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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*  
\*  
PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY \*  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2010 ACCIDENT \*  
SAN BRUNO, CALIFORNIA \*  
\*

Docket No. DCA-10-MP-008

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: MICHAEL HICKEY

Anaheim Room  
Marriott Hotel  
San Francisco Airport  
1800 Bayshore Highway  
Burlingame, California 94010

Friday,  
September 17, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to  
notice, at 1:52 p.m.

BEFORE: KARL GUNTHER  
Accident Investigator

## APPEARANCES:

KARL GUNTHER, Accident Investigator  
RICHARD DOWNS, Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20594

RAVINDRA M. CHHATRE, Investigator-in-Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20594

LAWSON F. NARVELL, JR., Investigator  
Human Performance Group  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20594

SUNIL K. SHORI, Engineer  
California Public Utilities Commission

TOM FINCH, State Liaison  
PETER J. KATCHMAR, Senior Accident Investigator  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety  
Administration

ROBERT FASSETT, Director  
Integrity Management and Technical Services  
Pacific Gas & Electric Company

BRIAN DAUBIN  
Pacific Gas & Electric Company

GEOFF CALDWELL, Police Sergeant  
City of San Bruno Police Department

DEBBIE MAZZANTI, Business Representative  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
Local 1245

JOSHUA SPERRY, Senior Union Representative  
Engineers and Scientists of California  
Local 20

DANE B. JAQUES, ESQ.  
(Counsel for Mr. Hickey)  
Dombroff, Gilmore, Jaques & French  
1676 International Drive, Penthouse  
McLean, Virginia 22102

I N D E X

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(1:52 p.m.)

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MR. GUNTHER: I'm Karl Gunther, from National Transportation Safety Board. We're investigating a accident that occurred September 9th, 2010, in San Bruno, California, DCA-10-MP-008.

I'd like to let you know that you have the right to counsel. And have you chosen counsel for you today?

MR. HICKEY: Yes, sir. This gentleman right here, sitting on my right.

MR. JAQUES: For the record, Dane Jaques.

MR. GUNTHER: I'd like to first go around the panel and everybody introduce themselves and their affiliation.

MR. CALDWELL: Geoff Caldwell, City of San Bruno.

MR. FASSETT: Bob Fassett, PG&E.

MR. DAUBIN: Brian Daubin, PG&E.

MR. CHHATRE: Ravi Chhatre, NTSB. I'm the accident investigator for this accident.

MR. SHORI: Sunil Shori, California Public Utilities Commission.

MR. KATCHMAR: Peter Katchmar, United States Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

MR. DOWNS: Richard Downs, NTSB, Group Chairperson.

MR. GUNTHER: Karl Gunther, NTSB.

1 MS. MAZZANTI: Debbie Mazzanti, IBEW, Local 1245.

2 MR. HICKEY: I'm Michael Hickey.

3 INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL HICKEY

4 BY MR. GUNTHER:

5 Q. What I'd like to do is get your name, address, and  
6 phone number for the record.

7 MR. JAQUES: Work is fine.

8 MR. HICKEY: Michael Hickey. My address is [REDACTED] *M.H.*

9 [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

10 USA.

11 BY MR. GUNTHER:

12 Q. And could I get your job title, please?

13 A. I'm a gas measurement and control mechanic, M&C  
14 mechanic, for short.

15 Q. Okay. Can you give us your credentials, high school,  
16 whatever?

17 A. I went to an all-boys college prep school, which is  
18 Riordan High School in San Francisco. That's R-i-o-r-d-a-n.

19 Q. Okay. And do you have any classes, courses, that  
20 you've taken at PG&E?

21 A. A lot of -- I've held a lot of positions, from foreman  
22 to --

23 Q. Okay. And are you OQ under your company?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 MR. GUNTHER: Okay. Rick, I'll turn it over to you.

1 BY MR. DOWNS:

2 Q. Okay. Mr. Hickey, is it?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Thanks for joining us today. I'm examining the  
5 emergency -- preparedness emergency response aspect of the  
6 investigation. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I understand you  
7 are the mechanic that actually turned the valve, closed the  
8 valve on both sides of the event site itself; is that correct?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. Okay. I'm going to principally focus on that, but  
11 let's start out by a little bit of your background. Emergency  
12 preparedness training, emergency response training, do you  
13 recall any of that? Can you give us a thumbnail of that,  
14 please?

15 A. We go through emergency response training annually and  
16 there's other phases of that that go on continually, other  
17 scenarios that are brought up. Almost every day we bring up  
18 certain scenarios, and once a week we have a safety meeting that  
19 lasts approximately an hour. That's on a Thursday.

20 Q. And would we be able to get that training list of  
21 recent training --

22 A. Yes, you can. It's all documented.

23 Q. -- through our party rep.

24 MR. DOWNS: That would be you, Brian?

25 MR. DAUBIN: Yes.

1 MR. DOWNS: Okay, great. Thank you.

2 MR. DAUBIN: So, for clarity, you want Mike's training  
3 records?

4 MR. DOWNS: Training, emergency preparedness review,  
5 response activities -- related activities.

6 MR. DAUBIN: Okay. For the last year, the last two  
7 years, the last 10 years?

8 MR. DOWNS: Let's go back -- let's go back five years.  
9 How's that?

10 BY MR. DOWNS:

11 Q. On the day of the accident, of the event, maybe you  
12 can start us out about your day -- I'm just looking for the  
13 quick bullets. Was it a normal day, a typical normal day?

14 A. It was a normal day at work. Nothing eventful.

15 Q. Nothing eventful. What time do you clock on,  
16 normally?

17 A. I start at 7:00.

18 Q. A.M.?

19 A. A.M., sir. Then I clock out at 3:30 p.m.

20 Q. 3:30 p.m. The event occurred a little bit after 6:00  
21 p.m.

22 A. I sat down to eat at 6:05.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And then I was through at 6:30 and I went to watch TV.

25 Q. So you basically clocked out at 3:00?

1 A. No, 3:30.

2 Q. 3:30, okay. You went home?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. So you were off duty and you went home?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Is yours a supervisory capacity?

7 A. No.

8 Q. No. Are you on stand-by, on call, or anything of that  
9 sort after hours?

10 A. I have not signed up, but I'm responsible if they call  
11 me. If they call me, I'll come in.

12 Q. But it's not a part of your regular to be on call, per  
13 se, is that correct?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. How often do you get an after-hours call? Every week?  
16 Every month? Every year? What's your best guess?

17 A. Twice a year.

18 Q. Twice a year. So it's relatively infrequent?

19 A. Very infrequent.

20 Q. And -- yes, sir?

21 MR. FASSETT: Point of clarification: The union  
22 contract allows them to volunteer. It's called signing up for  
23 the 212 list.

24 MR. DOWNS: Okay.

25 MR. FASSETT: When he said, "I'm not signed up," I



1 believe that's what --

2 MR. HICKEY: Thank you. I did not sign up for those  
3 things.

4 BY MR. DOWNS:

5 Q. Okay. But, correct me if I'm wrong, is it just a  
6 general understanding --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- that you're available for an event --

9 A. Yeah, no problem.

10 Q. -- to support an event, an activity, after hours,  
11 should you be called?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. There's no objection, in other words?

14 A. No, there isn't.

15 Q. The reason I ask is some union contracts forbid it;  
16 others allow it. I don't know what your union contract -- but  
17 it works for you, correct?

18 A. It works for me.

19 Q. Great. That's all I wanted to make sure we  
20 established.

21 Okay. Going back to your day, you went home.  
22 Anything at home that was unusual for the afternoon?

23 A. No, sir.

24 Q. Just the usual --

25 A. Uneventful.

1 Q. Uneventful, okay.

2 So you're sitting down to dinner and just tell us what  
3 progressed from there.

4 A. Do you want to know what I ate?

5 Q. No, of course not. Just give us the --

6 A. 6:05 -- I usually sit at 6:00, 6:05.

7 Q. When you got the call?

8 A. And then about 6:30, I finished dinner. I sat down to  
9 get ready for the football game and -- any more than that?

10 Q. Continue with when you got the alert from the company.

11 A. I was watching TV. I didn't get an alert from the  
12 company right away. I turned the TV on and the channels that  
13 are -- you know, the station channels near our house, channel 4  
14 or 5 -- I can't remember -- showed there was a plane crash in  
15 San Bruno.

16 Q. This was on the news?

17 A. On the news, channel 4 or 5 -- I can't remember what  
18 channel I was watching at that time.

19 Q. It doesn't matter. And this is roughly 6:30 or so?

20 A. It's exactly around 6:30, yeah.

21 Q. So you're watching TV and you saw a news bulletin. Is  
22 that a fair way of saying it?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Showing what was purported at the time as a plane  
25 crash --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- in San Bruno.

3 A. It was a gas station. They were confused.

4 Q. Um-hum. Okay. That's fine.

5 A. So I live in the flight path of SFO. They go right  
6 over my house. So I went outside to get a look of where this  
7 is. It's only a few miles from my house and I glanced over to  
8 the southern direction and I seen the big plume of smoke and,  
9 you know, the ember -- or the plume or whatever it was.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So I went back inside the house to look at it on the  
12 TV again. And I had my wife call her sister that lives in that  
13 area.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. To see if that was near her house. Because I knew the  
16 gas stations in the area. I taught my kids to drive in that  
17 area. And I was looking at it closer and I couldn't see an  
18 outline of an airplane in there. And so I figure, you know,  
19 there's transmission lines that run through there. So I went  
20 back outside to my car and I got my company cell phone, turned  
21 it on, and I called gas dispatch. And those records, you should  
22 be able to pull up.

23 Q. So far as getting the precise time of that call?

24 A. It's about 6:35.

25 Q. Okay, about 6:35. Best guess. We're talking best

1 guess.

2 A. You can pull the records. It's pretty close to that.  
3 It might be, you know, give or take a few minutes.

4 Q. Absent records in front of us, we can go with your  
5 best guess. That's fine.

6 A. That's fine.

7 Q. Okay. So you called gas dispatch.

8 A. And I asked them, "Did you get any reports of problems  
9 in the gas line or anything?" And he was kind of nervous, I  
10 guess, or he said, "No." And I said, "Do you think" -- he said  
11 <sup>I DON'T KNOW</sup> there was a serviceman responding to it and he'd call me back.  
12 So I went back in the house again and I looked at it and I knew  
13 that that was a -- in my heart, I knew that that was something,  
14 not a plane crash.

15 Q. Intuitively.

16 A. Intuitively.

17 Q. Okay. Not to put words in your mouth.

18 A. I've been on several transmission leaks before, but  
19 never ignited ones.

20 Q. Okay. So to make sure I'm following this, I should  
21 ask, probably, roughly where do you live? I don't need the  
22 exact address --

23 A. I live in South San Francisco.

24 Q. South San Francisco.

25 A. And San Bruno is the neighbor.

1 Q. Okay. So you reside north of -- a short distance  
2 north of?

3 A. It's north of -- yes.

4 Q. And due south?

5 A. Maybe two miles, as the crow flies, maybe less.

6 Q. About two miles from your residence, okay. And is it  
7 kind of due south from where you're at? Do you have a pretty  
8 good line of sight in terms of --

9 A. Southwestern, yeah.

10 Q. Is it a pretty good line of sight? You could clearly  
11 see smoke or fire or whatever?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. All right. So then what was the continuation  
16 of where you were at there?

17 A. I got in my car --

18 Q. You concluded your call to --

19 A. I concluded -- I think, yes. I concluded -- that had  
20 to be it.

21 Q. But the essence of that call -- and correct me if I'm  
22 wrong, according to my notes here, is that the person you spoke  
23 with said that there was a service person responding?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. And was there any other indication to you, insofar as

1 anything you might be needed for?

2 A. Well, he also said that that serviceman was in traffic  
3 and he hasn't -- it was something to that effect. And I know  
4 when sometimes that goes through, there's looky-lous (ph.), or  
5 whatever.

6 Q. Right. Okay. And that service person normally would  
7 be responding --

8 A. They're first responders.

9 Q. That would be somebody -- that would be actually  
10 somebody still on the clock from --

11 A. Oh, yes.

12 Q. -- from the maintenance facility. Okay.

13 COURT REPORTER: Wait to let him finish his question.

14 MR. DOWNS: No, this is dialogue. This is not a  
15 deposition. Okay?

16 BY MR. DOWNS:

17 Q. Great. Thank you. Again, I'm relying upon you and  
18 correct me if I'm wrong on that point. That would be a service  
19 person from the maintenance facility.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Who would be responding -- perhaps stuck in traffic,  
22 if that was the situation of that particular hour.

23 A. Probably, yes.

24 Q. And this occurred on a Thursday afternoon. So there  
25 would be traffic, as opposed to a weekend.

1 A. That was what I was thinking.

2 Q. Likely, given the history of the area.

3 So was that the end of the conversation, the essence  
4 of the conversation?

5 A. I think it was. And then -- that's what you wanted to  
6 know.

7 Q. That's fine. So you concluded the call. What did you  
8 do then?

9 A. I proceeded to my car, to head to work, to get my  
10 truck, which is at the Colma yard.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. That's three and a half miles from my house.

13 Q. So you drove to your shop.

14 A. In the meantime, I got a call from another M&C  
15 mechanic, an unassigned mechanic out of San Carlos that used to  
16 work with me.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Up to two or three weeks ago. He moved back -- I'm  
19 giving too much information? I don't know. But --

20 Q. No, let him finish.

21 A. And then he called me. His name is Ed Sickenger (ph).  
22 Sickenger M&C.

22 Q. Okay. Ed called you on your cell phone?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Okay. And you're in your car heading to your shop at  
25 that time?

- 1           A.    Yes.  And I told him to head to the Colma yard and  
2 meet me in there.
- 3           Q.    To meet you there, okay.  And he is a fellow --
- 4           A.    The same thing.
- 5           Q.    -- mechanic?
- 6           A.    A measurement and control mechanic.
- 7           Q.    A M&C?
- 8           A.    A measurement and control mechanic, yeah, an M&C  
9 mechanic.
- 10          Q.    Okay.  How far away, roughly, would he have been at  
11 that time, do you know?
- 12          A.    It's about the same amount, three and a half miles.
- 13          Q.    The same distance, roughly.  Okay.
- 14          A.    But he's in Pacifica, in the valley.
- 15          Q.    Okay.  And roughly how long would it take you to get  
16 from your residence to your shop?
- 17          A.    Seven point -- seven and a half minutes.
- 18          Q.    So we're talking under 10 minutes here?
- 19          A.    Oh, under 10 minutes.
- 20          Q.    So relatively quick.
- 21          A.    Yeah, I can get there fast.
- 22          Q.    Did you have difficulty getting to your shop?
- 23          A.    None at all.
- 24          Q.    And your normal work truck is at your shop?
- 25          A.    Yes, sir.



1 Q. And that would contain all of your tools or whatever  
2 you would need, normally, to do your job?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. So you're basically responding to a company  
5 emergency --

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. -- on your own initiative or were you given any  
8 authorization or was it just the understanding of that's the way  
9 you guys work?

10 A. I also received a call from the on-call supervisor  
11 prior -- it might have been prior to that. I think it was prior  
12 to that.

13 Q. One way or the other, you got a call.

14 A. I got a call.

15 Q. At that point?

16 A. At that point, yeah -- to come into the Colma yard and  
17 stage there.

18 Q. Great. So, basically --

19 A. And I told him I was already on my way.

20 Q. Great. So, basically, you were put on duty at that  
21 point. You're back on the clock, so to speak?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. And you're responding. Did you run into  
24 traffic or anything getting to the --

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. So no trouble getting to the yard.

2 A. None at all.

3 Q. So you get there. Pick up at that point when you  
4 arrived at the yard, approaching your truck -- or to get your  
5 truck?

6 A. Pardon me? I'm sorry.

7 Q. Pick up at that point when you're back at the shop  
8 there.

9 A. Oh, okay. I got in my truck. I made three or four  
10 phone calls to the other M&C mechanics in Area 1, which is San  
11 Carlos, which I also work with them periodically.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. One was Brian <sup>OLIVIO MA</sup> Olivio (ph:), I called. I called Brad  
14 Schubach (ph.). I think I called him first. Then Brian, and  
15 then I called for Craig <sup>FRACKERLEY MA</sup> Verzaekery (ph:), and I couldn't get  
16 him. I called, right after that, gas dispatch again. And I  
17 told them to call him at his home.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. He said he didn't have his home phone number and then  
20 I started to use some foul language on him.

21 Q. Don't worry about it.

22 A. I mean, I was pretty unhappy at that point. No  
23 problem.

24 He eventually came in.

25 Q. Okay. Great. So you made several phone calls, trying

1 to muster up, for lack of a better word, colleagues.

2 A. And they all showed up.

3 Q. And they all -- now, did you stay at the shop waiting  
4 for them or --

5 A. I went in to get a copy of a plat sheet that shows  
6 the --

7 Q. A map of the area?

8 A. A map of the area.

9 Q. Great. And that's in the office there somewhere?

10 A. That's in our headquarters, yes.

11 Q. Let me pause there for a moment. Do we have a way of  
12 determining what time this is? Best guess, if you don't have a  
13 way.

14 A. 6:00 -- about 6:45, around there.

15 Q. 6:45-ish?

16 A. 6:47.

17 Q. Somewhere in there. Is there a way to look at your  
18 cell phone calls later on --

19 A. You can retrieve all of that and put it together.

20 Q. I don't need who you called, so much. I'm just  
21 thinking of time stamps, to maybe give us a better idea of when  
22 the calls -- when you got those calls started.

23 A. The calls came -- when I got into the yard about 7:40  
24 (sic), I started making those calls.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Those four calls to the three mechanics and to the  
2 gas --

3 Q. Again, we don't need the content. We're just trying  
4 to get a time stamp to put together our timeline. That's all.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Great. Okay. So you're waiting at your shop?

7 A. Eddie shows up, Eddie Sickenger.

8 Q. Okay. And up to this point, you had not been given  
9 any instructions from your dispatch --

10 A. No.

11 Q. -- to proceed to the site?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay.

14 MR. DOWNS: Do you have a question?

15 MS. MAZZANTI: Point of clarification: You just now  
16 said 7:40. Earlier you said 6:40.

17 MR. HICKEY: I mean 6:40. I'm sorry.

18 MS. MAZZANTI: Thank you.

19 MR. DOWNS: Thank you for that correction.

20 MR. HICKEY: Geez.

21 MR. DOWNS: We would have sorted it out, but don't  
22 worry about it.

23 MR. HICKEY: I'm sorry.

24 BY MR. DOWNS:

25 Q. Okay. So you're at the shop -- don't get flustered

1 over things.

2 A. No, I'm not. Do you want to take my blood pressure?

3 Q. You're okay.

4 A. It's very low.

5 Q. Great. So you're waiting at the shop. So what  
6 colleague showed up?

7 A. Ed Sick<sup>i</sup>enger<sup>MD</sup> showed up. I assigned him to go get the  
8 copy of the map, of the plat.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I went over to turn the TV on in the bull room.

11 Q. In the office?

12 A. In the office, in the bull room there.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And there it was quite clear of what it was. And the  
15 helicopter panned back out and I seen the street.

16 Two transmission lines had crossed there, the 109 and  
17 the 132. The 109 proceeds east, down San Bruno Avenue. The 132  
18 cuts south and goes right through that -- or it cuts south and  
19 goes down Glenview in San Bruno.

20 Q. Okay. At that point --

21 MR. DOWNS: We'll pause for a moment. Off the record.

22 (Off the record.)

23 (On the record.)

24 BY MR. DOWNS:

25 Q. Okay. Picking back up, you're at the office. A

1 colleague or two shows up. You're in the office watching on the  
2 TV the event. At that point, you still had not been given any  
3 guidance from your dispatch as to what to do, other than just  
4 stay there.

5 A. Not at that point, and that was probably 6:50. So  
6 6:53 or 4, it was climbing up to 7:00.

7 Q. Okay. Let's continue from that point. What were your  
8 actions?

9 A. When I noticed that -- when I seen how clear the shot  
10 was that that one helicopter shot, I knew exactly where it was.  
11 And I knew what it was.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I called my supervisor at that time -- and the phone  
14 record will show -- his name is Steve Poulo, P-o-u-l-o.

15 Q. All right.

16 A. I pronounce it wrong. And told him, "They have me  
17 staged here, but I am going to go up and I know where the  
18 initial inlet valve is and I'm going to shut it off."

19 Q. So you knew from prior experience --

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. -- where the exact location of the valves on both  
22 sides of the event were?

23 A. I was there when they put them in.

24 Q. Great. Okay. At this point -- are you in a  
25 supervisory capacity at all?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Do you supervise anybody?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. So you were basically waiting for guidance from  
5 your supervisor, but you took the initiative to contact your  
6 supervisor, correct?

7 A. And he told me, "Do it." He says, "You're right.  
8 Go."

9 Q. And based upon your input to him, he gave you the  
10 authorization or the instruction --

11 A. He gave me the okay.

12 Q. -- the guidance to go close -- which valve?

13 A. I closed 38 and 41 on line 132. That's in the game  
14 reserve or the -- San Andreas.

15 Q. That's by the reservoir there?

16 A. San Andreas Lake.

17 Q. Okay. Did he tell you which valve to close first or  
18 he relied upon your --

19 A. Nobody did. No, he relied on me.

20 Q. Okay. And that would be normal, because of your  
21 firsthand familiarity?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Would that be a correct way to phrase it?

24 A. For direction of flow.

25 Q. Direction of flow. That's what I'm getting at.

1 A. It went to the -- sub-stream valve.

2 Q. That's what I'm getting at. Thank you.

3 A. Sorry.

4 Q. That's quite all right.

5 So you're at your shop at that point. You've got your  
6 truck. Okay.

7 A. And me and Eddie rolled on it -- or took off. I  
8 drove.

9 Q. In your truck?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. The company truck. And tell us what you encountered  
12 as you were going along.

13 A. There was a heavy traffic. We left the yard about  
14 7:05. I ran into other people coming in at that time that were  
15 showing up at that same time: Alonzo Lopez, Jose Priva -- I  
16 want to say.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. A lot of people were starting to show up at that point  
19 and stage there.

20 Q. Basically as you're going out the gate?

21 A. Yes. He actually -- Alonzo asked me if I could give  
22 him a ride, and I said, "No, go grab another truck." So -- we  
23 only could fit two in here and we're going to hit it.

24 Q. Okay. Roughly how far distance-wise, time and  
25 mileage -- best guess at this point -- between your shop and the



1 valve you're going to close?

2 A. Maybe 10 minutes, if you drive pretty fast.

3 Q. Again, we're just talking best guess. We don't have  
4 the benefit of a map --

5 A. It might have been 15 to get there. I was fighting  
6 through looky-lous.

7 Q. So you encountered some traffic.

8 A. Yes. I exited off Sneath Lane, off 280.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And I proceeded west of Sneath Lane.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And at that point the highway patrol -- everybody was  
13 just flagging me on. We have a rotator --

14 Q. I was about to ask, are your trucks sort of  
15 illuminated with the proper --

16 A. Yes, sir, headlights and the whole nine yards.

17 Q. And they instantly recognized that you needed to get  
18 through?

19 A. They knew what it was. They actually followed behind  
20 me.

21 Q. Great stuff. Okay.

22 So you continue on -- let's continue on from there.

23 A. I proceed up Sneath to Skyline Boulevard and I -- to  
24 my left, I could see what was going on.

25 Q. Down in the valley?

1 A. Yeah, in the valley there.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. I proceeded south on Skyline to about San Bruno, and I  
4 encountered -- Chuck Martinez is a supervisor for T&R in the  
5 City.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And he followed me. I told him to follow me in. And  
8 I came up to the gate. I opened the gate and I went in and shut  
9 off valve. ~~37~~ -- ~~38, 49.~~ 38.49 *MA*.

10 Q. Okay. Let's stop there. I'm personally familiar with  
11 that gate myself, so we need to proceed through that process,  
12 sort of step-by-step. You pull up to the gate from the highway  
13 there, it's a right turn. There's actually, I believe, two  
14 gates?

15 A. They're activated by one key.

16 Q. And the key -- you had the key?

17 A. Yeah, I had the key, but that key is not an issue. If  
18 you walk 100 feet down on that foot path, there's another gate  
19 that goes right to the valves, and any PG&E employee has a key  
20 to that.

21 Q. So if you couldn't get through the gate, you could  
22 have gone the other way?

23 A. I could have passed the key <sup>and *MA*</sup> in a valve wrench over  
24 there and a hook, and anyone could have shut it off. My  
25 daughter could have gone in and shut it off.

1 Q. Okay, great. So you were able to get through the gate  
2 without difficulty?

3 A. No problem.

4 Q. And tell us what happened. I believe there's a right  
5 turn onto the service road there.

6 A. A right turn. I came up to the --

7 Q. It's about 100 yards or so beyond that right turn?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. And take us from there.

10 A. I proceeded to open up the valve -- open up the cover.

11 Q. Okay. One moment. You use a cover hook, is it  
12 called?

13 A. A cover hook. Yes, sir.

14 Q. And you were able to put the hook in place and open  
15 the valve -- or open the manhole cover?

16 A. With no problem.

17 Q. It's a pretty heavy cover.

18 A. Very fast.

19 Q. You were able to get that off by yourself?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. Okay. We just need to understand the process,  
22 step-by-step.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. Okay. What comes next, step-by-step?

25 A. I used a valve key -- a wrench to shut it down. I

1 have several keys that we use and for gaited valves that are  
2 distribution, they're a little bit different, but they're easier  
3 for me to turn. And they're faster cycling. And I was able to  
4 shut it almost completely off with that. It's a very easy valve  
5 to turn. It's only 16 years old. No problem.

6 Q. Okay. That tool is basically a large key-handled  
7 wrench? Would that be a fair way of describing it?

8 A. It's got a hex nut. We call it a key 4. There are  
9 certain sizes.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Most all trucks have them.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And it has a little handle. And we just use those for  
14 --

15 Q. It's a shaft with a T --

16 A. A shaft.

17 Q. -- handle at the top.

18 A. Exactly, sir.

19 Q. And the bottom wrench fits into the socket --

20 A. Exactly.

21 Q. -- of the valve, at the top of the valve. And one  
22 turns it by hand.

23 A. By hand.

24 Q. Okay. Do we have any way of determining the moment  
25 you started to close the valve? Did you make a call or anything

1 to advise your dispatch that you were at the valve?

2 A. I had Chuck Martinez there with me. He's a  
3 supervisor. He followed me in.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And I had Chuck call the times out.

6 Q. Okay. So he was either on the radio or the cell phone  
7 to someone --

8 A. He was on the radio to -- I can't remember if it was  
9 gas control. I didn't -- I was too busy shutting the flow of  
10 gas.

11 Q. I understand. So, we do have --

12 A. That was about 7:30, I think, or -- I had 7:23. I did  
13 look at it when she went down.

14 Q. Okay. So we can potentially go back and get a log for  
15 that -- that dialogue from your supervisor?

16 A. From -- he's the San Francisco gas supervisor. He  
17 might have been in contact at one point with Vern Lopes, who's a  
18 gas M&C technician out of San Carlos, a very knowledgeable man.

19 MR. DOWNS: Okay. I'm going to put a request to  
20 Brian, over here, if you could chase that log sheet down for me,  
21 please.

22 MR. DAUBIN: And that's Chuck Martinez's notes? Is  
23 that what you're --

24 MR. HICKEY: Chuck Martinez at one point was in  
25 contact with Vern Lopes, Vern D. Lopes. He's a gas tech out of

1 San Carlos. I've worked with him many times.

2 MR. DAUBIN: And was Vern working in a capacity to  
3 where he would be on site, taking notes?

4 BY MR. DOWNS:

5 Q. He was right with you, wasn't he?

6 A. Chuck Martinez was.

7 Q. That's the individual that we need to -- that was in  
8 contact with dispatch.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. You were saying he was calling out the times, if you  
11 will.

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 MR. DOWNS: And that's the person I need to get the  
14 information.

15 MR. DAUBIN: Okay. And so you want Chuck Martinez's  
16 logs?

17 MR. DOWNS: Logs, right. When he was making calls to  
18 dispatch or whomever, because he was talking -- correct me if  
19 I'm wrong -- kind of step-by-step.

20 MR. HICKEY: Yes, I told him to call the times because  
21 I know it's critical.

22 BY MR. DOWNS:

23 Q. Great. So Chuck, potentially, whoever he was talking  
24 with, presumably dispatch, would have conveyed that information  
25 to dispatch.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And we would have a log somewhere?

3 A. There is.

4 MR. FASSETT: So you want other than what's already in  
5 the timeline; is that what you're asking for?

6 MR. DOWNS: Correct. If it's not already there.

7 MR. FASSETT: If it's not already there. So if it's  
8 in the timeline --

9 MR. DOWNS: Then we're covered.

10 MR. FASSETT: Then we're covered.

11 MR. DOWNS: Then we're covered, exactly. I just want  
12 to make sure that information is captured. This is somewhat  
13 important.

14 MR. HICKEY: That would show up in gas control, also.

15 MR. DOWNS: That's fine. I have not seen the  
16 documentation yet, but I just want to make sure that it didn't  
17 fall through the cracks. Okay.

18 BY MR. DOWNS:

19 Q. So you put the wrench in place. The wrench is  
20 carried --

21 MR. FASSETT: Off the record, please.

22 (Off the record.)

23 (On the record.)

24 BY MR. DOWNS:

25 Q. Okay. We're back to the point you have the wrench.

1 The wrench is normally kept on your truck.

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. You didn't have to put a special wrench in the back of  
4 your truck?

5 A. No, we carry all of that.

6 Q. That's a standard truck --

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. -- piece of equipment. Okay.

9 So you had the cover off -- the manhole cover off.

10 You placed the wrench onto the valve. Okay. How many turns  
11 would it take to close that valve? If you don't have a precise  
12 number, that --

13 A. I didn't count them. But it is --

14 Q. Best guess is fine.

15 A. It was very fast, maybe <sup>57</sup> 70 turns, maybe more. *(57 TURNS) MA*

16 Q. Something in that neighborhood is your best guess?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. That's fine.

19 How long would it take -- best guess -- to close a  
20 valve 70 turns?

21 A. I think I got it in four minutes.

22 Q. Okay. Four minutes, that's fine.

23 A. I'm pretty sure, it was very fast.

24 Q. And you didn't encounter any resistance, the valve  
25 felt just fine in terms of its normalcy of turning, of closing a



1 valve under pressure?

2 A. I could feel a little fight. It was fighting to stay  
3 open. You know, how pressure --

4 Q. Right.

5 A. We got it off. And then I proceeded to -- I have  
6 several keys. I took another key out of the truck that's more  
7 heavy duty, and we cinched it up, to make sure that that thing  
8 was tight.

9 Q. Make sure the valve was really --

10 A. Make sure the valve went in there.

11 Q. -- fully closed and locked in place, or whatever.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. So best guess, about four minutes, maybe 70-87  
14 turns, and somewhere in that neighborhood. (57 TURNS)  
MH

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Were you able to close it by yourself? Did you  
17 require assist?

18 A. At the end, me and Ed Sickenger cinched it up, just to  
19 make sure. I wanted to make sure that that thing -- you know,  
20 she didn't leak.

21 Q. That was with the second wrench, to make sure that it  
22 was tight.

23 A. Yes, sir. And it only went around three more turns,  
24 if that. But the ground had stopped moving or you could feel a  
25 little tremor.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Of the flow going through. Which happens in certain  
3 conditions.

4 Q. Okay. But, suffice it to say -- make sure I'm  
5 understanding this -- the initial wrench turning, you were able  
6 to get almost fully closed, and you just needed a little bit of  
7 assist to --

8 A. To bring it to a final stop at that point.

9 Q. -- with that second wrench.

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. That's more or less just a verification to make sure  
12 we're absolutely closed up?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Great. Okay. Next step, what did you do after that?

15 A. I left the cover open. I threw a "man on line" tag.  
16 I had Eddie fill one out, just to write "close" on it and leave  
17 it on there. And then -- in case any other mechanics would come  
18 into that area, knowing of what's going on. Because I have  
19 called so many people, they started responding back at that  
20 time, "Where do you want me to meet?"

21 Q. Right.

22 A. We proceeded to leave the San Andreas area, and I had  
23 Chuck follow me, so he was -- go ahead.

24 Q. Let's pause for a moment. Placing the tag, is that a  
25 standard procedure --

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. -- when you close a valve?

3 A. Very important.

4 Q. Okay, that's fine. I believe we saw that tag up at  
5 the site. It's still there.

6 So you left the cover off, the tag is in place?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. What did you, let's go through it step-by-step.

9 A. I put a cone on it.

10 Q. A cone?

11 A. A PG&E cone, because I figured if it gets dark or  
12 somebody -- if a ranger came in, he'd know that -- I didn't have  
13 time to shut it. I wanted to get out of there and --

14 Q. This is like a safety -- a highway safety cone?

15 A. Yes. There were two or three at the time when I came  
16 back. I thought I put one, but when I got back there, there was  
17 three.

18 Q. Okay. So you put the cones in place?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Then what did you do?

21 A. I told Chuck Martinez to follow me, we were going to  
22 go shut down -- we were going to go to Bill Healy (ph.) Station,  
23 which is at Crestwood and Rollingwood (ph.). *M.A.*

24 Q. Right.

25 A. And we're going to shut the downstream part of that --

1 of this connection -- of this transmission line.

2 Q. Okay. Let's pause for a moment. Did dispatch provide  
3 any guidance to you at that point, in terms of what the other  
4 mechanic was doing?

5 A. No, I never got any -- up there, I had problems with  
6 the phone inadvertently. But, no, I never --

7 Q. But Chuck, who's with you --

8 A. He would have gotten that.

9 Q. -- he would have gotten that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. But he did not relay to you any instruction, in terms  
12 of proceed to the other Healy Station valve?

13 A. No, he did not.

14 Q. Okay. So this was your initiative?

15 A. This was my initiative.

16 Q. Good.

17 A. I'll take full responsibility. I actually told them,  
18 "I'll call in on it."

19 Q. Nonetheless, it would have been the prudent thing to  
20 do.

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Perfect. Okay. You're back in your truck. You've  
23 got Chuck following you.

24 A. We exited the gate.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. We went north on Sneath.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. I mean on Skyline.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. We went down Sneath Lane and turned on Rollingwood,  
6 heading towards Bill Healy Station.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. And I had Ed get out, open the gates.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Get in there. I said, "Identify 132." They're all  
11 clearly marked. There's the 109 and the 132, there's a cross-  
12 tie there.

13 Q. Are they --

14 A. It's a Healy --

15 Q. -- right next to each other? Correct me if I'm wrong.

16 A. They're very close, yes.

17 Q. Are they labeled?

18 A. They're all labeled, highly marked.

19 Q. Highly marked.

20 A. They're brass tags, cow-ear tags.

21 Q. And roughly --

22 A. So anybody can get in there and turn them off.

23 Q. -- roughly what time are we talking now? Do we have a  
24 timeline on that, by chance? Or is Chuck calling in the times,  
25 still?

1 A. It was -- I'm pretty sure it was 7:43.

2 Q. Okay. But did Chuck call in the times, do you know?

3 A. Yes, he was on the phone. I'm pretty sure he was  
4 calling -- he was on the phone continually.

5 Q. He's continuing to give all of the times and the  
6 activities --

7 A. Yes, he is.

8 Q. -- as you're moving along?

9 A. I'm sure he was.

10 Q. Great. Okay.

11 So you're at Healy Station. You located the valve?

12 A. I located the main line valve, 40.05. I told Eddie to  
13 unlock -- they're chained and locked. You've got to go through  
14 three locks to get to these things.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. No problem. And then I told him to unchain the  
17 upstream bridle -- it's a 16-inch bridle that comes in there.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And I told him, "Number 2 has to go off, also."  
20 Because it's bridled around the main line valve.

21 Q. Okay. So this, basically -- correct me if I'm wrong --  
22 - is this a cross-feed?

23 A. No, that's not a cross-feed.

24 Q. That's not a cross-feed?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So I had him -- I started shutting 40.05, and I told  
3 Chuck, "We need" -- well, I just told Chuck, "This is what we're  
4 doing at this point right now. We're going to kill it," you  
5 know.

6 Q. Okay. And let me interject --

7 A. Okay, go ahead.

8 Q. The valve is above -- is it an above-ground valve?

9 A. It's an above-ground with a wheel. It's an access  
10 wheel. The valves are varied, you know.

11 Q. Okay. But the control wheel is above ground?

12 A. It's above ground. And that's quite common.

13 Q. And is it locked?

14 A. And they're locked, yes. They're chained and locked.

15 Q. And you had the keys and were able to unlock the locks  
16 okay?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. And you -- sir?

19 MR. DAUBIN: A point of clarification on the locks:  
20 Mike had mentioned that there's three locks on that gate. But  
21 they are all interlaced, so there's only one lock that needs to  
22 be undone to get --

23 MR. HICKEY: That's true.

24 MR. DAUBIN: -- to get into that gate.

25 MR. HICKEY: There's not multiple keys.

1 MR. DOWNS: Okay, that's fine.

2 BY MR. DOWNS:

3 Q. Suffice it to say, you had the key and you were able  
4 to open the gate?

5 A. Yes, no problem.

6 Q. Without difficulty. Great. Thank you.

7 A. If I didn't, I had a truck. You know what I mean?

8 Q. You have a bolt cutter in the truck?

9 A. I have a bolt cutter in the truck, yes.

10 Q. So you had three ways to open it, if you had to?

11 A. It's going down and it's going quick.

12 Q. Great. Okay. We're clear on the access. No  
13 impediment to the access.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. And we have a rough time -- pretty close on a rough  
16 time and we're going to research the actual times, based upon  
17 Chuck's phone calls or radio calls to dispatch.

18 A. He should have all of that, right.

19 Q. So we'll have that. Okay.

20 Chuck is working on the bridle valve, did you say?

21 A. No, that was Ed Sickenger.

22 Q. Ed.

23 A. He's a gas measurement control mechanic.

24 Q. He was with you in your truck?

25 A. Yes, sir, he was.



1 Q. And you instructed him to work on -- meaning close  
2 those valves?

3 A. To close the valve -- I wanted him to close the bridle  
4 No. 2, and I'll take the larger one.

5 Q. Okay. And that's the one with the large wheel?

6 A. And that's -- say, 100 turns on that one. It's a  
7 Grove -- they were both Groves. I gave him the 16 -- because  
8 he's 63 and a half, he'd probably still kill me, but, I mean,  
9 he's a tough guy.

10 Q. And the -- your familiarization, it sounds like that  
11 it was essential to close that other valve, as well as the large  
12 valve --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- that you're working on?

15 A. Yes. We operate them yearly, so we know what's there.  
16 Everybody's pretty much knowledgeable of the operation of them.

17 Q. And we have the start time of when you started closing  
18 the valve --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- because of Chuck's call?

21 A. Yes, I told him to call it. We're going down.

22 Q. Okay, great. We've got that. And your guess is --  
23 best guess is 100 turns of the wheel will close the valve?

24 A. It's a lot of turns. And that one is -- you know,  
25 it's --

1 Q. How many minutes? Best guess.

2 A. It was five minutes.

3 Q. Five minutes closure process?

4 A. It was pretty quick for that size of a valve.

5 Q. And Chuck would have likely made the call when you got  
6 it closed, because you're calling out to him --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- to make the calls?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. He even came over and started -- assisted me when I  
12 was running out of steam on the large one. And then I took it  
13 back over and completed the final kill.

14 Q. Okay. But let me ask the question. Could you, if you  
15 had to, if you were by yourself, could you have closed the  
16 valve?

17 A. Yes, sir. No problem.

18 Q. Okay. It was just a matter, because you had multiple  
19 people, to trade off?

20 A. Yeah, just, well, you go, I go, you go, I go.

21 Q. Got it. Roughly five minutes. We're talking 100  
22 turns. What did you do then?

23 A. I informed Chuck -- he goes -- that we needed to go up  
24 -- I needed to go up and lock in the reg station at Glenview and  
25 San Bruno, Station 190.

1 Q. Rake station?

2 A. Regulator station.

3 Q. Reg station.

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. "Reg" is short for regulator station?

6 A. Regulator station. I'm sorry.

7 Q. And that is located where?

8 A. At Glenview and San Bruno.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. It's across from Linardi's, if you've ever been there.

11 Q. Across the street, there's a gas station, I believe?

12 A. Yes, that's on the other side of the street.

13 Q. Right. And the necessity of doing that would be for  
14 what?

15 A. To stop any of the distribution from coming back  
16 through the inlet, going through and maybe getting into the  
17 transmission line itself.

18 Q. Okay. To make sure I'm understanding here, we have  
19 the transmission line coming from the upstream valve, that you  
20 closed first.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Coming north.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And approximate to that intersection there by  
25 Linardi's, there is a reg station?

1 A. A regulator station.

2 Q. With a valve, a closure valve.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And basically is that a line that keys off and feeds a  
5 local distribution line?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. So is that a back-flow from that distribution line  
8 into the line you just closed --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- that's the necessity of closing that valve?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. I understand it. Thank you. Okay.

13 A. And I got there about 7:50 or close to, and shut the  
14 station inlet valve off to that.

15 Q. So you drove directly from Healy Station around the  
16 site and you basically back-tracked the same route up the  
17 highway there --

18 A. Right back the same route.

19 Q. -- to Sneath, and then down San Bruno that short  
20 distance to Linardi's?

21 A. Very good. Yeah, that's it.

22 Q. Okay. And tell me about that valve.

23 A. It's valve 983. It's a station valve. The inlet fire  
24 valve is 317. I wasn't able to turn it. There was a fire  
25 apparatus on top of it. But that's no problem, there's several

1 valves to it.

2           And I think it was an SFO Fire Department, green  
3 truck, and I didn't have time to ask, so I just went over and  
4 had Ed Sickenger give me the key for it. I read out what size.  
5 They're all tagged and numbered, open/close, plug, grease --  
6 what it is. And he managed -- he gave me the key that fast and  
7 we shut it.

8           And then we opened a chart box, which graphs the flow  
9 of the distributions in those areas.

10          Q.    Okay.

11          A.    To make sure that she was down. She was and there was  
12 no problem.

13          Q.    Okay. Let's go back for a moment. Your first arrival  
14 at that location --

15          A.    Yes, sir.

16          Q.    -- to make sure that I'm understanding this here. Are  
17 these valves located in a vault?

18          A.    No, they're outside.

19          Q.    They are outside.

20          A.    Outside.

21          Q.    Above-ground valves or in a box?

22          A.    No, they're in a box.

23          Q.    There're in a box.

24          A.    They're in a little -- around 12-inch access box.

25          Q.    Is that a manhole box?

1 A. No, they're not manholes. They're valve boxes.

2 Q. Is that in the ground or in the pavement?

3 A. They're in the sidewalk, yeah.

4 Q. In the sidewalk.

5 A. That one was.

6 Q. Okay. And there are several valves to this  
7 arrangement?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. And one is obstructed for a reason you knew, because  
10 of your familiarity. You knew you could go to another box that  
11 wasn't blocked?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. And that's what you did?

14 A. That's what I did.

15 Q. Okay. It's a box in the sidewalk. How does one  
16 access the box?

17 A. Stick a screwdriver or a little hook in there, open it  
18 up.

19 Q. How big is the lid, roughly?

20 A. Oh, it's 10 inches, 8 inches.

21 Q. About like this? It's not a heavy manhole cover?

22 A. No, no.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. It's very common concrete. It's a little concrete  
25 lid.

1 Q. One person can readily open it?

2 A. Yes, sir. No problem.

3 Q. Okay. And you would have the access key or tool to  
4 open that --

5 A. I carry that on my truck, yeah.

6 Q. You opened the cover and, step-by-step, is it a hand  
7 valve or what's the arrangement?

8 A. No, it's a plug valve and it was three feet deep. I  
9 marked what key size, called it out, Eddie brought the key size  
10 -- I think it was a six. We loaded it, shut the valve. It's a  
11 quarter turn, very easy to turn, heavily greased, no seepage  
12 back.

13 Q. So that's almost instantly closed?

14 A. Instantly closed.

15 Q. Okay. That sound like what you said, a quarter --

16 A. I could have put a screwdriver or, actually, cranked  
17 it with my hand.

18 Q. Okay. So the valve was closed. What did you do then?

19 A. I went over to the command post which had assembled  
20 there, and met with John Corona. I think he's a superintendent  
21 in San Francisco.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I'm not sure of his function.

24 Q. What happened then?

25 A. I met up with him to see if I could be some assistance

1 with shutting off the distribution. Twenty years prior to that,  
2 I was an apprentice fitter, a welder, and I worked in that area.  
3 And there's some zone valves in that area that I maintain. I  
4 maintain numbered valves as a part of my job, and there are a  
5 few in that area.

6 Q. So I understand this, once you got the valves closed,  
7 did you close the covers of everything, so that everything was  
8 buttoned up?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Safe and everything?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And you checked -- I think you said you checked the  
13 chart to make sure that there was no --

14 A. No flow, yes.

15 Q. And that would instantly be able to tell you --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- on a graph or something?

18 A. Yes, it was dead zero.

19 Q. So you're satisfied in your mind --

20 A. I'm satisfied, at that point.

21 Q. And it sounds like the next step would be to go down  
22 to other distribution lines --

23 A. To assist them.

24 Q. -- to close those off?

25 A. Yes.



1 Q. Would that be a fair assessment?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And because you had familiarity --

4 A. I had familiarity.

5 Q. -- with them, you'd be the logical person to be able  
6 to expeditiously address that?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. You went to Incident Command, which had been set up  
9 nearby.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. In the gas station or whatever.

12 A. It was right outside the gas station.

13 Q. You identified yourself and made yourself available.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And did you suggest that that would be something you  
16 needed to do, is that the essence of it?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. I'm not wanting to put words in your mouth, but it  
19 sounds like --

20 A. No, no.

21 Q. -- that's where we're going.

22 A. I told them where there were certain valves, like on  
23 Earl, there's a valve there. But it wasn't needed, because it  
24 would have interrupted other distribution -- other areas that  
25 fed that area.

1 Q. So from the top of your head, you knew exactly where  
2 to go, step-by-step, to minimize the back-flow?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. What did you do next?

5 A. I met up with Alonzo Lopez's foreman in San Carlos to  
6 assist him with other valves on Claremont, that I was familiar  
7 with. But they were not mine. One was in a driveway as you  
8 first cut into Claremont. And he uncovered it and we were able  
9 to shut it off with a key 3 and isolate that one.

10 Q. And these valves accesses are similar to the one --

11 A. Exactly.

12 Q. -- the ones you had just closed?

13 A. It was a concrete lid. They're in, you know, the  
14 ~~right~~ <sup>Right of way</sup> <sup>M.A.</sup> away there.

15 Q. Very quickly close and verify they're closed?

16 A. No problem.

17 Q. Now, was Chuck still with you at this time?

18 A. No. He stayed at the command post.

19 Q. So nobody was really calling in at this point, your  
20 closure of these other distribution valves?

21 A. No. I was with -- I went with a gas crew at that  
22 point to assist them. They were from San Carlos.

23 Q. A gas crew had made their way to the site and had  
24 joined you at that point?

25 A. Multiple. There was many gas crews in that whole

1 area. And about -- earlier than that -- I want to back track.  
2 I got a call from Brad Schubach, and he asked me, "Where do you  
3 want me?" And I said, "Go to Bill Healy Station and wait  
4 there." I got another call from Craig -- they finally -- he had  
5 gotten an M&C truck out of San Carlos. I had him go stage and  
6 wait at San Andreas -- or the water shed and wait for me.

7 I proceeded down ~~Claremont~~ <sup>EARL M H</sup> and --

8 Q. Down the hill, towards the site itself?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. To assist them to dig or to find another valve. I  
12 couldn't remember if there was one there at one time. I was a  
13 little disorientated. I didn't know I had walked into ground  
14 zero.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. And I was kind of -- you know.

17 Q. Okay. Roughly how many valves would there be --  
18 distribution cut-off valves would there be on the south side of  
19 the -- for lack of a better word -- the trench?

20 A. There are many valves throughout the whole system.  
21 They're not numbered, but they are there.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We don't maintain them, but they were installed with  
24 the distribution line -- there's thousands of them.

25 Q. Thousands of them. But are we talking feed valves to

1 residences or are we talking --

2 A. No, little areas, blocks.

3 Q. Blocks. That all go into the L-132 line?

4 A. They're not connected to the transmission line.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Only the station I shut locked in, Station 190.

7 Q. So if you weren't able to close those, would it be a  
8 principal concern, in terms of feeding back to the site  
9 or --

10 A. No, they were just distribution at that point.

11 Q. Just distribution. So, it was not a pressing concern  
12 at this point?

13 A. Not a pressing concern.

14 Q. But as long as you were there, you were going to close  
15 them?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Would that be a fair way of saying it?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Great. So you're at the south side of the fire.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. What did you do then?

22 A. I walked up -- and I was at ground zero at that point  
23 -- and I noticed the ground -- the crater bubbling away or  
24 movement. I had no idea what -- whether it was a sewer or --  
25 there was probably other municipalities running through it. And

1 I didn't smell any gas, but I couldn't smell anything at that  
2 point, everything stunk.

3           And so I -- just to make sure that that was not gas, I  
4 ran back up, got Eddie and said, "We're going to go back over  
5 the valves."

6       Q.    You ran back up the top of the hill?

7       A.    No, our truck had come down 100 feet or so from the  
8 blast point.

9       Q.    So your truck is stopped about 100 feet?

10      A.    Yeah, and we were using tools.

11      Q.    So you had your tools right with you.

12      A.    Yeah.

13      Q.    Okay.

14      A.    Shovels and picks.

15      Q.    So you approached the crater and was the -- was the  
16 fire still burning?

17      A.    No, it was dead. It went dead the minute I killed the  
18 lower one on Bill Healy Station, the -- 40.05 killed it.

19      Q.    That would have the time -- even though you're a mile  
20 away or whatever -- that would have been the time that the feed  
21 -- fuel feed would have been shut off.

22      A.    Yes.

23      Q.    And the only thing to burn -- correct me if I'm wrong  
24 -- would be the residue in the line?

25      A.    Yes, yes.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Or distribution service riser Ts or whatever.

3 Q. But it was a relatively small back-feed that's still  
4 in there.

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I had wrenches. If there was something I could have  
8 shut off, I would have assisted and started shutting them down.

9 Q. Okay. And you saw what looked to be like a fluid in  
10 the hole?

11 A. It's something moving. At that point, I didn't know  
12 the pipe had blown out of there. I just thought it was a hole  
13 in the pipe. I didn't know what it was.

14 Q. You didn't notice there was a pipe -- a section of  
15 pipe in the roadway?

16 A. I seen something there, but I didn't -- my mind didn't  
17 put it together at that time.

18 Q. You didn't immediately register what it was?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. Fair enough.

21 A. I didn't think that was -- no.

22 Q. And what happened next?

23 A. I got on the -- I got Eddie, headed back up to San  
24 Andreas.

25 Q. You got in your truck?

- 1 A. I got in my truck. I headed back up to San Andreas.
- 2 Q. That's where the --
- 3 A. 3849, the first valve, the upstream valve.
- 4 Q. That's the upstream valve?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. To recheck that.
- 8 Q. Okay.
- 9 A. I hooked up with Craig.
- 10 Q. Who is Craig?
- 11 A. He's another M&C mechanic. He's unassigned -- also
- 12 assigned with me at the Colma yard right now.
- 13 Q. Okay.
- 14 A. And we double-checked it. We opened up the taps.
- 15 Those are gauge taps that hook from the bottom of the valve, to
- 16 make sure she was completely dead.
- 17 Q. Okay.
- 18 A. And the downstream. Nothing, it didn't even burp.
- 19 Q. It would have given you an audible hiss --
- 20 A. Oh, yeah, 300 pounds, you would know.
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. Or any pressure in there, you would know.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. I blew out the body cavity, to make sure there was
- 25 nothing that could migrate --

- 1 Q. That's the body cavity of the valve?
- 2 A. Of the valve itself.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. It's a Cameron valve. They're made in Scotland. *GROVE BSB OWN BY CAMERON M.A.*
- 5 It's a very good valve.
- 6 And she burped and that was the end of it.
- 7 Q. So you're 100 percent, in your mind, that valve was
- 8 locked down?
- 9 A. I guarantee it, yeah.
- 10 Q. Great. What did you do next?
- 11 A. I called Brad Schubach to have him do the same and he
- 12 was already -- he had already done it.
- 13 Q. On the Healy --
- 14 A. On the Healy Station.
- 15 Q. The Healy Station valve.
- 16 A. He had already -- he was one step ahead of me.
- 17 Q. To verify that the valve was absolutely locked up.
- 18 Like you say, one step ahead of you.
- 19 A. Yeah, he knew what to do.
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. They all knew what to do.
- 22 Q. What did you do next?
- 23 A. I asked -- I can't remember if I called the supervisor
- 24 and asked him what he wanted me to do, but I headed back down to
- 25 -- once I was sure those valves were tight, there's no flow



1 going through any of this stuff, which we knew already, but I  
2 headed back down for everyone to meet at Healy Station. That's  
3 usually where -- because it's a true cross-tie. And if you were  
4 going to do any valving in that area for a back-feed to  
5 establish anything, it would come out of that area.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So we all headed there to wait for further  
8 instruction.

9 Q. Okay. And you had a supervisor with you at that  
10 point? Do you remember?

11 A. No, I don't think we needed one, but there was none  
12 there. No, we knew what we were doing.

13 Q. Now, you had radios and everything in your truck?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. So you could communicate --

16 A. We were in phone communication. And so was Brad at  
17 that point. He was on the phone to somebody, or whoever it was,  
18 I guess. And they told him to hold off.

19 Q. Meaning everybody --

20 A. Bob <sup>DYSON</sup> ~~Dison~~ <sup>MR</sup> (ph.) was one of them. I remember him  
21 calling me several times, to give me instruction. "Hold tight  
22 there."

23 Q. At Healy Station?

24 A. At Healy Station.

25 Q. Okay. So you drove your truck --

1 A. Back down there.

2 Q. -- to Healy Station. Were there other mechanics there  
3 already when you got there?

4 A. There was Brian ~~Olivie~~<sup>OLIVIO</sup>, Brad Schubach and Craig  
5 followed me -- and I was with Ed Sick~~enger~~<sup>enger</sup>. <sup>MA</sup>

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. In the truck. And there were three M&C trucks there  
8 at that point. We could have covered anything at that point.

9 Q. What did you do next?

10 A. I waited for further instruction.

11 Q. From your dispatch?

12 A. For -- the relieving supervisor was, I think, Bob

13 ~~Dyson~~<sup>Dyson</sup> <sup>MA</sup> We had two at that point. We had -- we had Steve Poulo,  
14 and then there was Bob ~~Dyson~~<sup>Dyson</sup> <sup>MA</sup>, who was in the OEC.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And he said -- and they released us at 3:00 or 4:00 in  
17 the morning. They said, "Go home and come back in eight hours."

18 Q. So let's just get a rough idea. At the upstream valve  
19 when you went back to verify it's closed, roughly what time is  
20 that?

21 A. About --

22 Q. Best guess?

23 A. 8:30 or so.

24 Q. 8:30 or so?

25 A. No, not even that late. It was a little after 8:00.

1 It was dark up there.

2 Q. Okay. And then you went back to Healy Station and --

3 A. And stayed there.

4 Q. -- stood by for further guidance, instruction, from  
5 8:30 or so.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Until roughly 3:00 a.m., I think you were saying?

8 A. Yes, yes. I left my gauges up at the other site.

9 Q. At the feed valve.

10 Now, let me ask you are there distribution lines that  
11 would feed into a transmission line?

12 A. Never, no.

13 Q. At the point between the ruptured site and the Healy  
14 Station?

15 A. Distribution lines feeding -- even touching the  
16 transmission line?

17 Q. Connecting with. Feeding --

18 A. No.

19 Q. -- into? So there's no -- nothing --

20 A. No.

21 Q. -- between those two points?

22 A. No. (*Distribution Lines never feed into Transmission Lines*)

23 Q. Okay. Great. I wanted to make sure that we didn't  
24 have any other possible feed paths.

25 A. No, no. The regulator station at 190 handled that,

1 and that was dead.

2 Q. Right. Okay. The next day, is there anything  
3 significant that you can tell us?

4 A. No. We reported to work and we went -- one -- Brad  
5 Schubach reported to Healy Station and I reported up to the game  
6 reserve. And we monitored the gauges and stood by for further  
7 instruction of what to do.

8 MR. DOWNS: Okay. Thank you. That concludes my  
9 questions.

10 MR. HICKEY: Thank you.

11 MR. GUNTHER: Okay. Peter?

12 MR. KATCHMAR: No questions.

13 MR. GUNTHER: Sunil?

14 MR. SHORI: No questions.

15 MR. GUNTHER: Ravi?

16 MR. CHHATRE: No questions.

17 MR. GUNTHER: Bob?

18 MR. FASSETT: No questions.

19 MR. GUNTHER: City of San Bruno?

20 MR. CALDWELL: No questions.

21 MR. GUNTHER: And IBEW?

22 MS. MAZZANTI: No questions.

23 BY MR. GUNTHER:

24 Q. All right. One last question: Is there anything that  
25 you know that we should -- think that we should know and that

1 you haven't told us?

2 A. No, sir.

3 Q. And would you like to make a statement for the record?

4 A. No, I have nothing.

5 Q. Then we're off the record.

6 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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*[Handwritten signature]*  
**[Redacted signature]**

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

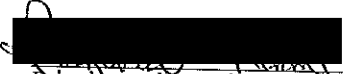
IN THE MATTER OF: PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2010 ACCIDENT  
SAN BRUNO, CALIFORNIA  
Interview of Michael Hickey

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-10-MP-008

PLACE: Burlingame, California

DATE: September 17, 2010

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared  
to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

  
Richard Friant  
Official Reporter