

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

TRAIN DERAILMENT NEAR NEW CASTLE, *
PENNSYLVANIA ON MAY 10, 2023 *

Accident No.: RRD23FR011

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Interview of: GORDON WENYECK, Engineer on the NS 14M
Norfolk Southern Railway

Saturday,
May 13, 2023

APPEARANCES:

ZACH ZAGATA, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

RICHARD SKOLNEKOVICH, Operations Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ANNA KAUFFMAN, Local Chairman, Local 421
SMART Transportation Division

BRIAN FRANSEN, Coordinator, Safety Task Force
Brotherhood Of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

DON CRAINE, Superintendent, Keystone Division
Norfolk Southern Railway

ERVIN WHITE, Motive Power and Equipment Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

PAUL HULBURT, Road Foreman, Keystone Division
Norfolk Southern Railway

JARED CASSITY, Alternate National Legislative
Director/Chief of Safety
SMART Transportation Division

LARRY ROSS, Operating Practices Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. ZAGATA: Good morning. My name is Zach Zagata and I am
3 the NTSB IIC for this accident. We're conducting an interview on
4 May 13th, 2023, with Gordon Wenyeck, who works for NS. This
5 interview is in conjunction with NTSB's investigation of the
6 accident in New Castle. The NTSB accident reference number is
7 RRD23FR011. The purpose of the investigation is to increase
8 safety and not to assign fault, blame, or liability. Before we
9 begin our interview and questions, we'll go around and introduce
10 ourselves. Please spell your name and your title, and I'll start
11 off and then pass it to my right. Again, my name is Zach Zagata,
12 that's Z-a-g-a-t-a, and I'm the NTSB IIC.

13 MR. WENYECK: Gordon Wenyeck, engineer, G-o-r-d-o-n
14 W-e-n-y-e-c-k, engineer on the NS 14M.

15 MS. KAUFFMAN: Anna Kauffman, K-a-u-f-f-m-a-n, local
16 chairman, 421.

17 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Richard Skolnekovich,
18 S-k-o-l-n-e-k-o-v-i-c-h, NTSB operations.

19 MR. FRANSEN: Brian Fransen, F-r-a-n-s-e-n, BLET Safety Task
20 Force.

21 MR. CRAINE: Don Craine, C-r-a-i-n-e, Norfolk Southern
22 Keystone Division superintendent.

23 MR. WHITE: Ervin White, FRA MP&E inspector, IIC. Oh, sorry.
24 W-h-i-t-e.

25 MR. HULBURT: Paul Hulburt, Norfolk Southern Keystone

1 Division road foreman, H-u-l-b-u-r-t, observer.

2 MR. CASSITY: Jared Cassity, C-a-s-s-i-t-y, and I'm with
3 SMART TD.

4 MR. ROSS: Larry Ross, R-o-s-s, Federal Railroad
5 Administration, assigned to the Pittsburgh area.

6 MR. ZAGATA: Okay, thank you. Do we have your permission to
7 record our discussion with you today?

8 MR. WENYECK: Yes, you have my permission.

9 MR. ZAGATA: Thank you. Do you understand that the
10 transcripts will be part of the public docket and as such, we
11 cannot guarantee any confidentiality?

12 MR. WENYECK: Yes, I do.

13 MR. ZAGATA: Okay, thank you.

14 INTERVIEW OF GORDON WENYECK

15 BY MR. ZAGATA:

16 Q. To start off with, if you could, give us an overview of your
17 railroad career.

18 A. I was hired in November '07, became a conductor April '08,
19 became an engineer in 2015, operated from Cleveland to Conway,
20 Cleveland to Mingo, Ashtabula to Conway, Conneaut to Conway,
21 Buffalo to -- or Conneaut to Buffalo, Cleveland to Buffalo, and
22 for a brief time, as a temporary transfer, I operated in
23 Birmingham, Alabama, also.

24 Q. So was this your regular assignment?

25 A. This has been my regular assignment for a few months as the

1 engineer.

2 Q. Okay. How many times do you run over this territory, do you
3 think?

4 A. We usually take five roundtrips per half, so in this stint it
5 would've been like 40. And then before that, significant amounts.
6 I've been in Conneaut and Ashtabula for quite a while.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. A lot of trips. I couldn't say precisely, but many trips.

9 Q. Okay, appreciate it. Now, if you could, walk us through your
10 day from when you went on duty and talk us through, you know, to
11 the time of derailment.

12 A. We came on duty at 3:50 p.m. on the 10th of May. In the crew
13 room we went over the paperwork, we checked our memos, we briefed
14 about the consist, the work we'd do in Conneaut -- or Conway, the
15 work we would do at Hazelton, where we do a set-off, and then the
16 work we would do in Ashtabula, Ohio, when we turn the train or run
17 around it, depending on the situation, to head it to Buffalo.

18 After we did that, we went out to the locomotive set a yard
19 crew had brought out for us, that was on the west end of Track
20 906. There were three locomotives already pre-set up for
21 distributive power. The first locomotive was going to run on the
22 head of the train, the two locomotives were going to be the -- I
23 believe it was the 125th and 126th position. And the marker, the
24 end-of-train device, was already pre-linked also, we were notified
25 by the car department of that and we had the paperwork to verify

1 that and it was showing -- everything was showing normal in the
2 locomotive. After we waited for some yard crews to move out of
3 the way, we traveled down 906, which becomes 701. We left the
4 cars we were attached to, plus the two distributive power
5 locomotives, on that track and we went light power over to 904.
6 We tied on to 904, which was on ground air.

7 With permission, we pulled up, taking head room on 702 and
8 then getting into the interlocking at West Conway. As we were
9 starting this move, I did lose communication with the conductor.
10 The five-yard yardmaster relayed all the information we needed to
11 complete attaching those cars to the ones we had left on 701.
12 Now, as a complete train, we were strung out through the
13 interlocking at West Conway, got permission to depart once I did
14 the brake pipe test that's required for the distributive power,
15 the Class 3 continuity test.

16 The yardmaster said okay to switch over from Channel 58, the
17 yard channel, over to Channel 89, which is the main-line channel
18 there. Talked to the dispatcher. Told the conductor that's what
19 we were doing to do. He switched over and said we would meet at
20 Rochester to get reunited. So I talked to the dispatcher and got
21 permission to pull to Rochester, pause and get the conductor, and
22 then proceed up to Bright, where we were going to hold for traffic
23 on the Youngstown line. So got the conductor on the head end, we
24 pulled up to Bright, sat there for about 3 hours or so and as we
25 were sitting there, you know, traffic's going by, we're hearing

1 things on the radio, we had no reason to suspect the engine radio
2 was the problem we had had in the yard. We don't go by what our
3 feelings are or what we think may be happening, we go by
4 indication of what's going on around us, but past experience has
5 told us it's usually the conductor's radio that's the issue. So
6 we had nothing to indicate that it was the radio on the engine
7 that was really the problem.

8 We get our signal to depart, I do a train check and we start
9 pulling, that's when I lost the marker. We went FR NOCOM after we
10 started moving. Tried to do a comm test, you know, the soft key
11 on the engine. I've had luck with that in the past, bringing the
12 marker back. No luck this time. We toned up the dispatcher.
13 There's a train going by on Fort Wayne Number 2 at the same time,
14 you know, there's a lot of traffic out in that area. We heard
15 other people on the radio, again, there was nothing to indicate
16 that the railroad radio -- the engine radio was an issue.

17 And from Bright up to the -- around the detector there at
18 91.9, there's no PTC. So because there's no PTC, there's also no
19 Trip Optimizer. They are somehow integrated and it's beyond me,
20 but that's our experience. So I ran the train up to there and
21 then at that point, I -- or I, you know, started the Trip
22 Optimizer, let the Trip Optimizer run the train, I was really not,
23 you know, too excited about running that train myself, I don't
24 have a ton of experience with huge trains, so I was very anxious
25 to get Trip Optimizer on board and take over for me. So I'm doing

1 that, I'm trying to get the marker, we're waiting for the
2 dispatcher to get back to us so we can let them know that we can
3 only go 30 mile per hour. Where I suspected the detector would go
4 off, I hit the counter but all of these other things going on, you
5 know, the counter's still running, we believe we heard the no
6 defects message and had no reason to suspect that there were any
7 issues with anything. Everything seemed to be operating
8 correctly, the Trip Optimizer was running the train, I had put in
9 a temporary caveat or stipulation to the Trip Optimizer that it
10 could only go 30 mile per hour, because once you clear that area
11 you can step it up to 40, but not today because of the FR NOCOM.

12 There was really nothing that happened that was eventful
13 between there and when we -- well, we changed the radio channel
14 right around Castle to 65, that's what's stipulated, and we had
15 nothing to suspect that anything was going wrong, everything
16 seemed to be operating normally, and then we went in emergency
17 around 93 or so, or 73, I'm sorry, and brought the train to a
18 stop, tried to get the air recovered, it seemed like the flow was
19 staying very high. The conductor was already -- he had called
20 emergency over the radio, we toned up the dispatcher to let the
21 dispatcher know what was going on. The conductor was suited up,
22 he was out the door, he took the tonnage profile with him and as
23 he was maybe 30 cars back, 40 cars, we were communicating a lot
24 because we knew we'd already had the issue with the radio, so we
25 wanted to make sure, as soon as he got out of range, we could have

1 the dispatcher work with us, if need to be. The dispatcher
2 responded "you're in emergency" and that was the first time we
3 heard that there might have been a report of a derailment. We
4 were not expecting anything like that, we were hoping like the air
5 would recover, but then it seemed like maybe at worse there was
6 separation. We had no indication, I never felt anything, the Trip
7 Optimizer was running the train. With the distributive power back
8 there, it kind of insulates us from anything that's going on
9 beyond there. So again, no indication that anything bad was going
10 on back there. We were thinking it was, at worst, a separation.

11 And let's see, he -- he said he might've -- the conductor
12 said I might see something down there, but maybe that was
13 emergency lights or something and that's when I said well, let me
14 get the consist, let's make sure you're running in the right
15 direction, because we knew we were on a key train but wanted to
16 make sure those -- everything that was back there was nothing that
17 would cause harm to him, I saw we had a loaded alcohol car and
18 there was, oh, a propane car also, with no odors. So that's
19 something as soon as you get there, you're not going to get a hint
20 that there might be a leak or something. So I told him about that
21 and it didn't seem like there was anything that would, you know,
22 be harmful for him to keep walking in that direction and then
23 other people started showing up, trainmaster James Wade, I think,
24 was one of the first ones on site. The fire department stopped
25 by, they told me that they had seen some cars derailed, soy beans

1 were spilling out, but nothing to be alarmed about as far as
2 dangerous to the public or anything like that. With all of this
3 going on, I was pretty much the person who knew the least, I was
4 just sitting in the cab, and we did put the train back together
5 with the stuff that was still on the rail, we fixed the
6 separation, I think it was the 63rd car, one of the knuckles had
7 opened up for some reason, probably just too much stress with
8 everything going on behind that.

9 We put together what we could, we re-hung the marker and then
10 we did a C102 to make sure everything was sufficiently secured,
11 put the brakes on the head locomotive, locked it up but then
12 somebody came who -- an employee of the NS, I can't remember her
13 name, I unlocked the door for her and then left with James Wade
14 and that was the end of our experience with the 14M.

15 Q. I appreciate it. So after you departed the yard and you went
16 to Channel 89 --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- and then you changed channels at Castle, is that correct?

19 A. Yes, went to Channel 65.

20 Q. Okay. Did you change channels at all in between there at
21 all?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. And then you hit your counter when you went over the
24 detector with the head end?

25 A. Yes, I did.

1 Q. And then once you said you guys thought you heard a defect or
2 no defect?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Okay. At that point did you reset your counter or stop it
5 or --

6 A. No, I did not, because the next time I looked at my counter,
7 it was way up there, so it was -- I would say because I had so
8 many other things going on, watching the Trip Optimizer, seeing
9 what it would do, because every trip's a learning experience, so
10 if you have this computer running your train, it's good to see
11 what it's doing so I can apply that.

12 If we don't have that available or if we have a train that's
13 similar and it does something erratic or different, then we can --
14 you know, you start building like a caseload of how these trains
15 run. The trend seems to be to longer trains, so it's good to have
16 that information and to build, build on that with every trip. So
17 yes, I did not -- I did not -- you know, when it got to the end
18 and it beeps and all that, I did not note that.

19 Q. Okay, appreciate it. Did you hear any other detectors going
20 off as you were approaching Castle? Or I guess, from the time you
21 departed the yard to Castle, what did you hear as far as detectors
22 going off?

23 A. When we were sitting at Bright, we heard multiple trains, you
24 know, going over the detector at 30.5. We waited for a train
25 coming south on the Youngstown line, the C36, and we heard their

1 detector go off because that's -- that's kind of like an early
2 indication of oh, okay, the train we possibly may be waiting on is
3 almost here.

4 Q. Okay. Do you ever hear the CSX detectors go off?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. As far as emergency response, do you feel like it was
7 pretty quick?

8 A. The emergency response from who?

9 Q. Well, I mean as far as the fire department.

10 A. Oh, yes, yes. Absolutely, absolutely. I believe everyone's
11 probably keyed up because of, you know, incidents in the recent
12 past.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. So they probably had recent training and all that. Yes, they
15 responded quickly and efficiently and professionally, in my
16 opinion.

17 Q. If you had to guess, how long was it before somebody talked
18 to you from the fire department?

19 A. Ten minutes.

20 MR. ZAGATA: Okay. I appreciate it. That's all I've got for
21 questions for now. I'll pass it around.

22 BY MR. SKOLNEKOVICH:

23 Q. Richard Skolnekovich, just a couple questions. So you
24 switched over at Castle, right after Castle, the radio channel?

25 A. Right before Castle.

1 Q. Right before Castle?

2 A. Yes, we call the signal on 65 when we're going north.

3 Q. Okay. And you said you got a no defect message?

4 A. At YG 91.9, yes.

5 Q. Okay. Can you kind of paraphrase what the message said?

6 Like, can you kind of repeat it?

7 A. Oh, NS detector Milepost 9, YG 9.9 -- 91.9, no defects.

8 Q. Okay. Did you talk to -- from the time that you left Bright
9 up until, did you talk to dispatch at all or --

10 A. After we had a conversation at Bright, because we had a
11 bigger train, things take a little bit longer, so you get a signal
12 and, you know, the dispatcher probably says well, why aren't they
13 taking the signal yet. So the dispatcher did contact us and say
14 okay, signal indication and yes, we did, that was the last contact
15 we had with the dispatcher at that point. Like I said, we had
16 them toned up, but they hadn't responded.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And I don't know what time they change shifts, but we left
19 Bright around 10 o'clock, so I don't know if they're starting to
20 do their turnover or what.

21 Q. How many times did you have to try to contact them?

22 A. Just the one time.

23 Q. Just the one time?

24 A. My understanding is once you tone them up, there's really no
25 point in toning them anymore, it lights up on their screen or --

1 I've never seen that, but that's just what people say.

2 Q. Okay. And then the other question I had was did you have any
3 other kind of mechanical issues en route? Did you feel anything
4 or what was going on with the train?

5 A. No, no, the train felt fine, there was nothing, there was
6 nothing alarming, the -- it charged up actually quicker than I
7 kind of thought it would. That is the one nice thing I do like
8 about the distributive power is there's air compressors further
9 back. So instead of pushing all the way through, there's somebody
10 helping you out. So yeah, I had no indication there was anything
11 wrong with that train.

12 Q. Okay. And you said you were kind of busy when you were
13 getting up towards Castle, you were messing with the TO (ph.)
14 or --

15 A. Well, it's especially busy around the detector area, because
16 like I said, we leave the PTC or the non-PTC territory and/or PTC
17 territory, there's a road crossing right there, somebody had just
18 gone across, not in an unsafe manner, but you know -- you know,
19 we've got a road crossing there to blow forward, you got the
20 detector, you've got an intermediate signal, you're leaving the
21 30-mile-an-hour and you're going into 40-mile-an-hour territory.
22 Yeah, it is a busy little spot.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And not to mention, you know, this train was -- like I said,
25 this was more than we usually get.

1 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: Yeah, okay. I have no further questions,
2 thank you.

3 MR. WENYECK: All right.

4 MR. FRANSEN: Brian Fransen, BLET, I have no questions at
5 this time, Gordon.

6 MR. WENYECK: All right.

7 MR. CRAINE: Don Craine, NS, no questions at this time.

8 MR. WHITE: Ervin White, FRA, no questions at this time.

9 MR. HULBURT: Paul Hulburt, NS, no questions at this time.

10 BY MR. CASSITY:

11 Q. Jared Cassity, SMART TD. Gordon, I do have a couple
12 questions. So you made the comment that this was a huge train and
13 that "huge" kind of stood out to me. Can you talk to me about
14 what your experience is with trains on this territory and what
15 maybe a normal size is versus a big size?

16 A. Typically, we figure we'll expect about 100, 130 cars and a
17 significant portion of that gets dropped off at Hazelton yard. So
18 you don't have a long stretch to take with this and they're not
19 typically distributive power, we don't -- I personally don't run a
20 lot of distributive power and I've tried to angle my career
21 towards -- I mean, I like Conneaut because it's a great group of
22 people, we have great supervision, we have people who really care
23 about what they do, so that's made it easy. But like I said, I
24 ran Conway to Toledo and they run really big trains over really
25 difficult territory. So I've tried to -- not to mention it's a

1 long drive from my house, but that's one of the, you know, plusses
2 that -- where we work, is we get more traditional trains, which
3 I'm a lot more comfortable with.

4 Q. Okay. The inspection on the train, I assume everything was
5 done by carmen in the yard, no --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- no inspections or anything that stood out to you --

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. -- with the air slips or anything like that?

10 A. That's correct, that's correct.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Of course, the conductor, he still looks over his head six,
13 but we didn't see anything that was out of the ordinary or took
14 exception to and like I said, when we put it together, everything
15 seemed fine.

16 Q. Okay. You had also made the comment that you wanted to test
17 the communication with the conductor to make sure that he was
18 still in range or not out of range?

19 A. After we went in emergency, yes. We had a discussion before
20 he left the engine and he says hey, I'll just keep calling you
21 and, you know, if we have an issue, then we'll know that that's as
22 far as I can go and still be, you know, in communication.

23 Q. Okay. So that actually leads me to where I was going, so
24 that was kind of the first time that you were, as a crew, able to
25 test the communication range with the radios or did you experience

1 some kind of comm loss there in the yard, too, or --

2 A. Well, in the yard, we had to get relayed from the yardmaster
3 and that was the first time we had an indication and again, we
4 just assumed it was the conductor's weaker radio, that's typically
5 the way it is.

6 Q. Okay, that's what I thought I heard. Do you recall what that
7 distance was in the yard, roughly?

8 A. I'd say we probably had about a hundred cars on that first
9 track that we were dealing with. I would say probably about 60
10 cars into it. From the head end to where he was. So probably
11 about 60, 80 cars, I know that's kind of a big difference, but --

12 Q. Sure. No, it's okay if you don't know. In the yard, is it
13 normal for the crews to lose radio communication around that
14 distance or --

15 A. No, it's not.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. No.

18 Q. You had also made a comment that a train was going south.
19 Just for the record, is that north/south territory that you're
20 operating on?

21 A. The train you're referencing was the train coming at us, that
22 was the southbound, that was the C36, that's the train we were
23 waiting for. When we were leaving, there was a westbound train
24 that's on the Fort Wayne line.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Is that what you're asking?

2 Q. So that gets me to where I'm going. Can you help me
3 understand, out of the terminal, what's east/west, what's
4 north/south, which lines are which?

5 A. Okay, absolutely. As we depart Conway yard, we're all going
6 west. When we get to Bright, that's when our trip goes north.
7 Main 1 and Main 2 go west. So the majority of the traffic in that
8 area is east/west with the Forth Wayne line, PC 28, right there at
9 Bright.

10 Q. Defect detectors in general, on the radio, do you hear quite
11 a few of those on that territory or is it pretty isolated or -- I
12 guess what I'm asking --

13 A. The only one we hear, the only two we hear in that area is PC
14 30.5, which is the Forth Wayne line west of Bright, and our
15 detector YG 91.9 north and southbound on the Youngstown line.

16 Q. And on the radio on the locomotive, did you -- let me ask you
17 this first, do you think the radio on the locomotive was bad?

18 A. Yeah, I do believe, yes. After this experience, yes. As it
19 was unfolding, no, I didn't think it was bad.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. We communicated with the dispatcher fine, I communicated with
22 the yardmaster fine, it was only in communication with the
23 conductor that I had an issue with. So there was no reason to
24 reach out to anybody and say hey, I think there's a problem with
25 the engine radio.

1 Q. Okay. So no daily inspection reports or tags or anything of
2 that sort with the radio?

3 A. Nothing indicating a defect. Out of Conway yard, most of the
4 time we get something called a gold card, that means that someone
5 else has signed the cards, inspected the locomotives and certified
6 that everything's good to go.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. We're not supposed to look at anything else, that's -- you
9 know, that takes the place of our personal inspection.

10 Q. And then technology, communications, you had said it went
11 front-to-rear NOCOM pretty quickly. Did you have any issues with
12 the DP communication at all?

13 A. No, no.

14 Q. And then the front-to-rear NOCOM, I felt like you indicated
15 that it was really quick coming out of the yard where you lost
16 communication.

17 A. It was very quick.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. We had communication so we could do a proper continuity test
20 before we left Bright, but you know, we -- like I said, I think it
21 was like 20 car lengths and we already went FR NOCOM, which was
22 kind of surprising.

23 Q. Do you think that was related to train length or do you have
24 a sense of what might've been going on there?

25 A. It's been my experience it's either train length or territory

1 or both. It's pretty much straight there, there's a little bit of
2 a hill for what we're doing, so I would say my experience would
3 indicate it was the train length.

4 MR. CASSITY: Okay. I have nothing else at this time, thank
5 you.

6 BY MR. ROSS:

7 Q. Larry Ross, FRA. When you said there was another train, the
8 trains, was there something coming off the Youngstown line towards
9 you, coming south?

10 A. The reason we held at Bright was there's a single track and
11 there was a southbound train, the C36.

12 Q. It was southbound. And off of the Youngstown line?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So once they cleared, we got a signal to proceed north.

16 Q. Were there any other trains out on that line, on the
17 Youngstown line, that night or were you the only game in town?
18 And for the southbound.

19 A. I don't have knowledge of any other trains, I know there was
20 a 15M in Youngstown waiting to come.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. But other trains that had already arrived or departed, I
23 don't have that knowledge.

24 Q. Okay, so did you hear any other trains on your line and then
25 that was it?

1 A. None other than that one train.

2 Q. And you said you doubled in the yard. Did you make one
3 double or several doubles?

4 A. Just one double.

5 Q. From 906 to what?

6 A. Nine-oh-four.

7 Q. Nine-oh-six to nine-oh-four.

8 A. Actually, it was nine-oh -- we pulled what we had off of 906
9 onto 702 or 701, cut away with just the head locomotive onto 904
10 and then doubled that to 701, because 906 turns into 701.

11 Q. Yeah, no.

12 A. Oh, okay.

13 MR. ROSS: Okay. That's all I had.

14 MR. WENYECK: So we had a single locomotive, the group of
15 cars off 904 over onto 701.

16 MR. ROSS: Thank you.

17 BY MR. ZAGATA:

18 Q. Zach Zagata, NTSB. As an engineer, have you received alarms
19 on hot box detectors?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. All kinds of alarms, critical included.

23 Q. How long has it been, do you think, since you had a critical
24 alarm?

25 A. The last critical alarm, it's probably been a couple years.

1 We had dragging equipment.

2 Q. So on that, when you got that alarm, did wayside get a hold
3 of you or how about the dispatcher, how did all that go?

4 A. Yes. In a timely fashion, like within 5 minutes we got a
5 call from wayside and they're very helpful with giving you axle
6 counts, maybe even a car number, south rail, north rail, the
7 information you need to, you know, know what to do or what to
8 expect as you're heading back there.

9 MR. ZAGATA: Okay. That's all I've got for questions now,
10 I'll pass it around one more time.

11 MR. SKOLNEKOVICH: No further questions.

12 MR. FRANSEN: No further questions.

13 MR. CRAINE: Craine. No further questions. I do have a
14 comment, if able. Mr. Wenyeck, I do appreciate your
15 professionalism in this, learning from the Trip Optimizer how to
16 handle that train is a very, very good thing and your
17 professionalism there and through this investigation also, I noted
18 that you and your conductor had several very pertinent briefings
19 in the cab, one, you were teaching a younger member about the DP
20 and what you're looking at as an engineer, and also a very
21 extensive briefing about your set-off in Youngstown. So I just
22 want to commend you for your actions and how you handled yourself
23 and thank you.

24 MR. WENYECK: Okay. And I appreciate being able to talk to
25 you so quickly the night of the incident, so that was -- I felt,

1 especially with Paul there, I felt good that we were able to get
2 the facts out to people who -- who could use them to figure out,
3 you know, what happened, what went wrong. And everybody wants the
4 same thing and that is to move freight safely, efficiently, to the
5 best of our ability. So we take a lot of pride in what we do and
6 I appreciate you noting that.

7 MR. WHITE: White, no questions.

8 MR. HULBURT: Paul Hulburt, no questions or comments.

9 BY MR. CASSITY:

10 Q. Jared Cassity, SMART TD, I do have a couple questions. You
11 had mentioned your qualifications earlier, it sounds like you're
12 qualified or have been qualified on a lot of -- quite a bit of
13 territory. The defect detectors on Norfolk Southern, in general,
14 are they all the same or do they vary throughout the system?

15 A. I found them to be fairly consistent. Sometimes they'll give
16 you an axle count, that might be the only big change, you know, or
17 variation from detector to detector. Most of them have a repeat
18 function, which is valuable at times. But yeah, I think they're
19 standard enough that there's no reason to say well, that -- what
20 does that mean or anything like that, it's clear cut, it's well
21 defined.

22 MR. CASSITY: Okay, that's it for me. Thank you.

23 BY MR. ROSS:

24 Q. Ross, FRA, one more question. Have you worked with this
25 conductor before?

1 A. Yes.

2 MR. ROSS: That's all I have.

3 MR. WENYECK: Okay.

4 MR. ZAGATA: Good. Well --

5 MR. WHITE: Mr. Zagata, this is White, I'd like to do a
6 follow-up, please.

7 BY MR. WHITE:

8 Q. The 91.9 detector, sir, have you ever had communication
9 issues with that detector on previous trips over the last year?

10 A. No. No, no communication issues.

11 MR. WHITE: Thank you.

12 MR. ZAGATA: Anybody else?

13 BY MR. CASSITY:

14 Q. This is Cassity with SMART TD, I apologize. You may have
15 said this and I might've missed it and if you did, again, I'm
16 sorry, but was that the first defect detector on the trip that you
17 encountered?

18 A. Yes.

19 MR. CASSITY: Okay, all right. Nothing else from me, thank
20 you.

21 MR. ZAGATA: Anybody else?

22 (No response.)

23 MR. ZAGATA: All right. Do you have anything you'd like to
24 add to the interview?

25 MR. WENYECK: No.

1 MR. ZAGATA: Okay. Is it okay if we contact you if we have
2 additional questions?

3 MR. WENYECK: Absolutely, yes.

4 MR. ZAGATA: Okay. All right. Well, if nobody has any
5 additional questions, we'll conclude the interview, thank you.

6 (Whereupon, the interview concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

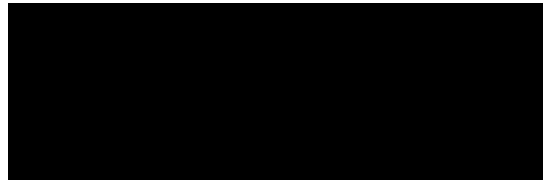
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TRAIN DERAILMENT NEAR NEW CASTLE,
 PENNSYLVANIA ON MAY 10, 2023
 Interview of Gordon Wenyeck

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD23FR011

DATE: May 13, 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.



Transcriber

