

STATEMENT UNDER OATH

OF

JOHN HALL

Taken pursuant to Notice by Miranda  
D. Elkins, a Court Reporter and  
Notary Public in and for the State of  
West Virginia, at the U.S. Bankruptcy  
Court, 324 West Main Street,  
Clarksburg, West Virginia, on Friday,  
March 24, 2006, at 1:31 p.m.

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A P P E A R A N C E S

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A P P E A R A N C E S (cont.)

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INTRODUCTION	6 - 14
WITNESS: JOHN HALL	
QUESTIONS	
By Mr. O'Donnell	14 - 33
By Mr. Rutledge	34 - 37
By Mr. O'Donnell	37 - 39
By Mr. Rutledge	40 - 42
CLOSING REMARKS	42 - 44
CERTIFICATE	45

EXHIBIT PAGE

PAGE

NUMBER      DESCRIPTION      IDENTIFIED

NONE OFFERED

1  
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P R O C E E D I N G S

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MR. O'DONNELL:

My name is Joe O'Donnell. I'm an accident investigator with the Mine Safety and Health Administration, an agency of the United States Department of Labor. With me is Bob Wilson from the Solicitor's Office, Mike Rutledge and Dave Stuart with the West Virginia Office of Miners' Health & Safety & Training.

I've been assigned to conduct an investigation into the accident that occurred at the Sago Mine on January the 2nd, 2006, in which 12 miners died and one was injured. The investigation is being conducted by MSHA and the West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety & Training to

1           gather information to  
2           determine the cause of the  
3           accident. And these  
4           interviews are an important  
5           part of that investigation.

6                         At this time, the  
7           accident investigation team  
8           intends to interview a number  
9           of people to discuss anything  
10          that may be relevant to the  
11          cause of the accident. After  
12          the investigation is  
13          completed, MSHA will issue a  
14          written report detailing the  
15          nature and causes of the  
16          accident. MSHA accident  
17          reports are made available to  
18          the public in the hope that  
19          greater awareness about the  
20          causes of accidents can reduce  
21          their occurrence in the  
22          future.

23                         Information obtained  
24          through witness interviews is  
25          frequently included in these

1 reports. Your statement may  
2 also be used in other  
3 enforcement proceedings.

4 I'd like to thank you  
5 in advance for your appearance  
6 here. We appreciate your  
7 assistance in this  
8 investigation. The  
9 willingness of miners, mine  
10 operators and state agencies  
11 to work with us is critical in  
12 our goal of making the  
13 nation's mines safer. We  
14 understand the difficulty for  
15 you in discussing the events  
16 that took place, and we  
17 greatly appreciate your  
18 efforts to help us understand  
19 what happened.

20 This interview with Mr.  
21 John Hall is being conducted  
22 under Section 103(a) of the  
23 Federal Mine Safety & Health  
24 Act of 1977 as part of an  
25 investigation by the Mine



1 Safety and Health  
2 Administration and the West  
3 Virginia Office of Miners'  
4 Health, Safety & Training into  
5 the conditions, events and  
6 circumstances surrounding the  
7 fatalities that occurred at  
8 the Sago Mine owned by  
9 International Coal Group in  
10 Buckhannon, West Virginia on  
11 January the 2nd, 2006.

12 This interview is being  
13 conducted at the U.S.  
14 Bankruptcy Court in  
15 Clarksburg, West Virginia on  
16 March 24th, 2006. Questioning  
17 will be conducted by  
18 representatives of MSHA and  
19 the Office of Miners' Health,  
20 Safety & Training.

21 Mr. Hall, the interview  
22 will begin by my asking you a  
23 series of questions. If you  
24 do not understand a question,  
25 please ask me to rephrase it.

1           Feel free at any time to  
2           clarify any statements that  
3           you make in response to the  
4           questions. After we have  
5           finished asking questions, you  
6           will have an opportunity to  
7           make a statement and provide  
8           us with any other information  
9           that you believe may be  
10          important.

11                         If at any time after  
12          the interview you recall any  
13          additional information that  
14          you believe may be useful in  
15          the investigation, please  
16          contact Mr. Richard Gates at  
17          the phone number or e-mail  
18          address provided to you.

19                         Your statement is  
20          completely voluntary. You may  
21          refuse to answer any question  
22          and you may terminate your  
23          interview at any time. If you  
24          need a break for any reason,  
25          please let us know.

1                   A court reporter will  
2                   record your interview and will  
3                   later produce a written  
4                   transcript of the interview.  
5                   Please try and respond to all  
6                   questions verbally since the  
7                   court reporter cannot record  
8                   nonverbal responses and also,  
9                   try to keep your voice up.  
10                  Copies of the written  
11                  transcripts will be available  
12                  at a later time.

13                   If any part of your  
14                   statement is based not on your  
15                   own firsthand knowledge, but  
16                   on information that you  
17                   learned from someone else,  
18                   please let us know. Please  
19                   answer each question as fully  
20                   as you can, including any  
21                   information that you've  
22                   learned from someone else. We  
23                   may not ask the right  
24                   questions to learn the  
25                   information that you have, so

1 do not feel limited by the  
2 precise question asked. If  
3 you have information about the  
4 subject area of a question,  
5 please provide us with that  
6 information.

7 At this time, Mr.  
8 Rutledge, do you have  
9 anything that you'd like to  
10 add on behalf of the State of  
11 West Virginia?

12 MR. RUTLEDGE:

13 Yeah, John. I have to  
14 tell you that the West  
15 Virginia Office of Miners'  
16 Health, Safety and Training is  
17 conducting this interview  
18 session jointly with MSHA. We  
19 are in agreement with the  
20 procedures outlined by Mr.  
21 O'Donnell for the interviews  
22 that will be conducted today.  
23 The Director, of course, does  
24 retain the right or reserve  
25 the right, if necessary, to

1 call or subpoena witnesses or  
2 require the production of any  
3 record, document, photograph  
4 of other relevant materials  
5 necessary to conduct this  
6 investigation. You know the  
7 chain of contact if you have  
8 any questions. Thanks.

9 MR. O'DONNELL:

10 Mr. Hall, are you aware  
11 that you may have a personal  
12 representative present during  
13 the taking of this statement?

14 MR. HALL:

15 Yes, I'm aware.

16 MR. O'DONNELL:

17 Do you have a  
18 representative with you today?

19 MR. HALL:

20 No, I do not.

21 MR. O'DONNELL:

22 Okay. Would you please  
23 swear in Mr. Hall?

24 -----

25 JOHN HALL, HAVING FIRST BEEN DULY

1 SWORN, TESTIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

2 -----

3 BY MR. O'DONNELL:

4 Q. Please state your full name  
5 and spell your last name for us.

6 A. John Michael Hall, H-A-L-L.

7 Q. And your address and telephone  
8 number, please.

9 A. My address is 153 Dilliner  
10 Hill Road, Dilliner, Pennsylvania,  
11 15327. Telephone number is area code  
12 724-324-2825.

13 Q. Are you appearing here today  
14 voluntarily?

15 A. Yes, I am.

16 Q. And Mr. Hall, what's your  
17 present position?

18 A. I work for the State of West  
19 Virginia as an electrical inspector.

20 Q. And how long have you worked  
21 at that position?

22 A. Since November of 2003,  
23 approximately two and a half years.

24 Q. And who is your immediate  
25 supervisor?

1 A. It'd be Brian Mills.

2 Q. Brian Mills, okay. Just  
3 explain --- just, if you would,  
4 please, tell us from the time that  
5 you were notified of the explosion at  
6 Sago, what your role was through the  
7 --- January 3rd.

8 A. Monday, of course, was the  
9 2nd. At approximately 9:30, Jeff  
10 Bennett phoned me on a cell phone and  
11 made me aware of what had gone on at  
12 Sago, and he told me that the mine  
13 rescue team was being called to  
14 gather there and respond to a  
15 situation. So of course, I  
16 immediately started packing some  
17 clothes. Probably within 15 minutes  
18 I was en route.

19 So I drove to Sago Mine site,  
20 which I had never been to before, but  
21 Jeff had briefly given me some  
22 instructions on how to get there, so  
23 it was pretty easily found. I  
24 arrived at the mine at approximately  
25 11 o'clock, maybe a little bit after

1 11:00 and went into the parking lot.  
2 And I immediately went into the  
3 inside of the office in there, which  
4 I seen Brian Mills and Mark Wilfong  
5 and they pretty much briefed me,  
6 updated me, shown me the map of the  
7 mine. I had never been to the mine  
8 before, so I really wasn't aware of  
9 anything about the mine. So they  
10 gave me a briefing on the situation,  
11 what they knew so far and what had  
12 --- what events had happened that  
13 they know of, you know, to be true so  
14 far.

15 And at that point, they had  
16 asked me to look over the electrical  
17 maps and some of the electrical books  
18 to see that we had an accurate map of  
19 the electrical installations and go  
20 over it with one of the Sago Mine's  
21 employees. Actually, one of the  
22 electricians confirmed that this is  
23 where this pump's at, this is where  
24 this power center's at, things of  
25 that sort, so that we made sure that



1 we had an accurate map so that the  
2 rescue teams going in there, you  
3 know, were aware of exactly what we  
4 were going to find.

5 I was told by Mr. Rutledge ---  
6 well, once I was told that the mine  
7 rescue truck arrived, which was  
8 probably about two o'clock, once it  
9 arrived I immediately went out to the  
10 mine rescue truck and it was decided  
11 then that I would be one of the first  
12 teams to go in, or with one of the  
13 first teams, myself and Barry  
14 Fletcher.

15 So we started working on our  
16 apparatuses while some of the other  
17 rescue team members were setting the  
18 truck up, things of that sort, so we  
19 were preparing them to go  
20 underground, testing them, things of  
21 that sort, and dressed ready to go  
22 for that. And at that point, we were  
23 --- you know, it probably takes about  
24 a half hour to get a machine, you  
25 know, benched and ready to go

1 underground. And at that point, we  
2 were pretty much ready to roll and  
3 told that, you know, that we were  
4 going to start the rescue part. At  
5 that --- you know, they kept bringing  
6 in samples of air samples, things of  
7 that, until the decision was made.

8 At approximately 5:30, maybe  
9 the first team went underground,  
10 which was --- Mr. Fletcher was our  
11 State person that went with that  
12 team. Robinson Run Team --- there's  
13 two Robinson Run Teams. He went with  
14 the first team. I went in with the  
15 second team, which was about an hour  
16 later.

17 So at about 6:30, I think is  
18 about what time I went underground.  
19 Our assignment when we were briefed  
20 before going underground was to ---  
21 we were going to go into the first  
22 power box. It was decided that there  
23 was a pumping return that had to be  
24 maintained and run as soon as  
25 possible. If not, it would disrupt

1 any kind of ventilation. So we were  
2 to go in there, check all --- explore  
3 all the areas around the power box  
4 and the pump. We were to disconnect  
5 power going inby from that and when  
6 that was established, we went up and  
7 energized that box and started that  
8 pump, and then proceeded on exploring  
9 on in.

10 I probably worked that evening  
11 'til, I'm going to say, midnight, one  
12 o'clock. I don't know exactly what  
13 time I got out of the mine. And  
14 probably about one o'clock, I was  
15 relieved by other teams that were  
16 advancing. At that time, we were  
17 along Three belt, I think is where we  
18 were, about the time that I came  
19 outside, yeah. So I probably got  
20 outside about one o'clock. I  
21 probably left the mine site that  
22 morning at about 3:00. I stayed with  
23 the hotel in Weston.

24 I returned to the mine on  
25 Tuesday morning. 10:30, 11:00

1 o'clock a.m. I was told, I would ---  
2 they showed us a schedule that I was  
3 scheduled to go in with one of the  
4 afternoon shift crews. So I arrived  
5 at the mine at about probably at  
6 10:30 or 11:00. I went over the  
7 apparatus, things of that sort, just  
8 prepared everything for when I was to  
9 go underground.

10 Approximately about two  
11 o'clock, I think going underground.  
12 I went ungrounded with Enlow Fork  
13 Team, one of Consol's mine rescue  
14 teams. We were briefed before going  
15 underground where the fresh air base  
16 was, what events they found, you  
17 know, things that had happened  
18 throughout the night. Went  
19 underground at about two o'clock and  
20 was at the fresh air base.

21 And I think it was the Bailey  
22 Team was exploring and the federal  
23 inspector, Ron Hicks was his name, I  
24 heard him holler back to the fresh  
25 air base, which the fresh air base

1        was only probably three blocks away  
2        from where --- maybe four blocks away  
3        from where he was. He said that we  
4        have found an item and we need to get  
5        a state inspector up here to look at  
6        this, see what we're ---. So he  
7        wanted --- so I went up. They knew  
8        that I had, before going underground,  
9        I had made --- myself and Barry  
10       Fletcher, we had made some tags that  
11       we were going to put on the victims  
12       they found and identify the person  
13       with the place of where it was found  
14       in case, you know, if we could move  
15       the body out of the way. We were  
16       told to tag the body and the area  
17       right next to it, whether it be a  
18       roof bolt or spad or whatever. When  
19       we find someone and document it on a  
20       map exactly where it was at, to, you  
21       know, disturb it as little as  
22       possible.

23                    And so Mr. Hicks had hollered  
24       and told --- I heard him say that,  
25       you know, that there's --- that they

1 had found a victim. So I walked - - -  
2 proceeded up to that area, which like  
3 I say, was three or four blocks. And  
4 we seen one of the employees that was  
5 laying face up on the ground in the  
6 track entry.

7 How much of a description do  
8 you want of what I seen? You know, I  
9 put a tag on him, felt that he was  
10 cold and stiff. There was no signs  
11 of any kind of life within. And at  
12 that point, I put the tags that we  
13 had planned on and I think I even  
14 took a piece of chalk and marked on  
15 the rib an arrow in case we was to  
16 move. I knew it was a place where  
17 the rescue teams was going to have to  
18 walk past here as we advanced looking  
19 on for the other employees of the  
20 coal mine. And so myself and Barry  
21 Fletcher actually took a piece of  
22 line curtain that was laying a block  
23 back and brought it up and covered  
24 the gentleman. And we went on  
25 exploring. That's pretty much what

1 we had done. We looked around the  
2 there, try not to disturb anything  
3 and went on to look exploring.

4 At that point, I went with the  
5 Enlow Fork Team. We explored the  
6 areas around the seals, which was a  
7 suspect place anyway. So we had  
8 confirmed that all nine or ten seals  
9 had been destroyed and confirmed  
10 where they were, you know, spad wise  
11 that we knew we were in the right  
12 place. And we were told to, after  
13 that, to proceed up the track entry.

14 We went around to where the  
15 overcast had been blowed out and was  
16 approximately about Number, I'm going  
17 to say, Ten block maybe, we could see  
18 the mantrip up ahead of us. It was  
19 probably at Eight block. We could  
20 see two blocks ahead. You could see  
21 the mantrip parked on the track. Of  
22 course, we called fresh air base and  
23 told them, they called outside and  
24 they said go see what you can see,  
25 you know. So we proceeded to there

1 and when we got to the mantrip, we  
2 found no persons onboard. There was  
3 a dinner bucket on the mantrip. We  
4 did look inside the bucket to see if  
5 there was any kind of a note or  
6 anything there to tell us anything  
7 that would be of any help to us.  
8 Could find nothing, put the lid back  
9 on the bucket. Asked --- I think  
10 fresh air base told us we could go  
11 like two more blocks inby just to  
12 look and we were looking for  
13 footprints, anything like that.

14 We went inby two blocks and  
15 then were told to go back out the  
16 intake escapeway. So we proceeded  
17 over into the intake and walked back  
18 outside maybe one block, because I  
19 think at Eleven block is where we  
20 actually seen the packaging for the  
21 12 self-rescuers. We called out and  
22 told them that we had found the  
23 packaging for them. They want us to  
24 recount, make sure how many packaging  
25 we found, tops and bottoms of these



1       SCSR-100s.    There was 12 in 12 little  
2       piles.    We looked --- told to pay  
3       attention to footprints and things of  
4       that.    At that point, we --- it  
5       looked like there was footprints  
6       toward the outside, so we were  
7       instructed to come back out that  
8       intake escapeway and look really  
9       close at some things, because we  
10      really hadn't tied that last part in  
11      yet anyway.    So we came back, clear  
12      back, through there to the --- and  
13      tied it clear back into the fresh air  
14      base.    Time-wise on these, I don't  
15      really know what time of the evening  
16      it was.    You know, I think we found  
17      Mr. Helms at 5:30 or something like  
18      that.    So you know, this was probably  
19      --- probably a couple hours had  
20      passed since then by the time we  
21      looked for the seal areas.

22                We went back to the fresh air  
23      base and at that point, I'm pretty  
24      sure with oxygen checks that were  
25      told to change out teams, because we

1        were --- there was --- you know, you  
2        always go by the low man, so there  
3        was a couple apparatuses that were  
4        low enough that they thought to  
5        explore any further toward the face,  
6        that it needed to be the other team.  
7        So at that point, it was pretty much  
8        the backup team back down at the  
9        fresh air base and another team had  
10       went inside inby the area from where  
11       the bus was.

12                So I think I went with that  
13        team back up though I did, because my  
14        bottle wasn't --- I went back up with  
15        that team and explored probably  
16        another six blocks inby this portal  
17        bus, something like that, probably  
18        like at 16 block, something like  
19        that. I had been to the track, was  
20        supposed to have been 24, something  
21        like that. But I went as far as ---  
22        that's as far as inby on the Two Left  
23        section that I had ever --- in fact,  
24        had ever been. I never went any  
25        further after that.

1                   At that point with the  
2                   apparatuses, we come back out the  
3                   fresh air base and traded out teams.  
4                   Approximately, I want to say, 10:30,  
5                   something like that, because I then  
6                   proceeded to the outside, you know,  
7                   ride the mantrip out. I got on the  
8                   surface at about 11:30. So that's as  
9                   far as --- you know, at that point, I  
10                  was just exhausted and I think I left  
11                  the mine site not 'til the following  
12                  morning. Of course, at that ---  
13                  about 20 minutes later is when I had  
14                  heard that they had found the bodies  
15                  and --- you know, so we stuck around  
16                  there to see if they was going to  
17                  need any help for anything else, you  
18                  know. And I stayed at the mine site  
19                  until they were all brought outside.

20                  Q.           Okay. Thanks. When you were  
21                  over in the intake escapeway and  
22                  found the area where the  
23                  self-rescuers were --- obviously were  
24                  donned, ---

25                  A.           Yes, sir.

1 Q. --- how far out the intake  
2 escapeway did you go? And what  
3 caused you to stop?

4 A. We had --- when we were at the  
5 portal bus, of course, we looked for  
6 self-rescuers and there was no sign  
7 of anybody or anything, other than  
8 the one dinner bucket that was left  
9 behind. We were given permission to  
10 go probably --- I think maybe it was  
11 two blocks inby that area or a little  
12 bit further maybe. And at that  
13 point, we went as far as we were told  
14 we were allowed to go and I don't  
15 know if it was because of 1,000-foot  
16 rule or communications, whichever it  
17 was. But at that point, they wanted  
18 us to tie --- I think it was to tie  
19 in an area that we had not tied in  
20 completely, because actually the  
21 rescuer tops, I don't know that they  
22 were actually in the intake  
23 escapeway. I think they were in the  
24 entry right next to it. It wasn't  
25 the intake escapeway that was marked.

1       There may have been two entries or  
2       something there.

3       Q.       Okay.

4       A.       Because I'm trying to think  
5       because some walls were disturbed and  
6       stuff. It was the entry next to the  
7       track, but --- it was the intake  
8       escapeway but not the one I think  
9       that had the reflectors in it. I  
10      think it was a common entry with the  
11      one with the reflectors. So we went  
12      as far as --- we had permission to go  
13      to, like, 12 block. And I think they  
14      said, well, that's as far as we want  
15      you to go right now, so we turned and  
16      come back but they said on your way  
17      back, we want you to come back down a  
18      different entry.

19      Q.       Okay.

20      A.       And that's when we came on to  
21      the tops and bottoms, packaging of  
22      their self-rescuers.

23      Q.       And from that evidence, you  
24      believed that the miners traveled  
25      outby or ---?

1       A.           This is an entry that you have  
2       to walk on a weekly basis, so there  
3       was several footprints.

4       Q.           Okay.

5       A.           There looked like there was  
6       more fresh looking footprints heading  
7       toward the outside than there was the  
8       other way. And that was something we  
9       discussed between the team members  
10      there. You know, we were looking  
11      really hard trying to determine and  
12      we thought that it looked like there  
13      was a lot more tracks going toward  
14      the outside.

15     Q.           Okay. So how far did you go  
16     down that --- how far did you examine  
17     the back wall?

18     A.           Toward the outside?

19     Q.           Yeah.

20     A.           I think maybe clear back to  
21     the fresh air base.

22     Q.           Okay. So you just made that  
23     loop down around?

24     A.           Yes.

25     Q.           That's correct.

1 A. Yes. To the best of my  
2 memory, yes, that's how we had done  
3 it.

4 Q. At any time during your  
5 exploration, were you --- did you  
6 have to put your apparatus on?

7 A. Oh, yeah.

8 Q. I mean, ---.

9 A. You mean as far as donning the  
10 ---?

11 Q. Uh-huh (yes).

12 A. Yes. Yes. When we were  
13 exploring up around the --- I  
14 probably put the face mask --- donned  
15 the apparatus when we were around the  
16 seal area, because of the CO content.

17 Q. Okay. So was --- at other  
18 times when you were doing some  
19 exploration work, did you have to  
20 wear your apparatus?

21 A. No.

22 Q. So it was ---?

23 A. I was bare-faced until the  
24 second day.

25 Q. Okay. Until you got to the

1 seal area?

2 A. Yes, that's correct.

3 Q. And the reason why you had to  
4 put your --- what type of apparatus  
5 did you wear?

6 A. We got BG-4s.

7 Q. So what caused you to put your  
8 BG-4 on? What was the ---

9 A. The levels?

10 Q. --- air quality?

11 A. It was CO content is what it  
12 was, and I really don't recall ---

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. --- what the actual reading  
15 was at that time. It's just that,  
16 you know, we had CO levels that said  
17 we had to put them on. You know, we  
18 went really inby ventilation, you  
19 know, and that's ---.

20 Q. Right. Now, when you came  
21 back from that exploration and then  
22 headed up the Two Left track, you  
23 said you went back in again because  
24 you weren't low on oxygen, you could  
25 travel another number of blocks. Was



1 any --- did you have to ---?

2 A. That was actually with a  
3 different team. It wasn't with the  
4 Enlow Fork Team.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Their apparatuses were reading  
7 lower; okay? And I went back in with  
8 --- and it was the Bailey Team, I'm  
9 pretty sure, that explored on past  
10 the portal bus.

11 Q. And did you have to put your  
12 apparatus on ---

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. --- at that time?

15 A. Oh, yes.

16 Q. You did?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And it was because of the  
19 increased levels of ---?

20 A. Yes. CO.

21 Q. Okay. It was CO.

22 MR. O'DONNELL:

23 Mike?

24 MR. RUTLEDGE:

25 One second, please.

1 BY MR. RUTLEDGE:

2 Q. John, when you went up the  
3 track entry and found this portal ---  
4 or the mantrip, what was your  
5 estimation of where it was located,  
6 at Ten block or 11 block or  
7 something?

8 A. Ten block was what I --- I'm  
9 thinking Ten block.

10 Q. Okay. And of course, you said  
11 you looked it over for any evidence.  
12 The only thing you found was a dinner  
13 bucket?

14 A. A dinner bucket.

15 Q. Okay. Was that mantrip  
16 covered in dust and dirt or whatever?  
17 Did it look like it had been, you  
18 know, into the smoke or dust or  
19 anything like that or not?

20 A. Not very much, no.

21 Q. Okay. And was there any  
22 evidence that that bus had been moved  
23 after the explosion?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And what was that?

1       A.       At about Six block --- and  
2       when we seen it, we didn't realize  
3       what it was when we first went by it.  
4       It was about Six block, there was a  
5       pile of Omega blocks, of new blocks,  
6       next to the track. At about Six  
7       block I think it was. They were ---  
8       come in a bundle, but they were next  
9       to the track right there. And as we  
10      were exploring down there, we got to  
11      about Six block, there was some  
12      laying in the middle of the track.  
13      At about Six block, there was still  
14      some black soot on the pavement,  
15      quite a bit of it. And this Omega  
16      block, there was a couple laying in  
17      the middle of the track and it  
18      actually had been slid, it looked  
19      like, six, eight, ten feet. Like  
20      something had pushed it, like plowed  
21      the gravel --- that the ballast that  
22      was put in between the rails in the  
23      middle. So we seen that and as we  
24      seen the bus, we tried to put two and  
25      two together, you know. But it

1 appeared that possibly the bus had  
2 pushed up against that, because the  
3 block had a dent in it and it had  
4 plowed like a V down through there  
5 and pushed it about six to ten feet  
6 or something and come to stop, you  
7 know, right there. And you know, we  
8 --- you know, I assumed that maybe.

9 Q. And that was about Six block?

10 A. Yes, it was about Six block.

11 Q. But was there another State  
12 person underground with you at the  
13 time that you were describing these  
14 activities?

15 A. Barry Fletcher may have been.  
16 You'll have to ask him. I'm not sure  
17 if he was with me right at that time  
18 or I think maybe he was with me when  
19 I went back up with the Bailey Team  
20 after we explored beyond the bus.  
21 Now, he may have seen these areas  
22 that we walked past. That might be  
23 something you want to ask --- you all  
24 want to ask him or something.

25 Q. Okay. And you don't know what

1 State person would have come on after  
2 you did? When you came out, was  
3 there somebody else ---

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. --- that was replacing you?

6 A. Yes. When I came out ---  
7 Barry Fletcher and I both left at the  
8 same time, there was --- Eugene White  
9 and Bill Tucker were the two State  
10 people that relieved Barry and I when  
11 we went outside.

12 MR. RUTLEDGE:

13 That's all I have right  
14 now. Thanks.

15 BY MR. O'DONNELL:

16 Q. John, did you at any time work  
17 the command center?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Or were in the command center?

20 A. Well, by it.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But I was not a part of  
23 anything there, no.

24 MR. O'DONNELL:

25 Do you want to take a

1 short break?

2 SHORT BREAK TAKEN

3 BY MR. O'DONNELL:

4 Q. Let me just start by asking  
5 you a little bit more about the  
6 footprints. Now, the reason why ---  
7 tell me how easy was it for you to  
8 see? Was it because of rock dust in  
9 the area? Was it because of soot?  
10 What made you ---?

11 A. The area was wet and damp so  
12 actual footprints was kind of hard to  
13 see ---

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. --- because of the --- because  
16 of it being actually some water  
17 there. You know, the pumps had been  
18 off for how long, you know, 40 hours  
19 or whatever. And so we were trying  
20 to determine really the edges of  
21 these water spots where you can start  
22 to see a little bit of mud to see  
23 some footprints and it just appeared  
24 that there was maybe several  
25 different sizes or the amount of them

1 looked like different footprints  
2 maybe. But most coal miners wear the  
3 same kind of boot. Different sizes,  
4 but most of them wear the same kind  
5 of boot, so really it was hard to  
6 determine but it looked like a lot  
7 more tracks when we were trying to  
8 from the packaging that we found of  
9 the SCSRs to look in that direction  
10 and it was --- it was a call that  
11 they asked our opinion, the fresh air  
12 base did. And our opinion, and we  
13 all pretty much agreed, that it  
14 appeared just from the amount of  
15 footprints that we could find. That  
16 area was not sooted up, not that I  
17 recall. You know, not like the black  
18 soot that we seen down around --- you  
19 know, down on the mains area there.  
20 So no, it really wasn't --- it was  
21 just the edge of the waterholes, kind  
22 of where you could see footprints  
23 really.

24 Q. Okay.

25

MR. O'DONNELL

1 Mr. Rutledge?

2 BY MR. RUTLEDGE:

3 Q. John, what type of apparatus  
4 did you say you were using?

5 A. BG-4s, Drager BG-4s.

6 Q. Drager BG-4, that's a positive  
7 pressure - - -

8 A. That's a positive pressure  
9 apparatus.

10 Q. - - - apparatus? And all of  
11 your team members wear that same type  
12 of apparatus?

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. You also said you came outside  
15 about 11:30?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. And that shortly after  
18 you came outside, you heard some  
19 news; okay?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And what was that news that  
22 you heard?

23 A. The news I heard was they had  
24 found them and that they were alive.

25 Q. And that they were alive?



1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. All right.

3 A. No kind of numbers, just that  
4 they were alive.

5 Q. Okay. So nothing specific,  
6 other than they had been found and  
7 had been found alive?

8 A. That's correct, and I don't  
9 know who said what. There was a lot  
10 of people there, you just hear  
11 voices. I just heard that comment  
12 made and ---.

13 Q. Okay. And then sometime how  
14 much later, you maybe heard that the  
15 news was different?

16 A. Probably a half hour to 45  
17 minutes later, I heard that that  
18 wasn't the case, that there was only  
19 one alive.

20 Q. There was only one survivor?

21 A. One survivor.

22 Q. Okay. And just to clarify,  
23 you mentioned something earlier about  
24 some tags. And just so that I'm sure  
25 that I understand here, you had two

1 tags, and if you found a person, that  
2 one of those tags would go on the  
3 person and then one on the location  
4 of where that person ---

5 A. That's correct.

6 Q. --- had been found? Whether  
7 they were ---

8 A. Whatever --- yes.

9 Q. --- condition they were in?

10 A. Whatever condition they were  
11 in that's what I was to do.

12 MR. RUTLEDGE:

13 Okay. I don't have  
14 anything further. Thank you.

15 MR. O'DONNELL:

16 On behalf of MSHA, I  
17 want to thank you for  
18 appearing and answering  
19 questions today. Your  
20 cooperation is very important  
21 to the investigation as we  
22 work to determine the cause of  
23 the accident.

24 We ask that you not  
25 discuss your testimony with

1           any person who may have  
2           already been interviewed, or  
3           who may be interviewed in the  
4           future. This will ensure that  
5           we obtain everyone's  
6           independent recollection of  
7           the events surrounding the  
8           accident.

9                         After questioning other  
10           witnesses, we may call you if  
11           we have any other follow-up  
12           questions. If at any time you  
13           have any additional  
14           information regarding the  
15           accident that you would like  
16           to provide us, please contact  
17           us at the contact information  
18           that was previously provided  
19           to you.

20                        If you wish, you may  
21           now go back over any answer  
22           you've given during this  
23           interview, and you may also  
24           make a statement.

25   A.           No, sir. I have nothing else.

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MR. O'DONNELL:

Mr., Hall, thank you  
very much for coming forward.

\* \* \* \* \*

SWORN STATEMENT

CONCLUDED AT 2:08 P.M.

\* \* \* \* \*