

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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MERRIMACK VALLEY RESIDENTIAL GAS

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FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS

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Accident No.: PLD18MR003

SEPTEMBER 13, 2018

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Interview of: ANTHONY MOSCHELLA

Northern Essex Community College
Lawrence, Massachusetts

Monday,
September 17, 2018

APPEARANCES:

ROGER EVANS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

JAMES SOUTHWORTH, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DARREN LEMMERMAN, Investigator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
(PHMSA)

RICHARD WALLACE, Director, Pipeline Safety Division
Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities,

DAVID NELSON, Operations Manager
Columbia Gas

EOIN BEIRNE, Esq.
Mintz Levin Law Firm
(On behalf of Mr. Moschella)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Anthony Moschella:		
By Mr. Evans		5
By Mr. Wallace		11
By Mr. Lemmerman		12
By Mr. Southworth		15

I N T E R V I E W

(11:50 a.m.)

MR. EVANS: We're on the record with Anthony Moschella?

MS. MOSCHELLA: Yep.

MR. EVANS: Good morning. Today is September 17th. It is now 11:50 a.m. My name is Roger Evans. I am the investigator in charge with the National Transportation Safety Board in Washington DC. We are at the Essex Community College here in Lawrence.

This interview is being conducted as part of the investigation into the South Lawrence accident that occurrence with the multiple residential explosions on September 13th, 2018. The Case number for this event is PLD18MR003. This interview is being recorded and may be transcribed at a later date. A copy of the transcript will be provided to the interviewee for review prior to being entered into the public docket.

Mr. Moschella, you are permitted to have one other person present during the interviews. This is a person of your choice; supervisor, friend, family member or nobody at all.

Please state the spelling of your name as well as the person you have selected to be present during the interview.

MR. MOSCHELLA: A-N-T -- A-N-T-H-O-N-Y, M-O-S-C-H-E-L-L-A.

MR. EVANS: And do you go by Anthony?

MR. MOSCHELLA: Yeah.

MR. EVANS: Okay. And who do you have representing you?

MR. MOSCHELLA: Eoin.

1 MR. EVANS: Okay. And can you please introduce yourself sir?

2 MR. BEIRNE: Eoin Beirne of the Mintz Levin Law Firm in
3 Boston on behalf of Mr. Moschella. E-O-I-N, B-E-I-R-N-E.

4 MR. EVANS: Let's go around the room now and have attendees
5 introduce themselves with spelling of their name and their
6 affiliation.

7 MR. WALLACE: Richard, R-I-C-H-A-R-D, Wallace, W-A-L-L-A-C-E,
8 I'm the Director of the Massachusetts Department of Public
9 Utilities, Pipeline Safety Division.

10 MR. NELSON: David Nelson, D-A-V-I-D, N-E-L-S-O-N, Columbia
11 Gas, Operations Manager.

12 MR. LEMMERMAN: Darren, D-A-R-R-E-N, Lemmerman, L-E-M-M-E-R-
13 M-A-N. I'm with PHMSA Accident Investigation Division.

14 MR. SOUTHWORTH: Jim, J-I-M, Southworth, S-O-U-T-H-W-O-R-T-H.
15 I'm an investigator with the Rail, Pipeline and Hazardous
16 Materials Division at the National Transportation Safety Board.
17 I'm out of Washington, D.C.

18 INTERVIEW OF ANTHONY MOSCHELLA

19 BY MR. EVANS:

20 Q. Thanks again Anthony for coming in today. Before we begin,
21 we'd like to just get some baseline information. Can you tell us
22 who your employer is?

23 A. Feeney Brothers.

24 Q. And can you please spell that?

25 A. F-E-E-N-E-Y, Brothers, B-R-O-T-H-E-R-S.

1 Q. Okay, and the job title that have with that company is?

2 A. Truck Driver.

3 Q. Okay, and I guess you're a CDL type person?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay, and how long have you been with this --

6 A. Just over 5 years.

7 Q. Okay, and have you been in that same capacity the entire
8 time?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay, and, the, the type of work that you do, is it always to
11 supply, transport materials and things like that for gas
12 restoration type jobs, where you have excavations and stuff like
13 that?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay, and, on the day of the event, when we had all the, like
16 the last witness said, going sideways things, did, what time did
17 you arrive that day, and kind of give us a timeline of what you
18 experienced, what you may have heard, who you saw, people you
19 talked to, from the day you arrived on the scene?

20 A. I just went to get the truck at a little before 7, maybe a
21 quarter of 7. The job is like 10 minutes away, so I got to the
22 job about 7, and parked my truck. Then we just met behind Billy's
23 truck and had like a tailgate meeting. We have a tailgate meeting
24 every day. And, then we start putting signs out, and that, after
25 that we pull the plates for the job. So, then after we pull the

1 plate for the job, I get my truck, like near the hole in place,
2 and I just start getting out tools ready for the job. That's what
3 I do. Start getting the tool, all the tools out that we need for
4 the day.

5 Q. Okay, and just for the record, describe your truck. Is it,
6 is it a enclosed or --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- it is enclosed truck, like a van.

9 A. Yes. Yeah, it's like a van, so inside is where all the tools
10 are.

11 Q. Okay. And then one you disburse these tools out to the
12 workers and all that, what, what's, what do you do next?

13 A. I just start, well we have like the bags, like the towers
14 right here, so I start to get those ready.

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. That's what I do inside the truck.

17 Q. Okay, so you, you start preparing what they may need to, to
18 continue forward.

19 A. Yeah. Yep.

20 Q. Okay. Okay, and, let's go back for a minute. The time that
21 you think that the metal was pulled away from the, the dig, what
22 would you say that would be?

23 A. The metal?

24 Q. Yeah. When they pulled the metal away from the --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The plates.

1 Q. The plates.

2 A. Oh, when we pull the plates?

3 Q. I'm sorry, the plates.

4 A. I would say like 7:30ish. I'm not sure exactly, but around
5 that.

6 Q. Okay, okay, and then when, once the, all the tools were
7 disbursed, what, and you were struck kind of with; Okay, perhaps
8 nothing more to disburse, any idea what that, time that would have
9 been?

10 A. I'm not, I don't know. I don't know the times honestly, but,
11 I don't know, because I'm still like, for, from the time we begin
12 it, it still felt like an hour I'm preparing things in the back of
13 the truck that they need, so I don't know exactly a time, you
14 know, it's not like just grabbing a wrench and putting it out
15 there --

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. -- it's more than that.

18 Q. Yeah, okay, but did you, did you have a coffee break that
19 day?

20 A. I honestly don't even remember if we had coffee break that
21 day --

22 Q. (Indiscernible)

23 A. I honestly don't remember.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. How about lunch break? Do you have it?

2 A. No, we didn't have lunch that day. I know we didn't have
3 lunch.

4 Q. You didn't take a lunch break?

5 A. I don't -- I didn't have a lunch, I know that.

6 Q. Okay, were you there when the, when the gas was released out
7 of the, were you present when the gas was released in, out of the
8 piping there?

9 A. What do you mean when the gas was released?

10 Q. They, during this day, they had a problem with the gas and
11 they had to valve it off and all that. Were you there for that?

12 A. Yeah, I was there the whole time. I was there the whole day.

13 Q. Okay, okay. Do you have any recall as to, as, I mean, none
14 of this, you can't match this with any time stamps in your mind?
15 I mean, with any accuracy, I guess, because --

16 A. I don't know exactly what point you're talking about?

17 Q. No, I mean anything along the day that you know of. I handed
18 this to this guy at this time, I know I took this and put this in
19 the truck at this time, after lunch, but you didn't have lunch,
20 so, and you don't know if you had a coffee break, so we're just
21 trying to get a reference point of when you may have been
22 assisting these people and what time --

23 A. I was assisting them all day. That's why, you know --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. So right from, like I said, we pulled the plates at 7:30,

1 right from then, I'm in the back of the truck working, getting
2 tools out --

3 Q. Right.

4 A. -- and getting stuff ready for the job, you know.

5 Q. So you're the -- they'll call for something and you turn back
6 and get that for them.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. They'll call for something else; Hey, we're done with this,
9 you can take this back --

10 A. Yep.

11 Q. -- those types of things, right?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay. So we had a situation where, you know, during the day,
14 there were sirens.

15 A. There was sirens?

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Do you recall sirens?

19 A. Yeah, I recall sirens.

20 Q. Do you have any ideas of what time that might have been?

21 A. I know it was at the end of the day. Time, I have no, I
22 don't know the time exactly, but it had to be like around 4
23 o'clock I would say, something like that.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I don't know exactly thought. I know it was the end, the end

1 of our process, or of our day, I don't know exactly the time.

2 Q. Um-hum. Did you see anything like smoke or anything on the
3 horizon?

4 A. Yeah, we seen smoke.

5 Q. Yeah?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Do you recall when that was?

8 A. I don't, it was like around that time when we seen,
9 everything seemed to happen like kind of quickly, so you know, I
10 don't know the time exactly, but, yeah, towards the end of our day
11 I would call it.

12 Q. When you heard the sirens, were the, were the crew, were the
13 crew guys that were down in there, were they out and on the ground
14 now, whenever the sirens were heard by you?

15 A. Were they out on the ground?

16 Q. Were they out of the pit? And now they're standing by --

17 A. Yeah, I think so. I know I was.

18 Q. Okay. Do you actually go in the pit very much, or no?

19 A. No.

20 Q. No.

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay, that's all I have.

23 BY MR. WALLACE:

24 Q. Richard Wallace speaking. Are you allowed to perform any
25 tasks other than providing tools, equipment on the job?

1 A. Not really, I, that's all I pretty much do.

2 Q. Have you had any training to do anything else?

3 A. I just have the basic training. That's why I don't do any of
4 that stuff.

5 Q. What is the basic training that you've been given?

6 A. It's, I don't even know what they're called but, more safety
7 precautions, I would say, for abnormal operating, recognizing that
8 I would say.

9 Q. Did, did you take a coffee break in the morning?

10 A. I honestly don't remember if we took a coffee break that day.
11 I really don't.

12 Q. What about a lunch break?

13 A. I don't think we took lunch. I know I didn't have lunch that
14 day.

15 Q. All right. That's all I have. Thank you.

16 MR. NELSON: I'm all set.

17 BY MR. LEMMERMAN:

18 Q. Okay, I got a few questions here tool guy. I used to be a
19 tool guy. It's a great job, right? So, I'm trying to get some
20 timeline here and understand what you might have heard in your
21 environment, so, I'm guessing when they pull these bags out, the
22 last two, that we've seen this photo --

23 A. These two guys?

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. They probably handed them, handed them to you and you put
2 them in the truck, right?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. They hand them over to you, here you go, take care of them
5 type of thing?

6 A. Yeah, they, a, yeah, they usually pass me these and I break
7 them down, and just put them away.

8 Q. Yeah, so when they pulled those two last bags, did you hear
9 anything in the environment at that time like --

10 A. No.

11 Q. -- sirens, or people coming out of the houses type of thing?

12 A. No, not that I recall, no.

13 Q. Okay. Then the next step, we understood, is they cut out the
14 by-pass? The plastic line?

15 A. Yeah, I honestly don't know what the step was, because I was
16 in the truck, but --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. So I was, you probably weren't involved with that because
20 it's not a tool.

21 A. Yeah, I don't do that.

22 Q. Did they also, the next step that they did was that they,
23 they pulled the gauges out. I'm guessing they probably handed
24 you're the gauges to put in the truck?

25 A. Yep.

1 Q. So at that point in the timeline did you hear or see anything
2 going on?

3 A. No.

4 Q. No? Okay, so the next step would have been, they had pulled
5 that plug out of the by-pass, and that's when the gas started
6 blowing out loudly. Do you recall --

7 A. I recall hearing it. Like I said, I don't know exactly when,
8 because I was in the back of the truck, but I do recall hearing
9 it.

10 Q. Totally fine, yeah, I'm not asking on a clock type time frame
11 here. I just want to, what was going on time frame?

12 A. Then I would say it was after the gauges. I remember some
13 body passed me a gauge and then, I don't know how long after, not
14 too long after that, I heard the noise.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So I knew something was wrong.

17 Q. So then they had asked for some stuff to plug that. Did you
18 help them get any parts to plug the blowing gas?

19 A. I didn't help them, no. I think there was still some stuff
20 out there, maybe. I didn't help them with that, no.

21 Q. So just a relative time frame, after you start hearing the
22 gas blowing, would you have might have heard sirens or people?
23 Any idea?

24 A. Quickly after that, 5, 10, 15 minutes, it wasn't long, I know
25 that.

1 Q. Okay. Okay, I think that works for me. Thanks.

2 A. Okay.

3 MR. EVANS: Anything, Jim?

4 BY MR. SOUTHWORTH:

5 Q. Just, so 10 or 15 minutes after you heard the rush of the
6 gas, that's when you could hear sirens and stuff? Is that what
7 you'd say?

8 A. Yeah. I would say around then.

9 Q. Okay, and then did you, did you involve, I'm sorry, it's Jim
10 Southworth. Did you, were you involved in any of the checks that
11 they made to the houses in the area when they started getting
12 people out?

13 A. What do you mean checks? Like?

14 Q. Well going to the houses and --

15 A. Yeah, yeah.

16 Q. -- getting people out --

17 A. Oh. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. We all tried to take a part in that.

20 MR. SOUTHWORTH: That's all I have.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Okay, that's all I have. I'm all
22 set. Thank you.

23 MR. MOSCHELLA: Thank you, guys.

24 MR. EVANS: Good, that concludes the interview. Thank you
25 very much. Appreciate it.

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MR. MOSCHELLA: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: MERRIMACK VALLEY RESIDENTIAL GAS
 FIRES AND EXPLOSIONS
 SEPTEMBER 13, 2018
 Interview of Anthony Moschella

ACCIDENT NUMBER: PLD18MR003

PLACE: Lawrence, Massachusetts

DATE: September 17, 2018

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.



Deborah Dowling Sweigart
Transcriber