q. Were you guys able to do that or because of the radio chatter  
7 you couldn't?

8 A. Not at the impact because, you know, once we, once we hit and  
9 I mean we reached out, but we didn't know what the emergency was  
10 behind our train. Once he said the air was restored, we kind of  
11 thought everything was fine. We didn't hear anything drop to  
12 where it determined it to be an emergency call to stop all  
13 movement, you know.

14 Q. Right. I know some railroads have what's called a quiet cab  
15 or sterile cab.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. Did you guys -- does NS have anything like that?

18 A. No, not that I know of.

19 Q. Okay. No further questions. Thank you.

20 MR. CRAINE: Craine, no questions at this time.

21 MR. HUNT: Hunt, no questions.

22 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Okay. Devin, you doing okay?

23 MR. BROWN: I'm doing fine.

24 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: We've have no follow-up questions. Okay.

25 I think we're probably going to be done right now, Devin.



1 BY MR. SKOLNEKOVICH:

2 Q. Before we end the interview, is there anything you'd like to  
3 add that might have helped prevent this accident or any  
4 information that you can provide?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. In the future, if we have additional questions, do you  
7 mind if we contact you?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. Well, on behalf of the NTSB, I want to thank you for  
10 your time to come in here and talk to us and for all the good  
11 answers you gave us.

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. So thank you very much.

14 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: The time is now 10:10, and this concludes  
15 the interview.

16 (Whereupon, at 10:10 a.m., the interview was concluded.)  
17  
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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 Devin Brown

ACCIDENT NO.:               RRD24FR009

DATE:                         March 4, 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