UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *
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HOUSE EXPLOSION IN FIRESTONE, *
COLORADO, APRIL 17, 2017 * Accident No.: DCA17FP005
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Interview of: DOUGLAS PRUNK

Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection
District Business & Education
Center
Longmont, Colorado

Thursday,
May 11, 2017

APPEARANCES:

RAVI CHHATRE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

JOSEPH GRATCOFSKY, Engineer
U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration
(PHMSA)

GBENGA AJIBOYE, General Engineer
Office of Pipeline Safety
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
(PHMSA)

MICHAEL LEONARD, Quality Assurance Professional
Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission

DAVID PUCCETTI, Fire Investigator
Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District

KELLY DUKE, General Counsel
Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District

DAVID McBRIDE, Vice President of Health, Safety & Environment
Anadarko Petroleum Corporation

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

MR. CHHATRE: Good morning. On the record.

Today is Thursday, May 11, 2017. We are currently at the Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District Business & Education Center located at 8426 Kosmerl Place, Longmont, Colorado. We are meeting regarding the investigation of explosion of a house located at 6312 Twilight Avenue, Firestone, Colorado that occurred on April 17, 2017.

My name is Ravi Chhatre. I am with the National Transportation Safety Board located in Washington, D.C. and I am Investigator in Charge of this accident. The NTSB investigation number for this accident is DCA17FP005.

I would like to inform, I would like to, I would like to inform everyone present in this room that we are recording this interview and we may transcribe it at a later date. Transcripts will be provided directly to the interviewee for review and identifying any typographical errors. The transcripts, the transcripts may be posted in NTSB's public docket.

Also, I would like to inform Fire Marshall Douglas Prunk that you are permitted to have one other person present with you during the interview. This is the person of your choice -- your supervisor, friend, family member or, if you choose, no one at all. Please state for the record your full name, spelling of your name, organization you work for and your title, business contact information such as mailing address, email address, phone, and

whom you have chosen to be present with you during your interview.

MR. PRUNK: Okay. Douglas J. Prunk. D-O-G-L-A-S [sic], J, Prunk, P-R-U-N-K, [redacted]. My title is Division Chief of Life Safety for the Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District and my chosen person is Kelly Duke, General Counsel for the district.

MR. CHHATRE: Thank you for that. Now I would like to go around and have each person introduce themselves. Please state your name, spelling of your name, your title, and organization that you represent, and your business contact information, starting from my left.

MR. GRATCOFSKY: My name is Joseph Gratcofsky, J-O-S-E-P-H, G-R-A-T-C-O-F-S-K-Y. I am an engineer with the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration in the Western Region. We're out of Lakewood, Colorado. My email address is [redacted]. Telephone number [redacted].

MR. AJIBOYE: My name is Gbenga Ajiboye. G-B-E-N-G-A, A-J-I-B-O-Y-E. I'm with PHMSA. I'm also an engineer and I'm training (ph) with Joseph. My contact number is [redacted]. My email address is [redacted].

MR. LEONARD: Mike Leonard, Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. I'm the Quality Assurance Professional. My name's spelled M-I-K-E, L-E-O-N-A-R-D. My email address is [redacted]. Phone number is

[redacted].

MR. PUCCETTI: Dave Puccetti, Division Chief Fire Marshall Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District. D-A-V-E, P-U-C-C-E-T-T-I. Contact number is [redacted]. Email is [redacted].

MS. DUKE: Kelly Duke, K-E-L-L-E-Y, D-U-K-E, General Counsel for the Fire Protection District. My address is, or my law firm is [redacted], that's at [redacted], [redacted].

MR. McBRIDE: David McBride. It's D-A-V-I-D, McBride, M-C-B-R-I-D-E. I'm Vice President, Health Safety and Environment for Anadarko Petroleum Corporation. My email address is [redacted]. My phone number is [redacted]. Office number is [redacted].

MR. CHHATRE: Thank you.

INTERVIEW OF DOUGLAS PRUNK

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Mr. Prunk, for the record, give us some background, your formal/informal education, how long you have been in the fire department, past employment.

A. Okay. Overall I've been in the fire service since 1994. I've been with Frederick-Firestone for 10 years in the capacity all the way from firefighter up through now, Division Chief of Life Safety. My daily activities are the oversight of all the training activities and all the emergency medical activities of

the district and I've been in that current position for 6 years. Education through a bachelor's degree in Fire Administration.

Q. Thank you. And what are your normal working hours?

A. On paper or what I do? Yeah, Tuesday through Friday --

Q. Okay.

A. -- 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. are my normal business hours.

Q. Seven to five?

A. Yes.

Q. So walk me through how, what involvement was on the accident that occurred on April 17?

A. Okay. So that was a Monday which is my normal day off. I live in the fire district and actually I live probably less than half a mile away, three-quarters of a mile away from the actual location.

That afternoon I was out in the front yard and I actually heard and felt the explosion. Wasn't sure exactly what it was at the beginning, thought maybe it was a sonic boom or something, so didn't really -- and I didn't have my work phone on me, so I didn't get any immediate alert of the way I normally would because we'd been mowing the lawn and stuff. So, kind of waited.

There's a fire station that's actually just a couple hundred yards behind the house and I can't see it but I can hear it, and I could hear the sirens. They started rolling on a call. So I knew something was going on, so I want to go get my phone. By then I had already seen -- I could see the smoke header coming from that

location so I just went ahead and -- I had to change clothes real quick or change into something to be able to respond in, and then got in my -- I have a take home work vehicle and I was able to respond straight from the house.

Q. Do you recall what time was that?

A. That 4 --

Q. If you don't, you don't.

A. -- 4, yeah. Whatever the, it was within 5 minutes of the actual event.

Q. Okay.

A. You know, it was 4 or 5 minutes after, because I wasn't an immediate response so it would have been, I don't know what that is, by 5:00 I was --

Q. Okay.

A. -- on the road for sure.

Q. Okay. That's fine. So just walk me through once you get to the car and reach the accident scene. Just tell me what you --

A. Yeah, so --

Q. -- saw, what you heard.

A. -- driving there you could definitely see the header without a doubt. I initially thought that we had an accident at that construction site to the south, the apartment complex. Seemed like more of the actual location of what was going on. And, because my truck had been sitting, my MBT, my mobile data computer, goes to sleep over the weekend so, and it takes it a few

minutes. I was actually on-scene before it would get loaded up to give me any information. Lots of fire radio traffic with the crews, obviously, so I didn't even code-up to say that I was enroute or I was on-scene for, I don't know, even know for how long. But for a little while just because the traffic wasn't there and I'm not really a, I'm not a first part of the response package so I don't have to necessarily code-in as, you know, they're not expecting me to get on the radio. So if I get on the radio, I don't know if they think it's a bonus or not, but it's a bonus. I'm extra help.

So because I was kind of a little bit behind a few minutes but by the time I got changed and got on the road instead of normally, you know, a lot of time fire department you'll go straight to the first, front side of the house, or we call it the Alpha side which is street side. This was already going slow enough and the traffic was all backed up on Firestone Boulevard so even managing, because I, everybody pulled over to the side of the roads to watch it because you could just see the house easily from a long ways.

By then I could tell that it was actually the house explosion and not the apartments. So I chose to go in through the apartment complex construction site to the Charlie side or the C side, the opposite of the street side for Twilight. And it was more of a strategy move to be able to help on the back side.

When I came around the corner to where I was going to park, I

saw a civilian female that was kind of leaning over the top of somebody laying there. Anyway, met up with her. I parked. Another Mountain View at that time had already, was right -- it just pulled in ahead of me but they went a different direction for a tactical reason. But I saw her there, I saw the civilian and it was Ms. Martinez.

So, the civilian -- I could tell she had medical background. She gave me medical size-up like I'd be getting a handoff from a, another paramedic or something like that. Didn't ask what she was, didn't, I knew she was something, right? She was giving me, you know, she's got third degree burns over the whole front of her body. They just got her out from underneath there. Her clothes were melted, you know, whatever type of, the fabric was a polyester type, so it had started to shrink and melt up. Like, she was wearing shorts and like, almost like a, like a sports tank top. It was a nice day, you know, so one of those type, like an athletic type top and that was all, had, a lot of the spots had already, you could tell they were, they were melted and stuff.

So dealing with that, I could hear one of the other, the community resource officer, I don't think that's that exact title, community resource officer, her name is Michelle (ph) from the PD and she was kind of coming around the back side and she'd been there. And I'd heard some conversation from somebody to either maybe the other fire engine or officer that was on-scene, I mean they knew who I was because I was in my vehicle and I had already

got bunker pants on, so they knew that I was part of it and not just a civilian, but, that we had, a helicopter was going to be ordered. I made sure, and I think I got on the radio. I don't totally remember. But I remember some kind of conversation that I needed an ambulance to the back side, that's where our patient was, one of the patients.

Ms. Martinez was concussive, she was repetitive questions of herself, you know, what's going on, where's my kids, where's my husband, what's happening, and then she would start over. And it, and that's very classic of someone that's got a good concussion. She did have, already had skin sloughing and some of that had already taken place which, it was, it looked like she had a bad sunburn before and it was already starting to blister and peel off, so, and this is within three or four minutes or probably five minutes by the time everybody on-scene, five, six minutes.

When they were going to fly, they were working on, there's PD, different PD there, police department officers just trying to set up a landing zone for the helicopter. Our first attempt was to still to try to land it on that construction site. There's a decent open pad to the, to the east. But, anyway they, I sent them just to go ahead and set up an LZ, we'll start working on this.

The ambulance crew had showed up on-scene which was the second ambulance, I believe, not sure, the real, the heavy smoke, so I couldn't see anything north of the house and it was actually

kind of banking down every direction. That night, that day we had a real, a lot of swirling wind. It was not a normal up and intuitive direction. It was, sometimes you'd be in the smoke and then the next time it's going opposite and it was good visibility. But I couldn't really see much more of the house. It was definitely involved. The crews were doing defensive tactics which would be, you know, large hose lines and not making any type of entry into the building anymore. It was already being consumed.

So, ambulance shows up on scene, my medic comes up to talk to me and I just said, give me your trauma sheers and go ahead and go get your stuff, you know, go get your beds, your, and blankets and ready to go. So I did the, kept, you know, the bad part about when they're concussive like that is you keep wanting to talk to them because they want answers but the light's on but nobody's home, right? She's not understanding what I'm telling her, other than I -- I'm trying to ask her -- she's asking about a husband, you know, is there anybody else in the house. She's asking about where her kids are and all that stuff. So, we kind of, you don't know when they're going to finally, like, their bell quits being rung, right? So you continue to keep asking in case all of a sudden she does start answering a little bit different than the last time then you know she's coming around. She never really did. She stayed repetitive questioning the whole time, but saying that there was, we knew, you know, she's using kids as in plural, her husband, which led me to think that he's still at least around

as opposed to, you know, nobody's home but herself. So relayed that information. Trying to find out where the son is. Somebody had told me that the son was being contained by a family member or something, a neighbor that was also a cousin, that type of stuff.

So cut her clothes off, trade her off over to the ambulance crew. They tried to land the helicopter. Because of the smoke and the construction debris they got down to where they were just feet off the ground and they flared because there was stuff coming up and they had to move the landing zone. So I, I'd heard that part going on as well. They moved the landing zone over to the Station 3 property which is, whatever, a half mile from the location and the ambulance was going to go and rendezvous.

My next steps were to find the son. They kind of kept saying, you know, he's okay, he's okay, but he's with, he's just very upset. Some, somebody had mentioned that he had almost like a type of anxiety disorder or, in my head I'm thinking he's autistic or something along that lines of that he wasn't, it was more than just, he's upset, like he doesn't handle this situation. He was supposed to be held in the construction site of the place and a different family member, you know, as we've discussed, this family's very large, so there was lots of cousins that you kind of kept getting the, oh, they're with this cousin or they're with this so-and-so. I know it's a family member but it's a different family member than who I thought. So there was some confusion about which cousin had him, but he was in the construction

trailer.

I head over that way which it's, the full end of the west end of the building that's under construction. So it's equal to probably three or four houses to the west of there and it's still on the property of the apartment complex. We get there and they're, he's not there, right? There's nobody there. Well, a different cousin shows up and she's on the phone, she's, and says well, you know, he's with my husband but my husband took him home. And I said well we got to see him, you know? He's, we got to see him. And there was discussion back and forth with him on the phone that, can I just go to the house instead and I said no you got to come here because we don't have resources to go all over the place.

So then that caused some issues because at, by that point there was almost like a, I don't know if on the law side they did some of county alert but I don't, I haven't seen that many law enforcement officers on-scene that quick in a long time. They had, they'd done a great job of cordoning off the area and not letting extra traffic in. But, that being said, my patient couldn't back in very well. So there was a delay of, he gets up there, the officer's not going to let him through the roadblock and we're trying to do radio traffic to get him to say, you know, what kind of vehicle are you driving, what, you know, to let him through this roadblock and not, I wouldn't even guess at the timeframe, you know, time's kind of different in these type of

events so, but it was a few minutes, you know, four or five minutes up to 10 minutes before we really got him back there.

During that time, still getting some feedback from these other family members that had been around about that there had been some, the husband or the owner had been working on a water heater in the basement. And then finally another one says if there's a black truck parked in, if there's this black Chevy or whatever, but if there's a black truck parked in the front then Joey (ph) is there, too. And called for the IC said, you know, hey we need to confirm, sounds like we might have a second victim in there inside. If this black truck is in the front, we need to assume that there's a second male party inside. And it was confirmed.

And so, that situation, the son and the cousin or whatever the person, the male individual that had the son had showed back up, definitely still just an anxiety situation going on more than injured. It didn't, you know, a quick visual look of him, he was, head to toe he was fine but turned him back over to the medic. And this, actually it probably took long enough that we actually flew, we got her to the helicopter, she flew and then I had that ambulance respond back and they actually did the transport of the son.

After calling medical direction the doc said, no matter what he looks like, he has to go in. So we did do an option to go ahead and transport him to University Hospital downtown which

would not be a normal destination for this, for him, but because mom was already going there they authorized to let the ambulance just go straight through.

At that point, a lot of times on these situations I'd become like a safety officer and so I was still starting already, start that role of being a safety officer, scene safety, looking at what we have, what other hazards we have. I met up with the incident commander face-to-face by that point and they'd been, there was some basic task, tactical discussions, I think, on the radio but nothing that like, nothing big at all, more verifying that I knew that utilities were getting taken care of, a lot of the normal process that we do on a structural fire, so, but nothing major.

Met up with the incident commander and he said that he was going to stay at the IC post which was about three houses to the west of the explosion house, and he asked me to go ahead and take over operations for a ground operation, so I went over and took over what we call operations with him still being incident command.

You know, a defensive attack is, there's not a lot to it, you know, you're pretty much setting up lines to the outside. The guys had a lot of lines already preset up. So there was not, you're basically just trying to put the thing out from the outside. There's not a lot of tactical movement going on at that point.

But I do remember, you know, I know that I'd heard early on

about the utilities but then when we were still having the fire going, I'm noticing conditions, I'm visualizing conditions as well that our, what we would call in the industry a fuel-fed fire, like, there, there's something else there that's beyond just the normal combustibles inside the house. You know, it had a, the flame had a little bit of a, and it was localized. It wasn't like the whole thing was a different color but there was localized areas that had a different color flame to it than what we would see. Normally you'd see the, kind of the, you know, the more orange type flame and there was more of blues and greens and just different stuff. That can happen sometimes with, if there's, happens be copper in the house or something like that, much like you would through copper into a campfire and it changes the color of the flame for a little bit. But, you know, at that point kind of just more taken as a mental note and that was it.

Also noted and heard, I heard myself, was that sound of small, incomplete combustion I guess I would call it, a woofing (ph) sound, an incomplete ignition, I guess. That woofing sound almost like a, if it takes your gas fireplace a little too long to light in the spring and it, it's filled up the chamber with gas a little bit and then it finally catches, it had that same woofing sound and I heard that two times. I heard it the first time, wasn't sure what it was, heard it a second time maybe, again timelines I don't know, 10, 15 minutes apart and I remember calling back to the IC verifying that we had utilities shut off.

You know, verifying that we had the gas shut off somehow, knowing that there was stuff kind of falling over.

At that point I got ahold of a crew and we had to do some lifting to see what was going on, but it was realized at that point that the natural gas meter had been severed at some point either at the initial explosion or in any of the collapse, so it wasn't even connected anymore.

Black Hills Energy had been on-scene already for that, and Black Hills Energy is the gas company, and their, one of the managers, they actually had a pretty good group of guys, there was, and I mean that as size-wise. They were nice guys, too, but a decent response, how about that. There was four or five of them in there right away which is an unusual response. Usually if we have a fire call it's, you request and you get one guy that's going to come out and he's usually the on call guy. But it was either the right timing or whatever. There was a bunch of them. And they re-explained that this was definitely new enough that there was an emergency shut-off valve underground located that if that meter severed that there was a shunt-type valve inside that was going to close off underground. They explained that there, you know, kind of how it works, that if there's an increased purge of gas that it automatically shuts off. And they see that happen sometimes with, like, meter change-outs or something like that. But this was, with it being severed off they were saying that it was turned off.

I don't know specifics of other stuff, you know, where there was, again, we were just defensive stuff, trying to put water out, water on to put stuff out. I kept getting reports, we did a, because we knew at that point now we're minimum one fatality based on the husband should have been there, the probability of a second fatality.

A lot of these we would maybe, what we would call surround and drowned where we really just dump copious amounts of water on it to get it to put out. This one we were a lot, a lot more strategic about it. Talked with the crews, we put our heavy ladder truck with the bucket, normally that tip of that can flow thousands of gallons a minute and we did all work with hand lines just because we didn't want to be stirring up what was there. We wanted it put out but we didn't want it stirred up.

And they kept reporting back, and they're elevated and looking down, that they have a couple hot spots that they still can't put out and it was of this different color flame as well, a little bit. Not really calling out specifics, you could see that there was some up against the Delta wall in the foundation line and then some kind of central around the screw jack or the column post in that area. There was still, obviously, a lot of debris that was still what I, what I would call pancaked. So there was still (indiscernible) stuff come down but there's, it was heavily burned from the event.

Kind of wrapping up that night, there was still plenty of

walk-arounds. Jerry Means from Colorado Bureau of Investigation had been requested. The Fire Marshall, Dave Puccetti, had showed up on-scene. By, probably by 8:00 that night they were both there and started, although we're still in operations mode, then investigation mode already kind of starts taking place where we're doing kind of just visual surveys of the site, the size of the, the scope of the call and by the end of that night with some basic -- well, let me start back. So, not sure of timelines exactly, again, but that evening it was post-dark so whatever, you know, it was after dark already.

Black Hills Energy also, you know, for fear that there was discussion about this water heater from the beginning that there was, they had started doing some air monitoring or monitoring for leak detection. They had their, and this is only, I've only seen this on one other call with us, they had their remote laser methane detection system that they were, that had come on the scene with one of those guys. They don't all carry it. They only kind of bring it in when they think they have different type outside leaks and they're not seeing it with any type of four gas detection. And the one member of Black Hills Energy was walking around, and it's basically a point and shoot type laser monitor.

And he started walking the front part of the, of the properties, was not finding any readings at all. And then as we started moving towards, on the Bravo side or the east side into that, which is a park which is adjacent there, walking through and

can pretty much just point it at the ground and walk and it'll pick up parts per million of methane type whatever it's calibrated, but methane is what they're usually doing.

They started getting readings of LEL levels towards the rear of the property and then moving back around to the, to the property to the west in the back. And they kind of contact me and said, you know, hey we got something going on back here and also at that time they made a comment to me or pointed out to me as well that there was some, it looked like there had been recent locates done. So there was flags, it was dark, you couldn't really see the old paint, but you could see some yellow flags in the backyard of, indicative of a recent utilities locate. Could kind of see that there was some type of fence work being done between the backyard and the apartment complex so we looked at that as just, you know, okay, that would be why the locates were done. And then we saw the way the flags went to, then we kind of, at that point we saw the well containment.

And I don't know, honestly, who actually ordered it but somehow it was ordered either through 811 or the utilities, I don't, I don't know. But an Anadarko representative showed up and like I said, some of this was already happening. The IC work separate. I, you know, operations I'm doing just task oriented stuff on the scene and then operations is taking care of whether we need rehab and lights and all that other stuff. So somehow it got ordered an Anadarko representative showed up on-scene and

performed a shutdown of that well or a blow down I think is what he called it. For, at that time, my little knowledge, or relative little knowledge of that, I knew what a blow down was, that they were shutting in that well and then they'll evacuate any type of product lines that go between there and the battery.

So at that point, when he confirmed that it was shut down we also, in a relatively, you know, shorter amount of time, those pesky hot spots that were inside that foundation were able to be extinguished finally. Like, we were able to finally (ph) get a handle on what was, that final bit of overhaul is what we would call it, we were able to put out all the beds of fire at that point. Still had tons of smoldering and stuff, but that flame that kind of kept popping up seemed to go away at that point.

Getting pretty late, Jerry Means from CBI is doing his kind of site walk around and he identifies what he thinks is one of the victims, points it out from the top to Dave Puccetti and myself that we think that there's, we got a party in the east window well. But based on the condition of the, the scene was still unsafe, we, as far as like making any type of entry into the basement it was determined that we would not make any, that entry until daylight. And that's been our common practice. Not even, not, tough to tell, but in the last several years we've really made a conscious effort to switch our investigations. If they're nighttime calls, we wait till morning to start because, one, just the dangers of doing it and then two, it gives it a chance to off

gas and that, you know, all that caustic, it just is safer for the investigators and we have better light, and it's just, logistically it's just better to do it in the morning. So we'll usually sit on it, whether it's either the fire department or we have the police department. In this case it was obviously the police department and we sat on the, on it, until daybreak. We knew we'd be back at 6:30 in the morning. So, that's kind of day one. Is that too much?

Q. No, no, no, not at all.

A. Sorry.

Q. Not at all. Please don't cut short anything. I have a couple of questions as clarification here (indiscernible) on your day one. Do you know who the incident commander was?

A. Mike Reasoner.

Q. How do you spell it?

A. R-E-A-S-O-N-E-R. And he's a battalion chief.

Q. Okay. R-E-A-S-O-N-E-R?

A. Yeah, Reason (indiscernible).

MR. CHHATRE: And I think we are going to talk to him, right?

MS. DUKE: Yes, he should be here, I think 1:00 today, but have we --

MR. CHHATRE: 1:00?

MS. DUKE: Yeah, 1:00.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. And you said the incident command was set up three homes away? Was it, which side?
A. So it was on Twilight and then, and it might have been two homes, but it was two or three homes to the west of the explosion house.
Q. So if I'm facing the front door of ground zero --
A. Of Twilight --
Q. -- so --
A. -- (indiscernible) to the right.
Q. The right?
A. To the mountains. Remember I told you to the mountains.
Q. Right, okay.
A. Yeah, to the, to the Delta side of the --
Q. So that's my next question. Can you maybe tell me which is Delta, which is Alpha?
A. Yeah, yeah. Alpha's front door --
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah, and then clockwise after that.
Q. Okay.
A. You have Bravo, Charlie is the rear, and then Delta.
Q. Okay.
A. And then we would call the house next door will be the Delta exposure.
Q. Okay.
A. And that house, you know, also had, there was fire efforts on

that. It had extension based on just radiant heat. It caught on fire on some of it so there was some fire activities that had to be done with that.

Q. So --

A. Cutting a whole on the roof, extinguishing the eaves and then looking for hot spots in the attic. But it was put out relatively contained.

Q. So then for a clarification, the house next door sounded like Beta exposure and --

A. The --

Q. -- Charlie exposure --

A. -- if there was, but --

Q. No, I understand.

A. Yeah, yeah. The Bravo exposure in this is the park, is the grass so we had no Bravo exposure.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah.

Q. And near the construction that is, would be the Charlie exposure side?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Okay. And the CBI is what? What the acronym stands for?

A. Colorado Bureau of Investigation.

Q. And what is their function? Do you know?

A. Investigations, they're criminal investigate, they're, we utilize them on higher acuity fire investigations.

Q. Okay.
A. Jerry Means is a, I don't know what his title technically is, but he's a dog handler, like an arson dog handler --
Q. Okay.
A. -- and so they're kind of a resource for fire investigators and investigation and stuff and --
Q. So they also get automatic call when you said, you know, if you --
A. (indiscernible)--
Q. -- somebody has to call them?
A. Yeah, they have to be notified.
Q. Do you remember when Dave Puccetti arrived on the scene? Did you meet him? Do you remember seeing him at the accident scene?
A. Yeah. I'm guessing around, it was right around 8:00.
Q. Okay.
A. Eight p.m. is what I'm thinking.
Q. Did you have any discussion with him as to what's happening?
A. Kind of more --
Q. Knowing full well that you guys are very busy --
A. Yeah. I mean there was no, like, I mean we had face-to-face discussions and where we were at and kind of the probability that we had a double fatal. I don't remember if Dave himself said that he called Jerry Means, but somehow Jerry was contacted as well. That wasn't originaled by me. So either IC or --

Q. Somebody called.
A. -- Chief Puccetti contacted him. And Jerry was actually probably on-scene, if I remember right, kind of in the same timeframe. They were, I don't remember, distinguish between which one was one or the other.
Q. When you arrived at that building (ph) Charlie side, that's where your car was, right?
A. Yes.
Q. Did you smell any gas odor, any pungent odor? Anything at all?
A. No, there was, it was just house fire. It smelled like house fire. The smoke was that plastic smell of a house fire.
Q. Okay. And did you see, did you go near the house at all or you could not go because of the flames?
A. So because of my involvement with the patients, I never really had to get past that at the time was a, I guess there was sidewalk in the green belt. I found out later that that was the, that Firestone owns, the town of Firestone owns the green belt and that, at -- my thought was it was still apartment complex so I never made it to the property line of the apartment complex until it had already, they were getting enough water on it that I was never really close enough. I mean, it was, it was still warm but it wasn't part of my normal operations to get close like that. That's, my fire crew's job is to do that. I'm directing them. And at that point it was still, I hadn't been actually given

operations by the incident commander yet, so I was still more of in a safety role on the outside and just touching (indiscernible) --

Q. And what would it involve, like a ground operations command, what your job will be with the ground operations command?

A. For the, for operations? Just tactical, you know, how are we going to put this thing out?

Q. Okay.

A. And like I said, some of it, because the first arriving officer, which you'll be talking with Don (ph) today as well, you know, they went right to defensive tactics which is stay outside and put a lot of water on it. So like I said before, there wasn't a lot of extra directing other than talking with the crew of the ladder company that, hey, you need to be careful putting the fire out. You know, like don't blow this thing up with water, you know. Put it out but don't disturb it the best you can.

Q. So do you remember what time you went home?

A. I got home, I don't know, a little after 1:00 a.m.

Q. Now I don't want to disturb (ph) your chain of command so go ahead and tell me, walk me through all those, two, three weeks. So, what happened next day?

A. So the next day we're back onsite. They'd brought in the command van. We had pretty much all those same players all knew that they were coming back. So Black Hills Energy was still there. A different representative from Anadarko who ended up

being Bret Schissler (ph) which I'm sure that's already on your list anyway. So Bret was there and then he had a crew of what I would call pumpers just because that's kind of what I know them as but they're field operators. A different (ph) kind of a crew of them as well and they were doing some, looking at stuff. They had already called in their own line locator at some point. I don't know how that, some of this they were already doing their own diligence. They called in some crews ahead of time to be looking at some stuff.

So Anadarko had their own line locator out and he was re-locating that line that came to be the active flow line that leads out of that well enclosure and then runs parallel to the back side of the, Charlie side of those homes. He kind of did a, I remember Bret coming back up kind of more to the front side of the house and meeting with us and said, hey we did a shut-in test on it, it was, like, 15 minutes at 500 psi and it came back good and kind of the, you know, let us know if you need anything, but that line's good.

And at first originally I was kind of like, okay, yeah, thanks, we're good, we'll call you to let you know. And then, I, you know, I don't know, I'm not 100 percent sure, but there was still discussion and one of the Black Hills Energy guys said, you know, and he made a suggestion to me. He's like, you know, he, did somebody witness that shut-in test? Are we sure because the Black Hills Energy guys were still very, thinking that we had a

gas leak problem, gas, generic gas, not, there was no pointing either way but just that there was some gas readings that were still showing up in the ground behind the building and we didn't know for sure where. Like I said, we were going down a path that we thought well maybe one of the post holes dug through that, drilled through that pipeline, not knowing that the, how high of a pressure of a line it is that if it, you know, at that time, if it would have gotten nicked or not it would have been a bigger issue before this, possibly. So we actually called Bret again and said hey, you know what, can you meet us back over here? So Bret came back and met us at the site and I want to say, I, by that morning from COGCC as well, his first name's Joe and I don't remember Joe's last name, there's a lot of Joes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: MacLaren.

MR. PRUNK: MacLaren? Joe MacLaren was onsite and we kind of pulled him in and kind of still had this, at this point we still kind of had like a huddle of a lot of the individuals. And I remember kind of having a talk with them being still, you know, this is our investigation site, everybody's still kind of here as a representative of their own agency. But in my head I still felt like between Dave and I, and different parts of the property it was our scene to control at that time. And I remember kind of asking, okay, who's the ranking person here out of all of your agencies? And I don't know if Joe stepped forward or everybody else stepped back but Joe was designated as the, from COGCC as

pretty much, he's the pipeline guy. You know, like he's my go to person. Discussion again about re-witnessing that, inspection of that flow line and location of it, and he was going to witness that.

And then somehow in that process I remember discussing with Bret Schissler again that, when they did a locate that they saw that there was this other, these abandoned lines that go out of that well enclosure straight to the west and head towards the apartment complex. And we were still kind of inside there looking at stuff and he's telling me about how the shut-in's going to work, or the test and stuff. And then we got outside of the enclosure at some point and we were talking about these lines. I said, well let's follow where these old lines go just to see because he was pretty, even though the first one wasn't witnessed, he was pretty confident that the active flow line was good. He's like, it was 15 minutes at 500 psi. That's double, more than double the active, pressure of that line. I don't think this is bad, but we'll do it again for the state, it's no problem. You know, an hour long test. Okay?

And so we started talking about these other lines and he's like, yeah well they kind of go up there and they kind of turn. And that whole turn thing kind of made me feel a little weird and I was like, all right so let's go, let's walk these because he even, he pointed out that he had the locator individual locate it with a yellow and white flag separate so that we knew that that

was this different oddity.

And actually, in there when we were talking about the abandoned, or this other line, this, he's like, well this two inch one's abandoned and this one is what we call a return line, and he started explaining some of the, how that is used at that point. You know, I'm like, well what's, what is the, how is this thing used? And he explained it, that that was, that they use it for, the pressure of it to be like a pneumatic gas, for running a rotary valve that's pneumatically actuated. And he calls it all the automation, to run the automation is basically so that the, it helps the well cycle and that's what causes it.

And he called these, well this is kind of, that return line's kind of the old technology because you can, and again, I'm trying to gather a lot of stuff, so it was giving me bits and pieces but I was kind of scabbing it together still. But he was saying that these regulators is actually where it gets it, the pressure from, and that's what runs automation and that was kind of old technology, is that line that goes down, and kind of left it at that.

Got out of the enclosure, we followed the line back over and it follows right, and it heads straight west and then it takes a turn out in the parking lot of the apartment complex and then it points right up to the, well, I'd call it the Charlie/Delta corner or the, of the southwest corner of the property at the time. And he says, well this is an old line, the steel line is, they can

locate the steel line because it's steel but this other one inch pipe that was, this riser that was stubbed up was, it turns from steel into plastic below grade and they can't physically locate that one. But usually they run in pairs together and they use the big pipe as the locator for the little pipe. Made sense to me, you know, I mean that's valid instead of having like a tracer wire on that poly the way you would on a, like a natural gas line would have.

So he shows where it follows and then they lose it in the green belt a little bit, probably about 10, 15 foot from the property line to the south. So the property line between the green belt and the, it's on the opposite, on the north side of the sidewalk but not in the property of the Martinez home. And he says that they lose it right there so we're think, and then at the same time we can also see the other, the perpendicular, right? Is that that way? I was never good at math.

So the active flow line is running parallel with the fence line and then this line is coming at it and we've lost it right at that signal. So we don't know, he explains that there's potential that, and actually the locator explained, that there's, potentially you could lose the signal when they cross because it's two steel pipes or it could be that this line is actually truly terminated because these were the old lines. Here's the new line and they dissected it and it's not there anymore. So we're, you know, that definitely kind of came under a thought.

Well, that morning was also, although some of that happened kind of at the beginning, some of this overlapping was, body removal was the priority for Tuesday morning. We had the one individual located right away. I'm working with Chief Puccetti. We had set up to do a quick identification of the first, that, to confirm there was a body, not confirming who it was but we had some identifiers by stature of what the individuals were and so we kind of had a guesstimation of who we thought it was, but we knew that we only found one and not the other. With it being based on stature, Joey was noted to be the stockier individual and Mr. Martinez was thin. This was the stockier individual which is, was good and bad for us as a finding for first because obviously he's not the homeowner, right? So now we knew we had two because we were still missing the husband as opposed to the other side we would have, if we would have found Mr. Martinez first, it could have affected, not affected but changed how we maybe were looking or what we were looking for because, you know.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. So the first victim was identified as --

A. Just unofficially by us, it was Mr. Irwin, the plumber.

Q. Oh, okay (indiscernible).

A. Yeah, so that's why we knew we needed to be looking for a second --

Q. Okay.

A. -- as opposed to finding the homeowner first and then a

strong guesstimation that there was a second. So, found him first, unofficially just between investigators assumed that that's, made the educated guess based on stature that that was the plumber and that we needed to keep looking for Mr. Martinez.

And this, like I said, this was systematic, so the body removal, we didn't get done with that until, I don't know if we didn't, it was 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon by the time we kind of were able to get everything done.

At that point, and a lot of that, kind of even unofficially between Chief Puccetti and myself, Dave was running the house part of the kind of fact finding and the body removal and some of that stuff, working with PD on evidence photographing and all that stuff. He was setting that up and I was kind of more focusing on the pipeline and, you know, what we had going on. Still, at that point just, yeah, I just, there was stuff going on with pipeline stuff but it was always kind of based on focusing on the body removal. But there was, you know, discussion about how some of this other stuff worked while we were doing it because of the time of how long it took to do body location and removal.

So still, by that day we ordered up a, and this was some discussions about starting to, you know, we're keying in on this transection of these two lines to just see what we even have there because there was still this line, that one inch poly line from the well had been connected and then, I take that back, so, or I'm going to add to it.

At the beginning, that morning, with those, when I said there was a lot Anadarko crews, Bret was on the phone a lot with one of them at the well or the battery side toward the separator. And they were trying to locate that one inch line. And there was discussions back and forth that there was not really a one inch pipe at all stubbed up at the separator. And so this kind of came back to, we have this one inch pipe but we really don't know where it, where it comes out at, but we know that it's connected to the well. And, you know, even though it wasn't officially had, we hadn't officially been questioned, the, there was, the nighttime pumper had said that we had shut stuff in so there was assumption that they, given it got shut off at that night when he shut it in. But that was still us, you know, we're just discussing it.

So we have this pipe early in the morning that we don't necessarily know where it goes but it is connected to the well. At this point it is shut off. The second two inch pipe is capped off but it's got a steel, a valve on it, like I, what I call, like, a butterfly valve, or it's a quarter-turn ball valve but it's a bigger industrial valve than, and there was, Bret and his crew were saying that this was probably seized up, that it was frozen, that they would have to do a hot tap to be able to open it to see if there was any type of pressure on it or not.

So we, in the process of making all that happen with Joe witnessing a lot of that, Joe from the state, they were working, because we still didn't know if we had gas still, it was more of a

safety concern than an investigation at that time. We're still trying to find the cause, or the, if there's this product maybe coming from this well or not and so it kind of went past the, I don't want to say, we needed to make sure that we had everything, all those pipes coming out, they're either shut off or an atmospheric pressure that we knew that there was nothing else on them. So that got worked with Joe while we were still doing body removal stuff. But like I said, the one pipe we did know where it was but the other one looked like it was capped off and going from there.

So now we're back to, like, 3:00 in the afternoon, we got the body out, bodies, and the decision with the construction crew that Anadarko uses was they were going to use, so that we didn't hurt anything when we were digging they chose that they wanted us to use a hydrovac system. Big, giant, you know, vac truck that uses a pressure washer type tip to create a slurry so they can vacuum, suck out the soil. Great tool, not real fast. So got us to dark at that point and we pretty much, we, through that process we located the pipe, and when I say located, we visualized the pipe at this point. We can see down, it's about seven foot deep and now when we've located it we found the active product line that runs east and west and now we have two steel lines running north and south and one plastic poly line all intersecting and still continuing. There's no stops, any of that.

We found that intersection, let's call it, where they

dissected each other, whatever, intersected each other. But there were still no cuts or stops in any of the pipe. It was explained that the second pipe, which would be another product line, probably came from a secondary well which is, that used to be, both used to go to a battery that's north of the complex. We hydrovaced it all the way to the property line of the two, like I said between, now I know that it's Firestone's property. But at the time I thought there was a apartment complex and the property of the Martinez.

It was dark at that point and we decided we were going to terminate efforts because now we're on the property line and there was some discussion on, you know, how far we could go and it was just a clarity thing of, you know, it was a good point to stop because we were at the fence line and let's start in the morning.

So reconvene in the morning, and I think I said this, like, every day that we were out there felt like you were going to get a lot done every day and we just didn't. It just took a long time to do anything. So now we're, I don't know, that's pretty much it for day two.

Day three, still a lot of stuff in the morning, discussions about who's doing what and there as lot of times we didn't even get to start digging until midday almost because just briefings and meeting of the minds and, you know, game plans and who's in charge of what. So a lot of times we didn't get started until after that.

So we moved forward into the property line now. Keep heading north and it, and again, we can see that he still can't really locate it. He tried to put a locator magnet, like lower it down onto the steel pipe that's heading north to the house to see if we could see where it ended. And because of the interference of that other line that, they couldn't get a good signal. So we knew we just had to keep visualizing as we kept moving north. We kind of did a little bit of a hop to give ourselves a little bit of space. We moved forward into the property. We had to wait to make sure everything was clear because we were going to have to move, they had poured a relatively new back patio and there was a lot of debris that needed to be moved before we could get further there.

But we still had this, oh, that was even, we still had this potential of, I don't know, I'm jumping around a little bit. We were still getting readings, gas readings in the houses, you know, next door and stuff. So we still felt we had, you know, we weren't confirmed that we had our source maybe shut down. So we were still kind of powering through the stuff. We were ordering up environmental testing, soil testing, core tests. Actually that was the next day.

So that next day we get all that stuff, we move forward, we're able to get stuff out. Like I said, hours of digging, literally, in a short amount of area. We get to the, where we do finally find the end of the pipe, and we find all three of the pipes mechanically cut at the end approximately six foot from the

foundation on the very southern and western corner of the foundation of that house.

Q. That was in the morning?

A. Huh?

Q. When did you --

A. That was that night. That night we went until 10:00 almost --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It was 9:30.

MR. PRUNK: -- and we, yeah. And what we, what we had problems with is --

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. At the third day or second day?

A. This is the third day.

Q. Third day at night?

A. Yeah. Yeah, about 10:00 at night on Wednesday night. So probably about 9:00 we finally find it. We're starting to get lots of, you can, there's an odor, a lot more now that we're digging towards, as we get closer to the foundation, of just something, you know, just what we would call, like, a product type smell, a petroleum smell we're starting to get there. And once the, and it was kind of, people, you know, and there's several, there's a lot of individuals on this thing as we're digging and every now and then somebody'd be like, oh do you smell that, do you smell that? And everybody's like, ah maybe, maybe not, maybe, you know. And then when we got to where we took kind of that last

little bit when we really opened up the end of the pipe, then it was like definitely, yeah we got, you could smell product at the end of those pipes.

Because of the way he's moving this thing in the vac, it's, we're only talking, that thing's maybe a foot and a half wide if that. So it's a, it's a trench, it's not even a, you know, excavation at all. It's, we're just following the line and just keep walking or moving on it. And as we get further north, a lot sandier soil, lot sandier soil. And it just was very unstable soil.

So the discussion was if we find the end of this thing, or you know, we're going to try to take as many pictures as we can and then we'll have to discuss, because now it's late enough that we're going to, you know, we're up against some property lines, we're up against a foundation and how are we going to excavate this, and as deep as it is. The construction guys were discussing how wide the trench has to be able to walk in. There's discussion on whether we're just going to do shoring instead of mechanisms, stuff like that.

So, we get it to where we can visualize it. Everybody gets to get their photographs and it caved in because the soil didn't stand and it just caved in. It was, like, 10:00 at night and we're like, okay we know where we're at, we're done, it's going to be secure, we're going to start this over in the morning. So, and so pretty much we found it, photographed it and then we had to

leave it, knowing where the end was but that was it. (indiscernible) --

Q. If you think you need a break, let us know.

A. Yeah I (indiscernible) --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have that ceremony in about 15 minutes.

MR. PRUNK: Yeah. We'll power to that?

MR. CHHATRE: Why don't we --

MR. PRUNK: Yeah, I'm fine.

MR. CHHATRE: -- just, why don't we just stop now

MR. PRUNK: Okay.

MR. CHHATRE: -- just in case, in case you got to go to the ceremony (indiscernible) out. It's really up to you guys. If you want to go there --

MR. PRUNK: It's a, all right if we want to go another 10, I know --

MS. DUKE: Yeah, why don't we go --

MR. PRUNK: I know, we're kind --

MS. DUKE: -- (indiscernible) going to go, go a little --

MR. PRUNK: -- of in a time crunch with the --

MR. CHHATRE: You guys tell me (indiscernible) --

MR. PRUNK: Well, all we got to do is walk across the hall so we're not, we don't have to go anywhere --

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Okay.

MR. PRUNK: -- it's in the building.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

MR. PRUNK: So we're fine.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

MR. PRUNK: I don't know, where it's at. That's Wednesday night --

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. So you said at night you stop. You located the line and --

A. Yeah, we stopped but then, but then the trench collapsed on us right away, within a couple, and we, I mean we had trench out there, the ground was just not good right by the foundation because there was still open trench from when we cut the very first night. And it hasn't even, we could see the pipe perfectly in that area but up against the house it was just super soily, sandy and, you know, there was still that off gassing smell. You could smell product of some petroleum type product.

Next day, we had, we had some stress (ph) debriefing and stuff, I think, because we're into Wednesday already, right? I'm looking at the calendar.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thursday.

MR. PRUNK: Thursday already.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. That would be Thursday, right?

A. Yeah. So, again, every time we thought we were get a bunch done, we didn't get a lot done. It just was a slow, tedious process which was good. I mean, we did it the way needed to.

But, so by the end of the next day and by the time we got time to actually, that's when, actually when we did the core samples at that point.

So, we knew where it was and that was the day when we did a lot more of the heavy soil sampling. We had an independent, Jeremy Espinoza from his, LD Environmental -- DL --

Q. LTE --

A. -- LTE Environmental. He did all our sampling. And we had a pretty good laundry list of stuff for him to be sampling all over. So that took quite a while up to and including, we did one full core sample right at the head of the pipes basically within a, less than a square yard area of the, between the foundation and where we had determined the end of the pipes were.

He did a, I, you know, I, approximately a, he's got it all documented but, you know, a ten foot hole. We took samples every four feet coming up, or a twelve foot hole, and then every four feet minus the first top four feet. Took those samples, tons of discussion about where this stuff's going, who's taking it.

Ultimately all the soil samples, all the gas samples were maintained by him as chain of custody straight to DIG which was the lab, the testing lab that was determined by everyone that we were going to use. So, like I said, that took a long time to get all the sampling done.

In that process we were also taking air monitoring samples out of the -- you know, of course, we got to this discussion of

how would this gas still enter in the house. Well, I've got a decent construction background before I was a career firefighter. Electrician for 20 plus years and built tons of brand new houses. And so, kind of have a good understanding of what it looks like from literally the ground up.

We kind of had a good idea where this thing was going to be severed if it was done at that foundation time when that house was built. I knew that this area has French drain systems which is corrugated pipe that feeds into, it draws out of all the, and especially that new of a house, draws out of all the window wells and then they all T and then form basically a big circle, drainage circle, that dumps into the sump pit inside the basement. Way too much stuff inside the basement to know exactly where the sump pit was at the time.

But we did find, easily find the French drain openings in each of the window wells and we took air samples as far as we could get a probe down, a hose probe, without getting into any type of dirt or anything which we documented and measured that it was, we were getting down those pipes, we were able to send a tube down almost four foot down into those and we were getting LEL levels anywhere from fairly low, 25, you know, clear up to pegging the machine 100 percent LEL in the water, in the, in the --

Q. That was in the window wells?

A. In the window wells. And that was on both the Martinez house

as well as the Delta exposure house. As well as, yeah, (indiscernible) missed some of those parts.

Earlier on in the week, we were, where a lot of the maintaining, where we were always doing our air sampling or sniffing with the four gas detector was next to any of the penetrations in the foundations in the basement next door. So the basements have rough-in plumbing for shower, stool wall, sink, whatever. All these houses already have a rough built into it, right.

Around there, that's just your normal plumbing, white PVC pipe or CPVC and then they take a piece of, like a Styrofoam type wrap and it's a separator, divider, so when they pour the concrete that pipe is independent of the (indiscernible). So you can rock those a little bit. They're sealed off because, you know, obviously.

Another option or thought we had was, we had gas coming in through the sewer. That first night the Black Hills Energy guys had opened sewer, you know, manhole covers and we were testing all the sewers and we're finding nothing. But if we leaned against, in the exposure house, if we leaned against those plumbing rough-in pipes and sniffed right at that insulation or that, we were getting clear up to 100 percent LEL readings next door.

So we had it, this feeling that it was, you know, it's below, it's not, it's not in the plumbing system, it's in the, in the foundation system instead, of both these homes. And we had no way

of doing that type of testing in the exposure house. We still had hot spots and just extensive digging to even get to the foundation at all, or the basement floor. So we were using the one next door as kind of more of our being able to test and see where it was going.

So we were getting readings in their sump pit, their French drain system, their floor penetrations. And so those samples were all taken, you know, we all agreed on different areas where we were going to take samples for, to send off to the lab, the core samples. And then finally that evening we were able to go ahead and get dug up and we determined that we were going to just take that poly line, after it was exposed enough, everybody could see tons of footage of it. But we were going to go ahead and, because the trench was pretty unstable still.

We just were able to lean it back up, it's, like, sprinkler pipes. So it's flexible. We were going to lean it back up and then go ahead and backfill around the two inch gas lines because we had kind of, through determination with Anadarko and ourselves, that those were truly abandoned lines, they weren't, there was no two inch connected in, to those lines, connected into that area. So we were (indiscernible), you know, relatively based on the findings that we knew that we could still get to those steel pipes if we needed to. But we needed to get this poly line which we knew was connected, or had a strong investigation that it was connected at some point.

So we bent that one back up and then we filled the trench in to where we could get it to a working level. We cut off 18 inches of the final end. There was no, there was nothing on the ends of those pipes. There was no what I would call attempts to plug. You know, there was nothing bent over --

Q. All three?

A. Yeah, there was, all three were just, looked like a, like a Sawzall type, you know, just mechanically cut even at kind of the same angle, you know, based on, they were in a trench and you could just kind of visualize that somebody had raked (ph) in and cut these three, boom, boom, boom, like that. So, but there was no, you know, mechanical plug or there was no fusion cap or, you know, there was no attempt to plug anything off like, yeah, anyway, I'll just stay with that. Got that back up, cut off that 18 inches to where we saved that end, it was taken into custody, or evidence, by the PD. Everybody got tons of time to take their photographs of course, (indiscernible).

And then at that point we went ahead and, we wanted to start, because we're still not 100 percent sure that this is connected to the well. The construction company, Anadarko's contractor, made a plug system that was fitting to where they could basically put nitrogen or air on it, to where we could start doing some pressure testing between the two. So we still had this fear of not --

MR. CHHATRE: Maybe we should stop --

MR. PRUNK: That's fine.

MR. CHHATRE: -- because I want to have the pressure testing and the previous (indiscernible) --

MR. PRUNK: That's fine.

MR. CHHATRE: Let me see what my (indiscernible) --

(Off the record.)

(On the record.)

MR. CHHATRE: This is continuation of interview of Chief Douglas Prunk? What was that?

MR. PRUNK: Prunk.

MR. CHHATRE: Prunk. Okay.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. I think we left off earlier to accommodate the second interview, but this was -- we were on April 20th, 2-0, and the last thing you were telling was about the (indiscernible) rates. Do you remember?

A. Yeah.

Q. Or should I go back a little bit?

A. No, that's fine. So that was the day that we were doing all the sampling.

Q. Environmental sampling you were doing.

A. And so we couldn't do a lot of work on the actual pipeline at that time. So the sampling, air sampling was taking place in the French drains. We were able to --

Q. By LTD, you said?

A. Yes, LTE.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: LTE.

MR. CHHATRE: LTE. Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. PRUNK: Environmental, yeah. LT Environmental.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Okay.

A. So getting samples in the two French drains that we could get to accessibly easily in the basement, as well as a soil core sample within the vicinity of the tail end of the -- where we found the cut line. So right at the -- within about a yard of the end of the cut that we had identified the day before, but we still hadn't brought anything up yet.

Yeah, so then we went ahead and we did those samples, including some samples out of the French drain next door, some -- I call it, I guess, the pothole-type air sampling, where they take the ground rod and drive it in the ground and then pull it back out and take an air sample out. They were doing that around and still finding readings of various --

Q. Who was doing that?

A. That was Jeremy Espinoza from the environmental company was doing that.

Q. Okay.

A. The only thing he was being assisted by was the Black Hills Energy was actually pounding the hole for him, but then he was doing his own --

Q. So (indiscernible) he is not (indiscernible)?
A. Yeah. Yeah.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah. The data was his, just the mechanics was -- Black Hills was just helping out with it. So like I said, I think we talked about it, but just to reiterate, we ended up getting that piece back up, the 1-inch pipe, got it up, took that end as evidence. And then a pressure end fitting was made for the end of it by Anadarko's contract foreman so to where we could do some pressure testing on it.

So because we still weren't a hundred percent sure that that was the pipe, we knew that that other pipe that was at the wellhead had been connected. At this time, all of that has been disconnected from the well, under the observation of Joe from COGCC. Because like I said, we were still under that safety factor of we weren't a hundred percent sure that we had a source stopped. We just knew we had a source.

So the concern was we didn't want to just put pressure on a line that we didn't know where it was going in case it was going under a different house and now we would pressurize it. We came up with the idea of actually pulling it in a -- putting it into a vacuum instead, real simple mechanics. We got to the other end, at the well site of the 1-inch pipe that had been, a valve had been put on there. Everything was still there but they had just put a fitting, an air chuck type fitting.

We actually just put a, taped a baggie on the end of it, you know, a plastic bag, and we used a vac truck to actually pull a vacuum on that pipe that we had identified next to the house. And we weren't trying to evacuate product or anything. All we wanted to do was see if that bag would move. And instantly it collapsed.

You know, it was just like a sandwich bag type bag that we used. It was verified at both ends. We used, like I said, the vac truck and we did some backyard mechanicing to get that to where we could pull a vacuum on that little pipe with the big, giant truck. And we didn't want to collapse anything, so we took it easy, but it moved the bag instantaneously. So we knew we had, well, at least minimum -- it at least went there. We still knew about a potential of a T somewhere in the property of the apartment complex.

Q. You did not at that time?

A. No, we knew that there was some type of a connection because we were missing one of the black pipes. Based on some of the feedback from the technicians, the operators -- Bret was our subject matter expert, as well, that we were utilizing. He said it would have possibly been common that the two steels would still go to the old battery, but somewhere along the way they would have merged those two polys from the two separate wells, east and west, with some kind of fitting, union, something to make only one have to go all the way. Because it wasn't moving product, it needs a relatively low amount, so it didn't have to be two lines

independently going.

So we at least knew that there was a continuity at least back to the well, but we weren't a hundred percent sure about the other area. We went in and switched gears since we knew we had continuity between those two. We switched to let's go ahead and put pressure, put nitrogen on it and see if we can get it to hold to see if we were at the end. It was taking upwards to, you know, like 10, 12 psi of nitrogen on that line, and then as soon as we'd let off it would drop down, but then it would kind of hold it, not necessarily hold, but it would drop down to about 5 and then be really slow below that. Talking with the construction foreman, there was --

MR. CHHATRE: Would it help if we use that drawing? Does that drawing show the pipes that he's talking about?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I was there.

MR. CHHATRE: No, no, no, I'm saying --

MR. PRUNK: For anybody --

MR. CHHATRE: -- for the transcriber, if we can use that as an attachment. The drawing that you have in your binder, will that show all these pipes he's talking about?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, I don't have that file. We won't have that until tomorrow.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. All right. Don't worry about it.

MR. PRUNK: Okay. Anybody else need more explanation on that? We're good? We know which one we're talking about, right?

Okay.

So we put pressure at the wellhead side. So we went back to -- we're not vacuuming anymore. We're going to pressure. We capped at the house that piece that was stuck up.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Right.

A. And then we went to where we're going to push nitrogen at the well site, the well configuration. It would not hold a definitive pressure. There was discussion about if there was fluid in the line from our process of doing the hydrovacing, because it makes that slurry. And there was some mud in that pipe when we had cut it loose, so we knew there was potential that there could have been water. That may have been affecting our pressures and not letting it really equalize because you're pushing against an air bubble. Lots of discussion. We discussed it a lot.

But really, nobody was feeling super comfortable that it was a continuous -- you know, like nobody would say, yep, there's no leaks. And that pretty much -- I think that closed that day out, for the most part. I don't think we did anything else. We had continuity. We knew it was going from one end to the other, and that's kind of where we're at. I'm just looking at my dates here real quick.

Friday, the 21st, was very limited on site. We had, by that point, Patty Dixon, Detective Dixon for Firestone PD had started setting up interviews with some of the Anadarko employees. And so

that kind of dictated the day. I don't think we did a lot of -- if I remember right, we didn't do -- I don't know, the days all blend together, but I don't think we really did much digging or site work on that day.

We had the interviews. First was Bret from Anadarko, and then second was going to be Steven, and I don't remember his name, who is the contract pumper at the time, or of the time of the incident. There was a misunderstanding a little bit on our part that he was actually a contract employee and not a true Anadarko employee, and there was discussion about his legal representation or not, and who Anadarko was covering. So it ended up being suspended. Instead of interviewing him without good representation, regardless of his choice, we suspended that. And that was pretty much our Friday.

I don't know. Like I said, it's blending all together. We didn't do any site work over the weekend, so then now we're, like, to the 24th. The 24th and 25th was more of we need -- the attempts were we need to get to this T, this union, this whatever is underground so where we could verify that second line, if there was one, or if we had a leak somewhere else. Again, because we're trying not to hurt anything, and it's 7-foot deep, we were hydrovacing for two more days.

That first day, the 24th, was a lot of in the spots and we would find it and we would just kind of keep moving up until we got to a point where we knew we were going to have to start

cutting pavement, concrete out in that parking lot, and it kind of got to where we had to be, you know, working with the property owner, who had been gracious with this the whole time. We had no problems ever with the apartment complex, but now we're cutting up the parking lot. Now it's a different deal than just parking some trucks. So there was some logistics of getting that prepared and being able to pull up pavement. So that ended up happening by probably, actually, Wednesday, Tuesday/Wednesday.

Q. So that would be --

MR. PRUNK: Right? I think.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Um-hum.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Tuesday.

MR. PRUNK: Yeah, Tuesday was --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, I'll just help you. In my notes, it was Tuesday when we started cutting.

MR. PRUNK: With that pavement. And we still didn't even actually -- yeah. Again, every time I thought we'd get a lot farther, we didn't get as far. It just took a long time to do it. So Tuesday, pavement up, and then we did finally locate the T and we were able to -- because that, again, had to be excavated back long enough that -- or at the right angle of oppose to be able to climb down in there without doing shoring.

So a big hole, pretty deep. Everything was intact. We did find a fusion-type T, which was, based on what my experts on scene was telling me, was typical of that type pipe installation. There

was nothing noted as an oddity of that T at all. So then we isolated the T out to where we could pressure -- actually, we left part of the T in.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. This is Ravi.

A. Yes.

Q. You had a 1-inch pipe?

A. Yes, 1-inch plastic pipe.

Q. And that's where you discovered the T?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. And it's about two parking spots into that parking lot where we had removed everything. So we were -- we located it. We went ahead and cut it. We were unsure if there was a true -- if it had been cut underneath the apartment complex that it was being built, even though that was slab grade, no basement.

So, what we were doing a lot of the times is when we would get to a spot that we had stuff open, we would take 175-foot electrical fish tape and shove it down the lines and then use it as like a tracer wire internally, inside that pipe, to see if we had continuity, how far we could push it. And we were able to push it clear the whole length of that 175 foot, so we knew that it was continuous underneath the apartment building. We didn't have any problems that there was potential of, you know, whatever, a severed spot underneath any of the buildings. So a lot of that

was taking that time of doing all that.

So, then we ended up leaving part of the T in. We cut pressure-fitted -- or effused pressure fittings back in, as well, so we could start doing air testing.

Q. Can you draw a sketch on a piece of paper and we'll put that as an exhibit?

MR. PRUNK: See, these guys hand me pens, Dave. You just take them out of my pocket. You have one in your pocket. Give me my pen. That's right. That was on the record, right? The transcriber is like, ah, people.

(Pause.)

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Draw the lines.

A. So, do you want just what's inside that pit in the parking lot or do you want --

Q. No, just in the parking lot. Anywhere you cut it, just show it.

A. Okay.

Q. If you want a pencil, you can get a pencil so you can erase if you make a mistake, if you want.

A. Okay.

Q. And use some reference (indiscernible).

A. Yeah.

(Pause.)

Okay. So the Martinez house, and then the exposure house,

and then not to scale.
Q. No, of course not.
A. I call that the well. So there's a window well right here on this, and then there's another window well right there that we did our testing out of. And the property, like I said, not to scale, but the property line is pretty much like this, and then it stops, technically, because this is the park. Those lines terminate right at about the edge of the -- within about a foot of the window well. And it's the two -- there are two lines, and they come out. Let's just say this parking lot kind of curves around like this, and then there's some space -- well, yeah.
Q. Just label them parking lots.
A. Yeah. And then this apartment sits pretty much like this. And as this goes down this driveway, then this side there's -- these are garage units for the apartments, carports.
Q. (Indiscernible) apartments, right?
A. Yeah. So these two lines come in. This one comes out and bends. Okay, I need the other pencil. Sorry. This one comes out like this and then it goes to the road. This second line comes in. And really, the well is a little bit farther this way.
Q. We can move that.
A. So they both bend like this. They're in an arc, a good-sized arc, so that there's no fittings, and then it goes back to the well.
Q. They are 2-inch, right?

A. These are the 2-inch, yep. Okay. And then a single 1-inch, which I don't know how we can make them different, but a second 1-inch comes in like this. And then there's a T-type fitting right there, and then only one line continues with these like that. So that's two 2-inches and a 1-inch.

Q. I guess identify the 1-inch (indiscernible) easier.

A. I'll put poly just so --

Q. Yep.

A. Okay. And then off of this other T, then these two share the same trench, and there's a 1-inch and 2-inch all the way in these ones. So these two share a trench. These two share a trench.

So our first cut, we found this down here. We came back 18 inches. We only removed 18 inches of that, or the length of whatever's in -- it's pretty much 18 inches, but --

Q. Yeah. Yep, approximately 18 inches.

A. Yes.

Q. Yeah, 1 to 2 feet.

A. Okay. So then we did a pressure effusion right here, back to here. That's how we pulled the vacuum. But we didn't know anything of this yet, of this T, other than we thought that there was some type of union. It was not unearthed yet. We pulled a good vacuum, but it would not hold pressure.

Q. Right.

A. Okay? So then by the time we got to the Tuesday, you know, a couple other, we would do -- we were doing this pothole. We're

looking for stuff. We're trying not to tear up concrete. We're looking to see if we can maybe find this, because we were having trouble with the locates as well.

And part of this even, to see what was going on, we pushed a fish tape through this after we did vacuum and pressure and it failed. Well, I could push 175 foot again, but all it told us is we could get past a union. We could feel it. You could feel how far -- like even laying out you knew you hit something, but then it kept on going. So we weren't sure, really, if it was going this way or that way because the locates just wouldn't work because that steel pipe pretty much smokes everything else from happening. But we knew that we could make it through. But this was a hard T. There was no way that it was going to go -- after this, hindsight, there was no way it was going to turn west. So what we ended up doing is just pushing around this corner again.

So once we unearthed this T here, cut the fittings, we left the straight-through part of the T. We didn't break that. We cut out here a foot and we did two, so they were side-by-side like this, and we put the two pressure fittings on those so we kept this as a continuous -- so we even basically tested the two sides of that T, if you know what I mean. Like, so you have your follow-through of a T, and then your T off?

Q. Right.

A. So we did not -- we left these ones intact and we cut this way.

Q. Okay.
A. Pressure fitting on those two. Tape measure again -- or I'm sorry, fish tape. That's when we said okay, at least we know we're good past the building. That saved us from possibly any -- whatever problems that could be underneath that apartment complex.
Q. But I mean, just by passing the tape doesn't mean there are no other perforations.
A. But at least -- we're going down the path of, like, major severs, you know, like from foundation work like we had seen here.
Q. Okay.
A. So you're correct, there could have been a failure, but there was no gross stoppage of the pipe.
Q. This is Ravi with NTSB. No, what I'm saying is, if you have a pipe and the pipe is -- just like here, it's cut, completely severed, you can still pass your line through.
A. No.
Q. You cannot?
A. The soil, it wouldn't go through the soil.
Q. No, no, no, I didn't mean they're 1 foot apart. I'm just saying if I -- they're close to each other, right?
A. Sure. Yes.
Q. The line would still go through.
A. Yes.
Q. So I guess what I'm saying, I mean, all you can tell by doing this is it's not completely plugged.

A. Sure.
Q. But that doesn't basically assure that --
A. Right then it didn't.
Q. Okay.
A. Okay, so we did that first, and then right away we put pressure fittings on it and we pressure-fitted between -- so we had it capped off here, and we had it capped off here, this time. And just because of logistics, we did all of our nitrogen work in that pit so we didn't have to haul bottles and pressure trees around.
Q. Sure.
A. All the pressurizing got done here. So as soon as we isolated that T, we had 5 psi hold for 15 minutes without a drop. So we knew we were solid between here and her. Here and west, again we could not hold the pressure. Okay? So we knew we could pass. I understand what you're saying. We knew we could pass 175 foot of tape, but we could not get it to hold pressure. We had it located on the other side of the building, we still had it located clear out to Oak Meadows over there, and so that was the end of that day. And then the next day, so now we're to -- I know Thursday is when we cut the well out.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That took almost all day.
MR. PRUNK: Yeah. Yeah. Like everything. So kind of suspended that operation for right then. We didn't have any leaks. We didn't have any LELs that we were finding in any of

these pits that we had dug. We didn't feel that there was any more -- we feel pretty isolated at this point that we haven't -- we don't have a source that we're not in control of anymore.

By this time, the warrants had taken place to go ahead and do the removal of the piping of significance off the wellhead. And like I said, that was a better-part-of-a-day project, as well, to get rid of that out of that deal. That was all taken in by the police department and booked into evidence and all that stuff.

At the tail end of that, they were starting to -- the next plan working with Bret was we were going to go out onto just east of Oak Meadows Boulevard before we had to tear up any concrete again. We had a good locate by Topside Locate, Service Locate, and we went -- and they were starting to locate that pipe with just the hydro knife again. And that took a process that they finished up kind of at night, but then we weren't -- we haven't done any more after that.

So then the next day, finally, out at Oak Meadows Boulevard, we opened that up. That pipe was close to right at 12 foot deep. I mean, not -- as near as we could -- you know, doing a quick -- it wasn't surveyed at the depth, but it was tape measure and a straight line, it was right at about 12 foot deep. And got down there, had no readings of LELs or anything like that in the pit at 12 foot deep. That had to be a big old, you know, 12 foot by 45 degrees or better, or 30 degrees. It's a big hole.

Got down there, cut that line, put a pressure fitting to face

back towards the house, and pressure tested it between here and there and we got 5 psi and it held just fine. So over the period of two weeks we've isolated back clear to Oak Meadows. We took the fish tape, at this point, and pushed it further west under the road, and we could only get about, oh, less than 5 feet into the road past the curb and gutter and then we were stuck. So we hit soil or we hit a plug. And based on some history of the town, that sewer line had probably been through there and was more than 16 foot deep. It would have transected that line at that point, and we knew that we were at the end of our line on that side. And that's pretty much where we had stopped with the exhuming of the pipe, of that pipe.

Q. So with the problem you had in not maintaining the pressure here was likely beyond this point where you guys cut?

A. Yes.

Q. Because you had cut the line?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Yes. Because we were able to isolate it just short of the road with the pressure cap and pressurize it again between here and here and it held. And then when it was isolated, it was pressurized between those two and it held. But I would -- we didn't pressurize under the road because we knew we'd already hit, you know, like -- it wasn't going to hold if we pressurized -- if we put another fusion cap and pressurized under the road, we knew

it wasn't going to hold, because that's where our leak had been, probably, from the beginning.

Q. The greenish pipe (indiscernible)?

A. Yes. But the 2-inch pipes have never been pressure tested. They were only brought to atmospheric. They were hot-tapped, the valves were hot-tapped and then they were recapped just to make sure it was at that -- so we never put any pressure on those. Because we had no place that we could tell that they were ever connected to a well at that point. Because we were able to locate those. The only spot that we lost our locate between the far west well, which is like the Coors-something-dash-13, and this well is Coors-something-dash-14.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 6-14 and 6-13.

MR. PRUNK: Yeah. Yeah. So we could -- there was that middle section of the road that he lost his signal, so we had steel coming and then we lost it just in the middle of the road, and then we were able to pick steel back up on the other side. So we were reasonably comfortable with that there was continuity minus the missing piece that sewer work took out 15-plus years ago. And it was far enough away from homes anymore that we didn't feel that we needed to bring it up right away. If it's going to come open, it will be opened at a different time and we didn't need to do it as part of our investigation.

Let me see here. So, where did we make it to, 28?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This is --

MR. PRUNK: 7?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- 26 was --

MR. PRUNK: I think we did more.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- was the last day. We did the excavation the 26th, at the road.

MR. PRUNK: I don't remember anything major or significant that I had after that support type stuff until we got to where we went in to dig inside the foundation at that point. And Dave was heading that portion up and I was just assisting with it. Our next goal was to find the sump pit in the basement, and that was a day process as well. But like I said, I was more in a support role on that, so I would defer to Dave on those. But I was there for that and kind of chasing it around the foundation until we found it.

I was witness to -- we had Jeremy from the survey -- or the sampling company was back out for that day, and we took samples out of the sump pit. We did have one of the lines coming into there max the machine when he drew it, so I know that we had positive findings there, and then that was kind of the end of that part of that week. Like I said, there was nothing significant going on. Every now and then there were surveys happening out there and we'd show up, or line locates.

And there wasn't a lot of other action until we got to Thursday, with more of the setting stuff up for getting ready to have the excavation of the gas appliances. And then Friday I

was -- I had left Friday on vacation for a long weekend, so I wasn't back again.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Now, the line from that road where you cut it to the other well, they still -- both heads cracked in the ground, they're not capped on either side?

A. Yeah, the last cap that we have is the east side of the road and it's the east direction one. There's nothing that's been done to the opposite site. It was marked and filled back in because it was quite the crater and it was right up against the sidewalk.

Q. Sure.

A. And there was just kind of a safety issue concern of leaving that big hole open.

Q. And you had documented the cut ends?

A. Yes.

Q. Of the 1-inch?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you document the cut ends of the other 2-inch lines? Granted, they are out, they were pulled out, but did you document, do any photographic documentation of the other two?

A. The only 2-inch that I've ever seen -- these are not cut. There's no cuts here. The only severed 2-inch pipe that I've ever seen is right there, and then these two ends have caps and valves.

Q. Right. So was this end documented, photographed?

A. With photographs, yeah.

Q. Okay.
A. Yeah. Copious amounts of photographs.
Q. Okay.
A. So, yeah. But no, this under the road has not been earthed to -- unearthed to see.
Q. You've got to blame technology for too many photographs, because these didn't cost you anything.
A. No, I know.
Q. (Indiscernible) like a picture, you can't believe it.
A. Yeah. Yeah.
Q. Now, what ultimate test you did? Were you there to help Dave? You had to take a gas sample that we are going to check and compare.
MR. PUCCETTI: Was Doug there to help?
MR. CHHATRE: Yeah.
MR. PRUNK: For the sump pit or where?
BY MR. CHHATRE:
Q. Well, I understand some gas samples were collected.
A. Yes.
Q. At the well location and at the --
A. Yes. Yes.
Q. So on that.
A. Yeah, so the --
Q. (Indiscernible) you go over that yet, so --
A. Yeah, no, like I said, we were able to utilize the same

technician to draw every time. Kind of early on, there was discussion between us and Anadarko verifying what types of testing was going to be looked for, any unknown peaks and, you know, like what the sample is supposed to be looking for, what lab they were going to use. And it was agreed on to use the DIG, initially. So those were all done by those. I witnessed -- the only stuff that I didn't witness was the first draw off the wells. That just kind of happened. And I don't know, I saw the -- they call those something-tubes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Isometric tubes?

MR. PRUNK: Iso tubes. So I didn't witness those come off, but all of a sudden he had them. He was keeping track of all that. But I witnessed the second time. Because we had to use a secondary lab because the first lab couldn't identify --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The mercaptans.

MR. PRUNK: Yeah, the mercaptans. Sorry, what's the other base -- I'm losing my --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sulfur.

MR. PRUNK: Sulfur. They were not able to do sulfur, so we had to do a second draw. The second lab, although they could have done the test with the iso tubes that we sent, they were not the standard type that they like to use with fittings on them. They would have had to -- it would be destructive to get into them, so they requested if we could pull with their own tubes for the second lab. So that was the only non -- and it was still the same

technician. He just used a different type of iso tube so that he could pull their standard off the top of the wells.

All the other samples, I was witness to Jeremy pulling all of the other. We pulled two of everything. We pulled a soil sample; a long discussion about what to do with it. We took it as a we don't know what we don't know. And we didn't want to not take a soil sample even though there was some argument of whether or not it would ever be valid or usable down the road. It was kind of at that point where everybody agreed, well, let's just take it and we'll protect it at the lab, and then if somebody wants it or knows of a different type testing, it could possibly be used.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Those samples are also at the lab?

A. DIG is holding anything that even wasn't used. So there was duals of everything taken, one was used for testing, and then was used -- or kept as a --

Q. Now, when you say dual samples (indiscernible) separate samples or one sample split into two?

A. No, two separate bags. Like, every -- you know, he would pull a bag, document the two different bags. Yeah.

Q. All right. Anything you want to add?

A. I don't know. I'll probably tell you tonight when I wake up.

Q. That's fine. I'll be here for two days.

A. I know. I know. I know.

Q. And by giving me everything, you can get rid of me.

A. Okay. Yeah.

MR. CHHATRE: From you, sir? Identify.

MR. GRATCOFSKY: I guess just --

MR. CHHATRE: Identify yourself.

MR. GRATCOFSKY: This is Joseph Gratcofsky with PHMSA.

BY MR. GRATCOFSKY:

Q. I guess we know now, in hindsight, that there's also, by the road, or under the road there is an open end to that system, I guess we can call it, that was hooked up to the well. Is there quite a bit of LEL and gas readings in that area?

A. I'd have to defer to COGCC. I don't --

MR. LEONARD: This is Mike Leonard. I think you need to ask that question tomorrow. We'll have some folks here that can answer that.

MR. GRATCOFSKY: All right. Fine.

MR. CHHATRE: Any other questions?

MR. GRATCOFSKY: No. No.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

MR. LEONARD: I have no questions.

MR. PUCCETTI: I have a couple that I'd like to ask just for clarification.

MR. CHHATRE: Identify, please.

MR. PUCCETTI: Excuse me?

MR. CHHATRE: Identify yourself.

BY MR. PUCCETTI:

Q. Dave Puccetti, sorry, Frederick-Firestone Fire Marshal. I know we had an early introduction this morning. Would you just expand a little bit on your education as far as a fire investigator?

A. Yeah. I've been a certified fire investigator for 12, 13 years, I think. I had been investigations prior to that but more as, you know, an assistant investigator. I've been on a fair amount of normal structure fires. I've been on three house explosions in my career, both before I was certified and then one smaller one after.

And there was -- definitely the big noted takeaway from this compared to the other explosions, I think, were everything else I had worked on in the past or really had ever studied, it seems like most of the fuel was kind of consumed during the -- the assumption is the fuel was maybe consumed because there was never really ever a fire on those other explosions. I had collapse or I had, you know, significant damage of some kind of -- you know, obviously the explosion, but there was not a lot of ever fire afterwards, maybe a little bit of smoldering of localized areas or something, but not fire.

And the way this one was so consumed in fuel -- or in fire so early on definitely struck as odd right from the beginning. There was just -- yeah, it was just -- and then some of the footage that was real time based on the neighborhood kids taking YouTube videos 30 seconds after it happened, it was just amazing how much fuel

there was, or how fire -- how much fire there was right away on an explosion like that. Everything else we've had, that I've been around, is there's glass everywhere, or there's walls puckered, or there's, you know, significant damage, but just not ever that amount of flame. That was just odd in my first initial take, was the amount of how involved that house was so quick. Because I wasn't even from my house and I, like I said, I can see it from my house, and it was through the roof.

Q. The other question I had is, you've been a paramedic for quite a while, too. How long have you been a paramedic?

A. Since 2001 I've been a paramedic as well.

Q. Great. Thanks. A little bit to understand, too, is you're our training chief, and just kind of explain your group, too, so the formal training we have for ICS and kind of how that works and the accreditation and certifications we've been through in the last three, four years. You might just explain to the group a little bit about, you know, what we've done and the hours and, you know, the time we've spent to get through a national certification for incident command.

A. Okay. Yeah, so, one, we've all been through the NEMS and all of the ICS that are required all the way through our level of rank, which are based on -- you know, there's different levels as you evolve through the fire service. So we all have chief officer level ICS credentials.

And then we also -- the department, five years ago, adopted

an all-hazards-type approach to incident command, which is called the Blue Card System. And all officers clear through the lieutenant rank are trained in incident command. And, you know, this is on top of what they -- this isn't a beginner-to-hero-type system, this is based on people that already have knowledge and now this is almost like a higher-level degree of education. And it's, you know, it's 55 hours of skills prior to doing week-long lab scenarios, plus continuing education. So there's a high level of incident command.

What it's based on is that only one level of upgrade of command. That's the whole goal, is -- often, the chief-level officers that show up later are put into aid roles or they're accountability or something like that. They're not -- there's definitely -- the old school was whenever the highest chief got there, they took over. And that's truly not the way it is. It's the right person running the right call, and then everybody else is an aid or a safety officer or accountability officer. But pretty extensive, and then continued follow-through all the way through that.

Q. Okay. And then there's one other question. I was going to just have you describe -- it was on the, I think, the warning on the 3rd. I know we got pretty much tied up in kind of what our press release was and there was some concern about a fracking situation with this well. And I think you went out with Anadarko (indiscernible) test.

A. Oh, yeah.
Q. Can you talk a little bit about the well-casing test that you observed?
A. Yeah, there was also a request through various -- for the Braden Head well test, and that was conducted that day and passed. The well passed fine. You know, a lot of that is to just -- even though we really didn't have it, especially by that point, truly didn't feel that there was any true well hazard and that it was more of a pipeline problem, there was a rule out for the community to be able to let them know that the well was actually -- the casing and stuff was --

MR. CHHATRE: Can you tell me what kind of test -- this is Ravi, NTSB. Can you tell me what kind of testing you are doing (indiscernible)?

MR. PRUNK: So I was an observer of -- it was COGCC's engineer came out and they do a -- you would have to defer to them in the exact process, but it was basically, you know, looking at the casing pressure. They evacuated because it can build up a small amount over time. So it had less than 20 psi on it. They bled it and then they recap it again and wait a time period. And I don't know what that is. You'd have to ask them. But it never even picked the needle back up after that, so whatever -- the pressure on that casing had been there for who knows how long.

BY MR. PUCCETTI:
Q. Who was with you during -- this is Dave Puccetti again. Who

was with you during the test?
A. It would have been the COGCC operator, and I have his cards available. And then Bret was out there, as well, and helped with it.
Q. That is Bret Schissler?
A. Yeah, Schissler. Yep.
MR. LEONARD: So this is Mike Leonard. If I may, it was Jason Gomez, the COGCC inspector that witnessed the test.
MR. PUCCETTI: This is Dave Puccetti. That's all I had. Thank you.
MR. CHHATRE: Okay.
MR. McBRIDE: I don't have any questions for you. Thank you.
MR. CHHATRE: No question?
MR. McBRIDE: This is David McBride. Yeah, no questions.
MR. CHHATRE: Okay.
MR. GRATCOFSKY: I just wanted to --
MR. CHHATRE: Sure.
MR. GRATCOFSKY: In the realm of background again --
MR. CHHATRE: Identify.
BY MR. GRATCOFSKY:
Q. This is Joseph Gratcofsky with PHMSA again. We were talking about background and at some point you mentioned you had a construction background. Can you just give us a little background?
A. Yeah. I mean, I got my journeyman electrician's license in,

like, 1992. And then part of the large boom of housing that happened in the early '90s in southern metro area, you know, Highlands Ranch/Castle Rock area, I spent way too much time down there building cookie-cutter houses. But, you know, you had very much of a feel of, like, how that system is built. And so, you know, I've been around open foundation holes or where they're still forming and watching the guys, the excavators cut the pre-holes for the foundations. And so I had a, I don't know, I had a comfortable background of knowing kind of where we were going of, like, even where we were going to find the end of the pipe, because they only cut the hole as big as they need to. They don't cut it a lot bigger.

And so that just was some of my -- I knew that there was French drain. And then, also, my house is relatively new. I mean, it's seven years now, but it's still under the newer code, and I was around for that whole construction and I knew what this area was going to have for either sump or lift stations or French drain. So I had a background in that direction.

Q. Great. Thank you.

MR. CHHATRE: Any other questions?

MR. McBRIDE: Yeah, one follow up to that.

MR. CHHATRE: Go ahead.

BY MR. McBRIDE:

Q. This is David McBride again. When you mentioned they don't dig the holes bigger than they need to, it reminded me of

something. Earlier, you said that when you all first excavated the 2-inch flow lines and the white pipe as it was approaching the back of the house.

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. You said that it was, like, 6 feet from the back of the house, or it was --

A. The cut was.

Q. That's where the ends of the pipe were?

A. The ends of the pipes are. But that's also -- I mean, if I could show you on this?

Q. Sure. Go ahead.

A. So in this, that was 6 foot counting that they have to cut the hole big enough for the window wells to go in. So you have your foundation line, then you have the bulge of your window well, and then it's about another foot is all they -- they put enough so the guy can walk around that window well after it's inserted. And by the time you get to that, it's right around that 5 to 6 foot mark, if that makes sense. So it wasn't flush with it. It was about a foot past, wider than the width of the window well.

Q. So the closest part of the structure of the house that it would come to is about a foot away from the window well exterior?

A. Yeah, but by diagonal it's about 3 feet from the window well, because it wasn't right at the window well.

Q. Gotcha.

A. So it was offside. So the window well was here, here's come,

you know, like the -- definitely the pipe was to the side, so it's like 3 foot this way, and then 5 foot to the foundation.

Q. Okay. I understand.

A. So they usually just kind of cut what they need to on this. Yeah, this was explained to us, as well, before we even got to that. The way that this was done was a little bit different because they had problems getting rid of the dirt so quick. So they actually did about three house worth's of excavation but they only took it down about halfway, and then they stored that dirt. And then each pit was done, but it would have looked like a lot shallower, because they called it basin.

Instead of normally just out in the middle, they would just cut it for that foundation. This one they kind of cut three houses' worth, and then the final, like, 4 foot-ish was the deeper straight down for that foundation. Does that kind of make -- because they knew they were building all three houses at the same time, so they kind of, like, scrape out a basin of it, but only halfway. Because they have a problem of getting rid of their spoil piles too much, so they need it for -- they can't get rid of it because they need it to backfill. But they've got to store it somewhere while they're doing it, so that's the way that they did this. It was not as common as I've seen in the past. Usually, it's just definitely that foundation and that's it.

Q. Okay. That's good enough. Thank you. Appreciate it.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. I'm glad PHMSA brought this up. Since your construction background, same exhibit, just the bottom, show me the plot and explain the French drain or drain tiles, whatever the terminology may be, is it all around the (indiscernible) or over the (indiscernible), or how does that work?
A. It's a full circumference of the -- so it's usually like a 4-inch corrugated black pipe that's perforated and it sits at the very bottom or the footing level of the basement. So, you know, I'm not a concrete expert.
Q. Sure.
A. But a basement is basically three pieces, right? There's footings, then there's the walls, and then the floor is poured in the middle, and they're there separate things done. Footings first, walls, and then they'll usually pour that inside. The French drain --
Q. Draw them separately, if you can.
A. All right. So I'll do a bigger house.
Q. Okay. Draw even if you want, draw even footing and draw whatever details you feel comfortable drawing. I don't want you to feel uncomfortable drawing anything.
A. So this one actually has this tandem garage, right?
Q. Right.
A. So it's that deep of a garage. So this is garage. This is still concrete and ground level. And the sump pump ended up being in this corner right here.

Q. Right.
A. And we don't know exactly how they tie in, like, underneath, but there's two pipes that come into this and, basically, it lays, this French drain lays underneath. And there's the window wells again, and then this window well here.
Q. Another window well. Okay.
A. And they have, I don't know if it's a T or what, because we stopped. You know, I think it comes into a T fitting. And, basically, that tees up for a drain in those so if there's heavy ran it doesn't fill your window wells up, it goes into this system.

And really, it's a system of drains that go nowhere, because the idea is that, hopefully, it evaporates, that there's not so much moisture, right? It's only in the higher moisture areas that they'll truly put a pump in there to evacuate it out. But my house that's only a quarter of a mile away, three-quarters of a mile away, doesn't need a -- mine has been dry for seven years, even through the heavy floods in '13.

So they have these Ts that go through here, and then there's the other window well that's right here, and they T off into these. And then this one, just because I've seen the drawing of this, I know that it goes underneath the driveway and then it comes back in, and it's a full circle. And then there's a separate circle of the interior, as well, so if you had a water leak in the house, it'll drain back into that pit as well.

Q. So we have two French drains, one outside and one inside?
A. Yes. Yes.
Q. Okay. And where does the water gets dumped out, or it just stays in that pipe?
A. It's like a black pit in the -- I don't know, it's 3-foot deep or something like that. It just falls into a pit that --
Q. So all the pipes just goes and opens, it open-ends?
A. Yep. Yep.
Q. Okay. In the pit?
A. Yep. And so, just for your example, again, and those, those pipes would have terminated about like that. So they're kind of diagonal from here, but then about 5 foot here, or 3 foot that way, just by angle.
Q. Now, do these drains ever get completely plugged up? Because, you know, the gutter water would bring some soil with it.
A. So they're encapsulated in, like, a cotton sock, and that's to help keep the silt and stuff from going through the -- it's like a filter, basically.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. Yeah, so it wraps around. And then we found gravel around these pipes, but we never really dug up the French drain completely. But a lot of times there, like, pea gravel, or squeegee they call it, that they lay in that lays around it that's a type of a system.
Q. So this French drain, is it the lowest point in the basement,

or it goes --
A. It goes below the floor.
Q. Below. So give me -- if you feel comfortable, draw me a section of the footing and the wall and how much below the French drain is under the foundation.
A. Pretty much at the level of the footings.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. And footing --
A. And then they waterproof as well. So this is part of that system. So it doesn't go in, they tar or they spray a waterproofing on and then they lay it in there, so it's almost making a -- that's two ways of keeping the moisture out of your house, is to water seal it, and then lay that French drain in that helps direct that water in there and it doesn't -- if they have to do an evacuation out of a sump pit, it can't go into the sanitary sewer. It has to come up and out of the house and it has to go to the gutter system.

And that was -- we saw that in the neighborhood, that some of the people had taken that pipe and ran it into their grass. Because you can't pump from the sump pump into your floor drain in your house. It's against code to just plumb it back into the sanitary sewer.
Q. Where does that water go then?
A. To the gutter.

Q. To the gutter?
A. Yeah. Well --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: To the gutter (indiscernible).
MR. PRUNK: Potentially.
MR. CHHATRE: Right.
MR. PRUNK: It just stubs out of the house.
MR. PUCCETTI: To the swell drain around the house.
MR. PRUNK: Yeah, to the lawn or whatever, but it doesn't go into any pipe after that. If it's lifted out of the sump, then it just -- it has to go outside, to the grass.
MR. CHHATRE: That's all I have. Anybody have any follow-up questions?
(No response.)
If not, thank you so much.
MR. PRUNK: Can I do one quick follow up to something that I thought of at the very beginning?
MR. CHHATRE: Sure.
MR. PRUNK: And nothing major, but just for -- you know, I said that we used that laser, or Black Hills Energy used that laser detector for methane checks. I wanted to say, as well, that at the beginning we were getting lots of these readings, high LELs in the back. And I had a pretty good concern about the validity of those findings right away, initially, because we had so much smoke and I didn't know if the CO or any of that, you know, the particulates in the smoke and stuff.

And, you know, thankfully, Google showed up a manual and they were able to say that it shouldn't have been a problem. So that helped us. But I was taking it as information but not as gospel quite until we knew.

And then by the second day, when we were utilizing it, the smoke was definitely not an issue and it kind of solidified those findings. But there was -- it wasn't just a quick -- that's how it actually came in.

You know, we talked about when we were evacuating the next-door neighbors, and they weren't there at the time of the explosion but their dog was, and they needed to get their dog and some medication and stuff. And we went in there, one of the Black Hills Energy gentlemen went in there, and why we weren't getting good -- we were getting CO readings, which is very common next to a fire house; there's smoke. But we weren't getting any LEL readings until he came in.

Because he's doing ground level, he's shooting the floor, then that's when we started taking the four-gas detectors and going, as I explained, to the penetrations and the sump and that, and that's when we started getting gas findings. So at waist height there was not really gas findings, but between the laser and the four-gas detectors is how we identified that we had gas findings in those houses. So just as a clarification for that.

MR. CHHATRE: Anything else should we know or you think might be helpful that we may not have asked you?

MR. PRUNK: No, I think that's it.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Thank you very much for putting up with us.

MR. PRUNK: Okay. Yep.

MR. CHHATRE: For a long time, and breaks and all that. Thanks again.

MR. PRUNK: Yep. Thank you.

MR. CHHATRE: Off the record.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	HOUSE EXPLOSION IN FIRESTONE, COLORADO, APRIL 17, 2017 Interview of Douglas Prunk
ACCIDENT NUMBER:	DCA17FP005
PLACE:	Longmont, Colorado
DATE:	May 11, 2017

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.

Sharon Estes
Transcriber