

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

CPKC TRAIN DERAILMENT IN *

BORDULAC, NORTH DAKOTA *

ON JULY 5, 2024 *

Accident No.: RRD24LR012

* * * * *

Interview of: KENNETH WANGEN, Chief
Carrington Fire Department, North Dakota

via Microsoft Teams

Friday,
July 26, 2024

APPEARANCES:

PAUL STANCIL, Senior Hazardous Materials Accident
Investigator and Hazardous Materials Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

DAVID CASACELI, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

BENJAMIN STROT, Rail Accident Investigator and
Ops Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

DION MILLER, Hazmat Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration

VERNON WALKER, Tank Car Quality Assurance
Federal Railroad Administration

RAUL GONZALEZ
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

ED DANKBAR, Director of Emergency Management and
Hazmat Response, Northern Region
CPCK

JASON WOLSKY, First Assistant Chief
Carrington Fire Department, North Dakota

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:02 p.m. ET)

1 Today is July 26th, 2024. The time is 3:02 p.m. Eastern
2 Time. This is an interview that's being conducted in connection
3 with the July 25th [sic], 2024 derailment of CPKC Train 242-03 in
4 Bordulac, North Dakota. The NTSB number is RRD240 -- LR012. That
5 is RRD24LR012.
6

7 My name is Paul Stancil. I'm a senior hazardous materials
8 accident investigator with the NTSB, and also the hazardous
9 materials group chairman for this investigation.
10

11 This is an interview of Chief Kenneth Wangen. Am I
12 pronouncing that correctly, sir?

13 CHIEF WANGEN: Wangen.

14 MR. STANCIL: Wangen. Okay. Of the Carrington, North Dakota
15 Fire Department.

16 Chief Wangen, are you aware that the conversation is being
17 recorded?

18 CHIEF WANGEN: Yes, I am.

19 MR. STANCIL: And do we have your permission to record the
20 conversation?

21 CHIEF WANGEN: Yes, you do.

22 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thank you. We are conducting this
23 interview via Microsoft Teams conference call.

24 So now, I'll ask those attending the call to introduce
25 themselves, and it's very important for the recording that we all

1 speak loudly and clearly, okay. So first, let's start with the
2 NTSB staff that are on this call. Mr. Casaceli.

3 MR. CASACELI: My name is David Casaceli, C-a-s-a-c-e-l-i,
4 NTSB investigator-in-charge in charge for this accident. And I'll
5 take the opportunity to correct for the record that the accident
6 was on July 5, 2024, not July 25, as Paul mistakenly stated in his
7 intro. July 5.

8 MR. STANCIL: Thank you. So, Benjamin.

9 MR. STROT: Good afternoon. Ben Strot, S-t-r-o-t, NTSB, rail
10 accident investigator, ops group chairman.

11 MR. STANCIL: Okay. And whom do we have from the Federal
12 Railroad Administration?

13 MR. WALKER: Go ahead, Dion.

14 MR. MILLER: Dion Miller, hazmat inspector, in Minot, North
15 Dakota here.

16 MR. WALKER: Vernon Walker, tank car quality assurance or
17 tank car specialist out of (Indiscernible), Oklahoma.

18 MR. STANCIL: Okay. And the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials
19 Safety Administration?

20 MR. GONZALEZ: My name is Raul Gonzalez. That's R-a-u-l,
21 G-o-n-z-a-l-e-z, PHMSA.

22 MR. STANCIL: Thank you. From the CPKC?

23 MR. DANKBAR: Yeah. Thank you. Ed Dankbar. That's D-a-n-k-
24 b as in boy, a-r. CPKC director of emergency management and
25 hazmat response for our northern region based out of Twin Cities.

1 MR. STANCIL: And from the Carrington Fire Department?

2 MR. WOLSKY: Jason Wolsky, W-o-l-s-k-y. I'm the first
3 assistant chief for Carrington Fire Department.

4 MR. STANCIL: And, Chief Wangen, would you please introduce
5 yourself.

6 CHIEF WANGEN: Yes. I'm Ken Wangen, fire chief for the
7 Carrington Fire Department.

8 MR. STANCIL: Okay. All right. Chief, if any question is
9 unclear or you don't understand the question, please ask the
10 questioner to clarify or restate the question. And if you don't
11 know the answer to any of the questions, it's okay to tell us that
12 you don't know. We don't want you to speculate if you don't know
13 the answer. Do you understand?

14 CHIEF WANGEN: Yes, I do.

15 MR. STANCIL: Okay. The sole purpose for this investigation
16 is to improve safety. It's not to assign any fault, blame or
17 liability. Our mission is to improve transportation safety and
18 prevent accidents. As such, the NTSB cannot offer any guarantee
19 of confidentiality, immunity from any legal proceeding or by any
20 other agency, whether it's local, state or federal.

21 A transcript of this interview will be placed in the public
22 docket for this investigation. Understood?

23 CHIEF WANGEN: Yes.

24 MR. STANCIL: Great.

25 INTERVIEW OF KENNETH WANGEN

1 BY MR. STANCIL:

2 Q. Okay. Chief, would you tell us about your background,
3 education and expertise please?

4 A. Well, my true education is I'm an engineering technician that
5 works for a large company, Eden. And I've also been a volunteer
6 for a little over 33 years. Started -- I was actually both in
7 fire and EMS for 27 years. I retired from EMS back in 2017. With
8 the volunteer status, I have taken multiple opportunities to
9 gather as much knowledge as possible and was a member of the Crude
10 by Rail Car Courses when -- during the Hoboken explosion of
11 railcars hauling crude. So, thanks to CPKC, I did actually get to
12 go down and attend cert Cs approved by rail classes. I'm also a
13 tentative member of the Northeast Regional Hazmat Group of North
14 Dakota. So early on I liked dealing with the hazmat stuff. So I
15 do have some knowledge and, of course, a veteran of two prior
16 derailments here in Carrington site. So that's about it. I could
17 go on and on in 33 years. There's been a lot of classes and a lot
18 of training on the fire side as well as being an instructor for
19 some of the stuff as well.

20 Q. That is wonderful. Which two derailments did you handle
21 prior to this?

22 A. In 2019, we had a derailment that was approximately 5 miles
23 west of here in February that involved anhydrous propane --
24 anhydrous and propane and there was some dry good cars in there,
25 but I cannot remember what was involved with that or what was in

1 those cars at this moment. And then in 2020, we had a dry good
2 car or a dry goods train derail within the city limits.

3 Q. Have you ever worked with the NTSB before?

4 A. No, I can say that I have.

5 Q. Okay. And how long have you served in your current position
6 as chief?

7 A. Since 20 -- I believe it was 2012.

8 Q. And you said altogether 33 years with the fire department?

9 A. Yes, in the fire service side, as a member of two other fire
10 departments.

11 Q. Right. Okay. I'll start by asking you to tell us as
12 completely as possible, what happened after you were notified of
13 this incident? And please walk us through the initial emergency
14 response actions to the derailment and you can do those
15 chronologically, if you would. Give us the most complete
16 accounting of what you did, what you saw, your communications with
17 others and other organizations and take all the time you need, and
18 feel free to refer to any notes you have.

19 A. I didn't -- I don't have my notes handy, but I think the
20 initial response is -- was fairly clear.

21 CHIEF WANGEN: We were paged out at approximately what was
22 it? Quarter to 4 or quarter 3, Jason?

23 ASSISTANT CHIEF WOLSKY: Quarter to 4.

24 CHIEF WANGEN: As we -- as I responded to the hall, Jason was
25 already in the first truck getting ready to leave, and because of

1 what we were told in the page ought (ph.) of a locomotive fire, he
2 was wanting to take out smaller units, not knowing where the
3 placement of that locomotive was. When I got there, he asked me,
4 and I said we should probably take our primary pumpers. So we --
5 that crew jumped into the pumper and took off. I then sent one of
6 our smaller tankers as support. So initially we had a crew of
7 eight responding to the scene.

8 As more guys reported to the hall, they informed me that they
9 could see the flame -- one gentleman from his home to where the
10 accident was at was 15 miles and he could see the flames and the
11 orange glow. So at that point, I called Jason again and said that
12 I was going to get more assets mobile, and he called me not very
13 long after that via the radio and said they were blocked by the
14 train on the first access point. And so then we did send our
15 smaller trucks and then again we -- that was via radio that we had
16 that conversation. And then it was about 5 minutes later I called
17 him, and we responded with our final unit which I brought out
18 which was our -- another one of our bigger trucks hauling more
19 water.

20 So Jason actually made it out to the site first and reported
21 back that it was a derailment. When I got on scene, they had
22 already done initial speed for the west side to make sure that
23 there was no personnel involved. It wasn't very long after that,
24 that we did actually make contact with the train crew, and then
25 realized that the east side of the train had actually pulled away

1 to a safe distance.

2 We then regrouped and started operations of trying to figure
3 out what cars were involved. I had not yet made the call to get
4 the consist for the train, but we did know that we had obvious
5 fire, and we did know that there were -- some of the cars were
6 actually having pressure relief devices going off. So at that
7 point, our decision was that we were going to back off, cordon off
8 the area. We had made contact with some of the local CPKC people.
9 We did mask up a couple of guys to go through to the other side
10 and try to get us a car count. And, once they came back, we had
11 gotten the initial of anywhere from 15 to 30 cars. It was
12 difficult to tell with the intensity of the fire how many were
13 actually in the pile.

14 Once that was complete, Jason and I actually went up to start
15 or trying to get identification numbers and about that time is
16 when Ed called me. Ed notified me or wanted to know the status
17 and what we were doing, and that's when we had known from before
18 what resources were coming.

19 So we stepped everybody back. We actually did make the
20 decision to go in and put a truck on the other side of the
21 incident to control any local access and keep people out of the
22 site until the resources were there and the plan was formed on how
23 we were going to handle it moving forward.

24 BY MR. STANCIL:

25 Q. Then what happened with any follow up or mitigation action?

1 Were you engaged in that as well?

2 A. Yes. Once Ed and his team got on site, we -- actually before
3 that I guess I should say, before Ed got on site, there were other
4 CPKC people showing up. The decision was made once a locomotive
5 set on the west side was obtained and onsite, that we could
6 actually break the string. There was one car that was semi-still
7 upright on the tracks. We teamed up with CPKC personnel and went
8 and pulled the pin to get the west side of the cars pulled back.

9 And then once Ed showed up onsite, then we set our net (ph.)
10 and started getting a better idea of what was actually involved as
11 far as, you know, at this point, we knew that we had an anhydrous.
12 We could see the purities going off and the white cloud, and I
13 believe it was about at that time that the first consist got to my
14 hands and realized what we were totally dealing with. And it had
15 been sent to me via my phone, but trying to read a phone at that
16 time of the morning with that much adrenaline running through is
17 not possible.

18 Q. Can you tell us a little bit more about what happened after
19 all of that took place?

20 A. We were constantly watching the weather, taking a look at the
21 wind predictions. For everything going wrong, we were getting
22 favorable winds early on to the incident. It was carrying the
23 foam away from the populated area of the small village. There was
24 concerns about the farm. So I had talked to the sheriff about
25 having the discussion with the people that lived in that farm on a

1 voluntary evacuation basis at that point. I believe the person
2 that does live there permanently did relocate into Carrington.

3 And again, we continued to monitor and as long as everything
4 was favorable, we didn't do a whole lot of messing around with the
5 people within the community other than keeping them out of the
6 site. And the plume was being carried away. So -- and the fire
7 was helping with keeping the anhydrous at bay. It never -- we
8 never did actually see a white plume on the west side of the black
9 plume. We could see it on the east side, a lot, every time the
10 PRD would go off. So we had an advantage with that.

11 Q. Okay. Let me follow up with a few questions, and then we'll
12 go around the virtual room here and allow my colleagues to ask any
13 questions that they might have as well, okay.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Chief, what is the size of your department?

16 A. Personnel-wise, we're restricted to 40 individuals, but the
17 reality of it is that our active group is around 30, 32. And it
18 all depends on your definition of active. For us, that's making a
19 certain percentage of calls and being involved within the
20 trainings and stuff like that. So.

21 Q. And how many of them were engaged in this response?

22 A. 25, and of the ones that weren't, they were actually
23 completely out of town.

24 Q. Okay. And what mutual support did your department have?

25 A. We brought in Jamestown Rural, Pingree, Kensal, New Rockford

1 and Harvey as far as manpower and equipment, and then we also
2 brought in Sykeston for manpower and Rugby for equipment.

3 Q. Do you have a total for number of firefighters and apparatus?

4 A. No, I don't. Not at this time. We are working on -- I'm
5 getting that -- getting those numbers put together.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I do know that the initial response, once the plan to start
8 cooling the tanks and stuff like that, we had our three tankers
9 onsite, Pingree's tanker, Kensal's tanker, two of Jamestown
10 Rural's, and New Rockford's. When we finished the plan, we
11 realized that one of our tankers, Pingree's and Kensal's would not
12 work for what was being given us on the fire ground. We were just
13 not going to be able to utilize them efficiently. So we held them
14 back in reserve.

15 Q. Now, all of this is occurring on day 1, the initial response?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Was there a unified command established?

20 A. Yes, there was. We (indiscernible) in Foster County just
21 about anything we have of any sizeable nature. We do unified
22 command with the law enforcement and EMS.

23 Q. Okay. Tell us about that organization and how that
24 functioned.

25 A. Initially on, it was -- I ended up as overall IC. I did --

1 Andrew Kirking, our EM was in contact with me, and Jodi Hovdenes
2 of the local ambulance here, I was also in contact with her, and
3 then the sheriff was actually onsite with us. We established that
4 we were going to have to get access to the site control. So I
5 believe the sheriff at that point had or through State Radio, I'm
6 not absolutely sure how the contact was made, but we did end up
7 with six North Dakota highway patrol officers onsite. Jodi and
8 Andrew worked on mobilizing EMS. They brought in Dave Somberol
9 (ph.) and New Rockford Ambulances -- or sorry, Jamestown Ambulance
10 and New Rockford Ambulances. And then Andrew then worked --
11 there's actually -- I can't remember the name of the actual
12 application, there's basically a web availability of equipment, an
13 application through the North Dakota Department of Emergency
14 Services. He did put out a call out to see what equipment to
15 pertaining to this type of incident would be available.

16 Q. And when did CPKC arrive onsite, and what assets did they
17 bring?

18 A. Initially the local crew was there, not even 5 to 10 minutes
19 after us.

20 Q. And what do --

21 A. I'm sorry.

22 Q. What do you mean by the local crew?

23 A. The local track crew that's based here in Carrington.

24 There's a track repair crew that's -- they have a building right
25 here alongside the tracks.

1 Q. Okay. Did they bring any firefighting aid at this point?

2 A. No.

3 Q. No.

4 A. No.

5 Q. So you did all the firefighting?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Did -- as to tactics, did you attempt to take
8 offensive or just defensive actions?

9 A. We went strictly defensive when we got onsite and seen what
10 we were actually dealing with. There was no amount of water that
11 we were going to be able to haul in and effectively extinguish the
12 fires that were going on.

13 Q. Okay. Let's talk about what you saw regarding -- you
14 mentioned tank car PRDs were going off and things. I guess the
15 fire was growing in intensity at some point. Can you describe
16 what you saw there with respect to the tank cars?

17 A. We actually couldn't see the tank cars from the west side.
18 We knew that they were involved. We couldn't -- through the
19 flames of the cars that were handling plastics, we couldn't see
20 that there were tank cars involved. We also did notice instantly
21 that the methanol was burning on top of the water. This was in a
22 slew area, and it was actually more or less diked because of the
23 road. So it was -- when it was dark, we had no problem seeing
24 that the methanol was there and burning. Again, we could not see
25 PRD devices going on -- off initially. We could hear them, and we

1 also were taking a fairly safe standoff point of our distance of
2 where we were doing the assessments from. Once we did have people
3 pack up and go through, they came back and gave us a rough
4 estimate of how many tank cars were involved. At that time, we
5 didn't know what was pressurized vessels and which were the
6 methanol carriers. So.

7 Q. Let me back up a second. So your time on scene was when?

8 A. Approximately 4 o'clock a.m.

9 Q. And the light conditions was dark, dawn light?

10 A. Yes. It was extremely dark yet.

11 Q. Okay. Did -- were you eventually able to make any
12 observations regarding what was venting from the PRDs?

13 A. Yeah. After first light, and we sent -- we didn't send a
14 team actually through the foam or through adjacent to the fire
15 area until there was light. We were, we were fairly confident
16 because it was a grassy area and stuff like that, and we hadn't
17 seen any flame on the road, that the methanol was not making it
18 much further than the edge of the waterway there. So we did
19 precaution them to go through, and if it was, you know, if there
20 was any type of singe marks or anything like that, to back off,
21 but when they got on their side, then they could -- they gave us a
22 better assessment of what was on that side of the fire.

23 Q. So this was a recon team that you sent in?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And what was their task? What was their mission?

1 A. Basically to get a car count and make sure that the east side
2 of the train was pulled away sufficiently.

3 Q. And you mentioned that you eventually got a train consist.
4 At what time was that in your hands?

5 A. I want to say, with everything else that was going on, when
6 it finally did get to my hands, it was probably around I want to
7 say the 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning timeframe. We had -- I had
8 been given reports of the consist, and we had a pretty good idea.
9 At the same time I was handed the consist, I was actually handed
10 the actual count of what was involved as well.

11 Q. So you said you received reports of what was in the consist.
12 Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

13 A. We were told that they train consisted of -- initially on, we
14 were even told that the train consisted of a sulfur product,
15 anhydrous, methanol, plastic pellets and everything else at that
16 point, I really didn't pay attention to because we did know -- we
17 could tell all that what we had burning was either the -- well, we
18 knew it wasn't the sulfur.

19 Q. And what was the source of that information?

20 A. That was from other individuals from CPKC that had showed up
21 at some point.

22 Q. And what timeframe are we talking about here?

23 A. That would probably have been around -- I want to say
24 probably around the 8 o'clock timeframe.

25 Q. Okay. So from the time you arrived onsite, 4 a.m. to roughly

1 8 o'clock, how were you able to determine what you were responding
2 to?

3 A. Strictly by what was in front of us being presented. We
4 weren't really worried about what the product was at that point
5 because we were strictly defensive. We were more worried about if
6 the air -- if the wind was to shift or something else was to
7 change, what we could do to protect the population.

8 Q. So during that timeframe, did you have any knowledge about
9 the hazardous materials?

10 A. I didn't know exactly what it was, but I had a pretty good
11 idea off of what it potentially could be.

12 Q. And can you explain that a little bit more?

13 A. Well, when I got the first picture of the last east side car
14 that was still on the tracks, I knew it was a pressure vessel. So
15 I had a relative idea that it was most likely anhydrous in that
16 car. We also had -- we also knew that by the fact that we could
17 see, and we had gotten -- actually we did have -- I did get
18 reports from State Radio that there was a possibility of methanol.
19 Well, that was confirmed by the blue flame on the water. The only
20 thing that we weren't sure was if there was any sulfur involved or
21 the plastic, but that had all come through as well through State
22 Radio.

23 Q. Okay. Did you have any or did you experience any challenges
24 or difficulties in gathering information about the hazardous
25 materials?

1 A. No. No, it was -- I had no less than two or three calls
2 about had I received the consist, and at the same time, you know,
3 there was still a lot of activity going on that we were trying to
4 direct, and I just never took the time. Once, once the hazmat
5 crews started coming up. Then there was a discussion of what
6 actually was involved and was more prevalent at the time and
7 important in my mind.

8 Q. Okay. You said you had the consist on your phone. About
9 what time did you receive it there?

10 A. I'd have to take a look here. I actually do have the AskRail
11 app as well --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- but they did not utilize it that morning.

14 Q. Is there any particular reason why?

15 A. Basically I didn't think about it, and then again like I
16 said, with what we were -- with our tactics that we were using
17 beforehand, I didn't -- I wasn't really worried about everything
18 that was in the pile. I was more worried about the general of a
19 few of what the pile was doing.

20 Q. Okay. And going back to the consist you received on your
21 cell phone, where did that come from?

22 A. That actually did come from CPKC.

23 Q. Do you have that time when that got to you?

24 A. Yeah. I'm trying to looked up here. I know the first
25 consist I requested was actually sent to State Radio. So that is

1 possibly how they got the information to us, and that was at least
2 an hour or 2 before I got notified that I had it.

3 Q. So can you give me a timestamp for that?

4 A. Yeah. I'm still trying to --

5 Q. Okay. Take your time.

6 A. It's amazing how many emails a day you get some days.

7 Q. I couldn't imagine in your case.

8 A. Let me see here. It was a little after the 6 o'clock
9 timeframe that I started getting the notices.

10 Q. And again, where did that come from?

11 A. From CPKC. We did establish later on that they had sent,
12 sent the original requested consist to State Radio.

13 Q. So it was sent to State Radio prior to you getting it?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Because they were -- that's how they, they believed they
17 could get ahold of me.

18 Q. Okay. And your copy came from whom at CPKC?

19 A. Let's see here. I'll pull up my computer here. The first
20 one I received was from ESEC Damon Brooks at 7:10.

21 Q. Okay. Very good. And that was the full train consist?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. And I heard you had some extensive hazmat background.

24 Are you -- do you understand how to read and understand the
25 content of a train consist?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And you've done that before?

3 A. Yes, several times.

4 Q. Okay. Did you or any of your firefighters attempt to use
5 placards as a means of identifying the material?

6 A. Yes, they were looking for any identification available, and
7 I believe that was one of the reports that came back from the east
8 side that allowed -- or that notified us of what was in that last
9 car that was connected to the locomotives.

10 Q. Were there any difficulties reading placards?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. How about shippers? Did anyone within your command
13 reach out to any of the hazardous materials shippers to request
14 information?

15 A. We had asked for it from the train crew, and I don't know.
16 It was actually with the -- on the truck that we had stationed on
17 the east side. We had asked them to get a shipper. I don't -- I
18 never seen it. So I'm not sure if it was ever delivered, and
19 again it was younger members. So they may not have asked for the
20 right thing.

21 Q. Do you know if any contact had been made with the -- with
22 shippers during the incident?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. And going back to the unified command, who were the
25 members of the unified command?

1 A. Myself, actually it was Alisa that actually showed up onsite.
2 So Alyssa Kaplan, a paramedic for the ambulance, and then Sheriff
3 Justin Johnson.

4 Q. Was CPKC part of your unified command?

5 A. Once they had showed up on scene, yes.

6 Q. Okay. And other organizations?

7 A. At that point, no.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Once Andrew showed, we did integrate him in as well, the
10 emergency manager.

11 Q. Okay. Does -- I think you mentioned it. Is Carrington a
12 paid or volunteer organization?

13 A. We're volunteer.

14 Q. Okay. And what level of training do your firefighters
15 receive for response to hazardous materials?

16 A. The State of North Dakota Hazmat Responder. It consists of
17 being able to read the DOT manual or the DOT book, basically know
18 how to determine what a proper response would be on identification
19 of the hazardous material.

20 Q. Is that -- would you describe that as awareness or operations
21 level training?

22 A. Awareness.

23 Q. Awareness. How many hours would that typically be?

24 A. It's normally anywhere from a 4 to 8 hour class depending on
25 who's instructing.

1 Q. Okay. Did you request any support from any specialized
2 hazardous materials teams during the incident?

3 A. We were in contact with both the Double Slag (ph.) Regional
4 Hazmat Team which I'm a member of the Jamestown Regional Hazmat
5 Team. We were on direct phone. I was actually on the phone with
6 Jamestown and Jason was on the phone with Double Slag.

7 Q. And did they deploy any resources?

8 A. We did not request them to.

9 Q. And is there any reason for that?

10 A. Basically because of prior knowledge. I did not add that I
11 actually was on a BNSF derailment as well at Heimdal. The
12 variabilities in what they could have accomplished at that point,
13 we already knew we had coming in the CPKC response.

14 Q. Okay. Were you involved in -- was your personnel involved in
15 any of the special mitigation tactics for the anhydrous tanks?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And tell me about that? Tell me what you did and what --

18 A. They were teamed up, they were teamed up with members of Ed's
19 response crew, cooling operations and I don't believe in this one,
20 that they actually -- in '19, we actually helped place parts and
21 stuff to mitigate the anhydrous leaks. They never got back to me
22 that they were to that extent on this one but they were helping
23 with the cooling and gaining access to see what was actually
24 happening within the pile up.

25 Q. So you mentioned there was at least one tank car that was

1 venting anhydrous through a PRD. Did you see any other release
2 points ever of anhydrous vapor?

3 A. Yeah. I actually through the use of (indiscernible)
4 technology, we could see that there were compromised cars.

5 Q. Now you mentioned you used tarps to -- tell me what the tarps
6 did?

7 A. The tarps helped with the suppression of the vapor. The
8 cooling tends to calm the car down and helped reduce the release
9 of the vapor.

10 Q. And how many cars did you need to deploy that on?

11 A. I know there was two for sure.

12 Q. Okay. Any other technique that proved useful in this case?

13 A. I know they used mag patches to -- on exposed breaches and
14 actually one I believe we buried in the mud.

15 Q. Okay. How many of those did you put mag patches on?

16 A. I don't know. That was actually more -- my personnel wasn't
17 involved with that. That was more Ed's crew.

18 Q. Okay. I'm going to start passing it off now to my colleagues
19 and give them an opportunity to ask you some questions.

20 MR. STANCIL: Let me start with Mr. Strot.

21 MR. STROT: Thank you, Paul.

22 BY MR. STROT:

23 Q. I just have a few questions for you about initial response,
24 operational side of things. You said initially you were told that
25 it was a locomotive fire. Where would that information have come

1 from?

2 A. That was actually -- we're paged out through State Radio.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So my assumption is that the -- it was the actual railroad
5 crew or the train crew that made that initial call, and in just
6 working with State Radio, what they reported -- or what was given
7 to them and what they paged out to us can be worlds apart. It's
8 not uncommon for us to not have all the information as we're going
9 out there. We do -- Jason and I both do get in the habit that we
10 make calls to State Radio on the way to a response to glean as
11 much information as we can from them. I did actually make the
12 call once the first truck left out of there and got a better idea
13 of where the train was at. At that point, they still hadn't
14 realized that it was bigger than just a locomotive fire.

15 Q. Gotcha. And then did anyone from your department go to the
16 train crew to get consist information from them or was it just
17 what was emailed to you?

18 A. I believe we did have one of our individuals -- I know he was
19 in contact with the train crew, our individual that was in charge
20 on the east side doing traffic control.

21 MR. STROT: Okay. I think right now that's all the questions
22 I have.

23 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thanks, Ben. How about Mr. Walker?

24 MR. WALKER: Yes, I just have a few questions.

25 BY MR. WALKER:

1 Q. How close did your personnel get within the first 4 hours
2 onsite? Just an estimation. How close were they to the fire?

3 A. The recon crew was, oh, I'm guessing within 50 yards, maybe
4 even closer than that.

5 Q. Do you remember what time it was that the recon crew was in
6 that area?

7 A. It was after first light. So I want to say it was around the
8 6 o'clock hour.

9 Q. Okay. 6. Did you set an area as far as no personnel beyond
10 this point?

11 A. Yes, we did.

12 Q. What was that? How far away was it?

13 A. After the recon crew was done, and the CPKC assets started
14 showing up, if you look at the site, there's a Y in the road on
15 the east side. That's where that truck was positioned. And then
16 on the west side, it was actually -- we actually station at a
17 garage just across the street from the elevator, and we wouldn't
18 let anybody past us there.

19 Q. Can you estimate distance?

20 A. I would guess it was probably a little better than a quarter
21 mile each way.

22 Q. Quarter mile. Okay. You also -- you said basically this
23 thing was kind of stretched out quite a ways. So you said you had
24 an east group and kind of a west group. Was one person in charge
25 of the east group, and I assume you were on the west side?

1 A. I was on the west side, and we only had initially for the
2 control of the area, we only had one truck on the east side. So
3 they were in contact via radio and cell phone.

4 Q. Okay. So you were maintaining communications with them as
5 well. So you were still in charge even if you was a distance?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Was the east group -- you said the wind was blowing
8 toward the east end. Is that correct?

9 A. Yes, it was blowing to the southeast. They actually did from
10 their initial -- when they initially set up a stop point, they
11 actually did have to relocate because one of the wind shifts did
12 actually carry anhydrous over to them where they could actually
13 detect it via smell. They told us. They're both, both of them
14 that are in that truck are extensively involved in agriculture.
15 So they have especially anhydrous ammonia training from the ag
16 aspect of it.

17 Q. Were they utilizing supplied air?

18 A. After they got -- after the first detect, yes. They went and
19 put -- made sure they had the SCBAs in the counts with them or in
20 the cab with them.

21 Q. Okay. They didn't require any hospitalization or any type of
22 emergency service?

23 A. No. No. They got a whiff of it, let us know and we told
24 them to relocate.

25 Q. Okay. That's all I have, sir. Thank you.

1 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Mr. Walker. Mr. Miller.

2 MR. MILLER: Yeah, just a couple of questions.

3 BY MR. MILLER:

4 Q. When the crew was -- you didn't have the consist you said
5 until 7 or whatever, and the crew. What time did they pull the
6 east part of the train up and go back and do the west part?

7 A. The east part of the train was beyond the -- was actually
8 beyond the Y in the road fairly quickly after the incident. I
9 know when we went to send the truck on that side of the road, the
10 train would have actually, had it been any closer, it would have
11 blocked them from crossing over onto the north side of the tracks.
12 So that point, which was probably around the 5:30 mark or so, and
13 that was after first light that we moved that truck over there.

14 Q. Was it light out when they moved the rear end of the train
15 out?

16 A. Yes, it was -- that locomotive actually came from Minot. So
17 it took whatever travel time from Minot to Carrington to get there
18 to or maybe it was Harvey. I'm not sure where that actually
19 locomotive set come, but it was probably around the 7, 8 o'clock
20 timeframe.

21 MR. WOLSKY: It was about 8 o'clock, Ken.

22 BY MR. MILLER:

23 Q. So by 8 o'clock, they hopped on the rear end and pulled that
24 west?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Into Harvey we were told. How close -- did you see -- our
2 understanding, the conductor walked up, pulled the pin on the west
3 end to pull the cars?

4 A. It would have been the east end. That was the last car on
5 the east side was disconnected. On the west side, it was a CPKC
6 personnel and one of our firefighters, masked up.

7 Q. Okay. It wasn't you that went with them?

8 A. No, it was not me. It was one of my firefighters.

9 Q. Okay. Do you remember what time or about that was, they
10 pulled that west end out?

11 A. It was right after the locomotive set got there.

12 Q. How close do you think, when they pulled the pin, they were
13 to the fire?

14 A. They were one car width away.

15 Q. Was there any concern about civilian conductor pulling them,
16 getting --

17 A. As far as I know, he was in Air-Pak as well and again we had
18 favorable winds and we actually did have -- our personnel was
19 carrying a four gas meter with them. So.

20 Q. Okay. I have nothing else.

21 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Miller. Mr. Gonzalez.

22 BY MR. GONZALEZ:

23 Q. I pretty much have one question. You said you were able to
24 identify hazmat through placards whenever it was possible. Did
25 you use the ERG --

1 A. Yes, I did.

2 Q. -- for your response? Okay. That was the only question.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Gonzalez. Mr. Dankbar.

5 MR. DANKBAR: I've got no questions at this time.

6 Everybody's asked the questions I might have. Thank you.

7 MR. STANCIL: Okay, sir. Thank you. Okay. Mr. Casaceli.

8 MR. CASACELI: David Casaceli, NTSB.

9 BY MR. CASACELI:

10 Q. Thanks, Chief. We talked quite a bit, a little bit about the
11 consist and meeting up with the crew. You said your west end guy
12 -- excuse me, east end truck had been in contact with the crew at
13 some point. Do you know when that first contact would have been
14 with the crew by chance?

15 A. I do not have that timeline.

16 Q. Okay. That makes my next question irrelevant. So thank you,
17 sir.

18 MR. STANCIL: Does anyone else have any other questions?

19 (No response.)

20 BY MR. STANCIL:

21 Q. Okay. I do have a couple more just in follow up. Let's talk
22 a little bit about the evacuations you mentioned. That was
23 something you focused on early?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. Tell us about the -- how you established the

1 evacuation distance and how many people that affected?

2 A. We actually asked for a spot check from the weather service,
3 and got an idea of what the wind was going to do. And then
4 through the use of the ERG and then actually I believe Andrew also
5 had an application available. We determined that the farm site
6 that's directly to the east of where the accident was at was
7 affected. We did go to door to door within Bordulac and ask them
8 to voluntarily evacuate. As I said, the farm site, that person
9 did evacuate. And then we just continued on assessment and kept a
10 spot check on the weather.

11 Q. And, what was the duration of the evacuation?

12 A. As far as the --

13 Q. How long did it last? From when to --

14 A. As far as the farm site, I guess I'm not sure when she was
15 actually -- it was the mother of the farmer, and she has -- had
16 the ability to be in town for most of it. So I don't know
17 actually when she was told she could go back out there. I talked
18 to the farmer several different times throughout the incident
19 here, and he -- it didn't really affect his operation per se. So,
20 we never did order or that they could rehabilitat if they wanted to.

21 Q. So the evacuation never affected anyone other than this one
22 farm. Is that accurate?

23 A. That's correct, yes.

24 Q. Okay. And it was just one person. Is that right?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. That's very fortunate. And you mentioned no injuries.
2 You had a couple of exposures?

3 A. Yeah, there was no injuries. We've all had whiffs of
4 anhydrous in this area. We know what it smells like.

5 Q. Okay. So how many anhydrous ammonia release incidents have
6 you handled previous to this, and not just train derailments, but
7 other situations?

8 A. I don't know that I can count that high. With the agronomy
9 around the area, we're constantly being called to nurse tanks
10 leaking and, in fact, even during this situation here, we had
11 relocated at one point on Saturday night, and we ended up parking
12 in the middle of a nurse tank farm. And, what wasn't making sense
13 to is, is that we were getting smell of anhydrous there, but the
14 wind was not supposed to bring that from. Well, what we found out
15 was it's what the inversion, one of the nurse tanks actually was
16 able to release and, of course, having several members that work
17 in agronomy, the first one went up and realized it was leaking.
18 He shut the valve, and we were good for the rest of the night.

19 Q. So it's fair to say that hazards are familiar to your
20 firefighters?

21 A. Yes, yes.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I don't think there is a single firefighter on my department
24 that has not had some kind of exposure to it.

25 Q. Okay. Can you tell us anything about lessons learned from

1 this incident? What went well? And, did anything not go so well?

2 A. I think one of the biggest issues that we are starting to
3 figure out from this was is that just the longevity and better
4 utilizing our resource of our people which I probably should have
5 reduced our initial response when we went to strictly securing the
6 area a little bit quicker, and then just implementing a schedule
7 system more quickly as far as being able to rotate people. Other
8 things as far as our actual response, when we did actually go into
9 operations of cooling, we were using the tanker fleet to augment
10 the water that was being utilized, and one of the things that we
11 will be addressing within our own department is the use and
12 specific types of pumps to pull from the local water resource. We
13 are definitely going to be addressing that.

14 Other things that we are in discussion about right now is the
15 possibility of using an all hazards type respirator fitting to our
16 current SCBA sets. We do -- we have a new fleet of MSAG1 SCBAs.
17 The mask has the ability to convert to using respirator
18 cartridges. So that and the training to go along with that
19 realizing that the only way they work is as long as you still have
20 a 20 percent oxygen concentration.

21 Q. Right. Anything else?

22 A. There's been a lot of discussion. I know we will be doing
23 more intensive hazmat for the majority of our department strictly
24 from the standpoint that it's fresh in their minds. They tend to
25 learn better right after an incident like this, so they know what

1 to do next time. Hopefully there is not a next time, but I also
2 said that in 2019.

3 Q. I couldn't agree more. Did you identify any specific issue
4 there that needs to be addressed?

5 A. No, I mean it's -- without, you know, completely changing the
6 scope of our fire department. We're not going to get in this to
7 be an actual technician level hazmat response. Even operational-
8 wise is a stretch. We do have a few people that are trained to
9 that level.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. They're also in the positions of leadership. So --

12 Q. And --

13 A. -- we --

14 Q. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

15 A. No, it's just -- right now I just don't know. I mean there
16 will be a few things that we'll probably look at from the
17 operational standpoint of hazmat response but to put a finger on
18 it right now, it really comes down to what the group is willing to
19 absorb as far as knowledge.

20 Q. Okay. Understood. Let's see. In terms of your
21 documentation and reports, what form is that going to be in? Are
22 you going to produce any report of this incident?

23 A. Yes. We'll actually have an incident report that it's
24 actually through -- it's now ESO but it was Emergency Reporting.
25 It's actually an application that also works with NFIRS, like a

1 few applications for MOB (ph.) and reporting with the State of
2 North Dakota. It's a standard fire report. The local emergency
3 manager has just sent me the draft of the after action report,
4 basically addressing lessons learned and areas of improvement.

5 Q. and, who can we get these reports from when they're
6 available?

7 A. The fire report will be through us at fire departments,
8 myself or Jason and once we have the after action report done,
9 where it's not a draft, that will be through Andrew Kirking, our
10 emergency manager.

11 Q. Okay. And would you be able to send us your final report
12 once it's completed?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And when do you expect that?

15 A. Jason and I need to sit down and get the timeline of
16 personnel and equipment squared away before we'll actually be able
17 to even start that. I mean it's started right now but due to the
18 nature of how long this was and we did have calls in between, and
19 then just personal lives, it's been -- it hasn't been ignored.
20 It's just been -- there's been other things that have been more
21 pressing than to finish a report.

22 Q. Okay. Understood. Well, we'll follow up with you on that.
23 That would have some very good information to help us understand
24 the challenges you experienced. One last question that I have,
25 tell us about how satisfied you are with the communications you

1 received during the course of the incident, both hazard
2 communications and just in general.

3 A. I think it was absolutely fantastic, the amount of
4 information. In fact, it was almost to a point where to me there
5 was probably too much information overload coming. I actually did
6 have points where I would have to excuse myself from other things
7 that were going on that needed my attention, refer it to Jason or
8 one of our other leadership people. As I said before, I had
9 worked with Ed in 2019. So we were pretty much hip-and-hip
10 through the majority of the action early on, and I was sitting
11 there hearing the same information he was getting in real times.

12 Q. Excellent. Okay. Is there any other thing that occurs to
13 you that we haven't asked that you think is important?

14 A. No, other than I guess events leading up to this incident,
15 and not to speculate but the area had been extremely wet this year
16 especially in that area. And we had gotten reports the next day
17 or the first full day of the incident that within an hour to 45
18 minutes before the accident happened, they had gotten 2 1/2 inches
19 in less than an hour in that area. So -- and with the amount of
20 water that was running, too, when we got onsite, and the
21 difficulties we had in getting to the site using the gravel roads
22 and stuff around the area. There's no reason not to believe that.
23 It was extremely wet. And, in fact, it stayed wet for probably
24 the first four days.

25 Q. Okay. Chief Wangen, I appreciate your indulgence and your

1 detailed responses to our questions.

2 MR. STANCIL: One last check with my colleagues. Does anyone
3 else have anything before we complete the interview?

4 MR. CASACELI: David Casaceli, NTSB.

5 BY MR. CASACELI:

6 Q. Ken, do you recall the source of that report of rain? Was
7 that a local person that -- do you know?

8 A. Yeah, so it was local and --

9 Q. Maybe not on the record, but if that's somebody you could
10 tell me about afterwards, I wanted to talk to them.

11 A. I heard it probably third hand through some of my -- one of
12 my colleagues.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. It wasn't somebody directly coming up to me.

15 Q. Gotcha.

16 A. Looking -- I had looked at the weather probability the night
17 before, and knowing what we had gotten and also in 23 years of
18 living in the area, that area is susceptible -- we could have no
19 rain whatsoever in Carrington, and they could have massive amounts
20 through there. It's just a strange -- it's only 10 miles
21 difference, and actually if you go directly line, less than that
22 from the fire hall, and it seems like it's always wet there even
23 in dry years.

24 Q. One other question just to kind of clean up some stuff on the
25 record. You had mentioned you didn't have the consist in hand for

1 a while, but you were seeing and making judgment calls based on
2 what you were seeing along the way. If you can just kind of back
3 up to the -- as you guys first arrived and there's an orange glow
4 and a fire ball, what hazards are you, you know, assuming could be
5 happening as you're making those early decisions? I just want to
6 get into your mind a little bit on what level of cautions you were
7 taking in that early level, and what you were thinking were
8 possibilities and were, you know, taking into account in those
9 early times.

10 A. By the time that I actually started rolling with the last
11 truck out of there, I believe in my discussion with State Radio I
12 had an overall idea. They may have gotten the consist right away.
13 As I said, the disconnect was is that I was told later that Sate
14 Radio had gotten the consist. I can virtually back that up with
15 we did have a pretty good idea of what was totally involved in
16 that train, and again as we got on the site and started pulling
17 placards or seeing placards and pulling train IDs and actually
18 visual of what we seen burning and how the overall site was
19 acting, I've got an actual picture of me or not of me, but of the
20 site 5 minutes after being there. You can see a large smoke cloud
21 carrying away from us. Our confidence that nothing dangerous was
22 coming us was pretty high. But we did take precautions once we
23 got past a certain point that anybody that -- well, it's just
24 typically the recon team, that they had to be fully tacked up and
25 stuff to go through there.

1 Q. What about from an inhalation hazard perspective with the AA
2 cars? Was that something in your mind the moment the first guy
3 left the house or was that something brought to your attention a
4 little bit farther along?

5 A. We always tend to think that we're going to have to deal with
6 it. You know, from the time that we left house -- from the
7 initial time we left the house, we were thinking that it was only
8 a locomotive fire. It probably wasn't considered --

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. -- but once they were getting closer and closer and actually
11 once they got to the point where they were outside the city limits
12 and could see the orange glow, they knew we were dealing with
13 something more. So, Jason, you could speak to that more because
14 you were in that first struck.

15 ASSISTANT CHIEF WOLSKY: Yeah, I think once we, like Ken
16 said, we probably got, oh, 4 or 5 miles from the site, realizing
17 that there was a whole lot more than that, every precaution that
18 we could possibly take was in our minds at that point. You know,
19 the goal of the whole group was that all of our guys go home back
20 to their families and things like that. And we just wanted to
21 make sure that we got everything say barricaded off so no
22 civilians were going to be involved and our utmost safety was --
23 that was my top priority at that point.

24 MR. CASACELI: Thank you. Paul, I do have one follow-on
25 question.

1 BY MR. CASACELI:

2 Q. Chief, we were talking about when the CPKC staff went into
3 pull that pin with your firefighter, with the four gas meter, and
4 you said that they were, you know, wearing Air-Paks or SCBA I
5 mean. Was that -- was -- the Air-Pak and the SCBA, would you say
6 that was required or precautionary for that type of operation?

7 A. I strictly -- I made the mandate as precautionary. I mean we
8 were -- as the train sat, we were probably on the road at about
9 the same distance to the fire without. It was just that if they
10 were going to go in there, and we had a back up crew intact ready
11 to pull them off if something was to happen.

12 Q. Gotcha. Gotcha. Okay. Thank you. That's all I have.
13 Appreciate it, Chief.

14 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Last call, anyone else?

15 BY MR. DANKBAR:

16 Q. Hey, Chief. This is Ed Dankbar with CPKC. I got some of the
17 recent questions here. I've got one. Chief, were our operations
18 crews that were working with you guys, were they able to
19 collaborate with you, you know, making those decision, to go in
20 and make that car cut, to pull those cars away? Was that
21 something they were coordinating with you?

22 A. Yes, they were. In fact, they actually come and asked us if
23 we were going to have someone go with them. And it was at that
24 point that I said, well, as long as they're both in SCBAs, I have
25 no issue with that whatsoever.

1 Q. Thank you.

2 MR. STANCIL: Okay. I believe we done now. It is 4:15 p.m.
3 Eastern. I'm going to terminate the interview and stop the
4 recording.

5 (Whereupon, at 4:15 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

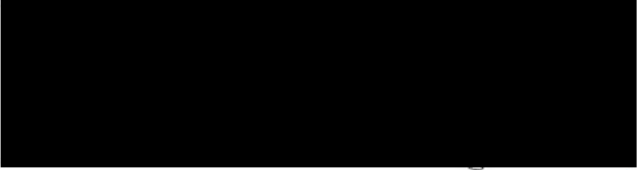
IN THE MATTER OF: CPKC TRAIN DERAILMENT IN
BORDULAC, NORTH DAKOTA
ON JULY 5, 2024
Interview of Kenneth Wangen

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD24LR012

PLACE: via Microsoft Teams

DATE: July 26, 2024

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Transcript Errata

Subj: Transcript Review Request for: Derailment of CPKC Freight Train 242-03 with Hazardous Materials Release in Bordulac, North Dakota, on July 5, 2024.

Accident No.: RRD24LR012

To: Chief Kenneth Wangen

Dear Chief Wangen,

The enclosed transcript of your interview on July 26, 2024, is provided for your review and comment to ensure its accuracy. It is not for public release.

The transcript is investigative information of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) created as part of the NTSB's investigation into the derailment of CPKC freight train 242-03 with hazardous materials release in Bordulac, North Dakota, on July 5, 2024. (NTSB Accident No. RRD24LR012).

NTSB regulations prohibit the public release of investigative information prior to release by the NTSB without the permission of the NTSB Investigator in Charge (IIC). See 49 C.F.R. § 831.13(b). The IIC has not approved public release of this information at this time. Therefore, we request that you refrain from any further dissemination of this transcript.

Kindly review this transcript for accuracy and provide corrections, if any, in the attached table. Please print, sign, and return it to me via email by **September 6, 2024**. Please return or destroy the transcript after providing your comments.

Comments must be returned no later than September 6, 2024. Requests for an extension of this deadline must be in writing and received prior to the due date. If comments are not received by the due date, we will consider the transcript to be final without comment.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. If you have any question regarding the process, please feel free to contact me.

Paul L. Stancil, CHMM

Senior Hazardous Materials Accident Investigator

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