

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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EXPLOSION AT THE RM PALMER CANDY
FACTORY IN WEST READING,
PENNSYLVANIA, ON MARCH 24, 2023

Accident No.: PLD23FR002

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Interview of: CORY LEE REEHL, Custodian
R.M. Palmer Company

Wyomissing, Pennsylvania

Tuesday,
April 25, 2023

APPEARANCES:

KIM WEST, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

SHERYL HARLEY, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:06 p.m.)

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3 MS. WEST: So, good afternoon. Today is April 25th, 2023.
4 It is now 3:06 p.m. My name's Kim West. I'm with the National
5 Transportation Safety Board, I'm an investigator in charge with
6 the pipeline accident investigation group for this accident. We
7 are here at the Residence Inn Hotel in Wyomissing --

8 MR. REEHL: Wyomissing.

9 MS. WEST: Thank you -- Pennsylvania. And this interview is
10 being conducted -- this interview is conducted as part of the
11 investigation into the explosion that occurred on March 24th,
12 2023, in West Reading, Pennsylvania. The NTSB case number for
13 this accident is PLD23LR002. Again, the purpose of the
14 investigation is to increase safety and not assign fault, blame or
15 liability. The interview's being conducted, and it will be
16 transcribed at a later date. A copy will be provided to you for
17 your review, make sure that there's no errors in what you said and
18 what they transcribed. They're not familiar with the subject,
19 so --

20 MR. REEHL: Right.

21 MS. WEST: So you're permitted to have one other person with
22 you. That could be a supervisor or a friend, a family member,
23 attorney --

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. -- or nobody at all.

1 MR. REEHL: Right.

2 MS. WEST: So for the record, who have you selected or have
3 not selected?

4 MR. REEHL: I have not selected anybody.

5 MS. WEST: Okay.

6 MR. REEHL: I'm on my own.

7 MS. WEST: Okay. And can you state for the record your name
8 and how to spell it?

9 MR. REEHL: Cory Lee Reehl, C-o-r-y, L-e-e, R-e-e-h-l.

10 MS. WEST: Okay. And so we'll go around the room and talk
11 about our name, title, and who we work for.

12 MR. REEHL: Correct.

13 MS. WEST: All right.

14 MS. HARLEY: So I'm going to start. I'm Sheryl Harley, my
15 first name is S-h-e-r-y-l, last name H-a-r-l-e-y, and I'm an
16 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

17 MR. REEHL: It's nice to meet you.

18 MS. HARLEY: It's nice to meet you, sir.

19 INTERVIEW OF CORY LEE REEHL

20 BY MS. WEST:

21 Q. So we have -- we discussed your title and kind of what you
22 were doing, so we have all that.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. What I'd like to do is kind of walk back through starting --
25 maybe not the beginning of your day -- but when you started seeing

1 a problem out there.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. Yes, if you have -- if you can describe to us.

4 A. Like -- so like I said before, it was around like 3:30. I
5 got over to Building 2. I just wanted to -- for some reason, I
6 just wanted to go over and talk to Elias (ph.) for a couple of
7 minutes. And at that point, there was still nothing -- no
8 indication of any smell of gas. And then after I was done talking
9 to him, I went back over at Building 1 and then I continued doing
10 my job. For some reason, I had the stairwells and the learning
11 center, the big conference room, all that had that done -- for
12 some reason I just had an opening. I went in and got that cleaned
13 out and done with. And then it was about -- probably about 4:30
14 or so, I went into that back room behind the learning center.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And then I did my normal cleaning. Like I said, every day, I
17 mean, they're picking up product and putting it on the conveyor
18 belt. On Fridays, I do, you know, dry mop and dusting and wet
19 mop. I did everything except the wet mop. But from the time I
20 went from -- the time I went in there and came out, within 6 to 7
21 minutes, that's when I walked out of my back room, and it was my
22 first encounter with the gas -- the smell of gas. And it just was
23 a big whiff -- I'm like -- it just smelled of rotten eggs, and I
24 -- part of me, at the moment, I just thought it was just this
25 particular room where I'm at.

1 Until I walked out, you know, there's a lobby -- the lobby
2 with the elevator across from me and then the learning center, and
3 then our front lobby. So I walked out to the front lobby, I
4 noticed the smell out there. And then I went out, just opened up
5 the stairwell door near the top where I'm at on the second floor
6 and I continued smelling the smell of gas.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. So I went in, and then I noticed -- I told Dina Mauer (ph.),
9 who's our receptionist there, to let her know there's an odor of
10 gas out here. So she came out, and I keep saying, like I know
11 people's noses are different. She noticed it, but she -- she
12 seemed concerned, but it was just, like -- she's, like, yes, I can
13 smell something, it smells of gas. And then we went back in, she
14 sat at her desk and then she has a TV above her desk. And then I
15 remember her standing there, and I looked up at the TV and we
16 noticed there's a few people outside out in front of Building 2.
17 I said to Dina do you want me to go outside and just see what's
18 going on, just to kind of get a perspective, whatever. Yes, if
19 you can, I appreciate that.

20 So I said yes, I'll go out. I went out. So then I went out
21 and like I said, Elias is sitting on the stoop, Zio's (ph.) to my
22 left, I'm in the middle, and then Dave Chalman (ph.) would have
23 been to my right. And then Big Mike (ph.), our maintenance guy,
24 was in the alley on one knee just looking at the meter, looking at
25 something with regards to this. And then I overheard Mike say I'm

1 going to go in and page Sue (ph.).

2 So he got up and then me and him went in -- went in the front
3 door at Building 1. He went to the right, I went upstairs. And
4 like I said when he goes to that -- to the right, goes through
5 that door, there's a little, like, area, a little lobby area there
6 where you go in. Because it had those middle -- door 1 to go into
7 Building 1, and then you have that middle section, which is like
8 if somebody's coming to pick up product or whatever, it's like a
9 little loading dock area.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. The double doors open. And then he went in -- he went into
12 that little hallway around the corner there, another door where it
13 takes you to the first floor. So when it goes in, you go to the
14 left. You have elevators there.

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. So when you look at the elevator, to the right is a gray
17 phone, which that's -- you use that to make pages and if you need
18 somebody.

19 So when I went upstairs to go to the second floor, I did hear
20 Mike say -- he was paging for Sue, but by the time I got upstairs,
21 she must have already been walking on the second floor coming out
22 that way. And then I ran into her at the mailboxes there on the
23 second floor. And I looked at her, I said, you're probably aware
24 of the odor of gas out here, and she said, yes, I'm going out to
25 see what's going on. I said okay, and then I noticed Amy (ph.)

1 came around the same place I just came in. She just had a piece
2 of paper in her hand. She looked at Sue and said, you know, I was
3 looking for you, and then she mentioned about the odor of gas.

4 And then, like I've been saying, that was my last visual
5 encounter, not knowing again what was going to happen in a few
6 minutes. But they had walked out and then I walked towards the
7 back down the hallway to let my boss, Kelly Sherman (ph.) know,
8 because she's down at, you know, in the back there. So when you
9 go in the back, like I said, there's a kitchen, a break room and
10 then her office is right there. So I went and I asked her, I
11 said, Kelly, are you leaving anytime soon? She says no. I said,
12 well, there's a strong odor of gas out front. All she said to me
13 was okay, thank you. You know, and I kind of just stood there --
14 this is where I need -- there was more that I needed to tell --

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. -- regarding to her. So in that moment, and the aftermath, I
17 expected her -- a different reaction than what I saw. I thought,
18 like, okay, get out of your chair, like panic, like oh my God, you
19 know. I just looked at her and I just felt like she didn't take
20 me seriously, like, I was just -- like, oh, okay, like, okay,
21 thank you, and then back to work.

22 So like I said I just stood there, and then I went -- I left,
23 went back up the hallway where I just came down from, and
24 something inside me told me just to get out. So I went out the
25 front door. I didn't look at anybody, I didn't say anything. I

1 just walked out, went down the stairwell in the front there, went
2 out the door of Building 1, turned to the left, took three steps
3 and boom.

4 And then right away, I heard it. I just went like that. I
5 started running as fast and as hard as I can. And like I kept
6 saying that sidewalk I just felt like it was never, never going to
7 end. I just was, like, I felt like I was running forever, and I
8 just remember feeling like there's a big wave of, like, debris
9 just fall on me.

10 So I finally got to the corner at Second and Franklin.
11 There's a white car there, they asked me are you okay. I said I
12 think so. I'm, like, I don't know what the fuck just happened and
13 then they were gone. And then that was the moment that I first
14 turned around and noticed the smoke, the debris, the wires laying
15 down, the fire, the black smoke. I'm just, like, what the hell
16 just happened here, like disbelief, anger, sadness, just confused.

17 And then I saw people come out on the side entrance of the
18 employee entrance on Franklin and walked -- they ran out the side
19 door, went across the street. I'm assuming they went to the
20 parking lot.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. And then I saw the office people on my floor come out the
23 front door where I just came out. They ran across. I still was
24 standing there, just, like, thinking what the hell just happened.
25 And then I saw Elias, who I mentioned before sitting outside,

1 somehow he came out from the debris, walked across the street,
2 fell down on one knee, got on his back -- he was laying on his
3 back. And then that was when I ran over because I -- I'm thinking
4 how the hell was he -- where did he come from? I'm thinking,
5 like, you literally have all this on you and you're walking out of
6 it.

7 And so I ran over. Tracie Q. (ph.) was over there with him,
8 and then she had grabbed her bag and put it underneath his head
9 for support, you know, talking to him, saying it's okay, just keep
10 breathing, you know, it's all right. Like I said, he just lay
11 there, and he was just, like, he had a stone look on his face.
12 His eyes were just, like, he didn't blink. He was just, like,
13 alert but like out of it, and I don't -- I honestly don't think he
14 knew what was happening.

15 And then a minute or two later, we heard somebody saying to
16 Mark, our VP, I think that's one of your employees on the same
17 sidewalk here a couple of feet up. And we looked up and all I
18 remember seeing was a bare foot sticking up in the air, and at the
19 moment not realizing who I thought it was until later on. And
20 then the more time I have to think about it once a couple of days
21 went by and you're seeing stuff, I'm assuming that was probably
22 Zio, the girl that was standing to my left. She got blown from
23 one side to the other.

24 And then we were advised by the police officers to back away,
25 so we went into the parking lot across the street. I don't know

1 the name of the business, but right across from us, we went into
2 the parking lot, kind of backed away. Again, I'm just standing
3 there, staring at this big fireball that was just, like, in one
4 little area. I'm not sure exactly how high it was, but it was
5 pretty high and like I said, the wires are down. It just -- it
6 was just a mess and I just, like -- I thought it was a nightmare,
7 I thought I was dreaming. I'm just, again, what happened, like I
8 -- just disbelief.

9 And then, again, then the cop was telling -- I remember him
10 yelling at Mark saying, like, you need to get your people out of
11 here now, like, because we didn't know about Building 1. We
12 didn't know if anything was going to happen. So then went down to
13 the corner. We were all on Second and Franklin there. And then
14 Jeremiah (ph.), one of the guys I work with upstairs -- again, I
15 felt my back was wet, but I thought it was sweaty -- he says
16 you're bleeding. So I was, like, all right. I'm, like, okay and
17 then he got gauze and, like, wrapped me up really good. He just
18 said, hey, Cory, I know it's hard, but just try to relax, chill
19 out, just, you know, sit down.

20 So I sat down. I remember people kept asking me are you
21 okay. I'm, like, I'm fine, I'm fine, you know, I'm, like, I'm
22 okay. I said I've dealt with worse. I said there's more --
23 there's people who are dealing with a lot worse, let me take care
24 of them. And then eventually I know, like, this guy -- I don't
25 know who he was -- he came over to me and was, like, did anybody

1 check you out. I said no, I just had -- Jeremiah, you know, he
2 put the bandage on me, wrapped me up. They're trying to get me to
3 see, you know, EMS. You know, again, there's so much going on.
4 He said, well, I'm make sure that we get an EMT to see you.

5 So then we did -- at one point then we walked up Franklin.
6 There's an ambulance there and I remember Jeremiah was with --
7 Kelly was with him and then Kelly had a phone call. She kind of
8 took the phone call and walked away. So then I kind of stood
9 there, and then Reading EMS did come to me. I went down there at
10 the corner again by the fire hydrant. I sat on the curb. She
11 checked me out, gave me some tests. I saw in the thing -- on her
12 tablet for HIPPA. She offered do you need to go to the hospital.
13 I'm, like -- again at the moment, I'm like, no, no, like, I'm
14 fine. Like, I'm okay, you know. And I said again, I've dealt
15 with worse. I said again there's people worse than me, you know.
16 And she's, like, okay, you know.

17 And then I kind of just sat there for a moment, and again we
18 were -- well, after that, then I remember seeing three people
19 being taken off on stretchers. Two of them, I have no idea who
20 they were at the moment. I just remember seeing their faces and
21 it was unrecognizable who they were. I had no -- their faces were
22 burned, it was -- their faces were black, covered in, you know,
23 smoke. The one person I noticed who was being taken away was Big
24 Mike. No option to mask, nothing on -- and I'm not going to lie,
25 when I saw him go by, I knew he was gone.

1 So I saw that and then we got up, we moved over. I never
2 tell Tracie Q. I was cold, because like they told us, move away.
3 So I moved away, and I remember me and her sat at the Mecca
4 Restaurant (ph.) at the corner there across the street on
5 Franklin. So we sat there, I was saying I was cold. She gave me
6 her flannel, so I put that on. She was on the phone; I don't know
7 who she was talking to. I want to say -- I know she calls her
8 daughters a lot because she's concerned about them. And she kept
9 crying, I remember her saying Sue, Sue, we don't know where Sue's
10 at and she was really worried.

11 And then again we were advised by an officer you guys are
12 going to have to -- I have to move you up the street so -- because
13 again we don't know -- the gas is not shut off. We don't know
14 anything about Building 1. We don't know if it's going to go, you
15 know. So we moved up the street and we went about halfway up the
16 block on Second Avenue. A lady I don't even know offered us, and
17 she took us on her porch. She gave me a blanket, a bottle of
18 water. I'm not a big dog person; she had pitbulls. This Pitbull
19 came over to me, put his head on my leg and then he let me pet him
20 for a moment. We sat there maybe for like two or three minutes.

21 And then again another officer came and said again tell the
22 lady that we're going to the house. I know this is your house,
23 but we have to get you guys out of here, because again we don't
24 know if this building is going to go or anybody's houses because
25 we just don't know. And then I know the lady kind of thought

1 about it for a moment there, and then she said okay. And then I
2 remember we got up, we went up to the next corner, Second and
3 Chestnut. Again, I sat at the corner, just because I'm, like, I
4 don't know what to do. I'm just kind of, like, okay, just do --
5 tell me what to do.

6 And I remember an EMS guys looked at me and kind of like
7 shrugged his head a little bit, like, did anybody look at you.
8 And I said, yes, and again, here I go, I'm okay, like I'm fine.
9 And he goes, no, I think you should go to the hospital. And then
10 I'm, like, okay. So I took him up on that, but then he kind of,
11 like, walked away and I was standing there. I looked at Dina
12 (ph.) and Janet (ph.), and I'm, like, I don't know what I'm
13 supposed to do. Am I supposed to -- he's telling me I should go,
14 I said I'll go and he kind of walked away. So then a firefighter
15 from West Reading came over to me and said I heard you're going to
16 the hospital. I said, yes, he said -- he told me to go, but then
17 he walked away.

18 She said well, come with me, so we went up Chestnut. The
19 ambulance is parked there, the doors open. She said just have a
20 seat here, I will make sure somebody will see you as soon as
21 possible. Just -- I know it's a lot, just hang in there. And
22 then I said, okay, thank you. I really appreciate it, I
23 appreciate everything you did, and I said be safe, not knowing
24 later when I watched the local news at 11:00 when it came on, she
25 was on the news. The first person on the TV. And I said to my

1 wife, here's the mayor of West Reading. I'm, like, I did not even
2 know that. So -- because I just didn't realize she was a mayor.
3 I just thought, okay, it was a firefighter, it was a girl that
4 took me up to the ambulance.

5 So I was at, you know, sitting there. EMS came up with the
6 striped shirt, nobody on it. They looked at me, I said -- I
7 looked at them, I said, I was told to go with you guys. So then
8 they got me in the ambulance, gave me some tests. The other EMT
9 said where do you want to go, I said -- where do you prefer to go.
10 I said Reading. So then we went up. I got there probably a
11 little after 6:00, I think it was 6:05 according to my paperwork,
12 and then released. It was probably a little bit before 8:30, so
13 about two and a half hours there.

14 Got my test done, did everything, you know, everything came
15 back fine. There was no debris or anything in my -- you know,
16 with the fractures on my back and my legs. Because like I said, I
17 was told if -- did you fall, and I said no. I think it was from
18 running and debris just bouncing and hitting the sidewalks. And
19 like I said, in the moment I didn't feel anything at that moment
20 until I kind of sat and chilled. And I'm like, yes, I was
21 complaining about my legs bothering me, and then that's when I
22 lifted up my pant legs and I'm, like, oh, I've got some cuts here.
23 I didn't even feel it at the time. And like I said my back I just
24 thought sweating, but it was blood.

25 So I got released, went home, then of course like the next

1 day when I woke up, that's when I felt really sore all over. And
2 then it's just -- from there it was just really rough that first
3 week. Just no motivation, depressed, just upset, anger, didn't
4 eat, didn't shower. And my wife kept telling me, you know, you
5 got to eat. I said, no, I'll eat. I just -- I'm not hungry,
6 like, I'll eat at some point, I promise.

7 You know, I was just -- trying to understand for her sake,
8 you know, dealing with this and, you know, not -- you know, she
9 kept saying in the beginning, she kept bringing it up. And then
10 after the fact a lot of people would say, well, you know, you got
11 to just kind of take the foot off the gas a little bit. When he's
12 ready to talk, don't just keep bringing it up. Let him bring it
13 up. If he's ready to talk about something, then let him talk
14 about it. But, yes, so.

15 Q. Can I go back to something you said?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You talked about Kelly.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Did she smell gas?

20 A. She didn't mention anything to me. Like I said, when I went
21 up to her, the first -- the original time and said are you leaving
22 anytime soon, and she says no. And then I said well, there's a
23 strong odor of gas out front. All she said to me was okay, thank
24 you for telling me. And then I just stood there, kind of, like,
25 for like three or four seconds, and then I'm, like, thinking to

1 myself okay.

2 And then I kind of walked away and, like, I just thought some
3 emotion, some, like, okay, like, get out of your chair. Come out
4 of your office, maybe talk to Mark, talk to whoever, like, you
5 know, Logan. I think Logan -- yes, he was there that day. His
6 office is -- you know, she comes out, his office is literally
7 right there. Like after I walked away, I -- like I kept saying, I
8 don't know who did what, where was it -- you know, like, with Dina
9 going back to -- when I went outside originally to see what's
10 happening, because I've been asked about that. And I'm, like, to
11 be honest with you, I don't know where she was at at that time.
12 All I know is I went outside to see what was happening, even
13 though I didn't really get any clarification, because I don't
14 know. I -- all you smell is gas. You're not -- you can't see
15 anything.

16 So when I'm out there, I don't know where she was at. So
17 when I came in with Big Mike, he went to the right and came up. I
18 didn't look at her desk. I just focused on coming in through the
19 door there by her desk, and I came out of the corner where Mark's
20 office would have been. And then that's when I ran into Sue, and
21 then I just kind of interacted with her for a moment, said what I
22 said there. And then I saw in the corner of my eye, Amy came
23 around.

24 And then after I talked to her -- to Sue, I went back and
25 then that's when I let Kelly know. So within that timeframe of

1 talking to Sue, seeing Amy going back to talk to Kelly and then
2 coming outside to go outside, and then that's when it happened, I
3 always bring up two, two and a half minutes of that -- you know --
4 what do you call it, like, when you're talking to somebody, that
5 two few minutes just in between that -- with that timeframe --
6 bring up two, two and a half minutes.

7 Q. Okay. You also mentioned Janet?

8 A. Yes, she's one of the ladies I work with. She's up in the
9 office.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Last name I'm not really sure. It's one of those long last
12 names. I'm --

13 Q. And Tracie Q?

14 A. Yes, Coleman (ph.), I think is her --

15 Q. Okay. All right. Let me ask you about the alley. I think
16 we went over this, but when you were out in the alley --

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. -- Mike was there, anybody else that was out there.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. What did they --

21 A. It was just like I said, just Mike in the alley, then Elias
22 on the stoop, Zio to my left, me in the middle and then Dave
23 Chalman to the right. We were the only ones out there at that
24 time when I went out to see what was happening.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Until, like I said, I went inside and then ran into Sue, and
2 that's how --

3 Q. Have you thought more about what Mike was looking at or what
4 he was doing out there?

5 A. To be honest with you, I don't even think he knew what he was
6 doing. I think he --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- I, you know, I can't speak for him, but --

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. -- like, but just from what I saw, I don't think he knew what
11 to do.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. You know, he's on one knee, you know, looking at whatever. I
14 know the meter was right there. Yes, I -- it's one of those you
15 wish you could have done more, and people should have been, you
16 know, you need to get out. And this is where, like, the anger
17 part with the company. I don't know how to say it, but that's
18 just, like, frustrating. There's just so -- aggravated, it's,
19 like, angry and, like, I just -- I keep coming back to this. It
20 should have never happened. Somebody didn't do something and it's
21 just really upsetting, and so.

22 Q. Did you smell something when you were out there?

23 A. I had three --

24 Q. Prior to the explosion?

25 A. When I went out to talk to see what was happening --

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Talked to Elias?

4 A. Yes, we did smell gas because I remember I asked him. I
5 said, you know, are you okay. He said, yes, but it smells like
6 gas inside Building 2. And then that's why I'm outside. I just
7 can't take it anymore. I was, like, okay, I said, yes. It smells
8 a little bit over here, too, like, that's why I came out. I
9 wanted to see if -- what was happening. So he was out because of
10 the smell, too. So he didn't say really much about a strong
11 smell. He just said it smelled in there, and I just needed to get
12 away. I just needed to come out to get some fresh air, because I
13 just -- he was, like, I just couldn't take it.

14 Zio didn't say a whole lot. She kind of just stood there
15 with us, but, like, it was just kind of me and Elias just having a
16 quick conversation, but.

17 Q. So where was it the strongest? You came out of the building.
18 First of all, it's -- if I understand correctly, you had the smell
19 coming down the stairwell.

20 A. Correct, yes.

21 Q. And then you went out into the street. Was the smell getting
22 stronger when you get to the street or less?

23 A. I want to say it was less. I'm going to be honest with you,
24 when I first came out of that back room behind the learning center
25 --

1 Q. Um-hum.

2 A. -- when I first walked out and had my first encounter, that
3 was probably the worst.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Like that -- it was so strong, like I said. It felt like
6 somebody took a, you know, and just threw a smoke bomb. And I
7 just in that moment just thought, okay, just -- it's just right
8 here. Like, okay, then until I walked out and then you can smell
9 it again. And I'm, like, so it's somewhere in this area, but
10 where is it coming from. I don't -- I have no idea.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And like I said, I wasn't up on the third or fourth floor at
13 that point -- that day, so I don't know -- I would assume if it
14 was smelling down here, there had to be something going on
15 upstairs. But that day, I just -- the only time I was up in the
16 stairwell earlier on that day when I did my stairwell. At that
17 point, there was still no smell.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It's just amazing how quickly -- it just escalated real
20 quick, you know, so.

21 Q. Yes.

22 A. But --

23 MS. WEST: I'm sorry, did you --

24 MS. HARLEY: Oh --

25 MS. WEST: -- you have some questions.

1 MS. HARLEY: Yes.

2 BY MS. HARLEY:

3 Q. Sheryl Harley. So I want to go back to something you said.

4 So Mike went in to call Sue on the gray phone.

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. Did you hear Mike page Sue?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay, yes. And -- but as you walked through, you saw Sue --

9 A. Right.

10 Q. -- and she already knew about it?

11 A. Yes, she was aware of the situation, because she said I'm
12 going out there right now to see what's going on.

13 Q. Okay. And then you said that you encountered Amy. When you
14 saw Amy, did Amy also know about it?

15 A. She just said to Sue I was looking for you, and she mentioned
16 about the smell of gas outside. I didn't hear her say anything
17 else besides all that. It was very quick. Again, like I -- this
18 is where I (indiscernible) myself inside that -- not knowing what
19 was going to happen in the next couple of minutes. I wish I would
20 have said, like, hey don't go out there or at least had said hi to
21 Amy, and I -- like that really bothers me that, you know. Like, I
22 just had that quick encounter with her real quick.

23 Q. Okay. And Kelly -- Kelly Sherman's office, is on the second
24 floor with --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And in close proximity of Mark's office?

2 A. Mark's more in the front there. He's, like, literally when
3 you come in, where Dina sits to the right. His office is right
4 around the corner there. He's basically the first one.

5 Q. And Logan, you're talking about Logan Smith. Is that --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. And his office is also near that area?

10 A. Yes, and he's in the back there with Kelly. So if you
11 literally look out at Kelly's door to look down the hallway, he's
12 right there.

13 Q. Okay. Let's see. The other thing you were saying that when
14 you were in the parking lot and you were looking over at Building
15 2, and it was on fire.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. What part of the building do you remember the fire coming
18 from?

19 A. Literally like right there, like, right by the alley. It's
20 just that -- for a while there's, like, that one section there,
21 there's just a big fireball. And, you know, you've seen fire pits
22 that act like -- that was like my impression first, like, this was
23 just a huge fireball, a huge firepit. It was just like one little
24 area, but then over time when you get away from it, you can see
25 more fire. Like little spots that were lighting up, I guess, you

1 know.

2 Q. So when you said right there, that's where Cherry Street,
3 which is what you're calling the alley --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. -- comes into Second. And it was --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- right there at that corner where you saw --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- the -- oh --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- good enough. Let's see, the other thing I wanted to ask
12 you is -- the learning center is on what floor?

13 A. Second floor.

14 Q. That's on the second floor?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And it's in the back?

17 A. Yes, it's actually facing -- there's a bunch of windows that
18 go along down the line. There's probably about five, six of them
19 that go down the line there.

20 Q. And --

21 A. So, like --

22 Q. -- which direction did the windows face, I'm sorry?

23 A. Is it the north? I think they said that's the north part.

24 (Crosstalk)

25 A. When I saw the article, they were saying they wanted to tear

1 down the north side of Building 1.

2 Q. Okay. So that's on the north wall. What's underneath the
3 learning center on the first floor?

4 A. So it would be the first floor, like I said, it would be the
5 elevator. I know there's a -- the elevator, the gray phone,
6 there's a cage area where we were -- all I know is that they keep
7 stuff for production. So when I see people go in there, I usually
8 see like the leads, which I would see, like, the supervisors.
9 Like I would see Donna go in -- Donna Newman (ph.) going in there,
10 Sue would go in there once in a while, and then like whoever's --
11 they call them leads. I guess they're kind of under the
12 supervisors. They would be the only people in there getting
13 product -- it looks like -- I don't know if they're like labels
14 for like the boxes or for the product. I don't know really what
15 else -- and counters in there.

16 So then after that area, you got another room. There's -- I
17 don't know what's in in. Just I -- every day if I'm down there
18 and I see it, the door's always closed.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. Then there's another door, which I believe it's -- I don't
21 know his last name -- but Joe (ph.), who's the maintenance guy
22 who's in charge of maintenance --

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. -- the day shift guy -- his office and then there's another
25 office when once a week I have to go in there and clean, basically

1 just check trash and sweep and mop. It's just an office, I don't
2 know whose office that is, but it's -- I know it's part of the
3 maintenance office.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And then you have the maintenance shop itself after that.
6 You have the doors where you go into the maintenance.

7 Q. Maintenance shop?

8 A. Yes, maintenance shop there. Because right across from those
9 offices downstairs on the first floor, it's like in there about
10 which I'm referring to. In my section up top is where the product
11 would fall down. I would go in and grab it and put it back on
12 that conveyor belt. And then it comes down through there and then
13 down into the basement area. And then there's a guy down in the
14 basement who will grab the product and put it on pallets, and then
15 they'll wrap it and then they'll throw it on the truck.

16 Q. I'm sorry, where is the top of the conveyor belt? What floor
17 is that on?

18 A. The very top. I think -- I believe it's the third-floor
19 area.

20 Q. The third-floor area?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Because of what my memory remembers on the fourth, I don't --
24 I've never seen any conveyor belts up there, so it's usually --
25 the third floor is where a lot of that starts.

- 1 Q. And that conveyor belt goes all the way down to the basement?
- 2 A. Correct, yes.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. Which they have --
- 5 Q. And --
- 6 A. -- call it line A area, basement area and stuff.
- 7 Q. Okay. Line A, this is the basement. And that conveyor belt
- 8 is on the Cherry Street side?
- 9 A. Yes, it's in front of those maintenance offices there --
- 10 Q. Okay.
- 11 A. -- going down.
- 12 Q. Okay. So -- and just -- so just to be clear, so you told
- 13 Dina.
- 14 A. Um-hum.
- 15 Q. So Dina went back to her office.
- 16 A. Right.
- 17 Q. And then at that particular point, she looks up at the TV
- 18 monitors and --
- 19 A. Yes, when --
- 20 Q. -- sees something --
- 21 A. -- I first encountered her, I came out, she was the first
- 22 person -- I talked -- she's always up front. She's the
- 23 receptionist, you know. We always talk to each other about just
- 24 normal stuff. And that day obviously it was a little bit
- 25 different. And we looked at the TV, we noticed people were up

1 front and that's when I asked her do you want me to go outside and
2 just see what's going on. And she just said, yes, you know, if
3 you can, please do, so I did.

4 Q. So I've got one other question. This is going to be really
5 changing --

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. -- changing lanes really quick. So explain to me how the
8 rules of conduct are in Palmer.

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. Okay. So if an employee, for example, steps out of line or
11 doesn't do something or fails to come to work, how exactly does
12 Palmer deal with that?

13 A. I don't know too much regarding that, because like I said I'm
14 not in production. My area's on the second floor. I know you get
15 points; I know they were really strict on cellphone use and not
16 having phones on. I was one of the lucky ones because of being on
17 my floor in the second-floor office, I had my phone and my wallet
18 on me. I don't have a lock because I don't really have any --
19 myself I don't have any particular area where I keep my stuff. I
20 have a back room where I keep my cart.

21 But prior to all this I was having issues with Napoleon (ph.)
22 on day shift who was messing with my stuff, and then you tell them
23 that and it goes in one ear and out the other. They don't want to
24 deal with it, so they kind of rubbed me the wrong way in that
25 regard. So I kind of would have to keep my bag on the second

1 floor down from Kelly's office on the B closet where I keep my
2 supplies, and that's where I would keep my book bag and my lunch
3 bag in there. But again there's a camera there, so if I leave it
4 there, the guy that's been messing with me, they would see it.
5 But would they do anything about it, probably not, so.

6 But, yes, going back to what you were saying, I don't know
7 all the rules. Since I've been here, I mean, I know -- I've heard
8 pages about with the whole COVID thing. If somebody -- I hear
9 Donna, I hear one of the other leads -- I don't know names too
10 well -- I hear them say, somebody, hey, check their temperature.
11 So in that regard, I feel like they showed compassion and they,
12 you know, we're really on that with that. Like I said phones,
13 they didn't want nobody -- not saying somebody didn't have their
14 phone, but they're not supposed to. But, like, rules I'm not
15 really familiar with what goes on downstairs.

16 Q. Okay. So if you had an emergency --

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. -- and you needed help, for example.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. How do you get help?

21 A. You see it's funny. So, okay, now when I'm upstairs, most of
22 the office -- technically, they're supposed to be gone by 4:30,
23 but you still get people that's strewing around a little bit,
24 maybe 5:00, 6:00. I've had people stay to almost 7:00, 7:30, but
25 they -- maybe they came in late. But once they leave, I'm by

1 myself pretty much upstairs on the second floor. And so, you
2 know, God forbid if I slip and fall after mopping, what if I have
3 a medical emergency? You know, whom -- do I use my cellphone in
4 that regard? Probably just to be, like, I just fell, I can't
5 move, because I don't have nobody up there. After everybody
6 leaves in the office, I'm by myself.

7 So, I mean, granted Donna would come up. Her mailbox was up
8 there in the front near the mailboxes, she'd come up from time to
9 time. If she didn't have time, she might send one of her lead
10 persons. They come up. And it's, like, you're just
11 (indiscernible) by yourself. You might have your music on and the
12 last thing you think about is you come around the corner, oh
13 shoot, there's somebody there, like, you scared me, like --
14 because I'm just so used to being by myself, you know once
15 everybody goes.

16 But from time to time, they will have some -- she will walk
17 up, whether it's herself to get her mail or she says hi, or she
18 always says how you're doing and stuff like that. But it's very
19 quick, you know. It's supervisor time, you know, it's -- you
20 know.

21 Q. So if I get this straight -- so if there's an emergency, your
22 options are to use your cellphone, which you're not supposed to
23 have --

24 A. Not supposed to, but like I know -- and I -- I know we're not
25 supposed to have it downstairs. So when I go downstairs, like if

1 I have my music on, I'll turn it off, you know. But I'm upstairs
2 by myself, I'm kind of like my own boss when I'm by myself. Again
3 at that -- I always question myself what if something would
4 happen, what if somebody came in with a weapon, what if I fell,
5 you know, doing my job. And then nobody there, do I -- you know,
6 I don't know, I mean, I'm -- help, help, you know. I don't know.

7 Q. So if you did not have your phone, but you needed help --

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. -- you needed to call 9-1-1, let's say, for another employee.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. How would you get help?

12 A. Probably get on the regular one of the phones, and just dial
13 out and call for, you know, call 9-1-1 and have them come over
14 and, you know, take care of the situation.

15 Q. Okay. And you were talking about Donna. We're talking Donna
16 Newman, is that correct?

17 A. Correct, yes.

18 Q. Did you see Donna that day?

19 A. Yes, I believe -- yes, did. She came up real quick. I don't
20 remember if I said hi to her. Again, she's one of those where
21 she's, like, balls to the wall. She kind of gets in her moods, so
22 I'm one of those if she wants to -- if they want to say hi, let
23 them (indiscernible), because I get bothered if I look -- you look
24 right at somebody and you say hi and they don't say nothing, I
25 hate that. But I remember her kind of real quick and kind of

1 walked by, and that was, like, that was it.

2 Q. Was she heading towards her office or away from her office
3 when you saw her?

4 A. Well, she's on the second floor, so I don't -- I'm assuming
5 she was coming to get her mail. Sometimes she comes early in the
6 day, I guess, when she has some free time to come and get it
7 quick.

8 Q. Okay. And that was the only time you saw her and that was --
9 actually, was that before you smelled gas?

10 A. That was way before, yes.

11 Q. Way --

12 A. So that early on in the day. The other time I did see her
13 was after the fact the building had already gone, she was outside.
14 Obviously, she seemed concerned, but, you know, people walk by me,
15 probably didn't realize I was hurt. I just kind of was sitting
16 there upset, you know, like everyone else, disbelief, anger, you
17 know. But I did see her outside, but what she did after that, I
18 don't know after, you know, just seeing her for that quick second.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So.

21 Q. Okay. Thank you.

22 A. You bet.

23 MS. WEST: Okay.

24 BY MS. HARLEY:

25 Q. Oh, I did have one real quick question if you don't mind. So

1 you were saying that someone said that it smells like gas in
2 Building 2, I couldn't take it anymore, I needed fresh air.

3 A. Yes, that was --

4 Q. That was --

5 A. -- Elias.

6 Q. -- Elias?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. I just wanted to make sure that was Elias. Okay.
9 Thank you.

10 A. You're welcome.

11 BY MS. WEST:

12 Q. I know we touched on this. I thought I'd just kind of run by
13 it again. I know this doesn't apply to you.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. But you mentioned a point system. So --

16 A. Yes, they're real weird on that. I mean, I've had a couple
17 since I've been there, but I -- it's, like, I believe it's one,
18 you know, one point and you, like, have to go, like, almost nine
19 months to clear one point. Because a lot of -- like the time that
20 I did have vacation time, I had to use it for my wedding last
21 year, so a lot of that got used because of that. So it's, like,
22 okay, when you didn't have any more vacation time, if you need an
23 off, it's -- you're pretty much, okay, you know you're going to
24 get a point and no pay. But with them I'm not sure if it's the
25 same -- I would think it's the same as me. It has to be with

1 everybody. It has to be -- I can't see why it would be different.

2 Q. I was going to ask you. Is the point system applied across
3 the entire company?

4 A. Yes, um-hum.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I'm pretty sure, yes.

7 Q. Including the management?

8 A. That I don't know.

9 Q. The team leads or supervisors or --

10 A. I'm not sure. I know -- all I know is I guess they're, like,
11 salary and, you know, if people -- whether they've been there a
12 long time before you or less time. I mean, it's like, that you
13 just feel in general they have more time either way so -- because
14 they're management. So, you know, it's, like -- yes, it is what
15 it is. It's just, okay, you know, you're just down here, they're
16 up there, you know, one of those ordeals, but so.

17 Q. So how do you know there's a point system? Is there a
18 document that talks about it or --

19 A. You can check, like, on your -- like when you clock out you
20 click on there. There's a button you click on. You can check,
21 like, the points in, like, I guess, like, how long it's going to,
22 you know, when you clear that point so you know, okay --

23 Q. Oh.

24 A. -- I can, you know, say if you take off now it's, like, nine
25 months. Okay, like, it's going to take you almost the whole

1 entire year to clear that one. So that's why I think they tell
2 you that, like, maybe it's best not to take off, you know. And,
3 you know, if you don't have vacation, maybe it's best. But, you
4 know, they have to understand, too, if there's a legit emergency,
5 say, at home, you know, your kid is sick, your wife is sick. You
6 know, if you're -- you know, you can't come to work at all then.
7 If you don't have vacation time, then you know you're going to get
8 the point so.

9 But I know they were really, like, when you hear -- they --
10 we have a new system. I've never -- a few months ago they had put
11 it in where you hear beeping. And we were, like, what the -- what
12 is that. And then we find out it was for the breaks. It would
13 just be this annoying beeping sound. So, like, I think a lot of
14 people -- again, it comes back either if they didn't have their
15 phones -- if they don't have their phones on even at break, you
16 know, just trying to talk to each other, you lose track of time.

17 So people were coming back, I guess, to come back to work.
18 And then you hear, like, Donna or one of the other leads say,
19 okay, line 8, break is over. And then -- because, like, you got
20 to keep going. Like, if you're offline, I guess they would have
21 other people fill your spot while you're on break, because you
22 can't just tell everybody go offline and then if -- you know, you
23 have this product. You keep going and you keep the train moving
24 and stuff. So I know they added that in the last few months with
25 the system regarding that. And I know they added digital clocks

1 in certain parts of the warehouse, because, like, again if you
2 don't have your phone on, you can say -- they don't -- there's
3 signs saying they don't want you wearing watches.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So how are these people supposed to know what time it is,
6 when it's break time, when break is over. And then you're going
7 to sit there and, like, give them hell because, well, you're
8 coming back to work late. Well how are we supposed to know when
9 we don't have clocks, you don't want us to have our phones, so.

10 Q. What's the purpose of not having a watch?

11 A. I don't know. I guess, is it say somebody comes in that
12 wears a Rolex. I mean, you know, a piece of diamond or a piece of
13 the watch could fall into the machine?

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Something like that, I would think. Because I know they were
16 like that -- necklaces always -- it was a big thing because if God
17 forbid you bend down and pick something in the machine, you don't
18 want that to get stuck.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. I know they -- the only necklaces they will allow you to wear
21 is if it was, like, religious necklaces. And I know, like, if
22 people with, like -- certain people, if your beliefs, they'll let
23 you wear the skirts. But other than that, they wanted you in
24 uniform, you know, the blue pants -- the Dickey pants, whatever,
25 and then the blue smocks. And I know, like, the higher up people

1 would wear -- they would wear the white jackets, so.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And then, obviously, hair nets was a big thing. They wanted
4 your hair up because, you know, you're around chocolates and
5 stuff. You don't want hair to get into the chocolates.

6 Q. Okay.

7 MS. WEST: Do you have more?

8 MS. HARLEY: Yes, I just have one other -- one other
9 question, real quick.

10 BY MS. HARLEY:

11 Q. So if the -- going back to the points. So you -- they would
12 give you a point when they felt that you have done something
13 wrong, but it's up to you to clear your own point?

14 A. Well, like, if you -- like I said if you have vacation time,
15 you can -- you call off and you use the vacation day.

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. See I didn't have a lot because of my wedding last May, and
18 so a lot of that went towards that. Because you -- every May you
19 get a new round of vacation days. Because I know when I first
20 started, you had to go to, I think 60 days and you got one week
21 right off of the bat, which any job I've ever been to, that's the
22 first I've ever had -- in that regard, that was really good. It's
23 really nice of them to do that.

24 But then after your, I think it -- is it after -- what did I
25 just say -- 60 days, I think it was -- so then after 90 days, then

1 you get your second. So then you start off with two weeks right
2 off the bat, but then after that, every time, every May, you get a
3 new round of vacation days. And then I know there's -- you get to
4 be there a certain amount of years, you get another week. So for
5 me I was only there -- going to be a year and six months in May
6 here. I think the next go around would have been for me to get a
7 third week would be seven years, and then I think it's 80/10 and
8 then I think the highest they go is, like, close to 20 years, you
9 get up to 50. But, again, you know, who knows.

10 Q. So -- but you were talking about the new system now where you
11 can actually check to see how many points you have and when the
12 points are supposed to come off?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So the points don't come off automatically? You have to --

15 A. No, I think you -- you have to go at least, I think, it's 9
16 months to clear one point.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. So, like, if you take off say, like, January or February,
19 that's going to take you almost the whole entire year. And
20 there's been people that do -- they play it with fire with that.
21 Like, they rack up points and then they're losing their jobs. And
22 then they -- that's their own stupidity that -- in that regard,
23 like, they're really dicing it. Whether they don't care, it's
24 just, like, okay, I'm going to work here for a little bit and
25 point out. I think that's something, like, legit one they need

1 the job, like they want to work.

2 Q. Yes, I was just wondering if the points come off
3 automatically, like, the points would go on.

4 A. I would -- yes, I would think.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. But, like, you can go on the computer and just -- say, if
7 there's a time you forgot, like, I don't know how many points I
8 have, you can go on the computer --

9 Q. Got you.

10 A. -- and jot it in and it'll come up on the screen. And it'll
11 say okay, because there could be times where, like -- say you
12 called off twice, three times, whatever in a month and a half.
13 And you're, like, and then you went, say, like, say 5, 6 months
14 without taking off --

15 Q. Right.

16 A. -- you may forget how many points you have. So you can go --

17 Q. Got you.

18 A. -- go back and look under the system and see how many you
19 used in that regard.

20 Q. Okay, thank you.

21 A. No problem.

22 BY MS. WEST:

23 Q. I know we're kind of obsessing on this point system, but it's
24 my first time hearing about it. Can you -- so when you earn a
25 point, a year from now you can have it taken off.

1 A. Pretty much, yes.

2 Q. Can you earn -- it's not really earning -- can you do things
3 besides that to take the points off, such as coming in early or
4 taking someone's shift or something that would benefit the
5 company.

6 A. I've had --

7 (Crosstalk)

8 A. I've had a moment, one or two times since I've been there,
9 where -- now if it's job-related, say, I had to come in and do a
10 cleaning quiz (ph.). And if Kelly says, okay, can you come in for
11 2:30? The one time I know that I would come in and -- so I would
12 normally work 3:00 to 11:00.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Then she would let me -- okay, if you come at 2:30, you can
15 leave at 10:30. You don't have -- because I never had overtime.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And I work Monday to Friday, like -- there were opportunities
18 where I remember -- because this is going back to last April.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. I didn't know if I wanted to work there anymore. I was
21 tempted to get another job across the highway in Reading at Berk's
22 (ph.) hotdog company. But they talked me -- Sue was one of them
23 -- Sue and Amy. This is why, like, that connection. They were
24 the two that --

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. -- pretty much talked me into staying. And, you know,
2 looking back I was happy I did, because then I didn't realize --
3 so this was last April -- because I didn't realize -- so then it
4 would be May. Amy had said you're actually -- you're due for a
5 raise, like, the yearly raises. So, like, I thought oh, okay.
6 Like, so -- what I make now, like this is the most I've ever made
7 at any job in my life, you know what I mean.

8 And I like the fact that you get paid on a Thursday. That
9 one day does make a difference. Some people might think I don't
10 think I might -- for me it's really nice because then it's, like,
11 you don't have to wait, like -- most people have to wait on a
12 Friday. You get it on a Thursday. It does help, but -- I don't
13 know if this would go in the same category -- but if you work
14 1,000 hours --

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. -- you do get a free day in that regard with the taking off,
17 you know, with the point system, you do get a free day if -- and
18 that's happened to me once since I've been there where I didn't
19 even know. I actually forgot about it. I remember Marissa (ph.)
20 came to me and she said, oh, you get a free day. I said for what?
21 she said you put 1,000 hours of working. Oh, okay, I didn't know.

22 Q. Does that relate to having a point taken off or does that
23 even matter?

24 (Crosstalk)

25 A. I don't think it really matters. I think once you get a

1 point and then once you do clear it, you clear it. But, like,
2 something like that if you're going to, like, add an extra day
3 because you've done well --

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. -- you've worked a 1,000 hours, you didn't call off, you're
6 here every day, you get, you know, the 1,000 hours and you get an
7 extra day, so.

8 Q. That's time off, but can you get points shaved off by
9 something you do?

10 A. No, not that I -- that I don't --

11 (Crosstalk)

12 A. Yes, that I don't know. I mean, I never --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- personally had any encounter with that, no.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I mean, I always -- my attitude was I would chart -- I deal
17 what's on my chart, because if you do any more, they're going to
18 expect more from you. So I kind of just -- that's my attitude
19 regarding my job, so.

20 Q. I totally get it.

21 A. You know, unless they tell me something different. You know,
22 somebody might be complaining, you missed something in her office,
23 can you get it. Yes, no problem, I'll take care of it. But, yes,
24 I always thought if -- yes, you do more. I'm only doing what's on
25 my chart, my daily assignments, my monthlies. Because, it's,

1 again, they're going to expect more out of you, and I'm good. I'm
2 just going to keep to my chart, so unless they add something to
3 it, I'm, like, okay, now they want me to do that, okay, so.

4 Q. Okay.

5 MS. WEST: Do you --

6 MS. HARLEY: No, I'm done.

7 MS. WEST: Okay.

8 BY MS. WEST:

9 Q. So it'll just be -- I feel that -- is there anything that I
10 haven't asked you that we should know when it comes to this
11 investigation?

12 A. I guess it was just the Kelly thing, you know, I just -- with
13 how she could have reacted differently. I actually do have her --
14 my wife was there when she said this on the phone. She did admit
15 that she could have done more. And then she had to -- she made a
16 comment to my wife, you know, like -- my wife was there, she
17 didn't realize that my wife was there. So Joe's her boyfriend, my
18 boss, Kelly, and her boyfriend's Joe, so my wife is Kaileen (ph.).
19 She said on the phone, Kelly says, you know, if that was you and I
20 going out there, Joe and your wife would have made funeral
21 arrangements.

22 And then this is where I'm trying to keep my attitude and my
23 emotions in check, because I'm telling you right now, her saying
24 that is, like, very, like, insensitive and, like, there's no need
25 for her to say that because you didn't even come out of your

1 office. You didn't act the way I thought you were going to act,
2 and I -- she didn't come out at all. Like -- and I told the
3 trooper -- I'm going to tell you right now -- no one was following
4 me. Once I talked to her, nobody would -- and this referring to
5 her -- nobody was behind me. I walked out by myself.

6 She didn't, you know -- so when that went off, she's, you
7 know, like her and everyone else was still in Building 1. Because
8 I found out a few days after, she thought I was inside and then
9 she said, well, I was told you were outside, so I don't know if
10 she's referring to when I was outside talking to them. Maybe Dina
11 had said something, but I said when I got done talking to you, I
12 went out for good and then that's when the building blew up, and
13 she didn't realize that.

14 But, like, I'm beyond upset and angry with her regarding --
15 to all that she said and her actions that day. I'll give her
16 that, that she did come up to me to try to get me to see an EMT,
17 but then she took a phone call. I don't know if it was her
18 boyfriend and then she kind of walked away and didn't really seem
19 to -- you know, I get we're all dealing with a lot here.
20 Everybody has their different emotions, because, like, I was very
21 upset that no one besides Jeremiah -- he was the first one to
22 notice the blood on the back -- nobody noticed it. And I still
23 have the shirt at home. Big blood stain on my shirt. Nobody
24 noticed that besides Jeremiah. And then Tracie Q. came over to
25 see if she could help, but nobody -- Logan, Mark -- none of those

1 other people saw any of this and didn't say anything. I, you
2 know, it's just -- it's very disturbing, so.

3 Q. Okay, all right. Yes. Well, thank you very much. I
4 appreciate you coming --

5 A. No problem.

6 Q. -- in.

7 A. No problem.

8 MS. WEST: I'm going to --

9 MS. HARLEY: Thank you.

10 MR. REEHL: No problem.

11 MS. WEST: I'm going to end the interview at 3:56.

12 MR. REEHL: Okay.

13 (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: EXPLOSION AT THE RM PALMER CANDY
 FACTORY IN WEST READING,
 PENNSYLVANIA ON MARCH 24, 2023
 Interview of Cory Lee Reehl

ACCIDENT NO.: PLD23FR002

PLACE: Wyomissing, Pennsylvania

DATE: April 25, 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.



Maria Socorro R. Abellar
Transcriber