

Finding Subtext

M01E01

This video is about the Ohio derailment in February, but it's also about so much more than that. I think we have a real problem in this country of taking real issues and turning them into conspiracies, thus completely sanitizing any lessons we could learn from them. Because of the sheer amount of disinformation, I first need to establish what happened in Ohio. If you aren't interested in the full story, you can skip to the timecode on the screen. Remember to subscribe if you want to see more content like this, sorry, I'm forced to ask for that by this algorithm.

Allegedly, On February 3rd 2023 a Norfolk Southern Railroad train fell victim to axle failure on one of its carts. This began around 8pm in Salem Ohio, and the train made it to the small residential town of East Palestine Ohio where it crashed off the rails. 38 of the 150 train carts were affected by the derailment, including 11 of 20 carts containing severely toxic chemicals which began leaking. The following day, a rapid temperature shift was detected within the carts creating a risk for an explosion so massive it would shoot parts of the train through houses up to a mile away. The following morning, an evacuation began and within the following 48 hours the railroad company Norfolk Southern initiated a controlled release of the chemicals from the carts. Rather than capture the chemicals, Norfolk Southern did a slow controlled explosion. Residents of East Palestine have since moved back into their homes, but reports of sizzling drinking water, oily rivers, and thousands of dead pets, livestock, and fish remain ongoing. When filing standard railroad paperwork, Norfolk Southern did not mark the train as containing hazardous materials. Best I can tell, marking the train as having hazardous materials would've cost Norfolk Southern more money, and because of lobbying efforts they legally don't have to if the vast majority of train carts are not carrying hazardous products. Norfolk Southern was sketchy about the details of what chemicals were present on the first few days of the accident. We later found the damaged train carts spilled a ton of chemicals I'm not smart

enough to pronounce: 688k pounds of Polyvinyl, 273k pounds of Ethylexyl Acrylate, 273k pounds of Ethylene Glycol Monobutyl Ether, and 206k pounds of Butyl Acrylates. These aren't even the worst chemicals that were dumped into Ohio's ecosystem, as due to the explosion risk Norfolk Southern cut additional holes into the carts to release 1.1 million pounds of Vinyl Chloride, a group 1 carcinogen known to cause rapid onset cancers, brain damage, liver damage, skin and bone changes, birth defects, infertility, and dozens of other medical conditions. The first symptoms of acute exposure mostly happen within the nervous system, causing headaches, dizziness, and drowsiness, which were all reported by Ohio residents after the crash. So yeah, probably not something we should launch into the air with a long-burning Chernobyl explosion. While Vinyl Chloride is released from select factories with it being used to make PVC, in 2021 the highest emitter of Vinyl Chloride in America released 68,000 pounds of it, compared to 1.1 million pounds in Ohio. Not to mention, when Vinyl Chloride is burned it turns into a poisonous odorless colorless colorless gas which was used as a chemical weapon in WW1 killing 85 thousand people during the conflict. It shouldn't be a surprise that many people in Ohio are reporting a wide range of health reactions. Fun fact, well, maybe just fact, birds lungs absorb whatever's in the air directly into their bloodstream, so for a lot of human history we determined air safety with birds, it's where we got the term canary in the coal mine. Well, people's parrots and chickens started dropping dead outside of the evacuation zone, as a burning plastic smell permeated the state of Ohio for days. Even though humans don't absorb chemicals through their lungs as quickly as birds, it's still disturbing to think about the chemicals just kinda covering Ohio and potentially surrounding states. Thankfully, I live 6 hours away from North Palestine, but considering how bad the water quality already was in my area, first world country by the way, I'm definitely still using bottled water as usual. Speaking of water, it seems like the initial spill made it into the Ohio River and is likely contaminating the rain as well, and with contaminated animals migrating into other states, there will likely be some residual effects.

According to officials the Ohio river is large enough to dilute these chemicals down to safe levels, but there's still safety concerns in the immediate area of the crash.

The Republican Governor of Ohio refused to declare this a Disaster, he also refused to take Biden up on federal assistance. Finally, the Biden administration decided to send the Federal Emergency Management Agency to East Palestine Ohio. Trump somehow took credit for Biden's decision, and made it about himself as usual. Ultimately, it seems the striking railroad workers predicted this better than anyone, as Norfolk Southern has committed countless safety violations in the name of profit, "safety be damned" was the literal wording according to a striking worker last year. In fact, this entire disaster was predicted by striking railroad workers, it's almost like they had good points and Biden shouldn't have used the federal government to stop them from protesting. At first, the derailment was underreported, and it had some coverup vibes going on, not to sound like I have fox news brainrot or anything. A cable news reporter was arrested in the middle of covering the story early on, after the story blew up a bit more the reporter was exonerated of criminal charges. Norfolk Southern also built a new railway directly on top of the toxic chemical spill, that makes any remediation way harder. I personally believe they did that to protect their profits and keep the line operational, but that also has coverup vibes. I think these vibes served as the stench which attracts insects like Fox News. All the pundits on Fox News have been non-stop reporting on East Palestine for the past week, maybe gay M&M's and promoting cigarettes finally got too boring, but their coverage has been interesting to say the least. It's very (pause) sound the alarms, they're out to get us, maybe if we did a few cleansings this wouldn't have happened, sort of thing, typical tucker carlson coverage. But his interview with forbidden daddy- I mean..sorry... Millionaire republican senator JD Vance was particularly interesting. (Video Playing 0:04-0:17) Wow, Tucker Carlson of all people is going to support investment and regulation of infrastructure? (Video 0:20-0:50) Wow, that was slick, almost as slick as Senator Vance saying he doesn't take oil money and then proceeding to quietly take donations from ExxonMobil. But sure, it wasn't deferred maintenance that crashed

the train, it was... political correctness? Within about 20 seconds they manage to take ruthless profit-driven corner cutting by Norfolk Southern, and turn it into an issue about the president giving a trillion dollars to affirmative action. Which like, no? Biden's 1 trillion dollar infrastructure deal was only 550 billion dollars of new federal spending split over the next 10 years, considering we spend 800 billion on the military every year I think it's worth it considering the deal was so penny-pinchd by republicans that it won't fully remove lead pipes from our water supply anymore. But this slots perfectly into a narrative being spun by republicans, as last week marjorie taylor greene blessed us with, whatever this is. 5.1 billion dollars for one diversity program at a one elementary school, in a country where the average elementary school has a budget of 8 million dollars. Sure, sounds good, the other day Biden paid me 15 billion dollars to get sodomized by a drag queen inside a NICU, gotta confuse them while they're still in the incubators am I right, next year I'll probably be richer than jeff bezos! I mean who's to say otherwise if an elected member of congress gets to do whatever this is on C-SPAN. Oh wow, JD Vance managed to get her to come out to his campaign events too, I wonder how much he paid her considering 175k wasn't enough apparently.

(Video 1:15-1:32) Bold of him to talk about the EPA when the day the derailment happened Republicans were actively fighting the EPA's water regulations. You know, one thing I keep thinking to myself when I watch conservatives talk about things is that they're ALMOST there. The entire point of the conservative media machine is to take real problems and neutralize them if they can impact corporate interests. We have a terrible for-profit medical system that places money above all else, but instead of bringing awareness to medication price fixing, insurance monopolies, or a lack of universal healthcare, we're made fearful of vaccine technology from the 1980s. Instead of bringing awareness to evil oil companies, we're made to believe Biden is single handedly raising gas prices because he's quirky or something. Gee I wonder why, It's almost like fox news is directly funded by ExxonMobil. Instead of paying teachers more than a Walmart worker, we're made fearful of the books they're reading. Instead

of bringing attention to private corporations overcharging the government billions of dollars in the form of military contracts, we're made to believe this only happens when minorities are involved. Instead of calling out a billion-dollar railroad corporation, we're made to believe this is the fault of a gay guy and all his diversity training. When Fox News covers a story like East Palestine, you can almost sense an anxiety that they might not be able to kill any lingering resentment against the status quo, I think that's why Tucker Carlson nearly cums when JD Vance brings up the conspiracy about a trillion dollars going to diversity training, literally quietly moaning thank you. I mean, (JD Vance) nevermind.

So what caused hundreds of train derailments across the country? What factor is Tucker Carlson desperately compensating for in this clip that he's so scared might come up? Well, it's a few things, both of which he could never say lest he piss off his oil company sponsors. Firstly, if we stopped relying on plastic so much, we wouldn't need to ship millions of pounds of vinyl chloride across the country. But let's just assume that's not going to change, because American politicians would rather us start sweating microplastics than stop getting fancy dinners with Exxon lobbyists. So, if Vinyl Chloride and all these other plastic-producing toxic chemicals must be shipped, we should do them safely. Even though conservatives would rather use reactionary distraction tactics, the reality stands that what happened in Ohio was simply the outcome of unfettered capitalism. The thing about capitalism, is it necessitates infinite growth. Corporations are pressured to make higher and higher profit margins every year, and the focus is less on the long term sustainability and more on the next quarter. Corporations want to post record profits in every quarterly earnings report, which means they need to achieve infinite exponential growth. With shareholder value for that quarter being the top goal, corporations are not working sustainably, even when it comes to sustaining their own business. Rather than spend 3 billion dollars to replace train braking systems nationwide, in 2022 Norfolk Southern announced 10 billion dollars of stock buybacks. If you don't know what that means, rather than spend any of their 12 billion dollars of yearly revenue on maintenance or safety, Norfolk Southern decided to

spend almost all of that on buying their own stocks which increases the value and scarcity for shareholders. They announced this on April 1st like the absolute joke this is. Without regulations forcing companies to do the right thing, they won't do the right thing, and unfortunately for Fox News Norfolk southern is a VERY easy example for this. In 2012, Norfolk Southern had 105 accidents involving hazardous materials, in 2022 it had risen to 654. That's like 2 hazardous material crashes per day, but yeah the real problem is gay people according to the media. After another spill of Vinyl Chloride in 2012, the Obama Administration proposed safety regulations for hazardous chemicals like the ones spilled in Ohio, but after industry lobbying the final regulation only focused on crude oil and exempted most other trains carrying hazardous materials. That regulation wasn't weak enough apparently, because once we got Trump in office and with republicans being even more ridiculously accommodating to corporate interests, this weak regulation was partially repealed. Railroad industry donors paid over 6 million dollars into republican campaigns during the 2016 election, so, as a result by 2017 better braking systems were no longer in the works for railroads.

While better braking systems and regulations on hazardous materials would've gone a long way, railroad companies are doing far more than that to maximize profits. For those in the audience listening closely, you might've noticed the Norfolk Southern train was about 150 carts long, which is a lot. That's because Norfolk Southern in the past 10 years has increased train sizes by 20%, cut staffing by 40%, and has resisted and lobbied their way out of preparing their infrastructure to handle these huge trains running on skeleton crews. Like, they straight up took their severely decaying infrastructure, and decided to put it under more stress than it was even designed for. With a situation as inexcusable as this, Fox news seems to be unable to maintain usual control over the narrative, so they actually have to kinda say companies can do bad things, sometimes. But, rather than talk about anything specific, as these problems aren't just Norfolk Southern problems but true for nearly every corporation in America; JD Vance lazer focuses specifically on Norfolk Southern, they're just a bad apple worsened under the strain of

political correctness somehow. This all makes Biden's spending seem less effective. Like, cool, we're going to put 66 billion dollars into railroads infrastructure now, but if we aren't going to regulate these corporations it's just a subsidy for their bottom line. To me, it seems like as a country even the few in government who want to do the right thing are scared of corporations, they have become our government. We're happy to band-aid the problem with a tiny bit of federal spending rather than address the root cause. An example is that we're (trying to)partially) forgive student loans, but they remain so predatory that you can pay into them for 20 years and still owe more than you borrowed. Notice how in the fox news clip, they mention diversity based hiring multiple times, but not the fact Norfolk Southern's workforce went from 30,000 to 18,000 despite having record amounts of business. Also, diversity-based hiring leading to a train crash just implies when you hire anything other than white men they'll do a worse job, it's subtle white supremacy being put on display. Though, it's not like Fox News wants to validate the concerns of the workers, and boy did the workers have some concerns.

For those of you who can still remember more than a week back, which sure isn't me at this point I'm smoking a lot to get through late stage capitalism right now. Railroad workers almost single handedly shut down the economy and supply-chains last year by threatening to strike. The mainstream media smeared them, with even our most left-leaning outlets like the New York Times randomly pointing out they !!make up to 100,000 dollars excluding overtime!! Hey, remember the New York Times published hate symbols over and over again including on the first day of Hanukkah a few months ago? And then at the same time published multiple anti trans articles? Yeah I wonder if that's related. In the past 6 years alone, railroad companies across the board have cut their workforce by 29% despite record profits. With this greater demand placed on a skeleton crew, the working conditions have deteriorated even though they were never great to begin with. Railroad workers now have to be on-call 90% of the time, and have to be at work within 90 to 120 minutes of being called at any time. Now you're probably wondering how you're supposed to have a sleep schedule if you can be called in at basically

any time? You don't. Historically, workers have just dealt with this. With a starting pay of \$50,000 and the dwindling prospects for rural or blue collar workers, this was worth it for them even if their mental and physical health rapidly deteriorated from sleep deprivation. The only consistent time they're allowed to not work is the federally mandated time off after each shift which is usually spent in a hotel wherever the train takes them, but those precious hours don't really help much. Even when railroad companies do follow the law, the shifts start at random times, so you may start at 3am some days and 2pm other days. There's also literally no way to stop working 7 days a week. If a worker has the full 30 "attendance points" but takes both Thanksgiving and Christmas Day off, they would run out of points and risk being fired. Say your wife is dying in the hospital but it happens to be New Years, taking that day off would use 15 points, and the only way to make points back is to be on call 24/7 for 14 days straight, which only gives 4 points. If you get sick during those 14 days of continuous 24 hour work, maybe because your immune system is failing from sleep deprivation, you lose those points too. The point system is arbitrary, and done at employer discretion, some offenses may cost you only 2 points, while many others can cost far more. This is on top of safety concerns, which was also a huge reason workers wanted to strike. Instead of staffing multiple trains these companies are trying to merge the carts into giant poorly maintained trains staffed ONE sleep deprived person.

Rather than letting these workers exercise their right to strike these objectively terrifying conditions, Biden blocked them from being able to, but gave them all that extra time off they were rejecting. You know, the ONE DAY of paid time off, scheduled at the mercy of the corporations. This leaves workers with 0 days of paid sick leave. Railroad corporations have the highest profit margins of any industry and I can see why. Yet, I understand why people are making this a conspiracy, because aside from the fox news take on this, there's a lot of people making insane claims right now. Like twitter accounts posting a Netflix Trailer from last year for a film about a train crash releasing toxic chemicals. Or news coverage from 3 months ago about East Palestine's new emergency medical systems. I think it's far more comforting to believe

there's some bad actor or deep state organization causing all of our problems, rather than the fact that our essential infrastructure is owned by companies that solely care about profits. It's also comforting to think that good things happening is a natural outcome in our system, that maybe if we regulated railroads even less, everything would be great, it would just all self regulate because corporations love spending more money on their workforce. The number one demand of Railroad Workers United was public ownership of the railroads. The workers saw massive safety violations and corner-cutting, and predicted these disasters would happen. They know that everywhere in the world where the government owns the railroads, these bad things just don't usually happen. I think if anything, we need to listen to them, but also think about other essential industries harmed by privatization. Think about how we all spend hundreds of dollars a month on internet from companies that give such poor service. Or the utility companies that suddenly double our power or gas bills. Or big pharma charging \$2,000 for medications that cost \$10 in europe. We need to really face the facts about privatized infrastructure, and learn from that.