

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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ALABAMA GAS CORPORATION (ALAGASCO)

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NATURAL GAS LEAK WITH IGNITION

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Docket No.: DCA-14-MP-001

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

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DECEMBER 17, 2013

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Interview of: MAX MORRISON

Alagasco Center for Energy
Technology
Birmingham, Alabama

Saturday,
December 21, 2013

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MATTHEW NICHOLSON
Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

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DON LUPO, Director
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Birmingham, Alabama

WALLACE JONES, Gas Pipeline Safety Administrator
KEITH BLACKWOOD, Pipeline Safety Investigator
Alabama Public Service Commission

WILLIE WILLIAMS, Investigator
Fire Investigations Bureau
Birmingham, Alabama

MICHAEL BELL
(Representative on behalf of Mr. Morrison)

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. NICHOLSON: Good morning. Today is Saturday, December 21st, 2013. My name is Matthew Nicholson, and I am an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board in Washington, D.C. We are currently in Birmingham, Alabama, at the Alagasco Center for Energy Technology investigating the Birmingham, Alabama natural gas leak with ignition which occurred on December 17th, 2013. This is case number DCA-14-MP-001. We are here today to interview Max Morrison.

For the record, Mr. Morrison, please state your first and last name with spelling.

MR. MORRISON: First name is Max, M-a-x; last name is Morrison, M-o-r-r-i-s-o-n.

MR. NICHOLSON: Thank you. And if you would, please state for the record your title, current employer, business e-mail and phone number?

MR. MORRISON: I'm a service technician. My phone number, business phone number is [REDACTED]. And what was your other question again?

MR. NICHOLSON: I just need your title and your contact information and who you work for.

MR. MORRISON: Alagasco.

MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, I got it. Mr. Morrison, you are allowed to have one person of your choosing to be present for these interviews. Can you please indicate for the record who you

1 have selected to be your representative?

2 MR. MORRISON: Mr. Mike Bell.

3 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. We'll now go around the room and
4 everybody introduce themselves for the record. Please state your
5 name and agency you represent. I'll begin, and we'll proceed to
6 my left.

7 Matthew Nicholson, NTSB Investigator.

8 MR. CHHATRE: Ravi Chhatre, NTSB.

9 MR. BELL: Mike Bell, representative for Max Morrison.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Willie Williams, Fire Investigations,
11 City of Birmingham.

12 MR. LUPO: I'm Don Lupo. I work for the Mayor.

13 MR. GARDNER: Bob Gardner, Alabama Gas.

14 MR. BLACKWOOD: Keith Blackwood, Alabama Public Service
15 Commission.

16 MR. JONES: Wallace Jones, Alabama Public Service
17 Commission.

18 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

19 INTERVIEW OF MAX MORRISON

20 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

21 Q. So, Max, just to begin with, maybe it would be helpful
22 for everyone here or at least for NTSB to know a little bit about
23 your background, when you started with the company, what positions
24 you've held up till now?

25 A. Yes, sir. I started with Alagasco on November 28th,

1 1989. I hired in the construction department as a crewman. Then
2 I went on to take my -- promoted to a construction -- a leaderman
3 is what they called it then.

4 Q. I'm sorry, a what?

5 A. A leaderman.

6 Q. Oh, a leaderman?

7 A. Yes, sir, which you're over the whole truck, you know,
8 you take -- you got your own equipment. You got an assistant with
9 you, but you're in charge of the whole, the entire truck.

10 I performed that duty for about 13 years in
11 construction. And, you know, we ran lines, installed lines,
12 repaired leaks and what have you.

13 Then I took an interest in inside service department.
14 Where construction work's from the main up to the meter, the
15 department I was in before, the department I work in now works
16 from the meter on into the house. And I've been in this
17 department for the last, I guess, 13 years.

18 Q. I'm sorry, what department is that?

19 A. This is I&O journeyman, inside installations.

20 Q. Oh, inside. Is that the name of it, inside
21 installations?

22 A. Well, my title is I&O journeyman, but I'm a service
23 technician. You know, a lot of people call it service technician,
24 but we're more inside the homes, from the meter on into the home.

25 Q. Okay. When you were in construction, then, you said you

1 repaired leaks on mains?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Okay. And service lines?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Okay. Had you done any work on cast iron mains?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Can you talk about some of the repairs on cast iron
8 mains that would be typically seen?

9 A. Yes, sir. We have a lot of mechanical joints on cast
10 iron mains where they have four mechanical joints on there. A lot
11 of times, you know, over a period time they might contract and
12 expand over time, and we'll go back and tighten those joints up
13 and monitor them.

14 Now we use -- before I left the service department, they
15 brought on a new system where -- it's called Anacure, where we
16 pump a chemical -- we actually make a tap on top of the valve
17 joint. We'll drill a hole and tap it, thread it. We'll actually
18 pump a chemical in there called this Anacure and it goes around
19 and seals the whole joint.

20 Q. Now, we're talking about the couplings -- I think I saw
21 them in the field, but it's like a two piece -- or it's bolted to
22 the valve with a internal gasket? Is that --

23 A. Do what now?

24 Q. I think I saw a coupling in the field where we had two
25 bolts, a bolt on either side?

1 A. That's right, yeah. You have some that -- the larger
2 mains have four.

3 Q. Then it had like a flange or --

4 A. Yes, 4 and 6 inch mains have like four T-bolts, you
5 know, and there's like a smaller 2-inch main, 2-1/4, it'll have
6 two on each side and have a flange, you know, where it pulls
7 pressure up evenly all around. Does that make sense?

8 Q. Yeah, I saw one. We were looking at that. So you --
9 there's a system where you can actually drill into it and you're
10 pumping a chemical to fill that annular space?

11 A. Yes, sir. That's most -- mainly we use those on the
12 larger bell joints because they have a lot -- those are packed
13 with lead. Used to, we used to go back --

14 Q. Oh, they are? They're actually filled with the lead?

15 A. Yes, sir. When you get around to the 2-inch stuff, a
16 lot of those have a little rubber, you know, mechanical flange in
17 there that presses out, you know. On your larger mains like the
18 6 and 8-inch cast iron, before they brought on Anacure, what we
19 used to do then was they had what they -- we had a tool; we'd pack
20 the lead. You know, take that joint and clean it up and then you
21 pack that lead all the way around and compress it, you know, make
22 it tighter. Then we would put on there -- I don't know if we
23 still use them because we went with this Anacure that's been
24 purchased and sells for what, now we use this Anacure.

25 The old way we used to do it was, and they're still out

1 there, is what we call a Carson clamp. A Carson clamp's like a
2 mechanical device. It bolts on the back side of the main and on
3 the front side of the main. Then it has a rubber there, and it's
4 got several bolts around it, and it compresses that rubber up into
5 the lead joint. It's very, very -- works very well. So I did a
6 lot of that.

7 Q. So it sounds like most of your repairs during that time
8 were on couplings?

9 A. Yeah. We had a lot of mechanical couplings as you know.
10 Are you specifically talking about cast iron or are you talking
11 about steel?

12 Q. Yeah, I want to know most about cast iron. That's what
13 this accident's about so I was curious. So you didn't see cracks
14 or what about corrosion? I mean, these are old lines, right?

15 A. It's possible you could see some corrosion on cast iron,
16 you know, cracks too. I've been out there before, I've been
17 around a lot all my life and, you know, I've seen people working
18 around our cast iron mains, dynamiting before, around Vanderbilt
19 Road just for an example. I'm talking about several blocks away
20 and create problems for us, you know, down the road just from the
21 impact of the ground, you know. Of course, we go back and do
22 walking surveys. We're aware of the dangers of that. You know,
23 we monitor it very well.

24 Q. Sure. But now, when you're on the construction team,
25 did you do the leak surveys or someone else did leak surveys and

1 then called you out to do the repairs; is that accurate?

2 A. Well, a lot of them are, they walk and survey that's
3 required by the Alabama Public Service Commission. They'll do a
4 walking survey every 3 years or whatever.

5 Q. Construction group does that?

6 A. The construction does that, yes. Yes.

7 MR. GARNER: Or it could be an external contractor.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, it can be helping them out.

9 MR. MORRISON: Yes. We have an external contractor,
10 Southern Cross, I believe it is now. Is that right?

11 MR. GARDNER: That's right.

12 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

13 Q. So they would -- they do the leak survey, they find a
14 leak, it gets logged in?

15 A. Yes, and a lot of it comes from the public too when they
16 just call in something, yeah.

17 Q. Oh, sure. But if it gets called in from the public, the
18 first step is to send someone out to do a leak survey?

19 A. If it's public's, it's going to the first responder like
20 me.

21 Q. Like you now as the service technician?

22 A. Right, me now, yes. And then if I feel a need, I'll
23 take some readings, do a bar test and take some readings in the
24 ground. And depending on what I find in the ground, I'll make
25 that decision to call a truck out there and work it at that time

1 or not, or either grade it down to a Grade 2 and they got a
2 certain time to come out and fix it.

3 Q. So as a service tech now, you'll do bar hole readings?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Because I heard you say it was from the meter inside?

6 A. Yes, but like on a -- if they call it a Grade -- a Code
7 2, which is an outside leak, it could be at the meter. It may not
8 be at the meter; it may be on the service, okay, or anywhere like
9 that, but I have to survey it all. I don't just stop at the
10 meter. I survey over the -- bar test over the service and over
11 the main.

12 And then depending on what I find there then I'll make a
13 decision, you know, and grade it, whether it be a 1 or 2. Grade 1
14 needs to be at immediate attention, get them out there then, and I
15 don't leave site until they get there. Grade 2 would be if
16 something, it could hold and, you know, they got 6 months to come
17 back and, you know --

18 Q. Now how do you -- what's the division for a grade? Is
19 it LEL levels or what is that --

20 A. No, it's a gas level, it's a gas -- 70 percent. It
21 depends on how much -- like a Grade 1 leak would be something like
22 where you got 70 percent or more gas, and especially if you've got
23 concrete from the street, all the way from the street to the curb
24 sidewalk and all the way to the building where it could migrate,
25 you know.

1 Now, a Grade 2 leak, you could have 100 percent gas on a
2 Grade 2 leak, which you think in your mind would be a Grade 1
3 leak. If it was out at a cow pasture, there's no houses, there's
4 no liability, you know, and it would hold and somebody could come
5 out the next day to take care of it. You know, there's nothing --

6 Q. True. Right.

7 A. Does that make sense?

8 Q. No structures or people nearby.

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 MR. GARDNER: And, Matt, the descriptions of how we
11 grade leaks, it's in that operations procedure manual we gave you.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: Sure. No, I'm sure it's written some --

13 MR. CHHATRE: The one that we got yesterday, right?

14 MR. MORRISON: Yes, sir.

15 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, good to know. So I don't have to
16 request that.

17 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

18 Q. And then I was interested, you said, you mentioned if
19 it's under concrete that it spreads --

20 A. Yeah, anywhere where you got a solid surface, especially
21 around our mains or services, it goes from our main up to, say,
22 over the sidewalk, maybe go all the way up to an apartment
23 building or something like that. Yeah, that would be a grade --
24 if you're seeing a migration pattern or something like that, it
25 would be a Grade 1 leak. I would not leave site and I'd wait for

1 my -- I'd call my dispatcher and I would stay on site, continue to
2 bar test until the construction -- to get at the aerate. I'd try
3 to get the gas off the building or, you know, whatever's there,
4 structure's there. And then I would stay on site and continue to
5 bar test until my construction crew got there.

6 So you're looking for, you know, that's pretty serious
7 when you got concrete, asphalt, you know.

8 Q. Because it's going to pocket under that?

9 A. It's going to pocket and migrate. You also got water
10 lines. You know, you got to keep in mind you might have some
11 water lines, old service lines that's underneath that asphalt
12 going back to the building. So we bar test those too, check water
13 -- we check a lot of water meter boxes, sewers, just everything's
14 inside.

15 Q. You're bar testing the water line because you --

16 A. Well, you can't bar test -- yeah, I bar test the water
17 line because any time you disturb the ground -- a natural gas leak
18 is like a root. It's going to follow the least path of
19 resistance, okay? And once you've opened that ground up from,
20 say, a water service or gas line or just a power line, underground
21 power line, it's going to follow that loose dirt versus, you know,
22 where it hadn't been disturbed.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. So I check water service. Like I said, I check sewers.

25 Q. Do you check on both sides of the main even though you

1 might have been called out on --

2 A. Both sides of the main, east, west. I go a block,
3 sometimes 4 blocks each way.

4 Q. Oh, wow.

5 A. I check sewers. I check on each side of the road on a
6 curb, you know, blocks each way, block and a half each way, make
7 sure there's no -- you know, a lot of times, a curb's a good
8 example. When they put, when they build these curbs up they'll
9 put this 8910 crushed gravel stone along the curb. It'll travel
10 that curb line too, you know, especially on a hill. You can have
11 a leak -- I've had leaks 4 or 5 blocks away that's creating us
12 problems up here if I was out, and it's following that gravel. So
13 we look for --

14 Q. So is there a procedure for that? How do you know where
15 to take your -- you're just randomly taking samples until you get
16 a zero?

17 A. Well, like I said, natural gas will follow its least
18 path of resistance. If you got a leak up here on a hill, it's not
19 likely it's going to run down; it's going to keep going up hill.
20 If you got a leak, you're going to keep going down hill more
21 likely, you know, until you start getting out of it. You're going
22 to start getting less readings as you go that way.

23 Q. Sure.

24 A. That kind of gives you an idea of where to start.

25 Q. Okay. So you kind of -- you pick maybe a radius and

1 start testing?

2 A. Yes, sir. I go north, south, east, west, you know, kind
3 of like it's an intersection, depending on what the, I guess, the
4 road or the premise looks like.

5 Q. Okay. And then let's go back to the day we're talking
6 about here, December 17th. I wanted to talk to you a little bit
7 about your involvement there. We did just talk to Rochelle and
8 she did -- she mentioned that you were called out. If you could
9 just kind of take us through the day's events, when you were
10 notified, when you got on scene, kind of walk us through the
11 timeline?

12 A. Do you want me to just kind of start from the beginning,
13 just tell you my story about what all I did?

14 Q. Sure.

15 A. Okay. I was down in -- I was actually -- I'm not sure.
16 I know I made my response time for the Public Service Commission
17 though, but I got the call I think around 2:41. You know, I'm
18 getting to --

19 Q. I understand. We're not holding you to these, if you
20 can just estimate.

21 A. Okay. I got called, I think, around 2:41. But, anyway,
22 I was out on South Shades Crest Road.

23 Q. I'm sorry, can you slow down. South where?

24 A. Shades.

25 Q. Oh, Shades?

1 A. Yeah. Crest Road. Actually that address where I was at
2 was 5016 South Shades Crest Road.

3 Q. Okay. Is that an on call?

4 A. It's a house. It's an elderly man that lived there.
5 Mr. McCreary is his name. Actually, he was a World War II
6 veteran, and he lived out there by himself.

7 We had some -- we have a high-pressure main that runs
8 along South Shades Crest Road. We had some problems on a valve
9 stem on his regulator that served his home. It had a little leak
10 on it. I think somebody had bumped into it with, you know, I
11 don't know maybe some lawn equipment or a car and broke that
12 little valve stem. That's where we check pressure on our
13 pipe pressure first, but --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. It's a -- we got a 100 --

16 Q. It's on the riser going to the meter? No?

17 A. Well, this is further on down. This is up on -- let me
18 just tell you this. We got 100 --

19 MR. BELL: Slow down.

20 MR. MORRISON: All right.

21 MR. BELL: Slow down. Just listen to his question and
22 answer it.

23 MR. MORRISON: I'm sorry.

24 MR. NICHOLSON: It's really, it's not essential at this
25 point.

1 MR. MORRISON: Okay.

2 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

3 Q. So I think we've established at 2:41, you were at South
4 Shades Crest Road --

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. -- working on a call out to some -- a regulator in a
7 residence. That's, you know --

8 A. It was his call. His complaint was he didn't have no
9 heat, and we were trying to get him back in service. That's what
10 we tried to do.

11 Q. And how far is -- if you had to estimate, South Shades
12 Crest Road, how far is that from --

13 A. The job before?

14 Q. The call you got, at 2:41, you were called to the Gate
15 City accident; is that correct?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Okay. And how far is it, time or miles?

18 A. I researched that and MapQuest is pretty accurate. I
19 took that 5016 in MapQuest and it's 39 miles, 39.2 miles.

20 Q. That's quite away, okay. I'm sorry, we got
21 sidetracked. So 2:41, you were at this residence, you got the
22 call and then --

23 A. Yeah, I was actually in the basement. I just --
24 actually, I was finishing up. I was in the basement just relit
25 his water heater, got his water heater back on, lit the furnace, I

1 was down on my knees. As soon as I got through lighting his
2 furnace, I stood up, that's when I received a phone call from
3 Rochelle, who was in here previous to me. She told me I had an
4 explosion on Joppa Avenue, that I needed to leave as soon as I
5 could.

6 The phone was breaking up. I had to get back outside
7 the garage to really understand her because I was way out there.
8 So I got all the information from her, and I left as fast as I
9 could. On the way to my truck in front of his house -- I was a
10 mile off -- I was farther out in the woods off (indiscernible) you
11 just wouldn't believe it.

12 But anyway, I got the call and my construction crew was
13 waiting on me to come back up to the road. We was going to leave
14 out of there together. And he called me and I told him, I said
15 Mike, you're going to see these guys here in a few minutes. He's
16 actually a leaderman on this crew truck. I said Mike, I said you
17 need to go to Joppa Court, Joppa Avenue over -- I said we got an
18 explosion. I said I need for you to go ahead and go on.

19 He hadn't received a call from Rochelle yet. I kind of
20 more or less told him to go ahead and head that way because I knew
21 she was going to call him, so he could get a head start.

22 So about that time, I come out from out of the woods up
23 on Shades Crest Road and realized how -- you know, I was farther
24 out than I wanted to be. And I don't mind telling you, I broke
25 the laws getting there. I mean, I passed -- I know that's not,

1 Bob, you want to hear, but I did. I didn't at first, but I was
2 headed up Morgan Road. These roads are real curvy, real woody.
3 Yeah, I was going 85 to 90 trying to get there. I know it's
4 not --

5 Q. But you said -- so you radioed your crew back and they
6 were in another truck?

7 A. Yes. Well, here's what happened. She called, she asked
8 me -- well, she told me I needed to head that way. I got up on
9 Shades Crest Road and I got up to Morgan Road, 459. I got up on
10 the interstate, was going around, and Rochelle called me back. I
11 think the fire department had requested for another ETA. She
12 asked for my ETA, you know, and I told her I think at that time it
13 was 10 minutes, I think, before I can get there. I already been
14 half way there, you know, more than half way, and I told her to
15 call construction, which was Mike, the guy was up on the hill
16 waiting on me. I thought they were out in front of me. And
17 evidently, I must have passed him somewhere, you know what I'm
18 talking about. I didn't see him, but I passed him somewhere. And
19 I thought for sure in my mind he was in front of me, which he was
20 not, so -- and then when she called me that second time to ask me
21 for my ETA, I knew something was, you know, pretty seriously
22 wrong. So I got there as quick as I could.

23 When I arrived on site at Joppa Court, it was very
24 difficult to get in there because everybody, you know, all the
25 cars. I couldn't get up in there and they almost wouldn't let me

1 up in there. But, you know, when I told them who I was, you know,
2 they started peeling the ropes back, raising the ribbons. I think
3 it was -- is it Chief Mortis [sic], I think his name?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Morris.

5 MR. MORRISON: Morris. He met me at my truck door.

6 I'll go ahead and tell you this, I don't know if this is
7 important, but I'm required to show my arrival time on my
8 computer. That was the furthest thing from my mind. I did show
9 it, but they got my conversation on my time that I got there, you
10 know, and everything.

11 I got out of the truck, Mr. Morris asked me, he said,
12 what's the plan; what are we going to do? And I said, well, I got
13 a construction truck be here just any minute. I said we're going
14 to locate this service. We had a riser fire on the back side of
15 the building.

16 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

17 Q. On the back side of which building?

18 A. The back side of --

19 Q. Do you know the -- is it 79 or 80?

20 A. Let me just say this. The address they give me on my
21 computer was not the correct address where the actual problem was
22 at. Okay?

23 What was the actual address, the apartment, 7425 or
24 something like that?

25 MR. GARDNER: 7526?

1 MR. MORRISON: 7524. I don't know if that's important.
2 But anyway --

3 MR. JONES: 7544 was the actual location for BA -- that
4 meter number BA587735 it was?

5 MR. MORRISON: Yes, sir.

6 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Okay? And they gave it to me as another residence on
9 Joppa Court.

10 And then what I'm supposed to do when I arrive -- this
11 is protocol -- I always, we always have to verify meter numbers to
12 make sure I'm at the right location, but I knew I was at the right
13 location obviously what was going on. I just actually had to
14 arrive, call them, you know, tell them -- I'm supposed to call in
15 and get another order. Well, I wasn't going to waste time doing
16 all that. That was irrelevant to me to what was going on.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. So after I told Mr. Morris what the plan, what I was
19 going to do, of course, here come my construction truck; they
20 arrived. They were having a difficult time getting up in there
21 too. Of course, you know, I cleared -- I went around and cleared
22 the path, got them -- get them up there and start peeling back
23 ribbons and telling who they were. And once I got them up in the
24 alley, of course, the building had already collapsed. The riser,
25 it was actually in control believe it or not. It was a controlled

1 fire, riser fire. I see it all the time. I deal with them -- I
2 go on them a lot. They don't intimidate me. I mean, I deal with
3 them a lot. And not stuff that's caused by us, just natural house
4 fires, okay, because a meter will melt, you know what I'm talking
5 about, or a regulator.

6 After construction got up there and got busy, we started
7 trying to help locate the lines. You know, I tried to get us --
8 there so much rubble and we were trying to locate the line. But I
9 ran across, I ran into Robert Rumph, my supervisor, on the way up
10 to the building, and Robert looked -- he was the first responder
11 supervisor. And Robert looked at me and we talked, discussed
12 about how many people we need to get out there and get, you know,
13 some assistance. And we went ahead and made the decision that we
14 needed at least two or three more construction trucks and, you
15 know, a few more service technicians like me. And we went ahead
16 and got that done and out of the way so we could get more help on
17 the way.

18 After we -- after I made that conversation with Robert,
19 I then went to the right side of the building. There's a -- the
20 left side of the building's where the actual, you know, the
21 problem was. I think the other people were on the other -- the
22 right side of the building got out. I went to the right side of
23 the building.

24 Anytime a building has that much damage, was torn apart,
25 you can physically go up to the meter. You can tell if there's

1 something going on in that apartment because you're going to valve
2 the meter off anyway. But the meter was clocking, okay, because
3 it didn't shear the line -- not this apartment where you had the
4 problem at. The apartment where it was actually standing part up,
5 that meter was clocking right up. So there was a line severed
6 somewhere in that building. So I went ahead and valved that meter
7 off immediately to get rid of the odor and the danger there.

8 After that, you know, my concern was that they kept
9 telling me, you know, we're smelling gas two and three blocks
10 behind me, you know what I'm talking about. I got this riser fire
11 I'm dealing with, this other thing, and as a first responder, the
12 first thing I check is sewer lines and water lines. Mainly sewer
13 lines because that's where you start -- you know, you could have
14 explosion after explosion, you know, if you're not careful
15 checking those. So --

16 Q. Storm sewers, is that what --

17 A. Storm -- well, sewers, just sewers. But they have like
18 these cleanouts. On these apartments, there's cleanouts. There's
19 a 4-inch cleanout. You probably got one at your home depending if
20 you got, if you're on sewer. Septic tanks sometimes have them.
21 It's a 4-inch PVC pipe. It's -- I didn't check the building with
22 -- it doesn't matter which one you check. It all goes out to the
23 main sewer line. So that building next to the building that come
24 apart --

25 Q. Can I ask, can you draw up here maybe so we --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. I think it's going to help then we'll photograph it for
3 the record. If you can just draw maybe two units and the streets.
4 We'll have a better idea which unit you're talking about.

5 A. Okay. Let's see here, this is an intersection here.
6 These are like alleyways here. This is Joppa Court. I want to
7 say this is 66th Street, okay. And then, of course, our main runs
8 across here like this. This, I'm talking about our main.

9 Q. Right. Cast iron main, right?

10 A. Yes, sir, cast iron, 2-1/4 cast iron. And then you got
11 this building here that come apart. I'm not an artist.

12 Q. Well, I'm not -- that's fine. You're doing well. This
13 looks good.

14 A. Then another building here.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. All right. Of course --

17 MR. GARDNER: Just so I'm clear, should those be
18 connected or --

19 MR. NICHOLSON: Well, that's --

20 MR. MORRISON: No, it's not.

21 MR. GARDNER: Are you saying that's the building?

22 MR. MORRISON: No, these are two different units. So
23 these are two five-bedroom apartments.

24 MR. NICHOLSON: Right. So one was --

25 MR. MORRISON: You got a family here and a family here.

1 MR. NICHOLSON: Is this 79 and 80?

2 MR. MORRISON: Yes, sir.

3 MR. NICHOLSON: Can you label those, please, if you
4 know?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And then the riser is to the
6 left.

7 MR. NICHOLSON: Perfect, thank you.

8 MR. MORRISON: And I don't know the address of this
9 building, you know, if it's 7A or 7B, you know, so whatever's next
10 down. I didn't check that address.

11 MR. NICHOLSON: That's fine.

12 MR. MORRISON: So you have in this particular situation,
13 what I understand -- you know, most of the time our services run
14 from here. We had a meter set here and a meter set here. Of
15 course, we had like a meter set over here too as well. There was
16 a bush -- there's a bush that sits right here, okay. Typically,
17 normally, our lines run from the main up to the meter set.

18 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

19 Q. Straight home run?

20 A. Just straight in.

21 Q. Straight shot?

22 A. Yes, sir, 99 percent of the time. Unless there's like a
23 home or something, you might come up here and split it, you know
24 what I'm talking about. This is on this end of the building.
25 This was very non-typical -- we was -- that's the reason we had a

1 hard time locating that line. This line actually took off and run
2 over here to this meter set and then went out. Does that make
3 sense?

4 Q. Oh.

5 A. So actually, it actually didn't run -- it might have
6 been more so like, you know, this way. But most --

7 Q. Oh, okay. So you drew what you expected. You expected
8 it to be straight?

9 A. Yeah, we expected it to be, and that's why --

10 Q. And that's what you found it to be?

11 A. That's what I was telling Mr. Morris. He kept on asking
12 us, you know, what's the progress; what's going on? I said we're
13 still trying to find that line. We had dug several holes there.
14 You have to keep in mind, there's a lot of water out there so
15 they're flooding our hose so we couldn't see, you know.

16 Q. Your -- what are we talking, the bar holes?

17 A. The service line. No, we're trying to dig up --

18 Q. Oh, you're digging. I'm sorry.

19 A. Yeah, they're trying to dig up the service line, okay?

20 So, but anyway, we dug several holes out here looking
21 for this line. We couldn't find it. In fact, we got desperate
22 and started digging horizontal this way just hoping we would hit
23 it. It's grass because it was -- you know, they just wanted to
24 get in there in the building. He kept coming to me every 10
25 minutes, you know, what's the progress?

1 Q. And this whole time, you've got a riser fire on A and B?

2 A. Yes. David Gallagher came by, David Gallagher came on
3 site by then and Chris Hill, some other supervisors came on site.

4 But anyway, after we got all this, this over here, my
5 main concern was sewer and other things going on around me. So I
6 come over here behind this bush. There's a little sewer cleanout
7 right here that goes into this building, and I'm sure it runs out
8 here to the sewer wherever it's located. I took -- I removed the
9 storage cap, took my GMI, run it into the sewer. I got zero PPMs
10 readings. I'm on parts per million. I'm not on the gas scale.
11 I'm on a sensor, you know, are you familiar with it. I didn't get
12 anything in the sewer.

13 Q. Right. Okay.

14 A. I'm sure there's some more over here, but there was so
15 much rubble I couldn't find those.

16 Q. So much, what did you say?

17 A. Like bricks and stuff.

18 Q. Oh, yeah, right. Debris and stuff.

19 A. I couldn't find these cleanouts over here to get
20 readings and, of course, I couldn't get close to that because the
21 fire. There was a sewer manhole here we had checked. It had a
22 little a hole in it. I checked it. There was nothing in it.

23 Q. Okay.

24 MR. CHHATRE: Matt, do you intend to take a photograph
25 of this?

1 MR. NICHOLSON: I do plan to take --

2 MR. CHHATRE: Can I suggest to you, you draw the gas
3 line red or -- so when we take the picture it will probably show
4 up a little better there. That might help a little bit.

5 MR. MORRISON: Okay.

6 MR. CHHATRE: And could he just write down if he did --

7 MR. MORRISON: No --

8 MR. NICHOLSON: I think this is your line up here, I
9 think.

10 MR. MORRISON: You're right, you're right. I'm sorry,
11 sorry. I was listening -- trying to listen to him. You're right.
12 This is a road actually. All right. Okay, and then I will say
13 this. Right here the meter and then it went across here.

14 Like I say, what I did then, I come over here and popped
15 this -- this is a sewer cleanout. These sewer cleanouts are tied
16 out. They go -- I don't know where the sewer is out here. I
17 assume it's out here in the street. That sewer cleanout, all
18 these sewer cleanouts go out here. And that's the first thing we
19 want to check for is to make sure there's no gas traveling all
20 these other streets.

21 So I checked this cleanout here, checked the cleanout
22 here. I got zero PPMs at that, okay?

23 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Once I got -- I let my other guys do their work. So I

1 kept getting -- they kept telling they were smelling, you know,
2 gas back on these other streets back here.

3 Q. Who's they?

4 A. Just public, police department.

5 Q. Coming up to you?

6 A. Coming up to me, yeah, or telling my supervisor, you
7 know. After I felt like I got this gas off this building here and
8 checked that sewer, I felt like that's all I could do here. My
9 main concern was now was checking people behind me and see what,
10 you know, try to protect other people.

11 Q. Had they located -- you said you left construction to
12 find the line. Had they found it by that time or --

13 A. They were still -- no, sir.

14 Q. They were still searching?

15 A. Still searching. It was very difficult. I mean, you
16 got a lot of debris out here. It's hard to crawl across it and
17 locate it. And they were picking up solid signals, you know,
18 where they went picking up -- you know, them guys are
19 professionals at locating lines. This was very, this is very non-
20 typical to just see a service run like that.

21 MR. CHHATRE: Could you actually go that close to
22 building? Was the fire intense? Would you reach actually into
23 the building?

24 MR. MORRISON: I'm dressed out Kevlar and a Nomex hood,
25 okay?

1 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

2 MR. MORRISON: And it's not uncommon for me -- you know,
3 I don't get right up against it. I stay several feet away from
4 it, but what we did -- here's what we did. I get pretty close to
5 it. Like I said, I do it all the time. I'm not -- it doesn't
6 intimidate me, you know, because I got good people like him that's
7 sitting behind me back here with a 4-inch water hose.

8 But this riser fire was burning. I went on around -- I
9 went ahead and did what I did here all around the blocks behind
10 me, all back in here, okay, all the way around.

11 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

12 Q. Checking sewers and cleanouts?

13 A. Checking sewers, cleanouts, our mains. Found nothing.

14 MR. CHHATRE: Nothing?

15 MR. MORRISON: Nothing, okay. Once I got all that --
16 felt good about that, I came back to the premise. David Gallagher
17 was there. And I could tell that Chief Morris was getting a
18 little -- you know, we really -- we need some resolve here, you
19 know. So I asked Dave, I said, you know, I do this all the time.
20 I said if you let me just put out these embers, this riser fire --
21 put some water on the slab, leave the riser burning, I can go back
22 there -- the service cock, when the meter come apart, actually the
23 service cock was still intact, okay. It was a lot of water. It
24 was under water, but the service cock wasn't hot.

25 See when that thing's burning, it burns about 2 feet

1 above the service cock so the service cock's not getting hot,
2 okay, it's in water. And those service cocks have a grease
3 packing around those that dry out, you know what I'm saying?

4 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

5 Q. Uh-huh.

6 A. I could get close enough, say, from here to that podium,
7 I could see the service cock, and it was still intact, good, good
8 shape.

9 MR. CHHATRE: Of which meter?

10 MR. MORRISON: On this building here.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: On 80.

12 MR. MORRISON: The one that collapsed.

13 MR. CHHATRE: Where you could see it?

14 MR. MORRISON: Yes, sir, I could see it.

15 I asked David, you know, I said I can get this out
16 because Mr. Morris was getting a little antsy with us. I asked
17 David could I go up there and just put -- handle it. I do it all
18 the time, it doesn't intimidate me and I can handle it. David
19 told me, he said -- he thought about it, you know, that's not our
20 policy to do that. David told me no, we're not going to do that.
21 You know, he was afraid it would roll back out and do some other
22 thing. So that decision was made not to do it. So we're still --

23 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

24 Q. By Dave --

25 A. By Dave.

1 Q. -- Gallagher?

2 A. Yes, sir. By that time we're still -- another crew,
3 Dan Ingram came on site. So by that time we're starting to get
4 more people on site, Dan Ingram.

5 Dan comes on site and they're helping him out there
6 locating. We got two people, two crews out there, three, they're
7 all coming in trying to locate this thing. By that time --

8 Q. The service line?

9 A. The service line, yes. I think they finally located it,
10 but, you know, about 30 minutes of time went by. You got to
11 realize just -- it's been a little while we're trying to get this
12 thing out, you know. I would have liked to have it out sooner.

13 I talked to David again, and I asked David, I said,
14 David, I said you just trust me on something. I do this all the
15 time. I says it's very -- I said lot of times I'm out there, I
16 don't have anybody, you know what I'm talking about. The fire
17 departments there. I may have to have to call in a crew and it
18 may be a couple of hours before I get somebody on site.

19 Q. Right.

20 A. So, I mean, I do this a lot. Yes, sir?

21 MR. CHHATRE: Which -- I think you said earlier -- this
22 is Ravi -- that the meter was running fast. Is that this
23 building?

24 MR. MORRISON: Yes, sir, this meter here.

25 MR. CHHATRE: That's fine. I just want to make sure.

1 MR. NICHOLSON: We should say for the record, that was
2 --- he's pointing to unit 79 meter --

3 MR. MORRISON: Yes.

4 MR. NICHOLSON: -- was running.

5 MR. MORRISON: Yes, sir, it was clocking. It was
6 sitting -- the line was completely wide open.

7 MR. CHHATRE: So at that time you thought something
8 inside is severed?

9 MR. MORRISON: Something severed, probably from the
10 collapse of the slab.

11 MR. CHHATRE: Collapsed building.

12 MR. MORRISON: Yeah, all of those -- the fuel lines,
13 those fuel lines go in the wall and they go up and they go in the
14 ceilings. And probably when that structure fell, it probably
15 sheered those lines. You know, to be honest with you, when I went
16 into that meter, I expected that, you know. I did, I really did.
17 And it was there.

18 So anyway, I went back to -- after I had cleared
19 everything, got back here and doing -- felt like I had done all I
20 could do as far as making sure everybody within the public was
21 safe and all my guys were safe, I went back with David. I met
22 with David again. Chief Morris, you know, he's still bearing down
23 on us pretty good.

24 MR. CHHATRE: Where was David at that time?

25 MR. MORRISON: David was, he was on site. He met us

1 here with a couple of trucks, David was. And I asked David again,
2 I said, David, I said I can get this thing out and we can go ahead
3 -- if you'll just trust me, just this one time, just trust me.
4 And he was still reluctant about it, you know. Like I said, this
5 is not our normal -- we normally like to go out here and do it,
6 but I know time was -- it was getting tough, you know.

7 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

8 Q. Now you said that you were getting pressure from the
9 chief.

10 A. Well, a little bit of --

11 Q. The fire department chief?

12 A. The fire department. Yeah, they're wanting to get in to
13 do rescue recovery, you know.

14 Q. Is that -- that's what they said to you, hey, we need to
15 get closer? They couldn't get close because of this?

16 A. Yeah, they couldn't get in there and do their work on
17 account of the fire going up under the slab, the gas. You know,
18 nobody's going to put their guys in harm's way, okay? So I asked
19 David, I said, this is just very simple. I said it didn't scare
20 me. It's not going to intimidate -- nothing's going to happen. I
21 was very confident in my decision. And I told David, I said if
22 you'll just let me handle this, I'll take care of it. They were
23 still over here digging and locating. And David, he was just --
24 you know, he was shook up, real hesitant, real reluctant. And he
25 said okay, let's go. He took my hand on the back and --

1 And so I had the Birmingham Fire Department there. I
2 told them what I wanted them to do. I saturated the whole slab
3 that was down. I saturated underneath the slab. I said get out
4 all the embers. I don't just squirt water on it and walk up
5 there. I saturated it for 15 minutes.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So I saturated that whole area and that riser.

8 Q. For 15 minutes?

9 A. At least 15 -- 10 or 12, 15 minutes, somewhere right in
10 there, until I was confident what I can do. And I let the riser
11 fire burn while we were getting out the embers from the building
12 because you don't want a reignition. We want to leave that
13 burning because if it's burning, it's actually in better control.

14 Q. Sure.

15 A. So after we got all that out of (indiscernible), I said
16 okay, go ahead. You know, I'm up there, and I let them wet me. I
17 just let them fog me with the water. I turn my back, it just came
18 -- and actually when they push that water towards you, it actually
19 pushes the gas away from you. So if I did have a reignition, it's
20 not going to really come back at me. It's going to kind of push
21 it away from me.

22 And then keep in mind this is burning above the slab so
23 it's not really down there where I'm at. You know, I'm talking
24 about the lower you are the better you are.

25 Q. You're saying reignition, but technically it's already

1 ignited, right?

2 A. Well, I'm talking about what we put out, you know, up
3 underneath the slab. Well, no, we didn't put the riser fire --
4 yeah, if you put that riser fire out, you can have reignition.
5 But I don't --

6 Q. Want that?

7 A. Right. Once I put that riser fire out, as soon as he
8 puts it out, I walk, I'm there.

9 Q. You're worried about another -- a secondary pocket of
10 gas?

11 A. I'm worried about a reignition.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So I got all the fire out around the riser and then I
14 let them put the riser fire out, the last thing we do, okay?

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. All right. They put the water on to it. I walked up to
17 it, valved it off, very simple. And then, you know, that was --
18 and then they start saturating the whole thing. That's what got
19 everything under control and they were able to go in and get the
20 whole building under control, saturate the building and
21 everything.

22 And I didn't smell any more gas after that, I didn't,
23 you know, right there in that area up there. I didn't feel like
24 something was migrating up there where I was at.

25 You know, I know we had an issue out here.

1 MR. CHHATRE: When you went to close that meter before
2 -- when you saw it's running, do you close that?

3 MR. MORRISON: That was the first one I closed, the very
4 first one.

5 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

6 Q. Oh, okay. I didn't hear that. So you had closed that
7 one when you first got on site?

8 A. Yes, sir, because it was clocking. That was already a
9 problem.

10 Q. I see. I'm sorry.

11 A. This was easy. There was nothing over here in danger,
12 know how to open a hole up here in the building. I couldn't have
13 that blowing, you know, knowing it was clocking. So that's the
14 first meter I turned off was apartment 79.

15 Okay. So after we got this under control, you know, all
16 the noise went away. The noise is what makes everybody nervous,
17 the roaring of the fire. So once we got that out, Birmingham Fire
18 Department was able to do their job.

19 Little did we know, we thought we were recovery. In our
20 minds, you know, I didn't see life at all, you know, just what I
21 was seeing. And then after we got our job done, then it turned
22 back to rescue, okay. So, which I was proud. I thought we was
23 going to receive two miracles, but we didn't.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. Then after that, you know, it's daylight by that time.

1 Q. What time are we at do you know at that point?

2 A. Well, probably from the time I'd been on site dealing
3 with all this up here, I got instructions from Chris Hill. Chris
4 Hill asked me that the Birmingham Police Department wanted me to
5 assist them and the housing authority to go in each unit and get
6 readings with my GMI, go in each unit and check each apartment.

7 I went in probably, it felt like 100 in that
8 circumference. That was around -- I'm just guessing. I want to
9 say it was around 8:30. Because I never show I arrived, you know,
10 on my computer, but when -- to move on with my calls on my
11 computer, I had to close that call out, the explosion call out to
12 get the next call. And I want to say it was around 8:30. So from
13 2:00 to 8:00 to 8:30, I'm dealing with all this.

14 Q. At that point when you had shut off the fire at 80, had
15 they ever discovered the service line, or did they just abandon
16 that idea altogether?

17 A. They hadn't discovered it yet. They had it located and
18 they were on it, okay, and they were digging it up. They were
19 dead on it.

20 Q. Had it located using a line locator?

21 A. Yes, sir, a line called pipe --

22 Q. Okay. So they call it a line --

23 A. No. It's our, we got pipehorns.

24 Q. Oh, okay.

25 A. It's called a pipehorn and they're very, very accurate.

1 And plus we have, I think we had some line utility locator we call
2 also that come out if we're doing a lot of digging. We call them
3 all the time. We have an emergency, you know, the 811 system?

4 Q. Sure. Yeah.

5 A. They come out and assist with locating lines too on top
6 of what we locate because we don't hit other phone lines, what
7 have you. And they assisted us with trying to locate it too.

8 After I got this off here, they were -- they had it
9 located, were going down on it, but it was just time to do
10 something with that. So we took care of that problem first and
11 then they went out here and abandoned all this.

12 Q. So you can continue. You went and you said you checked
13 100 different apartments?

14 A. Yes, sir. What we did then -- I got another call.
15 Chris Hill advised me, he said the Birmingham Housing Authority
16 and the police department wanted to go in each unit. No, I think
17 -- I mean, I probably -- I mean, I went a circumference, you know,
18 all the way around, all these homes all the way around here. I
19 mean, there were just hundreds of them.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. And, of course, you know, a lot of them had vented --
22 left their homes, left their doors open. Christmastime, they had
23 Christmas gifts. They didn't want us going into the apartments by
24 ourselves because if something come up missing, that was another
25 purpose of being there to cut down on all that.

1 So we went in each unit with my GMI. I went into each
2 room, took readings in the ceilings and the floor. I would clear
3 with them and they'd document it. Then we'd go to the next one.
4 And then after we got all that situated, they said they were okay
5 with everything. And then I was able to go to -- they started
6 getting just various calls. People were getting scared, paranoid.
7 Then I was just getting calls all over.

8 By that time we had a bunch of servicemen by there by
9 then, and I was able to go out and just do other things and not
10 really have to fool with this anymore.

11 Q. Okay. You said you were recording your readings.

12 Do we have that record? Have we requested it? If not,
13 we're requesting it.

14 A. Recordings or readings?

15 Q. Well, you said every apartment you went into you
16 recorded the readings. It sounds like you're writing them down?

17 A. No. They were recording what apartments we went into.
18 As far as my readings, I got zero PPMs on my GMI, which is a
19 sensor scale in here. Recording, like I say, they recorded what
20 apartments we went in so we wouldn't double, go back in there
21 again, you know what I'm talking about?

22 Q. Okay.

23 MR. GARDNER: You're asking if we have a log or some
24 kind of, you know, or --

25 MR. NICHOLSON: Or handwritten notes from Max.

1 MR. MORRISON: Tony, the guy I work with --

2 MR. GARDNER: Who was recording? Are you talking about
3 housing authority?

4 MR. MORRISON: The housing authority, they were
5 documenting --

6 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, okay, so the housing authority.

7 MR. MORRISON: The housing authority was documenting
8 that. I had the housing authority with me and I had the
9 Birmingham Police Department.

10 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

11 Q. Who from housing authority was with you?

12 A. Tony.

13 Q. Oh, Anthony, yeah.

14 A. I can't think of Tony's --

15 Q. We've talked to him.

16 A. -- I can't think Tony's last name, just Tony.

17 Q. Somerville I think.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Somerville, that's it.

19 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

20 Q. Does that sound right?

21 A. Yes, sir. Very helpful, kind of stocky.

22 Q. Yeah, we've met Tony, okay.

23 A. Like I said, we went in each unit, and they documented
24 each, you know, we cleared each unit and they documented that, you
25 know, which parts we went in. He's not going to document probably

1 the readings I was getting. I'd just tell him it was all clear,
2 then we'd go the next one. We were trying to cover a lot of
3 ground real quick.

4 Q. So I want to back up just a little bit. When you said
5 you arrived, the streets were blocked. And now that we have a
6 nice map here, can you show me where you parked or where they
7 were, where you came in?

8 A. Yes, sir. When I first came in -- this goes out to
9 here. This is Georgia Road.

10 Q. G-o-r-g- -- a, so Georgia.

11 A. It's Georgia, Georgia Way. I think it's Georgia Road.
12 Isn't that Georgia Road?

13 Q. I don't know how it's spelled?

14 A. And then you got another one here, Interlaken. I want
15 to say this is Joppa Court.

16 Q. Joppa Avenue?

17 A. Joppa Avenue, it's Joppa Avenue. And then you got
18 Interlaken down here. You're right, Joppa Avenue. And then you
19 got this alley that ties in here. And these roads just keep
20 branching off. Like it keeps going that way except for Georgia
21 Road. Then you got a little store right there.

22 When I came down Georgia Road, I took a left on
23 Joppa Court, and I pulled up about right -- there was a tree here.
24 They had the fire trucks located along this premise. I couldn't
25 get any closer, you know, because all the hoses and there was so

1 much going -- I couldn't get closer than this. So I parked my
2 truck here.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. All right? And then that's where I parked my truck.

5 Construction arrived, they come up here, they couldn't
6 get -- construction arrived, this is as far as they got, was here.
7 When they initially they arrived. There was so much cars, so much
8 traffic.

9 Let's see. I took them -- I went around here. They
10 were trying to get in there. I took -- you know, when I first got
11 there, I went around here. I called them on the phone. I said,
12 you can't come up here, you're going to have to come -- the best
13 way is to come -- they had this roped off. I assisted him. He
14 come down this -- down this Joppa Avenue and then come up to 66th
15 Street. He parked his truck -- construction parked their truck
16 somewhere like right in here, somewhere like right in there.
17 Maybe a little farther up maybe. But right here is where they
18 parked their truck.

19 And then, of course, then I moved my truck. There was
20 so much going around, they was trying -- so I moved my truck right
21 here and I parked behind them two here. That's where I was
22 parked, so --

23 Q. Just a couple of other questions then I'll turn it over
24 to Ravi. You do -- you were talking earlier about doing the bar
25 hole testing, just normal call situations. So, I mean, you

1 respond to leaks, right, as a service technician?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. So don't you have maps of where the services lines --

4 A. Yes, that's a good question. Yes, sir. What we did,
5 I'll go ahead and tell you this and I'm proud to have them. You
6 know, we got this new computer system now. Everything we used to
7 do now -- when we'd look up mains of services, we used to have to
8 pull a card out of a box and visually look up at the sun, you
9 know, like a -- I forget what we call it. What do we call that?

10 Q. Yeah, like a negative or something?

11 MR. MORRISON: What do we call that, Bob?

12 MR. GARDNER: Slow microfiche or (indiscernible).

13 MR. MORRISON: Microfiche, is that what it was? That
14 was our way of doing it. I can say this about the gas company,
15 they do -- we spend money on technology here. They got wonderful
16 stuff. Now we have them on our computer. They bought these
17 computers and we get everything, everything's computer generated.
18 So I was able -- their computer in their truck wasn't working
19 because they've had some problem --

20 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

21 Q. Who's their truck?

22 A. The construction truck that arrived. They were trying
23 to pull up documents. That's the reason I like to go out with
24 them a lot in case they want the information, I can, you know --
25 so I actually let them use my computer on my truck. You know, a

1 supervisor would go in my truck, pulling up the information. My
2 truck was working very well. It showed the valves, the mains. It
3 showed everything we needed to look -- in fact, if push come to
4 shove, they actually located two valves. If we couldn't get
5 anything else done, we could valve up the whole complex.

6 Q. That was my next question. So you said they went to
7 your truck and they were able to pull up the service lines?

8 A. No, sir. That service -- no, sir. That line, the
9 records we have on that wouldn't be up on our computer, I doubt.
10 I don't think we had -- these were actually on a card that my
11 supervisor e-mailed me.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I did have that information. It showed an inch and a
14 quarter -- I think it's a bare steel line that service this.

15 Q. It showed exactly what you've drawn there?

16 A. Yes, sir. This is an inch and --

17 Q. Okay. But that had to be e-mailed to you; that wasn't
18 in this computer-based system?

19 A. It wasn't in the computer base. The main information
20 was. A lot of the service cards -- the service information is not
21 on that computer, okay. Mostly it's just main.

22 Q. But your job is to deal with the service mains, right,
23 or the service lines. So wouldn't you need that --

24 A. I deal with service lines and mains.

25 Q. Oh, you do, okay.

1 A. Both of them when I'm looking for leaks.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. I'm kind of confused about what you're looking for.

4 Q. Well, I guess I'm a little confused too, and I'm sorry.

5 The computer system did not have these service mains in it?

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. Does it have any service mains for your day-to-day job?

8 A. The trucks, their systems in their trucks may have the
9 information. I don't have that service information, okay. I
10 don't know who -- I had never seen a service --

11 MR. GARDNER: Matt, for clarification, we have services
12 and we have mains.

13 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah.

14 MR. GARDNER: So we don't have service mains. We have
15 services.

16 MR. NICHOLSON: I'm sorry.

17 MR. GARDNER: I just want to make sure we're clear.

18 MR. NICHOLSON: The service lines, the services.

19 MR. GARDNER: The services lines and the mains. The
20 main is in red that you see.

21 MR. NICHOLSON: Right.

22 MR. GARDNER: The service is the dotted line.

23 MR. NICHOLSON: Yes.

24 MR. GARDNER: So our mains are depicted on the computer,
25 in our mapping system. Our service lines generally are not

1 depicted on the computer system.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: So it wasn't just this address, any
3 address, you wouldn't have in this computer system?

4 MR. GARDNER: General speaking, we do not.

5 MR. NICHOLSON: That's what I was trying --

6 MR. MORRISON: Well, I knew that on my side, but I
7 didn't want to speak for construction side because I didn't know
8 if their trucks were equipped with more information on everything.

9 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, okay, gottcha.

10 MR. MORRISON: But he's right. Bob?

11 MR. GARDNER: From a mapping system standpoint, the
12 basis of our mapping system is the mains not the service.

13 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, now I understand.

14 MR. MORRISON: But I did have the information on the
15 service. Chris Hill --

16 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

17 Q. E-mailed it to you?

18 A. Yeah. They called our engineers. They called up there,
19 he e-mailed me. I think I still got that e-mail in my truck
20 actually. And it showed -- I pulled it up and we both were
21 looking at it. And it showed a how many feet of inch-and-a-
22 quarter was run and how many feet of 1-inch was run as pipe.

23 Q. But that was after the riser valve had been shut?

24 A. Yes, it was after that, yes, sir.

25 Q. And then going back to the main, the computer system

1 shows the service main, the red line. And does it show --

2 MR. GARDNER: Service main?

3 MR. NICHOLSON: The main, sorry.

4 MR. MORRISON: No. The computer, our log -- you're
5 talking about our information on our computer? It's only going to
6 show this line here.

7 MR. NICHOLSON: And that's what I'm referring to.

8 MR. MORRISON: The main.

9 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

10 Q. And does it show the valves, the main, the valves?

11 A. It shows the mains on the valve, yes.

12 Q. Where were the valves, and why weren't those --

13 A. Well, I don't know where those -- I know they're on
14 there. I didn't particularly see those. I got this information
15 from somebody else, you know, if we had to go that route. I
16 couldn't tell you, but the guys that's coming in here next, they
17 could probably tell you.

18 Q. So it's like a Plan B. You kind of knew where they
19 were?

20 A. Yes. Our last thing is we just don't want to shut down
21 -- you know, valve off of the whole -- you know, we try to make it
22 less as possible, you know what I'm talking about, as far as --

23 Q. But it didn't sound like there was a valve here and
24 there that would just kill the thing off?

25 A. Well, I know there was two valves. Now, where they're

1 located, I don't know because I didn't look because that was
2 something I didn't need to be dealing with. This wasn't important
3 to me. Now that -- it's important to construction and them other
4 guys.

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. They can possibly know where those valves were at, but I
7 knew -- I was told there was two valves. If push comes to shove,
8 that we could valve off and shut down the whole complex if needed
9 be.

10 Q. Did you take bar hole readings as well? I know you said
11 you were taking readings in the sewers and manhole covers.

12 A. Well, by that time, bar hole -- well, I didn't have to
13 actually have to do that at the time. By the time that I was
14 doing all this other stuff getting all this under control, my
15 construction guys were -- they're the ones that was actually the
16 bar holes while I was doing all this.

17 Q. Oh, they were, okay.

18 A. Yes, sir. They were doing the bar holes over the
19 services and main. I didn't have to do that because they were
20 doing it.

21 Q. Okay. I'll wait to talk to those guys.

22 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, Ravi, do you want to --

23 MR. CHHATRE: If I may, okay. Hi.

24 MR. NICHOLSON: And you can have a seat now if you need
25 him to draw.

1 MR. CHHATRE: For the record, this is Ravi. I've got
2 quite a few questions. You know, I think the figure really helps;
3 it really does help.

4 BY MR. CHHATRE:

5 Q. Just for the record, a routine question we ask, are you
6 OQ qualified?

7 A. Yes, sir. Absolutely, every year.

8 Q. Also just for the record, can you tell us your training,
9 your formal training, on-the-job training, any training classes
10 you took?

11 A. All the time, we're all the time having updates with --
12 that's one thing Alagasco -- we believe in here. They're always
13 having training classes, you know, for various type --

14 Q. Can you tell us what kind of -- I mean, if you don't
15 remember all, I don't expect you to, but, I mean, can you just
16 tell me like --

17 A. Well, like fire -- they have like this right here
18 situation like fire training, you know, PSE puts on a fire school
19 that, you know, we prepare for situations like this.

20 MR. BELL: Do you want him to sort of, Ravi, describe to
21 you what his typical training is? In other words, like --

22 MR. MORRISON: Like what I do?

23 MR. BELL: Yeah, how you got to be trained to be a
24 service technician.

25 MR. MORRISON: Service -- okay, yeah. I had to have,

1 actually, hold an Alabama State Plumber's card, okay. I have to
2 be certified through the State of Alabama. And that's a -- this
3 program we have here at the gas company, it's actually a 2-year
4 apprenticeship program. I have to go through electrical classes.
5 I have to go through control classes. We work on a lot of
6 appliances, you know, that kind of stuff.

7 And actually, I'll go -- we'll go out and we're doing
8 on-the-job training. I go out with senior mechanics. I'll ride
9 with them for almost 2 years and then we had to learn code, the
10 code book, International -- back then when I took it, it was
11 Southern Code, okay. Now we're under the International Fuel Code
12 guidelines. When I took it, it was Southern Code.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And then you got to learn all the codes inside/out the
15 building. You know, we learn -- that's the main things, we're
16 mandated by codes through various inspectors throughout the city.
17 We go to a bunch of different cities.

18 MR. BELL: And then your annual training, right?

19 MR. MORRISON: Yes, our annual training, yes, sir.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Annual training is how long and how
21 frequent? I mean, every, some particular time of the year or can
22 it vary?

23 MR. MORRISON: Like fire school, we have it -- you know,
24 we have a fire school about every February, you know. And if
25 there's anything updated, you know, they bring us in regular.

1 OQ, they're pretty good about, on our OQ being trained.
2 It's tracked by computer and those different courses are -- you
3 know, it proves that I'm competent in what I do. And those things
4 expire throughout the year and they may send me in there in a
5 month and then go take a course. Sometimes I might go in there
6 and sit a week and take tests all week long.

7 MR. CHHATRE: And by no means I was implying that you
8 are not qualified. Just for the record, we want to make sure
9 that --

10 MR. BELL: Yes, you want to understand what it is.

11 MR. CHHATRE: Yes.

12 MR. MORRISON: Okay, okay.

13 BY MR. CHHATRE:

14 Q. Now you us told that you were dispatched at 2:41 a.m.
15 approximately?

16 A. Approximately.

17 Q. Do you know what arrival time was approximately?

18 A. I asked that question from my -- Andy Harper. I asked
19 Andy Harper to look at what my response time was because I know on
20 a -- we have a certain amount of time we have to be there. A Code
21 1 or inside leak, an explosion, of course, is something different.
22 But we have -- by the time my dispatcher receives the call, she's
23 got 30 minutes to get, to send the call out to me -- of course,
24 we're not going to wait that long, of course -- and then I have 30
25 minutes to be on site; a total of 1 hour. So by the time she's

1 raised that signal, that phone call, I've got to be there within
2 an hour. And I'm 39 miles away, and I felt like I should -- yeah,
3 I went there probably 32 -- 39 miles, 32 minutes.

4 Q. I mean, I don't expect you to look --

5 A. I want to say, I want to say --

6 Q. -- at your watch for some (indiscernible).

7 A. I think it was 3 -- I mean, let's see 2:40 -- I think it
8 was 3:18 a.m.

9 MR. BELL: Ravi, that's the part he was telling you
10 where he said normally he hits a -- he logs in when he gets there
11 but was distracted.

12 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah. That's why I'm asking him
13 approximate time because --

14 MR. MORRISON: Yeah, 3:18.

15 MR. CHHATRE: -- in an emergency like this, we don't
16 expect you to look at your watch in the process.

17 MR. MORRISON: Yeah, I wasn't worried about it, 3:18. I
18 think it was 3:18 or 3:19.

19 MR. CHHATRE: Approximately. That's close enough. And
20 the reason I ask that because we can just build a timeline
21 roughly, that's the whole purpose.

22 MR. MORRISON: I got you.

23 BY MR. CHHATRE:

24 Q. Initially, were you the first Alagasco person to arrive
25 on scene, or was somebody else there before you came?

1 A. Was I the very first? The very first.

2 Q. Okay. And you said Robert was there, you met him at the
3 scene, but he came after you?

4 A. Actually, he comes out -- you know, certain supervisor
5 on call depending on what week it is, they rotate it. I meet him
6 a lot throughout the year. it happened to be his time up. And he
7 met me -- he was there almost, probably -- I guess he probably got
8 there --

9 Q. Same time?

10 A. -- about the same time my construction crew got there,
11 you know.

12 Q. Okay, all right, just a few minutes later?

13 A. He walked, yeah, just a few minutes after I got there.
14 He was very prompt.

15 Q. Okay. You already answered the question with your
16 drawing saying it was a unit 79 meter that was running, and you
17 turned that thing off?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Do you know approximately what time you turned that
20 thing off? I'm not looking at clock time. Like 10 minutes upon
21 your arrival, 5 minutes, 15 minutes? If you don't know, you don't
22 know.

23 A. No, I know the time -- well, I made conversation with
24 Chief Morris first, then Robert got my attention. I would
25 probably say between 10 and 15 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes.

1 You're talking about apartment 79, right?

2 Q. Right, yes, sir. And what is your normal shift?

3 A. My normal shift, I come in at 11 at night, 11 p.m. to
4 7 a.m.

5 Q. And is this a shift you work all the time or you rotate?

6 A. I work it all the time. I don't rotate.

7 Q. Okay. So that day you stayed beyond shift time?

8 A. Sir? Oh, yeah, I did. That's not -- that's pretty
9 common.

10 Q. Okay. Now upon your arrival, did you see a fire where
11 the leak was in the cast iron main?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. There was no fire on that location?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. Okay. Did you do a reading at the leak location, the
16 bar hole readings or aboveground survey?

17 A. Well, by the time I got doing all that what I was doing,
18 my -- that's what the purpose of my construction guys, that was
19 their job, okay. And that's what they were doing, bar testing and
20 trying -- you know, after they -- they were trying to get, we were
21 trying to get the riser fire first so the Birmingham Fire
22 Department got their job. You can't do a bunch of things -- there
23 was so much going on, you can't do a bunch of things at the same
24 time.

25 Q. Oh, no, I understand.

1 A. But they were there -- you know, my main job is to check
2 all the sewers first.

3 Q. So you didn't take any readings there, I guess,
4 basically, is that --

5 A. I did in the sewer on the job before.

6 Q. Okay. Right. Okay.

7 MR. BELL: But no bar test?

8 MR. MORRISON: No bar test.

9 BY MR. CHHATRE:

10 Q. No bar test.

11 A. They did that, the construction department did that.

12 Q. Construction, okay.

13 Now I want to just going to go back a little bit taking,
14 you said you did test sewer and use the -- for the gas. Can you
15 explain the meter, what you used?

16 A. Yes, sir. I used what they call a Gas Measurement
17 Instrument. It's very, very efficient. This instrument that you
18 use is tracked by the Alabama Public Service Commission, and I
19 don't --

20 MR. BELL: He's just asking what type it is.

21 MR. MORRISON: Oh, I'm sorry. Okay, I'm sorry.

22 BY MR. CHHATRE:

23 Q. Is it a flame ionization, or what is it?

24 A. No, it's not a flame ionizer. It's a GMI indicator, a
25 Gas Measurement Instrument. It pulls in samples, air through the

1 meter.

2 Q. Okay. So it's aboveground instrument?

3 A. Yes, sir. Above ground, portable. I carry it on a
4 strap.

5 MR. JONES: Well, it can be used below ground too, Ravi.
6 It's got a probe for below ground stuff too.

7 MR. MORRISON: Right.

8 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. That's what I believe I understand.

9 MR. JONES: It can be below and above ground.

10 MR. CHHATRE: And above ground, okay.

11 MR. JONES: Yes.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is that the thing that looks like
13 a, it almost looks like a thermometer and they're putting down in
14 the hole?

15 MR. MORRISON: That's actually the probe that we use.
16 That's actually able to, it's just a little, a Tygon rubber hose
17 attached to a little flexible rod or a little plastic tube. It's
18 got two -- it actually gets me down in the ground closer to the
19 main so I can get a reading.

20 MR. NICHOLSON: So it's got a little vacuum pump?

21 MR. MORRISON: It's a vacuum. It pulls a vacuum --

22 MR. JONES: Pumps it up.

23 MR. MORRISON: -- and goes to there and tells me the
24 readings.

25 BY MR. CHHATRE:

1 Q. And when was that last calibrated?

2 A. Well, I know I can get that information for you. I know
3 it's in -- I know it's up in current standing because we monitor
4 that.

5 Q. That's all I wanted. And how often you calibrate those?

6 A. I calibrate --

7 Q. When I say you, I mean either you or the company, or
8 whoever does the calibration.

9 A. Within 30 days.

10 Q. Okay.

11 MR. NICHOLSON: So monthly, or is it --

12 MR. MORRISON: Monthly, I do it monthly. Yes, monthly.

13 MR. NICHOLSON: You do it?

14 MR. MORRISON: I do it. In fact, I do it every -- you
15 know, we work one weekend a month and I do it every time I come on
16 that weekend. I do it the weekend I work, you know, so it's
17 easier to track that way. It's something you can't forget because
18 if I forget to calibrate this GMI, it sends out e-mails to various
19 people. It's automatically -- I mean, it sends out e-mails to my
20 bosses.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And I think that's a log we need
22 to get too.

23 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, I've got a note to request that.
24 I guess we could stop here and just make that request, the
25 calibration records.

1 MR. GARDNER: You want the calibration records for his
2 GMI?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, if they use -- being used
4 out there at the scene.

5 MR. GARDNER: Is that what you want?

6 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah.

7 MR. MORRISON: Okay. I know for a fact it's in current
8 standing.

9 MR. NICHOLSON: Well, I -- how many do you have?

10 MR. MORRISON: I just have one. Each truck has one.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, but the construction crews
12 going to have one, all the construction crews who were out there,
13 so --

14 MR. CHHATRE: You can send me the program, if you have
15 standard operating practice when they do it.

16 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, the procedure.

17 MR. CHHATRE: Procedures, yes.

18 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, the procedure as well.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They had this system prior to my
20 leaving the company, and it's -- they can get a computer printout
21 of when each one of the GMIs was tested and if there were any
22 faults found with it or anything.

23 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah, great. I mean, that's actual data.
24 But I'm saying in your protocol that each instrument shall be
25 calibrated every 30 days, every 1 month. I'd just like the

1 regulation. You have -- you can leave it no more than 15 months,
2 you know what I'm saying, something like that.

3 MR. GARDNER: Sure. Sure.

4 MR. CHHATRE: Can I also get a copy of that e-mail that
5 he talked about, that he got an e-mail saying where the lines are?

6 MR. MORRISON: Yeah, I can have that copied, I guess,
7 sent to --

8 MR. CHHATRE: True, but we have to request.

9 MR. NICHOLSON: We'll go through our party rep and he
10 can provide -- yeah, thank you.

11 MR. GARDNER: Ravi, that was the service record that Max
12 referenced?

13 MR. CHHATRE: No, I think he said he got an --

14 MR. BELL: An e-mail --

15 MR. CHHATRE: -- e-mail saying where the service lines
16 are.

17 MR. BELL: -- of the service records.

18 MR. GARDNER: That's what I'm asking.

19 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah.

20 MR. GARDNER: E-mail with the service record in it.

21 MR. MORRISON: From Chris Hill. Chris Hill sent it to
22 me, right.

23 MR. CHHATRE: I'm sorry.

24 MR. MORRISON: Go ahead.

25 MR. CHHATRE: And maybe Bobby can correct me, I'm just

1 going by my memory, what I was told.

2 BY MR. CHHATRE:

3 Q. The rupture around sometime 2:39, 2:38 in the morning, a
4 rupture around 2:38, 2:39ish in the morning -- the call came in at
5 2:41 I think, so I'm guessing a minute, 30 seconds before that.
6 And the valve -- finally both services were isolated was roughly
7 what time?

8 A. Say that again?

9 Q. When did the two valves were closed to isolate the gas
10 going to the house?

11 MR. BELL: When did he do thing that he described by the
12 fire department, where he valved it off? Yeah, what time did you
13 valve off number 80?

14 MR. CHHATRE: Approximately. If you don't know, you
15 don't know.

16 MR. GARDNER: I think we provided that.

17 MR. CHHATRE: I think -- I know, but I want to --

18 MR. MORRISON: I'll tell you what, I was so consumed
19 with that, I couldn't -- I don't know.

20 BY MR. CHHATRE:

21 Q. That's okay. If you don't -- I don't want to guess at
22 all.

23 A. I think I can --

24 Q. That is not the intent. I guess what my question was I
25 think you mentioned to me that -- I think everybody was getting a

1 little bit antsy for lack of better word.

2 A. The fire department may have that.

3 Q. No, no. My question is why didn't -- don't you guys
4 have any valves on this piping system, this area that you can just
5 shut off?

6 A. Yes, sir, on the main.

7 Q. Yes, that's --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And my question is why was that not done or considered?

10 A. That's not my decision. That comes above me. It came
11 from the supervisor, service supervisors above me.

12 Q. Would that be Robert who makes the decision?

13 A. Well, he would -- Robert, it could be Robert and it may
14 come above Robert. It could be Robert, David, Chris Hill, those
15 guys.

16 Q. Did you suggest that to anybody?

17 A. No, sir, I did not suggest that.

18 MR. CHHATRE: I know some drawings will be coming, Bob,
19 but I don't know if the drawings we have show the valve location
20 for this particular area to isolate those?

21 MR. GARDNER: It may be on the first map you received,
22 but I'll be glad to check that and see.

23 MR. CHHATRE: No, I checked. I might have missed it,
24 but I don't think it is there. If it is there, obviously, point
25 it out to me and then that will be more than adequate.

1 BY MR. CHHATRE:

2 Q. So can you describe if you remember how the structure
3 looked like? Was the structure like on fire, burning?

4 A. You know, when I arrived, the structure on apartment 80,
5 the slab on that -- which is the floor above it, was laying down
6 I'd say at a 45-degree angle. The unit -- apartment 79, some of
7 the roof was still intact with a hole on the backside of that
8 apartment.

9 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

10 Q. Can we go back to the board for a second?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. You mentioned 80, the slab was -- you're talking the
13 second floor slab?

14 A. Yes. If you're looking from the side, the side drawing,
15 the other side of me -- let's see, couldn't get a side view of the
16 building if it was actually intact. You know, this is the roof.
17 This floor on this building, that slab, I want to say it was
18 probably a foot or a foot and a half thick, the concrete. You've
19 probably seen it.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. You know, that thing probably run -- I assume it runs
22 all the way across the building up here. This part of the
23 building here was gone. There was a hole here at the back of the
24 building here on this structure here and the roof was opened up
25 here.

1 Q. Where's 79 and 80 in this? Are we looking at the whole
2 building or just half?

3 A. I'm sorry about that. Yeah, no, this is two units.
4 This is 79 and this would be 80.

5 Q. Can you put a 0 next to your 8?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Sorry.

8 A. Sorry. This slab, this floor right here, this slab on
9 this floor here was down at an angle this way.

10 Q. Okay.

11 MR. CHHATRE: Okay, now I understand. I think pretty
12 much it looked similar to (indiscernible).

13 MR. MORRISON: And if you -- can I erase?

14 MR. CHHATRE: If you see something, change it.

15 MR. NICHOLSON: Certainly.

16 MR. MORRISON: Can I erase it, and can I give you maybe
17 a better idea of what it actually looked like?

18 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah.

19 MR. NICHOLSON: Sure.

20 MR. MORRISON: I'll just tell you what I saw.

21 MR. CHHATRE: You're drawing.

22 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, we want to --

23 MR. MORRISON: So when I get there --

24 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, do that.

25 MR. MORRISON: That's what you got after it's all said

1 and done.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, when you got there, that's what you
3 saw?

4 MR. MORRISON: Yes, sir, I got --

5 MR. NICHOLSON: So there was really nothing at all?

6 MR. MORRISON: There was nothing. This is a slab here.
7 It may have been laying down more, you know, like that.

8 MR. NICHOLSON: Sure, we won't hold you to it.

9 MR. MORRISON: Yeah, like that. And, of course, you
10 know, it had a flame, flames coming out here. I had the riser
11 fire here, the meter here, the riser fire here. Of course, that
12 meter was clocking, and I had it valved out because I knew there
13 was gas going in this part of the building. So that was safe,
14 okay?

15 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

16 MR. MORRISON: And more or less this, the only thing I
17 seen really, the structure was down, it was smoldering, little
18 flames out around the slab and a riser fire and that was it.

19 BY MR. CHHATRE:

20 Q. When you were there, did you hear any other explosion?
21 There was some rumor that we heard there were two explosions, so
22 I'm just trying to kind of see while you were there, did you hear
23 anything?

24 A. No, sir. When I was there, I never heard a second --
25 there was no explosion when I was there, no.

1 Q. Okay, great.

2 A. I had heard what you heard, you know what I'm saying?

3 Q. Yeah. Since you were the first person arriving, I'm
4 just kind of checking with you that it was the same.

5 And I'm just going to, actually, I'm this is my last
6 question. Since we're investigating this accident, is there
7 anything that you had that we -- tell us more? I mean, did we ask
8 everything we should be asking you, or do you know something --

9 A. Absolutely. Yes, sir.

10 Q. -- or you hear that might help us?

11 A. I understand what you're trying to do. I think you all
12 have been very thorough and very fair with you-all's questions.
13 You know, I feel like us as first responders, because the way we
14 were trained, I felt like I did the best I could possibly do, and
15 I feel that about my colleagues.

16 Q. I don't doubt that, I don't doubt that at all.

17 Now did you know at that time there were any survivors
18 at all? Did you see anybody?

19 A. No, sir, I didn't. I did not know if there was any -- I
20 had, when I arrived -- when I arrived on the scene, I always ask
21 if there's any injuries or, you know, like that. That's my first
22 question, you know, to the fire chief. And I can't remember -- I
23 don't know if it was Chief Morris who I asked. I was told that it
24 was possibly two adults and one child. That was the general --
25 the first information I got.

1 As it went on after, as we was doing our work, you know,
2 this thing went back into a rescue and there was actually two
3 people. The child that was supposed to be in there had spent the
4 night somewhere else so there was not a child in --

5 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

6 Q. That was a child in 80 or 79?

7 A. 80, with the two adults. There was two adults. I
8 think, if I -- these two adults were here. I don't know if they
9 were laying this way. I think they were laying --

10 Q. But you didn't see them?

11 A. I did not see them.

12 Q. How do you know they were there?

13 A. Well, after we got all this stuff, after we got
14 everything under control, Birmingham Fire Department Rescue or
15 something -- I guess those people's the one that found that -- I
16 guess they heard him up in the, up underneath the slab. That
17 information comes from the Birmingham Fire Department. And that
18 felt real good when I heard that. I mean, I thought we was going
19 to come out of this okay, but like I say, we, you know -- but
20 Birmingham Fire Department's the one's that discovered that.

21 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. I think you answered everything I
22 wanted to know. Thank you so much.

23 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

24 Q. While we got this drawing here, where was this wall here
25 that would have been that vertical on the -- was it the east side

1 here?

2 A. That wall there, it really -- and it's not intact. It's
3 really just rubble, bricks, but it's laying all out here.

4 Q. It was all out there?

5 A. Yes. This wall here's laying out here, the other wall
6 too. But most of it's laying right in here with all that rubble.

7 Q. Thanks, Max. Just one other if Ravi's finished. Is
8 your truck outfitted with a GPS?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. Okay. Do you monitor that GPS? Is that data we could
11 get?

12 A. Well, when you say -- well, I don't --

13 Q. Okay, I know. You've got a GPS you use to get to your
14 locations; is that what you're --

15 A. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

16 MR. NICHOLSON: Question to Bob, does the company track
17 their truck locations by GPS?

18 MR. GARDNER: I'm not sure exactly how we track that,
19 but I can find out.

20 MR. NICHOLSON: Well, if that's something that's logged
21 or maintained, that would be useful information for us. So if you
22 could look into that, please, and just help us pinpoint where you
23 were?

24 MR. MORRISON: I know they have the ability to look at
25 it from a supervisor's computer to see where I'm at. I don't know

1 if it's logged. But they have the ability to look at it.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, we don't if it's real-time or not.

3 MR. MORRISON: Right.

4 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, terrific, thanks. Willie, it's
5 your turn.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: I don't have anything.

7 MR. NICHOLSON: Nothing? Okay.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm good.

9 MR. NICHOLSON: Bob?

10 MR. GARDNER: I don't have anything.

11 MR. NICHOLSON: Keith, Wallace?

12 MR. JONES: It comes back to us, doesn't it?

13 MR. NICHOLSON: It does.

14 MR. JONES: All right. Just a couple of things, Max.

15 MR. MORRISON: Okay.

16 BY MR. JONES:

17 Q. One of the things you already -- we had a question about
18 was your OQ training, and you've already answered that so we
19 appreciate that.

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. Emergency procedures. Do you carry a copy of those with
22 you in your truck, or is this something that you have access to
23 readily? Is it on your computer? How do you have, how do you
24 know what to do in case of an emergency?

25 A. Well, I do have it and it's in my door of my panel. I

1 can show you that. And this -- you know, we got an instruments
2 company, it's called AEGIS. You all come in and put these fire
3 schools on and stuff and all the time handing out current
4 information and stuff, but we do have a first responder's pack or
5 a little notebook, you know.

6 You can -- I think just about all the information you
7 can find is on our computer. They've got us on -- and I think it
8 may be on our computer. You can go to various different websites,
9 but they put all that stuff on the computer web. But I do have a
10 hard copy of a first responder's, you know, and it just tells you
11 like first thing when you arrive on site, you want to make sure
12 you got the right meter number, right address, okay.

13 Of course, it was obvious here because you know what you
14 were there for. But I'm just saying if you had a house, there was
15 nothing going on and you had a leak call, you don't want to be
16 working somewhere that you're not supposed to be, you know what
17 I'm talking about. You want to make sure that meter number
18 matches that address. And it just goes on that through there.

19 And they train us, you know, life, limb, property. Life
20 first, okay. When you get on a site, our first -- my first
21 response is to -- I've evacuated people before. If I got a leak
22 that concerns me, I make the people leave the home and say, can
23 you -- you know, I'll get in touch with you later, just give us
24 the time to get this situation under control.

25 I've had leaks in sewers, you know, with people and I've

1 had them, you know, coming through sewers on top of the houses,
2 the vent switches, and I'll evacuate the homes. So it's life,
3 limb and property for us. Life first, limb and then property
4 last.

5 Q. Okay. Now this first responder pack you're talking
6 about, is this something from AEGIS or is this Alagasco property?

7 A. It's Alagasco.

8 Q. I mean, is this something that Alagasco has given you to
9 keep in your truck?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Okay. But it's not just AEGIS stuff; it's Alagasco
12 material also?

13 A. You know, I'm thinking it's Alagasco's property, but
14 AEGIS has this. We were out there in the training building when
15 we get this information so I'm not -- you know, I don't want to --
16 I couldn't say to that. But I know Alagasco does have a first
17 responder.

18 Q. How do you go about downgrading a leak? Who's
19 responsible for doing that?

20 A. Downgrading, I have that authority to downgrade a leak
21 -- well, not -- well, downgrade a leak, are you talking if I
22 graded it 1?

23 Q. If you receive a leak call on a Grade 1 leak, how do you
24 go about possibly making that a Grade 2? Or do you have that
25 authority or does that come from supervision? How do you do that?

1 A. That comes, if it's a Grade 1 leak, I've got to get
2 instruction from somebody, put them on site. I don't have the
3 authority to downgrade that. That goes to my construction
4 department. They arrive on site, they do their testing and then
5 if they -- they have the authority with them and their supervisors
6 to downgrade the leak. I don't have that authority to downgrade.

7 Of course if it was a Grade 2 leak, I mean, it's not --
8 you don't have to downgrade it, you know what I'm saying?

9 Q. Okay. Do you know who did the bar testing around the
10 building after you got the fire out and they started doing the bar
11 testing around the building?

12 A. Yes, sir. It would be Mike Donaldson and Pete -- it
13 sounds like Pete --

14 MR. BELL: The next two fellows up?

15 MR. MORRISON: Yeah, the next two fellows up, Pete and
16 Mike.

17 BY MR. JONES:

18 Q. Mike Donaldson and Pete Stokes?

19 A. Pete Stokes, that's it. And there were some others in
20 there that come on behind them that did bar testing too, you know,
21 Dan Ingram and some other guys.

22 MR. JONES: That's all the questions I got right now.

23 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. I don't think I've got anything
24 else. Ravi?

25 MR. CHHATRE: Just a couple, just for the record.

1 BY MR. CHHATRE:

2 Q. You said earlier the Grade 1 leaks 70 percent or more
3 gas. Do you mean 70 percent LEL or 70 percent --

4 A. Seventy percent gas.

5 Q. -- concentration on gas?

6 A. Seventy percent concentration.

7 Q. I just want to make sure that I got it right.

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 MR. BELL: And Ravi, he was saying too it's not just the
10 70 percent.

11 MR. CHHATRE: No, I understand that.

12 MR. BELL: There are other factors too.

13 MR. MORRISON: Yes.

14 MR. CHHATRE: It was the unit that I was really more
15 concerned. I want to make sure that we captured it accurately,
16 that's all.

17 MR. BELL: I'm with you now.

18 MR. MORRISON: Right, right.

19 BY MR. CHHATRE:

20 Q. You mentioned your concern about the sewer, and I'm glad
21 you checked the sewer, okay.

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Now, with all your past experience, how often you find
24 gas in the sewers in leaks like this or have you ever?

25 A. Yes, I have. I probably average -- I had one -- I

1 supposed you missed that. I had one this year in the Bessemer
2 area. Gosh, I want to say it was on 18th Street, Bessemer. I
3 don't have it too often. I'd say maybe once to every maybe a
4 couple of years, 2 years.

5 Q. Okay. But it does occur; I mean, it's not frequent but
6 you have seen it?

7 A. Yeah, I have seen it, yes, sir.

8 Q. And do you wonder how the gas got into sewer?

9 A. Do I wonder how it got in the sewer? I'm not sure what
10 you --

11 Q. Well, I mean, do you believe that gas is in the soil --
12 your pipeline is in the soil, gas leaking in the soil maybe, and
13 how did the gas go from your pipeline in the soil or ground --

14 A. To the sewer?

15 Q. -- into the sewer?

16 A. I assume, you know, when it gets into the sewer like
17 that, a lot of times it's just our utilities, they may -- you may
18 have a gas main here that's installed or a sewer line installed,
19 whichever comes first, and they're directly beside each other.
20 And those sewer manholes have joints on them every so many feet,
21 and it probably might break one of those joints or something like
22 that.

23 Q. I guess, now, in your training with the company, have
24 they told you to watch and check in the sewer system?

25 A. I always check. I never go out on a call -- that's

1 priority for me and the gas company has a policy. I never leave,
2 anytime I get a Code 2, I always check sewers before I leave the
3 premise. I don't just check that one; I go several blocks each
4 way to check.

5 Q. Okay. This is because of your experience or because the
6 company procedures asks you to?

7 A. It's company procedures and my experience; it's both.
8 And not only that, and if I do find gas in the sewer, we remove
9 the sewer lids to aerate to get the sewer -- you know, we start
10 popping sewer lids and get the gas out of the sewer to keep it
11 from migrating to the buildings.

12 MR. CHHATRE: Bob, question. Do you have a training
13 manual that you guys train these people, if we can get a copy of
14 that?

15 MR. GARDNER: I think so.

16 MR. BELL: You're talking about these, you're talking
17 about the service mechanics?

18 MR. CHHATRE: Correct, you know, service mechanic and
19 your other technicians, everybody who does the bar hole test.

20 MR. BELL: So it sounds like you're asking for the
21 service mechanic's manual. Wallace, is that what you said?

22 MR. CHHATRE: I thought manual -- correct me if I'm
23 wrong, but I thought manual will be what they should do. I was
24 thinking more like the training process, you have training
25 manuals.

1 MR. MORRISON: Yes, we have a training --

2 MR. CHHATRE: Training manual.

3 MR. MORRISON: When I go out on -- when I train with a
4 service mechanic over this 2-year apprenticeship, they have it.
5 And I got a book -- I might have one and they got one. We have a
6 book that we have to perform different tasks each month, and it
7 has to be signed off. And we have to be -- we work out in the
8 field then we take into a classroom and are evaluated on that
9 task. Does that make sense?

10 MR. CHHATRE: I'm glad you did what you did.

11 MR. MORRISON: Yes, sir.

12 MR. JONES: Wouldn't certain things like this also be
13 governed under your -- you all use Energy World and that still?
14 Do you know, Keith?

15 MR. BLACKWOOD: Yes, that --

16 MR. JONES: Would some of these things still be covered
17 under that as far as checking leaks and all?

18 MR. BLACKWOOD: It would. If you're asking for -- I'm
19 hearing two different questions possibly, training versus a manual
20 that you use in performance of a job.

21 MR. CHHATRE: No, I was -- he might have asked manual
22 earlier. I was looking, maybe for your training material. I
23 mean, he obviously did check the sewer, which is a good thing to
24 do, and I thought maybe your training material covers that.

25 MR. GARDNER: It is not -- for example, it is not one

1 notebook or one course that takes everything that Max is
2 responsible for understanding. It is a series of courses. It's a
3 series of training we have online. And we can give you all the
4 details about it.

5 MR. NICHOLSON: So we just need a curriculum sheet and
6 the courses that you would --

7 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah.

8 MR. BELL: The courses change so much over time. That's
9 the question. I'm trying to think how you can do that.

10 MR. NICHOLSON: Well, let's see one from 2013.

11 MR. BELL: Maybe they may want the current thing. Yeah,
12 get the current.

13 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, current.

14 MR. GARDNER: You just, you want to understand, if I
15 understand correctly -- you want to understand what the content or
16 the context of the training that Max has --

17 MR. NICHOLSON: What competency --

18 MR. MORRISON: Well, that actually follows under OQ,
19 some of that stuff does. Bar testing, okay, when I go out and bar
20 test, a supervisor every year has to check off. I have to go out
21 there and bar test and show him that I'm -- you know, how I'm
22 using GMI, what am I doing and that kind of stuff. So a lot of
23 stuff he's talking about falls under Keith.

24 MR. CHHATRE: I mean, I don't want to cast a huge wide
25 net. If you can send maybe a list of things that we can narrow

1 down just to save everybody a painful process, that would help.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: What would the service technician, what
3 courses would he have to take to become --

4 MR. CHHATRE: Tell me the course and the course material
5 you cover because, I mean, obviously, I think checking the sewer
6 is a good thing. And maybe I thought your training manual or
7 something --

8 MR. GARDNER: There's training and then there's
9 continuing training or annual training, so we can -- does that
10 make sense?

11 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah.

12 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah. I mean, send me the brief
13 description, then maybe we can -- you know, instead of getting
14 2,000 pages, we can just narrow down to 50 or 100 pages whatever
15 we are looking for.

16 MR. GARDNER: So I'm going to -- I've written that you
17 want the service mechanic training curriculum or description of
18 the courses or what's taken?

19 MR. CHHATRE: That will do for now, yeah, and then we
20 can just narrow down.

21 MR. GARDNER: Is that what you're --

22 MR. NICHOLSON: I think that's -- I don't think we need
23 all the content.

24 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah. No, we don't.

25 MR. GARDNER: Okay.

1 MR. CHHATRE: Other than that, thank you so much for
2 your time.

3 MR. MORRISON: Thank you. A privilege to be here.

4 MR. CHHATRE: By the way, you draw nice sketches.

5 MR. MORRISON: Well, I was nervous. I didn't spell
6 Georgia right I was so nervous, G-e-o-r-g-I -- I was nervous.

7 MR. CHHATRE: Was that the wrong spelling? I just
8 thought --

9 MR. MORRISON: I did Georgia, yeah.

10 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. It's still on top -- fix that -
11 your --

12 MR. MORRISON: I'll erase it if you take a picture.

13 MR. NICHOLSON: When you get the transcripts you can --

14 MR. GARDNER: We're glad you weren't nervous the other
15 morning.

16 MR. MORRISON: No, I wasn't nervous. I was very
17 confident. I do, I do it a lot really.

18 MR. NICHOLSON: I did have one more question just about
19 this area, Gate City.

20 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

21 Q. Is this an area you had been to before? Is it --

22 A. Absolutely. I go to Gate City all the time. You can go
23 in there and you can probably find anybody in Gate City, they
24 recognize me. You know, I know a lot --

25 Q. Well, I mean, maybe I mean Marks Village in particular.

1 Is that -- are we talking about the same place or --

2 A. Marks Village?

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. I guess that's it. There's so many of them. You got
5 Tom Brown, you got Marks Village, you know.

6 Q. Okay. But we are -- you're talking about this general
7 neighborhood?

8 A. This is Marks Village, I think, yeah.

9 Q. Okay. Right. So you go there a lot?

10 A. I go there a lot. Yes, sir.

11 Q. You're there a lot on what?

12 A. Turn ons, turn offs, just routine calls.

13 Q. Not leaks?

14 A. Not leaking. You might get a meter -- somebody smelling
15 gas at a meter. You know, that's common.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. You know, it might be on something -- a fuzz leak, you
18 know what I mean, you know, something like that, but nothing
19 serious. I hadn't been on anything serious.

20 Q. Hadn't been out for any --

21 A. No, sir.

22 Q. -- other cast iron type leaks?

23 A. Just routine.

24 MR. JONES: Matt, do you remember one of the people you
25 were talking with yesterday said that they had gone from like

1 occupancy of 155 to a full --

2 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, right.

3 MR. JONES: Well, so he's probably out there a lot.

4 MR. MORRISON: A whole lot, setting and resetting
5 meters, stuff like that.

6 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, terrific. I got nothing else.
7 We're finished. I guess we'll go off record and thanks, Max, for
8 your time.

9 MR. MORRISON: Thank you very much.

10 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you so much.

11 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: ALABAMA GAS CORPORATION (ALAGASCO)
 NATURAL GAS RELEASE WITH IGNITION
 BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
 DECEMBER 17, 2013
 Interview of Max Morrison

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-14-MP-001

PLACE: Birmingham, Alabama

DATE: December 21, 2013

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

Christina H. Neilson
Transcriber