

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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NORFOLK SOUTHERN EMPLOYEE *

FATALITY NEAR DECATUR, ALABAMA * Accident No.: RRD24FR007

ON JANUARY 31, 2024 *

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Interview of: JASON HALL, Conductor (A08)
Norfolk Southern

Marriott Courtyard
Decatur, Alabama

Saturday,
February 3, 2024

APPEARANCES:

BEN STROT, Rail Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MATT THOMPSON, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN JENNER, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

RANDY HUNT, Senior Director of Bridge and Safety
Norfolk Southern

SHAUN McCOY, Gulf Division Superintendent,
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STEPHEN YOUNG, Operating Practices Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

BYRL McCOY, Operating Practices Safety Inspector
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DAVID WYATT, Investigator, Safety Task Force
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CHRIS CHRISTIANSON, Investigator, National Safety Team
SMART-Transportation Division

TODD SIZEMORE, Local Chairman, Division 423
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET)
(On behalf of Mr. Hall)

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. STROT: All right. Good afternoon. My name is Ben Strot. I am an investigator for the NTSB. Today is February 3rd, 2024, and we are meeting at the Marriott Courtyard here in Decatur, Alabama. This interview is being conducted in reference to NTSB accident number RRD24FR007, an employee fatality near Decatur, Alabama, on the Norfolk Southern that occurred on January 31st, 2024.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of transportation accidents and promoting transportation safety. It is not part of the DOT, FRA, or any other regulatory agency. NTSB has no regulatory or enforcement powers. We will publish recommendations to any party that we believe can act on those recommendations to prevent accidents from happening in the future. There are several phases in the process. We are currently in the fact-finding phase. That will be followed by analysis, probable cause finding, and finally any recommendations that we see necessary.

Today we're here to speak with Jason Hall. Before we go around the table, introduce ourselves for the transcriptionist, please remember to speak clearly, speak up, and spell your last name for the transcriptionist as we go around.

My name is Ben Strot, S-t-r-o-t, rail accident investigator for the NTSB.

MR. THOMPSON: Matt Thompson, T-h-o-m-p-s-o-n, IIC for this

1 investigation, NTSB.

2 MR. HUNT: Randy Hunt, H-u-n-t, Norfolk Southern safety.

3 MR. S. McCOY: Shaun McCoy, M-c-C-o-y, Norfolk Southern
4 Transportation, Gulf Division superintendent.

5 MR. YOUNG: Stephen Young, Y-o-u-n-g, FRA.

6 MR. B. McCOY: Byrl McCoy, M-c-C-o-y, FRA inspector.

7 MR. SIZEMORE: Todd Sizemore, S-i-z-e-m-o-r-e, BLET local
8 chairman, Division 423.

9 MR. HALL: Jason Hall, H-a-l-l, conductor on A08.

10 MR. WYATT: David Wyatt, W-y-a-t-t, BLET Safety Taskforce
11 investigator.

12 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Chris Christianson, C-h-r-i-s-t-i-a-n-s-o-
13 n, SMART-TD investigator.

14 DR. JENNER: Stephen Jenner, J-e-n-n-e-r. I'm with the NTSB.

15 MR. STROT: All right. Thanks, everybody.

16 Please remember as we ask questions to re-state your last
17 name for the transcriptionist so she knows who is asking questions
18 when they transcribe it.

19 And, Mr. Hall, do you mind if we go by Jason today?

20 MR. HALL: Yes, that's fine.

21 MR. STROT: All right. Thank you.

22 As we spoke beforehand, this interview is going to be
23 recorded. Are you good with that?

24 MR. HALL: Yes.

25 MR. STROT: And as such, it will be made part of the public

1 docket and we can't guarantee any confidentiality. Are you good
2 with that?

3 MR. HALL: Yeah.

4 MR. STROT: Okay.

5 During this representative you're allowed -- during this
6 interview, you're allowed to have one representative.
7 Mr. Sizemore's here for you. And Mr. Sizemore just -- can't
8 testify for Mr. Hall. He can't object to any questions, but if
9 you need to speak to your representative, we can take a time out
10 for you to talk with him.

11 Please answer all the questions today to the best of your
12 recollection. If you have any question that you don't understand,
13 don't quite hear, please ask to have it repeated or explained. If
14 you realize you misstated something, you know, you want to go back
15 and modify your answer, that's perfectly fine.

16 If anybody needs to take a break during this investigation,
17 please just give me the signal for timeout, and we'll take a break
18 and come back around.

19 INTERVIEW OF JASON HALL

20 BY MR. STROT:

21 Q. All right. So, Jason, the first question that I want to ask
22 you is just tell us about your railroad experience, your time here
23 at NS, what you've done, how long you've been here.

24 A. Hired out in January of '97. I marked up in June of '97.
25 Went to engineer school in '03, 2003, and running a engine till --

1 I've been -- we done the -- in the flow back, and we've been a
2 flow back on this job probably for 10 years. I run a engine in
3 Decatur for 2 years probably before. So I've been in Decatur
4 probably 12 years straight. I think that's right, 10 on the
5 ground, on the 08. I've been stepped up maybe a couple times
6 for -- here or there, there when they needed engineers. But
7 probably the last 10 years, I've been on this job.

8 Q. Okay. So regular on this job for 10 years?

9 A. Yes. It was off and on, but mostly this has been my job.

10 Q. Okay. What's your schedule on this job?

11 A. Off on Friday and Saturday. Day shift, come in at 7, usually
12 an hour overtime, maybe, you know, 10 mostly, sometimes 12, but
13 anywhere from 8 to 12 on duty.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Home every day.

16 Q. Gotcha. All right. So you've worked here in Decatur the
17 last 12 years. Anywhere else?

18 A. Sheffield, Memphis working road. Sheffield to Memphis on
19 through freights, engineer for a while. But up here the last, my
20 last part.

21 Q. Okay.

22 MR. STROT: All right. Anybody have any questions about
23 experience before I move on?

24 (No response.)

25 BY MR. STROT:

1 Q. Okay. Jason, I guess really if you'll just take us through
2 the day of the incident from the time you came on duty until the
3 time you left, like we talked about before?

4 A. It was a normal day, switching the yard, building trains,
5 cuts. Probably about, I'd say around 1:30 or 2 o'clock, we had to
6 wait on a Sperry car. We didn't know -- waiting on a signal, we
7 go to the siding to get some cars to bring in the yard. Probably
8 waited, I'm going to say it was probably a good hour and a half
9 waiting on a Sperry car and track guy to tie up until we get a
10 signal.

11 Finally got the signal. We brought one cut -- we busted a
12 cut up. I couldn't tell you how many we brought in at one time,
13 but we brought a cut in the yard, set some over. Went back to the
14 siding, we made another cut and we set some cars over. And we was
15 building two trains. We was building a (indiscernible) train for
16 that night and the A80 train over in 10. So we started doing that
17 and then we went to pick our cars up.

18 MR. STROT: Yeah, let's take a break. We'll go off the
19 record for a minute.

20 (Off the record.)

21 (On the record.)

22 MR. STROT: All right. We're back on the record.

23 MR. HALL: All right. So we was picking cars up, and I
24 remember the A80 job, Caleb hollered and said that he was going to
25 get a couple cars up east end of the yard, I think track 7. I

1 said, that's good, we're shoving -- we'll have your cars in 10.
2 It's going to be the last move of the day. The U-Man, Jay Parker,
3 he hollered. He said something about we had a jam over in 1. So
4 me and Bradley said, well, we'll get this in 10 and then we'll go
5 fix the one in 1, the last move.

6 But when -- Bradley said I'll get the cut one. I can't
7 exactly, how he said. So I was in the Kubota. I lined him up. I
8 seen Chris back to Bradley. And when he was shoving, I went to
9 watch the shove. We had plenty of room. We had some cars on the
10 other end of 8 that was tied down from earlier. I knew we had
11 plenty of room, but I went down there halfway just to make sure
12 anyway, to watch it. And I heard Bradley, and it wasn't normal.
13 He said something like, hey, Flat, there's some car rolling in 7,
14 shove them.

15 Well, I could tell the way Bradley said it. Because usually,
16 you know, cars creep back because -- you know, we always say, hey,
17 watch out there's -- they're creeping in 7 -- or usually 10,
18 whatever. But what he said it, I knew. I says -- so I turned
19 around in the Kubota and I said -- I think I said, hey, Flat, you
20 cleared for 50 or -- just keep shoving, get what you need.

21 So I was going to go up there and just maybe line a switch if
22 the cars rolled out in front of us. And as soon as I got by the
23 motor, it hit. And it was tilted. And I said, we got sideswiped.
24 And when I got to the front, I could see him laying on the ground.
25 So I just took off to get the help.

1 And I remember pulling up to the shack and the trainmaster I
2 think was out there and I said, it's bad, call 911. I went back
3 and I remember Bradley over there with him. And, anyway, the
4 diesel fuel -- I remember the motors was making some kind of noise
5 or something. So we went to hit the shutoff valves on the --
6 because the fuel was going everywhere. And I know Jay Parker
7 helped. I know he done it and me -- me and him was trying to hit
8 the buttons. And I remember all the fuel was coming out, and we
9 just -- we was waiting till the ambulances got there.

10 Q. Gotcha.

11 A. And talking to him.

12 Q. Yeah. Okay. All right. I appreciate the detail and the
13 completeness there.

14 MR. STROT: I don't have any other questions.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right. Go ahead, you first.

16 MR. THOMPSON: No questions.

17 BY MR. YOUNG:

18 Q. Steve Young, FRA. So were you guys switching with air?

19 A. No, no air.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. No, when we went to the siding, we pulled the cars with air,
22 but we shove them in the yard, and they're like 15 at a time. You
23 going to have a big cut with no air, you have to put them -- you
24 just stop, get brakes on. And one of us will bust it. We'll
25 bleed 15 off, kick a few, go to the next. If we go to the siding

1 and do it.

2 Q. Okay. And was this your all's first move of the day, first
3 train you all kicked on that day?

4 A. No. No, this was our last. We was getting done.

5 Q. Last? Okay. Had you all been in track 7 at any point that
6 day?

7 A. Yeah, I'm sure that day, that morning probably, maybe. But I
8 know we was in the siding because we was trying to get time -- the
9 signal to come out of that main line. And that was probably I'm
10 going to say around 1:30, 2 o'clock, somewhere in there. So I
11 knew it was way before that point with that 7 rail.

12 Q. Okay. Do you keep your switch list? Do you have like a
13 written out switch list?

14 A. Well, we had one on NTR.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. And like every so often we'll get caught up. We never
17 took -- we don't take minutes on this job like -- our engineer, he
18 always wanted -- he didn't want to get off till we got done. It
19 don't matter if it was 12. So he stayed up there. And we would
20 always go -- like if we was taking a break, we'd go by the shack,
21 kicks the phone up, press new list. So we was always getting a
22 new list during the day.

23 Q. Okay. And -- yeah, that's it. Thank you.

24 BY MR. B. McCOY:

25 Q. Byrl McCoy, FRA. I just got a couple questions. Obviously

1 we had a rollout that day. But are you aware -- you've been there
2 10, 12 years, right? Are you aware in the 10 or 12 years has
3 there been other incidents like rollouts that did not sideswipe,
4 or maybe they did? Are you aware of any other incidents?

5 A. They been a couple, you know, during the career. Not too
6 many with damage. You know, we've had one that rolled out a years
7 ago with a -- it was a mechanical issue, that derailed some cars
8 on the east end. Nobody was hurt then; thank goodness. There's
9 been a couple more like -- I don't about what you call -- maybe
10 run through a switch something, but nothing major --

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. -- you know.

13 Q. Okay. It's my understanding -- correct me if I'm wrong,
14 because I've not dug into the timetable special instructions
15 concerning the securement in that yard. It's my understanding
16 it's three handbrakes.

17 A. On the east end.

18 Q. On the east end. Has it always been three handbrakes?

19 A. Since we've been there, I -- as far as I remember, it's been
20 three. And what me and Bradley, we do in the morning since -- he
21 worked with me the whole time on that job, we've been together the
22 whole time. In the mornings, especially if we don't know who's
23 been working, we'll go down there on the east end and look, make
24 sure, you know. And a lot of times on the -- if we know we got
25 heavy cuts, rolling a heavy car, we'll go get five or six

1 handbrakes. Because you got them markers on -- you know, you
2 don't want to knock them over the mark (indiscernible).

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. So we always sort of -- you know, we don't want to kick cars
5 with no handbrakes, so we always go there in the morning and check
6 before we get going.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. We check and make sure we got brakes, you know. And then
9 like Jay Parker, the U-Man, he'll tell us, hey, we got -- I bled
10 that track off, you got three on the rear, stuff like that. No,
11 we always know.

12 Q. Has there always been a -- I know in the yard, from my
13 understanding, once a crew secures three handbrakes, there's no
14 C102.

15 A. Not in the -- the rule is unless it's -- I'm wrong. The rule
16 is if you're a key train in the yard, you have to do them.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Not in the yard. In the siding you do, but not in the yard
19 on a C102.

20 Q. Okay. Has it always been like that or had it changed 6, 7
21 years ago?

22 A. Well, you know, the C102 rule has not been in effect the
23 whole time.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. But ever when it has, it's what -- as far as I know, that's

1 the way it was done. Not in the yard, but in the siding on the
2 main line, and of course the industries is C102s.

3 MR. B. McCOY: Okay. I have no further questions.

4 MR. WYATT: Wyatt, BLET. I don't have any questions for you,
5 but thank you for being here and telling us what happened.

6 MR. HALL: All right.

7 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Chris Christianson, SMART-TD, no
8 questions. Just thank you for being here and my condolences to
9 you.

10 MR. HALL: Okay. Thanks.

11 BY DR. JENNER:

12 Q. Steve Jenner with the NTSB. I have a few questions. I'm
13 just trying to get a sense of the timing of things. To the best
14 of your estimate, when did -- if you can just explain again who
15 first detected that something may be wrong?

16 A. When we pulled that cut -- we had a -- we was getting the CS6
17 cut together for the A80 crew for that night to shove to the "O",
18 to the interchange "O." That's what we done before. And I
19 remember Bradley was telling me, he said, I'm going to go to 10
20 or -- yeah, I'll be in 10. And so I took the Kubota to drive to
21 watch the shove. But when we was shoving back in 10 is when
22 Bradley noticed the cars was coming. And I remember him saying --
23 and I like said, I've worked with him so long, I knew something
24 wasn't right when he said it. He said -- I think he said Flat, he
25 might have said Chris or whatever, shove them -- these cars in 7

1 is rolling towards you or coming at you, shove them on in. And
2 like I said, when he said that, I think I said, hey, Flat, you got
3 plenty of room, clear 50 or whatever. So I turned around, like I
4 said, I was going to try to catch ahead of him, just in case --
5 line a switch, if they run through it or try to run through it.
6 And when I got by the engine, they hit. And I thought, well,
7 we've been sideswiped.

8 Q. Right.

9 A. Because -- you know, it was bad, but I've seen couplings, a
10 hard couple. It rocked the engine real bad, but when -- then when
11 I seen him, I looked back and the whole -- I seen the engine and I
12 seen him laying down and I seen Bradley was getting toward him.
13 And that's why I had to go call 911 and I went and I started
14 hollering for help.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. And I think Bradley toned the emergency tone and he was --
17 and then, like I said, I went right back down there to help
18 Bradley. He was with Chris, and I just remembered the engines
19 making a noise and that diesel fuel and but -- we was shutting
20 them down, trying to get the fuel to quit. But it was coming so
21 fast it was there before --

22 Q. Yeah, I was going to ask, is there any way you can estimate
23 the speed that it was rolling?

24 A. The cars? I never seen the cars hit. Bradley's the only
25 one, and he said when he seen them, you know -- well, he

1 (indiscernible). It was just so fast, it was like turn around and
2 there they was.

3 Q. Right. And just the sense of time when you first -- when
4 Bradley first heard something, suspected a problem, to the point
5 of impact, do you --

6 A. It was quick. And like I said -- and I can't remember what I
7 told him, but as soon as I told Flat or Chris -- we call him
8 Flat -- that he was clear for 50 or I told him he had plenty of
9 room and shove them, and he was saying, I am, I'm trying. But
10 soon as he said that, it hit that fast and he was on the ground.
11 It was that fast.

12 Q. Less than a minute?

13 A. Oh, it was way before a minute.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I -- yeah. I don't think he had -- he didn't have time to
16 react.

17 Q. I see.

18 A. It was just like -- when he was talking to me, it hit and he
19 was there.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. Because I was expecting to go around there and just see a car
22 messed up and Flat mad about it and -- but when I seen the front
23 of it, I knew it was bad.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. So -- but it was that fast. It just -- they was there on top

1 of us when we was shoving in. It was that fast.

2 Q. Right. About how much -- you mentioned you saw Jay Parker
3 arrive down there.

4 A. Yeah, he come, he come down there pretty -- when I pulled
5 back up on the Kubota to get help -- I was trying to get somebody
6 to call him. And I think I might have hollered on that radio. I
7 was hollering for Jim, the trainmaster.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And I remember him being out in the parking lot. And I
10 started -- there was a bunch of people out there. But I remember
11 looking at Jim and I said it's bad, it's real bad, get help, I saw
12 it. Then I took off and I think Jay come right behind me and he
13 helped me. He was getting the motor shut down, too. I remember
14 that. He was hitting them buttons, too.

15 Q. So Jay Parker was on site pretty quickly?

16 A. Yeah, he was -- so he was sort of helping us. You know, he
17 helps us during the day.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. The U-Man does. So he's always helping in and out, helping
20 other crews.

21 Q. Sure.

22 A. So he was there.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Because he was going to make that last cut and then he found
25 that jam in. When we shoved 10, we was going to go over -- he was

1 going to make a cut back there for us and then swap out with the
2 next crew.

3 Q. I see.

4 A. That's what we -- so he knew. I mean, you know, he was there
5 pretty quick.

6 Q. Right. How about, did you end up seeing people from the
7 other crew?

8 A. I never did. Just afterwards, when the ambulances got there,
9 I remember seeing Caleb and them, and then just -- after all it
10 happened. It was me -- I don't know if we're supposed to say,
11 but, I mean, Bradley was on top of Chris, we was talking to him.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. But that was it. I mean, that -- I remember Jay and me and
14 Bradley, and Bradley stayed on top of him the whole time.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And then we was talking and he -- you know, we was just
17 talking to him and waiting. And I remember somebody trying to get
18 the ambulances there because they didn't know which end to come
19 in.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. And the fire trucks and everything, so --

22 Q. So no one else from the other crew showed up within -- they
23 did not show up immediately or --

24 A. Not, not immediate. You know, it -- like I said, I think I
25 was back down there with Chris when they got there. And I think

1 maybe the -- the police got there first, because he said they was
2 trying to find out where to come to. And then I -- you know, then
3 everybody started showing up.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. But it was me and Bradley. Bradley was there with Chris
6 first. Then I was down there, and then Jay was there pretty
7 quick. He might have been right behind me.

8 Q. Right.

9 A. And then, like I said, we talked to him and -- till the
10 police got there and trying to stay with him.

11 Q. Right. Did you end up talking to the other crew that
12 evening?

13 A. Just sitting around the office waiting for people to get
14 there and went to the hospital to get the -- but me and Bradley
15 and Jay with rode with somebody, the trainmaster, to the hospital.
16 We rode together and the other crew rode with somebody else. But,
17 you know, just talking.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. It was nothing.

20 Q. Was there any discussion about --

21 A. No.

22 Q. -- what may have happened or anything like that?

23 A. Nobody said a word about nothing talking. They was telling
24 us just stay here and the claim agent, whatever, whoever was in
25 that -- I can't remember who was all in there, but we all stood in

1 there together.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And they was -- till -- then they took us back one at a time,
4 but no, I --

5 Q. They took you back for testing, drug testing?

6 A. Yeah. No -- yeah, they did that and then when we got back to
7 the yard, too, you know, they was talking to us. But nobody
8 talked in front of each other.

9 Q. Right. Yeah.

10 DR. JENNER: Very good. Thank you for all that.

11 MR. STROT: All right. We'll go around one time for any
12 follow-up questions.

13 BY MR. STROT:

14 Q. Jason, the only questions I have are about more the operation
15 of the yard there. When you're switching in Decatur, do you
16 normally switch from the west end or east end?

17 A. West end. Well, normally it's the west end.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It's a whole lot -- you know, of course it's easier because
20 you got the bowl down there and it's downhill. So you switch on
21 the west end.

22 Q. Okay. And you said bleed them off and you all are kicking
23 cars all day long?

24 A. All day long.

25 Q. When you all get done at the end of the day, do you go in and

1 stretch your tracks before you go home or --

2 A. Well, we usually swap out, see, because you always have
3 another crew coming on --

4 Q. Gotcha.

5 A. -- duty. It never stops through the day.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. But usually we swap, we pull -- usually we pull our engine up
8 on the lead and the next crew --

9 Q. Jumps on.

10 A. -- gets on it and they -- that's what we usually do. Now
11 talking about the trains, like the outbound Chattanooga train, we
12 stretch. We build it, make sure we have air on it. The Sheffield
13 cut we -- because we're letting -- we're making sure it's all
14 together for the U-Man. And then the trains we do.

15 Q. Gotcha.

16 A. So the train that goes to (indiscernible), the LS6, the 07
17 crew. We get all them together, make sure all they have to do is
18 go over to the lead that night.

19 Q. Gotcha.

20 A. Where they can be they ready to go. We do all that.

21 Q. You all do air tests or does the carman do that?

22 A. No, we don't have a carman. The U-Man usually does the
23 hanging the EOT and the brake test for the trains leaving.

24 Q. Yeah. Gotcha.

25 A. That's why they have the U-Man. They usually do that. We

1 don't do the -- we don't usually do. Now, we'll help him out and
2 do it with him if we need to.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. But that's usually not our job.

5 Q. Gotcha. Okay.

6 MR. STROT: I think that's all the questions I have.

7 MR. HUNT: I have -- go ahead first.

8 MR. THOMPSON: No questions.

9 BY MR. HUNT:

10 Q. I just had one question. When you -- you said you were in 7
11 at some point during the day.

12 A. Probably.

13 Q. Do you recall if there were any handbrakes in the track you
14 encountered or if you heard anything squealing like air brakes on
15 when you were shoving?

16 A. No, sir. If I remember right, and I could be wrong, but if I
17 remember right, that morning when we checked and everything, I
18 think we had run -- so we kicked cars in there that day, but we
19 didn't shove it or nothing. We might have dropped a few cars in
20 there, but that's all we done in that track. Like I said, that
21 was probably at lunch or before.

22 MR. HUNT: Okay. That was Randy Hunt, NS. I don't have any
23 more questions. And I will say also, thank you. I know it's been
24 really tough, so appreciate the information.

25 MR. HALL: I appreciate it.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have nothing else.

2 BY MR. B. McCOY:

3 Q. I just got -- Byrl McCoy, FRA. I just got one follow-up
4 question. Did you hear anything on the radio from the A80 crew?

5 A. The only thing I heard was when they told me that he said,
6 hey, this is Caleb; I'm going to get some cars out of 7 or -- he's
7 going to be making a move there. Like I said, we was building his
8 cut in that end and he was just going to gather some cars up for
9 the other lead out there, as far as I remember. And I just
10 remember him saying that, hey, I'm going to be in 7 and get a
11 couple of cars. And I said, we're good, because we're going to
12 shove -- we're getting your cars, we're going to put them all in
13 10 for you. That's all I can remember talking with him.

14 Q. Okay.

15 MR. B. McCOY: All right. No further questions. And once
16 again, I want to thank you for participating and hopefully we'll
17 be able to find out why it happened and prevent any incidents from
18 happening in the future.

19 MR. HALL: I appreciate it.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't have any.

21 BY DR. JENNER:

22 Q. Steve Jenner, a couple questions. You've operated, I think
23 you mentioned in other yards --

24 A. Yes. I worked in Sheffield Yard, Memphis Yard, Rossville
25 Yard.

1 Q. Right. Can you compare and contrast the operations here
2 versus there?

3 A. Well, there -- here you're kicking, flat switching cars. I
4 mean, Sheffield, when it was hump yard, I worked hump, pulled
5 that, which that's just pulling pins. So this is different. This
6 is different than any yard. These flat switch, kick cars.
7 Memphis Yard's a pig yard, you know, they load containers, so you
8 don't -- you use their air and you just shove cars.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. Here you kick cars. It's a flat switching yard.

11 Q. Right. Does that make things more challenging, less
12 challenging?

13 A. You got to be more careful in a flat switching yard like
14 this. Yeah. That's why -- I mean, you know, me and Bradley's
15 worked together for 10 years and you still -- and I'm not going to
16 lie, when somebody -- if he takes off, I don't like going to work.
17 You know, it's -- you got to careful. You want to know that they
18 know what they're doing, you know. Because you -- I mean, you got
19 a lot of people coming in and out of that yard at one time, a lot
20 of people on the radio talking, so -- people getting in tracks,
21 people asking you, hey, we got trains coming in. You got people
22 coming in from Scottsboro, you got people coming off of "A" lead.
23 So it's a lot going on during the day, so --

24 Q. Right.

25 A. That's why I've been on the job so long because Bradley's

1 been on it, or I wouldn't have been on it. It's just a lot.

2 DR. JENNER: I appreciate that. Thank you.

3 BY MR. STROT:

4 Q. Ben Strot, NTSB. I have one follow-up question. I
5 apologize. When we were talking about securement you said you go
6 down to east end in the morning and check for three handbrakes.
7 If there's gaps in the track, do you -- it's just the three on the
8 east end, you don't go down and secure anything in the middle of
9 the track?

10 A. The way we do it, if you go there and check and, say,
11 there's -- you got 15 car lengths worth of room on the west end of
12 the yard, well, there's no need to stretching it that morning
13 because you're going to be kicking cars on it all day long. The
14 reason you go there and tie them brakes up is to make sure it
15 don't go out.

16 Q. Yeah. Okay.

17 A. And that's what -- you know, and then like a lot of times in
18 the morning we'll get the tracks together that we're going to kick
19 in, if we need all the room. Because a lot of -- you know, the
20 yard's full. So let's say, just for instance, midnight shift cars
21 are usually in track 3 for us. We keep them in 3. So if we know
22 we need 30 car lengths of room that morning, either me or Bradley
23 will go to the other end, we'll stretch, you know, stretch them
24 out, get it all together, and shove it all the way to that mark
25 down there. Make sure we got three, four, five good handbrakes,

1 kick on top of it all day long. Because when it gets full, it's
2 full.

3 Q. Gotcha.

4 A. That's the way do. That's the way do.

5 Q. Okay. But when you go down there in the morning and you're
6 checking, if there's a five-car gap, you know, you know you got
7 enough room on the other end, you're just going to have the three
8 on that end?

9 A. Because we're fixing to kick right on top of it. And there's
10 going to be more -- you know, they're rolling all day long in that
11 track. We make sure it won't go out, you know, of course go out
12 the other end. And we always -- we have green marks, at least,
13 and we all -- and a lot of times we'll pull them up two extra car
14 lengths just to have a buffer not to get over the mark.

15 Q. Right. Yeah.

16 A. We do that. That's normal. We do that all the time.

17 Q. Gotcha.

18 A. So -- and that's usually in the mornings. And then, you
19 know, a lot of times, you know, a lot of times you might get to
20 the mark. We have to go pulling it back up --

21 Q. Right.

22 A. -- but, you know, that's our normal things.

23 Q. Okay. Appreciate it.

24 MR. STROT: Anyone else?

25 (No response.)

1 MR. STROT: All right. Well, that's all the questions we
2 have. Is there any questions -- anything that we didn't ask you,
3 anything you'd like to add?

4 MR. HALL: No. I don't think so.

5 MR. STROT: If we have any follow-up questions, do you mind
6 if I contact you at the --

7 MR. HALL: Any time.

8 MR. STROT: -- information you gave me?

9 MR. HALL: Yeah, any time.

10 MR. STROT: Well, on behalf of the NTSB, I appreciate your
11 cooperation, your detail, and, again, tough times. I mean, just
12 make sure you're leaning on the people to get the help that you
13 need to get through it, and I'm sorry.

14 MR. HALL: Oh, I appreciate it.

15 MR. STROT: Thank you so much.

16 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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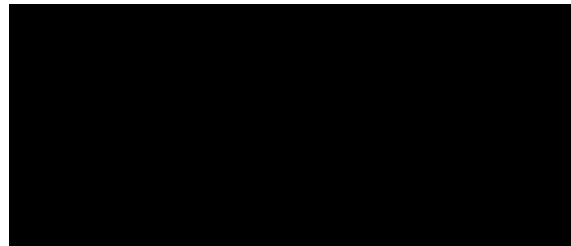
IN THE MATTER OF: NORFOLK SOUTHERN EMPLOYEE
 FATALITY NEAR DECATUR, ALABAMA
 ON JANUARY 31, 2024
 Interview of Jason Hall

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD24FR007

PLACE: Decatur, Alabama

DATE: February 3, 2024

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