UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
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RESIDENTIAL GAS EXPLOSION	*	
ON SPRINGDALE LANE, MILLERSVILLE,	*	Accident No.: DCA17FP006
PENNSYLVANIA, JULY 2, 2017	*	
	*	

Interview of: JOSE FIGUEROA

Blue Rock Fire Hall
Millersville, Pennsylvania

Tuesday,
July 25, 2017

APPEARANCES:

ROGER EVANS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

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National Transportation Safety Board

RICHARD DOWNS, Survival Factors Group Chair
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TERRI COOPER SMITH, Fixed Utility Evaluation
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(On behalf of Mr. Figueroa)

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

(8:22 a.m.)

MR. EVANS: Good morning. Today is July 25. It is now 8:22 a.m. My name is Roger Evans. I'm an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board in Washington, D.C. We're at the Blue Rock Fire Hall in Millersville, PA. This interview is being conducted as part of the investigation into the residential gas explosion on Springdale Lane here in Millersville that occurred on July 2, 2017. The NTSB Case Number is DCA17FP006.

The purpose of the investigation is to increase safety and not assign fault, blame or liability. The NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from legal actions. 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.

Jose Figueroa --

MR. FIGUEROA: Yeah.

MR. EVANS: -- you are permitted to have one other person present during the interviews. This is a person of your choice -- attorney, supervisor, friend, family member or nobody at all. Please state for the record who you have selected.

MR. FIGUEROA: I have selected Dane Jaques.

MR. EVANS: And Dane, the spelling of your name and --

MR. JAQUES: Sure. First name is D-A-N-E; last name is J-A-

Q-U-E-S. With Steptoe & Johnson.

MR. EVANS: Okay. Well, thank you for agreeing to talk to us today. Jose, can you give us the spelling of your name and your job title, please?

MR. FIGUEROA: Yes. My name is J-O-S-E, Jose. Figueroa is spelled F-I-G-U-E-R-O-A. And my title is operations manager.

MR. EVANS: Okay. I'd like to go around the room, starting with Ed here, and introduce yourselves, both with your name and title.

MR. KENDALL: Sure. Edward Kendall, K-E-N-D-A-L-L, Attorney, NTSB.

MR. DOWNS: Richard Downs, NTSB Survival Factors Group Chair.

MS. COOPER SMITH: Terri Cooper Smith, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Fixed Utility Evaluation Engineer III.

MR. MAURER: Gary Maurer, Manager of Operations Programs, UGI Utilities.

MS. RITNER: Annette Ritner, Compliance Officer, Harrisburg area office for OSHA.

MR. BIERMAN: Matthew Bierman, Compliance Officer, OSHA, Harrisburg.

MR. KRIEGER: Bob Krieger, vice president of operations, UGI Utilities.

MR. JAQUES: And Dane Jaques. I've already introduced myself.

MR. EVANS: Okay. Before I begin, I would like to make a

statement about -- there are two OSHA individuals in the room today. And they will be silent people in this room and not participating. They won't be asking question; they'll just be taking notes. Okay.

Oh, excuse me. I'd like to correct that. The OSHA people will not be taking notes.

INTERVIEW OF JOSE FIGUEROA

BY MR. EVANS:

Q. Okay, Jose. Let's find out a little bit about yourself. First off, give us your full job title again.

A. It's operations manager.

Q. Okay. And how long have you been in that position?

A. I've been in that position for approximately 6 to 7 months.

Q. And prior to that?

A. Prior to that, I was in -- a supervisor.

Q. And in that position, what -- how many months or how many years?

A. All together, about a year, year and a half, actually.

Q. And prior to the supervisor role?

A. I was a training instructor for UGI.

Q. And how many years at that?

A. For 10 years.

Q. Okay. And your total time with the firm?

A. Twenty-seven years and counting.

Q. And what did --

A. Twenty-seven-plus years.
Q. Okay. As far as the majority of the time outside of this -- what you've done so far, what were your other positions?
A. Well, my first 15 years at UGI was as a -- was working the construction department in various roles.
Q. Okay. And what is your background?
A. My background?
Q. High school, Ph.D., whatever, GED?
A. I have a high school, 2 years of college. Got my associate's degree.
Q. And what is your associate's degree in?
A. It's liberal arts. Letters, arts and sciences.
Q. So your role, can you describe for us, as your -- as an operations manager, what your responsibilities are?
A. My responsibilities are to oversee the day-to-day operations of the utility department, the construction and maintenance department, and the capital work that's conducted in the Lancaster and Lebanon areas.
Q. Okay. And the party you report to, the name and title?
A. I report to Dan Huegel, who is the senior operations manager.
Q. And how do you spell his name?
A. H-U-E-G-E-L.
Q. Okay. Who did you report to prior to reporting to Don?
A. To Dan?
Q. Dan, I mean.

A. Yeah, Daniel. Prior to reporting to him, I reported to Brian Morris, who is now my counterpart.
Q. And what's Brian's title?
A. He is the operations manager for Harrisburg, Middletown area.
Q. Okay. So as far as your job as operations manager, is it all regionalized? And can you tell us what regions -- how it's all set up?
A. It's Lancaster Country, Lebanon. Those are the two areas that I handle.
Q. Lancaster and Lebanon.
A. Yeah, Lancaster County.
Q. Okay. And how many people report to you?
A. Directly, four. Indirectly, about 40.
Q. Okay. And those four that report to you, what are their job titles?
A. They're supervisors. One's a construction and maintenance supervisor. Actually, I'm sorry. Three of them are titled construction and maintenance supervisors, and one is a utility supervisor.
Q. Okay, so I guess it's broken down to, what, new construction versus maintenance?
A. Correct. One is a supervisor for the capital work. There's one who's a supervisor for maintenance. The other one is a C&M supervisor, and he handles restoration and locates. And the utility supervisor.

Q. Okay. And what is your relationship to the deceased and to those two individuals that were injured that day?
A. I am -- to the deceased, I am his boss, so to speak. I am his supervisor once removed. I am his supervisor's supervisor. Yes.
Q. And the other two, same?
A. And the other two, the other two I'm the -- Jason Trimble, I am his direct supervisor. He is a supervisor of maintenance. And the other gentleman, I'm, again, twice removed his -- I'm his supervisor's supervisor, so --
Q. Okay. So let me get this straight. So it's like there's two kind of groups represented that day --
A. Correct.
Q. -- when they went to the scene?
A. Correct.
Q. Correct?
A Sort of, yeah. It varies. These gentleman are -- they play different roles. The deceased is an inspector who reports directly to the capital supervisor, who reports to me. One of the gentlemen who was injured, he reports to the maintenance supervisor, who reports to me. And the other gentleman who was injured reports to me directly, as he was a supervisor himself.
Q. I see. I see. So for those roles that -- for those three, what -- how many years' experience does it take to have that role of, you know, for -- let's go one by one. Might as well get their

names out. What are their names again? It's Jason --
A. Jason Trimble.
Q. Yeah.
A. Is the supervisor.
Q. Okay, and the next one was -- the deceased is --
A. Rick Bouder.
Q. Rick Bouder.
A. Richard Bouder.
Q. And he is -- his title --
A. He was a mechanic III.
Q. Okay. And the other person?
A. Robert Lopez.
Q. Okay. And his title again?
A. He's a mechanic II.
Q. Mechanic II. Okay. So let's start with Jason. Jason, for him to be a supervisor, what's the typical background, years' experience it takes to be a Jason in your group?
A. Well, it varies. It could be anywhere from 10 to, in my -- personally was about 25 before I became a supervisor. So it varies on opportunity and competence, obviously.
Q. Right. Are there pecking orders along the way before this person becomes supervisor? Does he take several steps to get to that point?
A. Not necessarily. But generally that's the way it goes. You obviously fulfill certain roles in the C&M department and prove

yourself and display your, you know, competence.
Q. So with 6 to 7 months as an operations manager, just for the record, you do not have an active role in these assignments just for their job positions? That was not --
A. I do for Jason.
Q. Oh, for Jason. So Jason was the person that you actually put in that role?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. But the other two you did not?
A. The other two, not directly. There's a -- being that they are part of a union, their progression is more or less dictated.
Q. Okay. So the mechanic II and III are union people?
A. They're union people. Correct.
Q. And Jason is not union?
A. And he is not, no.
Q. Okay. Thank you for that. And just -- we're going to get -- we're going to be interviewing Jason soon, so -- but generally, Jason's years' experience in that arena, what is that?
A. He was a mechanic III at the time of his promotion. Not sure if that's exactly what you're asking me.
Q. So he went from mechanic III to supervisor.
A. To supervisor.
Q. Okay. So he went from union to non-union.
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Okay. What are the qualifications that you set, and

how often do they have to, you know, do they have to be qualified for these types of jobs? Let's focus on Jason. Does he have to have a set of courses and training and -- all along the way?
A. To be a supervisor?
Q. Yes.
A. I would say that his experience and his time at C&M is the bulk of his qualifications. It's how familiar you are with the, with the work that you are going to be supervising.
Q. But is there a structure that the supervisors have to follow as far as, you know, basic supervisory skills, basic EEOC type things or any of that stuff?
A. Not typically, no.
Q. Okay. And how about Rick Bouder and Robert? What are their -- I know that you're saying it's a progression, so I trust they went from mechanic I, II and now III?
A. Yes. There's a utility -- there's a start. Typically, you're there for 5 years before you become a utility or a mech II. Actually, it's -- it could be actually a lot longer than that. And then -- but there's a progression. And it's also competence. The number of operator qualification skills that you've gained, the amount of experience that you've gained -- it's a progression.
Q. As far as the, like, ops manual, when they talk about evacuations or the type of gas call they're going for -- odor and all that, that training that talks about that, where in their careers do they get that training?

A. They get it almost immediately.
Q. And is there retraining every --
A. Annual.
Q. Annual. Annual retraining?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So anyone who's ever going to be doing a -- answer an odor call or a, you know, gas problem in a home or whatever, they will have been trained 1 year back normally. We should be able to get a document that says their last training date was this date?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And that training consists of -- is it CBT or computer-based, or is it classroom or is it open book? What type of training is that?
A. It's classroom.
Q. It's classroom. And how many people would typically be in a class?
A. It can range anywhere from 5 to 20.
Q. Okay. And a written test, when they take that class?
A. There is a written test.
Q. Is there a retrain if they score a certain score?
A. Yes. I believe 80 percent is the threshold.
Q. They have to score 80 percent. Okay.
The instructor that -- and since you were a training instructor 10 years, did you teach that class before?
A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And when you taught that class, is that a class that's -- you know, is it an hour? Is it 20 minutes? Is it 2 hours? Is it -- can you recall how long that --
A. Half a day.
Q. Half a day.
A. Yeah.
Q. And when you do --
A. About 4 hours. I mean --
Q. Okay, 4 hours. Okay. So when you give that class as a training instructor there, is that class a PowerPoint, hands-on? Do you do any sort of mock-up drills where you do something besides just the classroom?
A. It's predominantly classroom. There's no mock-up. There's no hands-on.
Q. Okay. And the test is handwritten or is it a computer?
A. It was a handwritten test up to maybe 3 years ago. And then we went to a software that you could actually answer the questions via a -- I'm not sure of the name of the software, but it's --
Q. Like an iPad type --
A. Well, it's almost like a remote control, where you can answer A, B, C, D or E. That type of --
Q. Oh, oh, yeah. I know what you mean. Yeah. Okay. Okay.
So that training, what is that training called, that allows someone to be qualified to go into a home and do that thing for -- what do you call it? What exactly is the name of that training?

MR. FIGUEROA: Can I, can I pause here for a second? I'd like to confer with --

MR. EVANS: Off the record.

(Off the record.)

(On the record.)

MR. EVANS: On the record.

BY MR. EVANS:

Q. Okay. The name of that training?

A. Okay. The name of the annual training is emergency response. It's for Task 27. But I wanted to be clear that that is not the only training, and that training in and of itself does not qualify someone to respond to leaks and emergencies. There's a whole other set of things that we do to qualify a person to do that.

Q. Parallel to that. Okay.

A. Parallel and prior to their -- much earlier to their qualification.

Q. Okay. So let's go on from there, and tell us about your day. When you woke up that day, from the very first moment that you heard about this, where were you? And every single little detail that you can provide us going forward.

A. I'll do my best. The first thing I remember is I was just preparing -- I was having family over for the July 4th weekend. And I received a call, which I had missed, from Sean Fitzpatrick. He had called me at approximately 12:36 -- or actually, exactly. I have it on my phone. It's 12:36, is when he called me. And I

missed that call.

I then received a call at about 2 minutes later, thereabouts -- 12:38, perhaps -- from dispatch. And I picked up the phone, and they had informed me that there had been an explosion at the -- at Springdale, and that Sean Fitzpatrick was trying to get a hold of me. I then ran upstairs, put all my clothing on and attempted to call him en route. I didn't get a hold of him the first time. It dialed the wrong number. It was a voice thing.

But he returned -- he called me back at about 12:40. He called me back, told me what was going on, and if he -- he wanted to shut the valve to that cul-de-sac, the main valve. I asked him a few questions, mainly, are you confident that that valve will take care of the problem? He explained to me that it was a one-way feed into that cul-de-sac, and I gave him the instruction, go ahead and shut it down.

On my way out, I received a few more calls from Dan Huegel. I believe Chris Brown may have called me. I can look in my phone and find out for certain. But I had received a few more calls letting me know what they were going to do.

I arrived there at approximately 1300, maybe a little thereafter. Fire department was already on-scene. They had quite a few engines on-site, so I had to park quite a ways away from the actual site. On my way down towards the cul-de-sac, I saw -- I believe it was Jason first, on a stretcher. I asked him, you know, how he was doing. I asked him -- I told him that he would

be okay, reassured him. I can't recall exactly what he said. He was sort of mumbling, and he was in very, very bad shape.

And then I saw -- I obviously was walking along with them, let them go. Then I saw Rob, and I had another -- I had a similar conversation with him. And he had requested that I call his wife Megan and to call his father-in-law, who also works at UGI, and to let them both know that he was not on-scene; he would be going to the hospital.

After that, I approached the cul-de-sac. I saw that the house was still in flames and they were fighting the fire at the time. Can't recall who from UGI was already there. I believe I spoke with Ken Henry, and he informed me that they couldn't find Rick Bouder. Walked up to the very front, where there was a -- they sort of had it barricaded off. And I believe I spoke to someone from the fire department. I don't remember names. There was quite a few emergency personnel there at the time.

A small group of UGI folks had gathered over a period of time, and I informed them to begin shutdown process. So the -- I sent them along both sides of the street to shut down all the valves. While this was in progress, I was standing there with a police officer and spoke to him, I saw that they were still searching. I believe they were searching for Rick Bouder, and I asked them if they had indeed found him. And he nodded affirmative. And then I asked him if he was alive, and he shook his head no.

At some -- I was standing there for some time, and eventually, they took me down and I saw Rick's -- identified him. From there, I got back behind the barricade, and the guys had finished. We sort of did a vigil on the side. And then the fire department at some point, maybe 13:40, approximately 13:40, they, along with one of the UGI personnel, began to check of the other homes. I guess they had -- by this time, it was safe enough to do so. They checked the other homes for the presence of gas or residual. And it all came back and it was good.

I'll be honest with you. From here on out, it's sort of a blur. There were a lot of people arriving.

Q. Okay. That's fine.

A. You know, a lot of folks taking charge.

Q. No, it's been wonderful so far, so no issue. I have a question. You said that they were going to address a valve. What valve? Can you describe where and --

A. Yes.

Q. -- what they did with that valve?

A. It was at Burr Oak. It was a valve at the corner of Burr Oak and Springdale. I believe it's Burr Oak. I'm not sure. It was the main valve for the 2-inch line that's fed the cul-de-sac, the 2-inch main line that fed the cul-de-sac.

Q. So at that point you basically shut gas off to that entire area?

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. And had you talked to any neighbors when you were there?
A. Yes, I did. I talked to a few. Some of them mentioned that they were there for the whole time. Some were outside, actually witnessed the whole thing. I don't know what -- the topic of the conversation was obviously the explosion, was everyone all right, that sort of thing. It wasn't anything technical or --
MR. EVANS: Okay. That's all I have.
MR. DOWNS: Richard Downs, NTSB.
BY MR. DOWNS:
Q. Mr. Figueroa, I have questions for you, if I may.
A. Sure.
Q. You mentioned the qualifications for promotion were generally time and service. Is that an accurate representation? How many years you have and experience? Is that pretty much the determination? Are those qualifications --
MR. JACQUES: I'm sorry. Can you answer verbally?
MR. FIGUEROA: Yes. It's --
MR. DOWNS: I'm sorry. Verbal answers.
MR. FIGUEROA: To a, to a degree. Once you are a utility III, then you have -- to become a mech II, a mechanic II, you have to show competence. It's just not an automatic -- so we assess whether the person is really qualified, whether they are qualified to turn on and do some other tasks. If they're not, then we hold them back until we feel that they're --

BY MR. DOWNS:
Q. And does the supervisor make that assessment --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and that promotion? Are those promotions, assessment processes documented somewhere by UGI?
A. We do.
Q. Is it in the personnel manual, or exactly where would one find that promotion criteria? Do you, do you happen to know that?
A. I would imagine they'd be in the employee files, in their folders.
Q. Not for, not for a given employee. I'm just saying for the process itself.
A. In general.
Q. In other words, for a given mechanic be promoted from a III to a --
A. From a utility III to a II.
Q. From a I to a II to a III, what criteria -- specifically, what tests would be performed for that person to make that grade increase?
A. I think -- I don't know of other places that it could possibly be, but I know that in the union handbook, in the union agreement --
Q. So the union --
A. -- there is a matrix that shows the different --
Q. So the union agreement stipulates that promotion criteria?

A. It shows the different -- it shows the different skill set that an individual has to have at any given level.
Q. So it's a union agreement, not a criteria of the company itself?
A. Well, it's an agreement between the company and the union.
Q. Agreement between the company and the union.
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay, very good. Would UGI field employees such as the crew here on Springdale, would they have a map showing the piping and valve situation in a given area?
A. Yes.
Q. Where would that map normally be kept?
A. It's on their MDTs, on their computer, ruggedized computer.
Q. It's a computer screen in their truck?
A. MapFrame.
Q. Okay. And it would be up to the employees of that crew to be able to access that map and be able to see where the valves were and the meters or whatever they were working on in that area? You had mentioned --
MR. JAQUES: I'm sorry. Let's get a verbal answer.
MR. FIGUEROA: Yes. Correct, yes. I'm sorry.
MR. DOWNS: Thank you.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And speak up.
BY MR. DOWNS:
Q. And you mentioned in your testimony that there was an

individual that you spoke to about shutting the gas off --
A. Yes.
Q. -- feed. Would that person likewise have that computer screen --
A. Yes, he would.
Q. -- or would that person -- that person would in their vehicle?
A. Yes.
Q. And that person merely was asking you for the authorization to shut it off?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. NTSB has determined in discussions with the fire department that they had asked a UGI employee to immediately shut off the gas feed to that particular length of properties along there. And what it's sounding like here is that that individual is the person that you were referring to that contacted you for approval. Correct me if I am wrong. Can that person in the field close the valve on their own if you would not be available, or does that person absolutely need to connect with you first to get authorization?
A. Our gas operation manual allows for an individual in the field to close the -- under certain circumstances to, yes, close -- shut the valve off.
Q. And those circumstances would be, say, a fire department request?

A. No, that's not spelled out in the, in the operations manual. It's competence. It's the number of years that they've been there, obviously, their ability to read and understand the system.
Q. I see.
A. And the situation in which they are shutting the valve.
Q. And this individual that requested authorization to close the valve, is that a supervisor?
A. No, he was a, he is a mechanic II.
Q. Mechanic II. And would a mechanic II normally have those competencies that you mentioned?
A. Yes.
Q. So you would have good confidence that person would be able to close the valve?
A. Yes.
Q. Very good. What kind of gas meter equipment is held or used by UGI field personnel when they're working this particular type of job?
A. What type of gas meter?
Q. Yeah. The handheld meters to measure the gas in a given area.
A. Okay. They have some have flame ionization units. Flinpack (ph.) 2000, I believe it's called. I'm not exactly sure of the name. They also have GMIs, which are -- it's a heat GMI unit, gas combustible indicator. Combustible gas indicator.
Q. Is that it?

A. I'd say those are the two, yeah.
Q. So they would have -- these are both handheld devices?
A. Yeah.
Q. And they would be typically used when they go to a residence to check the gas in the particular area?
A. Yes.
Q. Is it an instant readout?
A. Yes.
Q. Very good. Once the gas is shut off in a given neighborhood, is there a purge procedure that can be engaged to remove the excess gas that's in the line between the valve and the various properties that you want to address?
A. A purge procedure?
Q. In other words, the procedure that one would be able to remove the gas that's in the line between a valve and particular -- say, a fire location.
A. No, there's nothing written for a purge procedure under these circumstances.
Q. There's nothing written for the purge procedure?
A. There's a purge procedure, but they're generally for a maintenance project. And so an engineer would write out a purge procedure where he would introduce either nitrogen or air to the system in order to purge the system. Under these conditions, where you're shutting off gas due to an emergency, there's nothing that's written for that. Because obviously, the footages aren't

known. There are all these factors that aren't known, so there's nothing specific --

Q. So there's no, there's no written procedure, but is it a -- is it an understood procedure that your field people would engage? What I'm getting at here is that the fire department asked for the gas to be shut off, and it took a little while for the gas to be shut off. And it was indicated to the fire department that they would -- that the UGI employee was going to be engaging a purge procedure to try to expediently remove as much gas as quickly as possible.

And that's what I'm getting at here, whether there's a procedure written in your process or your SOPs, or whether it's a field process that your field mechanics would know by experience and they would somehow be able to engage a process to bleed off or remove the excess gas so that they could allow a fire to be suppressed as quickly as possible.

A. I imagine something may have been lost in the translation. There's no purge procedure after an emergency like this to get --

Q. So the process here merely is to close the valve and allow the excess gas to burn off? Is that what you're saying? The normal process --

A. It would just dissipate.

Q. Okay, and is that documented somewhere in the SOPs of UGI? That procedure?

A. Well, it's actually a lack of a procedure.

Q. A lack of a procedure?
A. Well, yeah, we don't have a purge procedure, so there wouldn't be anything in the GOM to say this is --
Q. Is there a written procedure to apply at a given site if there was a fire, for example, that you needed to be able to shut the gas off and allow the system to cleanse itself of remaining fuel? Is that documented somewhere?
A. Not out of the pipe itself, no.
Q. Okay.
MR. DOWNS: That concludes my questions. Thank you.
MR. EVANS: Ed has some questions.
MR. KENDALL: Good morning, Mr. Figueroa.
MR. FIGUEROA: Good morning.
MR. DOWNS: Your name?
MR. KENDALL: Edward Kendall, NTSB. I just have a couple questions.
BY MR. KENDALL:
Q. Who did the decedent report to when he was in the -- working for Utilities?
A. I'm sorry. Who does who?
Q. Who did he report to?
A. Who?
Q. The decedent.
A. Oh, I'm sorry. Rick Bouder reported to Nicholas Strand, who is the capital supervisor, C&M supervisor. Senior supervisor.

Q. In the classroom-based training, you said it's ER Task 27. Did any of that training relate to whether you should open windows upon arriving at a scene for an odor call?
A. Yes.
Q. It did. And what was that procedure?
A. The procedure is, at levels at 20 or even above 20 LEL, to -- when you are evacuating, to open windows and doors if you -- doors, windows if you can, while you are evacuating the residence.
Q. And so a key part of that would be evacuation as well?
A. Yes. That's in the process of evacuating, yes.
Q. Okay. And would that have been in the manual or the training class?
A. In both. Yeah.
Q. And just to talk about the individuals that arrived on-scene prior to the accident for UGI, how did those individuals know to go to that scene?
A. They would have conducted -- well, Rick Bouder would have conducted an outside leak investigation. And he would have used his maps and records. And essentially, have found where the leak -- where the highest readings were. And you know, that's where they would have -- and you know, the leak would then eventually have taken them to the home and everything. They would have conducted a full leak investigation, and that's how they would have found it.
Q. For the recorders that Mr. Bouder used, would any of them

have recorded the data that he was seeing?
A. No, the combustible gas indicator that he would be using does not record data.
Q. Okay. Just to go back, kind of, even further, how did Mr. Bouder and Mr. Trimble know to report to Springdale Lane?
A. It was called in.
Q. Okay. And how would that process --
A. The customer -- well, a customer was walking by. Well, the process works where a customer will call in for an inside or outside leak. Dispatch would send that to the nearest person or to the one (indiscernible), which is what Rick Bouder was. He was the first responder on call.

He will report, and he will start wherever the complaint came from. In this case, I believe it was 202. So he would have started his leak investigation at 202.
Q. So Mr. Bouder would have been first to the scene, and then the other individual UGI employees would have followed him.
A. Eventually. It depends on where the -- it depends on the severity of the leak, obviously.
Q. Would dispatch have sent the other employees, or would Mr. Bouder have called them in?
A. Once Mr. Bouder found an emergency leak that had to be worked immediately, he would have called into dispatch. And dispatch will call the duty supervisor, who in turn, who in turn calls out the crew.

Q. So Mr. Bouder wasn't part of the regular crew. He was, he's an inspector, so he's separate from the other individuals?
A. He's a first responder on-call. So he's on 24-hour call. So he would be the first guy there. But he is not part of the repair crew, if you will.
Q. Okay. And did Mr. Lopez work regularly with Mr. Trimble?
A. Yes. They all knew each other very well.
Q. Okay.
MR. KENDALL: That's all the questions I have right now.
MR. EVANS: Terri?
MS. COOPER SMITH: Terri Cooper Smith, Public Utility Commission.
BY MS. COOPER SMITH:
Q. When you arrived on-site, how did you know that the valve was actually shut off?
A. I didn't physically check it. I didn't check it. I knew it because he had asked me if he could shut it off, and he shut it off. I believe he eventually reported back to me that it had been off, but I didn't verify it in any way, if that's what you're asking.
Q. Okay, and can you just read -- give me the name again of the employee that shut off that valve again?
A. His name is -- it's actually Kenneth Fitzpatrick, but we all call him Sean. It's his middle name. So it's Kenneth Sean Fitzpatrick.

Q. The valve that was closed, was that -- how is that valve designated? Is it an emergency valve? Is it just a regular valve? What type of valve is it?
A. I cannot say with any certainty what -- I'd have to look that up.
Q. Okay. And you said Rick Bouder would have normally -- in these type of situations, he's the first responder. He would normally arrive first. But he directly --
A. Well, yes.
Q. Yes. Okay. He directly reports to Nicholas Strand?
A. Yes.
Q. Was Nicholas Strand on this site at all?
A. He was not.
Q. Okay. So once Rick called in to dispatch to say that this was an emergency situation, dispatch would have dispatched Jason next; is that --
A. He would have called Jason, but Jason was the duty supervisor. We also share the responsibility for what we call duty supervisors. And so, on a rotating basis, anyone, any individual could be a duty supervisor. Myself, I also have that responsibility when I'm duty supervisor. So regardless of who's reporting, they would be, they would be calling and communicating with the duty supervisor. So it's not necessarily their direct supervisor.
Q. Do we know, or do you know when Jason arrived on-site?

A. I do not know that.
Q. And my last question is, are you aware of any type of tracking equipment in any of the UGI vehicles?
A. As a GPS tracking?
Q. As a GPS tracking or a speed reduction or speed limiting type --
A. No. Actually, this week, we just installed our Fleetmatics, which is a GPS, so -- and this is a -- yeah.
MS. COOPER SMITH: Okay, that's all I have. Thank you.
MR. MAURER: Gary Maurer. No questions.
MR. EVANS: Okay. Mr. Krieger?
MR. KRIEGER: Robert Krieger.
BY MR. KRIEGER:
Q. I have one question, and it relates to -- you had said at some point in time that -- and I think it was at approximately 13:40, homes were checked. So I think that was by the fire department, or was that by UGI?
A In conjunction. Both.
Q. Okay, so it was -- and what were those homes? Were those --
A. They were the homes in the affected area.
Q. So the affected area. So that was specific to in the cul-de-sac, correct?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay.
MR. KRIEGER: That's all the questions that I have.

MR. EVANS: Okay.

BY MR. EVANS:

Q. You had just stated that the call was made to 202? I want to confirm, was that the address that the call was made to and not 206, the home that exploded?

A. I believe the call, I believe the call was made for 202, in 198, 202 in that area. It was not -- but it was a customer who was walking by -- or not a customer. I'm sorry. Just someone who was walking their dog or something, they smelled gas.

Q. But the specific call that was made was for address 202. I want to make sure that's --

A. Correct. It was not for 206.

Q. Okay.

MR. DOWNS: I have a follow-up.

MR. EVANS: Just a couple more questions here.

BY MR. EVANS:

Q. When we, Rick and I, we arrived on the scene, one of the first things that we observed was a -- you know, one of your service trucks. And we noticed that there was an excavation underway, okay? We also noticed that the meter had been disconnected from the residence. Based on your knowledge of the operations and all that, can you describe for us what the, what the efforts underway -- the why of the excavation and the why of the meter being taken away from the home?

A. I can't speak to the meter being disconnected. I'm not

exactly sure what was going on there and, not having been there, I obviously can't really speak to what their -- what they had found and why they were proceeding the way they were. The hole, I believe, was this -- they were attempting to squeeze off the main.

Q. In your experience, have you ever had a situation where a meter was removed at a scene like this?

A. I have not been to very many scenes like this, so I can't, I would say --

Q. Okay.

MR. EVANS: I have no other questions.

MR. DOWNS: Downs. Follow-up question.

BY MR. DOWNS:

Q. Mr. Figueroa, you mentioned a little while back here that a crew like this, when they respond to a report of a gas leak, they would conduct a full leak investigation? Would that be accurate?

A. Yes.

Q. And does the crew in the field report back periodically as to what they find when they first arrive on-scene, when they do various steps of the process? They would report back to your dispatcher?

A. No, not necessarily. They don't report this is what we found, and then continue. There would be -- typically, in an emergency, they will do their work. They will, you know --

Q. Okay. Just to make sure that I'm following the process -- you get a report from the field of a gas leak. You dispatch a

crew to the site. The crew may have the supervisor first, followed up by other mechanics. Do they report back into your dispatcher when they arrive at the scene of the site?
A. They report -- when they've arrived, they will.
Q. So they make a report, we've arrived on-scene. And that's it. And it sounds like what you're saying is that they just start with their work, continue through their work, complete the work. And is it -- then they report back to dispatch that they're done and that they're returning, or what is the reporting process?
A. They don't -- if they report to anyone, it would be to the duty supervisor, letting them know what they found. If it's, if it's severe enough, the duty supervisor would be out there with them, which is why Jason was there.
Q. Okay. So the normal process they -- once they finish the job, if it's relatively minor, they would just report that they're done, and the supervisor would either send them to another job or send them back to the shop. Is that how it works?
A. Yeah, they would just go home. It's a crew that is, that is on standby for emergencies.
Q. I see. Okay. And when a crew like this in the field conducts a full leak investigation, would the process normally entail a closing of valves at given property sites through either crimping, squeezing the pipe itself? Or is there a valve on the meter at the house itself?
A. Yes.

Q. Okay. If it was a major leak that would involve several properties, meaning they were walking around in a given area with their handheld and they discovered quite a bit of gas, would the process involve perhaps going back to a valve down the street, as you had mentioned before with the, with the other fellow, the other UGI employee who then closed that valve in the street? Would that field crew utilize that valve closure process?
A. In the right conditions, yeah. If the conditions warrant, they would go back to the valve.
Q. Okay, what specific conditions would warrant closing the valve first down the street rather than dig holes to crimp off a line or whatever?
A. The gas operation manual allows for both. There aren't any conditions where it reads, if you have this, this is how you do -- you know, this is what you do. You shut off the valve if you have this. It's more or less left to the judgment of the crew and the duty supervisor.
Q. Judgment of the crew. So if the crew felt that, say, two or three property sites had a prevailing high meter reading, it would be up to them entirely whether or not they were to dig a hole to access the service line to crimp it off versus go back down the street, maybe a block away, whatever -- 10 houses, let's say -- and close the valve, correct?
A. Yeah. They would, they would converse with the duty supervisor, say, this is what we have. And they would make the

determination whether they should dig a hole and squeeze it off, or to shut the valve.
Q. And would there be a downside to closing the valve down the street versus just digging a hole and crimping off a particular service line?
A. It depends on the size, the length. That's --
Q. What would be the downside?
A. Well, if the -- if it were a larger size pipe, if it's far away, you know, you still have line pack to deal with --
Q. Would it, would it --
A. -- if you had the equipment there and you could dig immediately and squeeze it off, that type of thing.
Q. Okay. Would it also entail the loss of gas service to the various houses along the length between valve closure and where you're actually working? Would that be a downside as well?
A. It could potentially, but it shouldn't be considered in the, in the cases of emergencies.
Q. Okay. All right. And in digging a hole to access the service line, as we found in this particular case, that would take a certain amount of time, wouldn't it, to dig a hole?
A. Sure. Yes, absolutely.
Q. Because it has to be done by hand, correct?
A. Well, in this case it was.
Q. Right. In which case, digging a hole versus running down the street to close the valve and then coming back and then further

working, that would be one of the processes that one could engage?
A. Digging a hole as opposed to going down -- it depends what they found and when they found it.
Q. Okay, well that leads to my next question. It sounds like, based upon what we found at the evidence at the scene where the crew had actually dug a hole where the hole wasn't quite to the line; is that correct?
A. They were very close.
Q. Very close to the line. They hadn't quite reached the line, and that suggests the intent of crimping, squeezing the line off itself, the service line, okay, versus going down the block, closing the valve down the block, right?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. The valve down the block, is that in the street itself or is that on a sidewalk or in the grass, or whereabouts --
A. The valve was in the grass.
Q. In the grass. Is that adjacent to the pavement, street pavement?
A. Yes, I believe it was.
Q. Okay. Does that valve have a cap on it?
A. It does.
Q. Is that cap bolted shut?
A. It is not.
Q. Not bolted shut. How does one open that up?
A. A pair of, a pair of flathead screwdrivers should do it.

Q. Just to quickly pry it open. And is it a T-handle that's involved to close the valve?
A. Yes. A T-handled key.
Q. T-handled key. It's not a special tool or anything like that, or you can't reach it by hand. It has to have the special tool that your crews would carry, right?
A. Right.
MR. DOWNS: Thank you. That concludes my questions.
MR. EVANS: One last go-around?
MR. MAURER: No questions.
MR. KRIEGER: I have some follow-ups.
BY MR. KRIEGER:
Q. Jose, you were asked a question about -- Robert Krieger. Jose, you were asked about supervisory training, and I believe it was related to soft skills. Do we have, or is there at UGI, a new supervisor training program that supervisors would go through for -- related to soft-type skills --
A. Yes.
Q. -- and general supervision?
A. Yes.
Q. That we do. Okay. As well, Rick, I think you just asked a question with respect to digging a hole to access the service line. Do you have any direct knowledge, Jose, that they were in the process of digging a hole to access the service line?
A. No, I do not.

Q. Okay. And the last thing that I had was, for squeezing off or crimping off as it has been referred to, is that something normally that could be done in situations versus shutting a valve?
A. Yes.
Q. And typically when that's done -- well, I don't want to speculate. So that is something that they would -- they could go out as part of their procedures, go down and crimp off that service line?
A. It's in the gas operations manual as an option, using either the main valve or squeezing off.
Q. Okay. And that's -- from your standpoint, would that be situation based that they would be doing that versus closing the valve?
A. Yes, absolutely. Situation based.
MR. KRIEGER: That's all the questions that I have.
MR. DOWNS: Downs with a quick follow-up.
BY MR. DOWNS:
Q. Mr. Figueroa, you said that you have no direct knowledge of the crew digging the hole to access the service line for purposes of squeezing off, correct?
A. Correct.
Q. However, in digging a hole as we found here at the site, is that entirely characteristic of the process that would be utilized to squeeze off the line, yes?
A. You'd have to access the pipe someway, so you'd have to get

down to (indiscernible).
Q. Logically, that would be the only way to do it.
A. Correct.
Q. Thank you.
MS. COOPER SMITH: This is Terri Cooper Smith. A follow-up question.
BY MS. COOPER SMITH:
Q. Does it depend on what type of gas readings that you have in terms of if you have LEL or if you actually have gas, whether or not you will actually crimp the line?
A. Where?
Q. Okay. In this particular situation, if you were -- if they had LEL readings, would crimping the line be something they would go to first as opposed to turning off a valve?
A. LEL readings out in, out at the main location?
Q. Right.
A. Typically, you wouldn't squeeze off at all. You'd dig down and you'd repair the LEL reading. You'd repair whatever it is that's causing the LEL reading.
Q. Okay. Is there ever -- is there any level of gas reading where it is not safe for them to crimp off the line?
A. Gas reading in the street, you're saying? Is there any gas reading in the street where it doesn't -- where you think it -- where it would be unsafe?
Q. Yes.

A. If they found gas readings in the street, there is no -- no. If there was blowing gas in the street, given the conditions, we could always go back further and squeeze off. We wouldn't squeeze in that hole. But we would -- but there's no reading or condition that would preclude you from squeezing off.

Q. Okay. Thank you.

A. In the street.

MR. EVANS: This is Roger Evans. Follow-up question. Since your background is training -- I've asked this question.

If I'm a -- one of your students and I have to evaluate a scene, and I have a valve that's all the way down the block, and I know that when I close that valve I'm still going to have residual gas in the line and it's going to take a while to bleed that line off. It may -- matter of fact, it may, in the person's mind, based on his training, it may be that he's going to say, even if we close this valve, we've got all the line gas and we're still going to have blowing gas until the pressure normalizes, correct? Do you teach that to -- for these people to make this decision of when they would address the valve and when they would do the squeeze?

MR. FIGUEROA: Not in, not in that respect. Not in -- okay, if you have X number of feet or a mile of 6-inch, you should consider X instead of Y. We don't teach it that specifically, no.

MR. EVANS: Okay. I was just curious.

MR. DOWNS: Downs. One last quick question.

BY MR. DOWNS:

Q. Now Mr. Figueroa, in your experience on the job and in your training regimen, often is there a hissing noise that one would hear in the proximity of a gas leak?

A. Depends on its severity and the pressure in the line.

Q. So hissing noise would not be an uncommon situation. It would be quite obvious. If there was a hissing noise, that would be a gas leak.

A. Yeah. I mean, if there's hissing noise and you smell gas, typically that's what the --

Q. Okay. And regarding the smell, let's say the wind conditions -- you wouldn't necessarily have a smell if the wind conditions were blowing away from where you're standing. Would that be correct?

A. It'd have to be a pretty strong wind, but yeah.

Q. Strong wind. Very good.

MR. DOWNS: That concludes my questions. Thank you.

MR. EVANS: Anyone else?

MR. KRIEGER: I have one follow-up question. Robert Krieger.

Jose, again with the crimping off, would you expect that that crimping off was of the service line as it was asked or of the main line?

MR. FIGUEROA: It would be the main line. There would be no reason to squeeze off the service.

MR. KRIEGER: Okay. Thank you.

MR. EVANS: One last question from me. Roger Evans.

BY MR. EVANS:

Q. We have a preliminary timeline that we requested, and we were given that timeline. Very promptly we received that, by the way. One of the things that we noticed in that timeline was that there was a lot of telephone calls that were made before the accident occurred, right?

A. Yes.

Q. Before the explosion occurred. So my question is this. When you have two union people going to a scene and you have one non-union person going to a scene, are they working as a unit or are they, or are they going back to their -- another, you know, supervisory function -- or are they kind of working together when they go to a scene, absolutely cohesive?

A. Absolutely.

Q. Making decisions among themselves? They're talking and all this type of thing?

A. Yes. Absolutely.

Q. Okay then. As far as these phone calls that were made back and forth for over 20 minutes during this, what in your -- and based -- since you do training, why would there be these types of phone calls and for so many minutes from the time the accident -- when the guy arrived to the accident scene, he's on the phone for a long time. And I was just -- it just sounded kind of unusual. We saw that number of calls in the number of time. Can you -- do

you have any --
A. Well, we do instruct that they call, if they deem it necessary, to call help. And so that may be the reason for the calls, that he's calling folks to have them come out and assist.
Q. Okay. But generally, as a unit, when they arrive, one non-union and two union people, they work as a team.
A. Yes, they do.
Q. Everyone that is going to -- and the non-union person is going to direct the traffic, so to speak, I would imagine, right?
A. I'm sorry. The team --
Q. The non-union person's going to direct the traffic of what's going, of what's going to occur --
A. He's the -- being the, being the senior representative, then he would more or less, yes, direct the, direct where the activity and how it progresses.
Q. So he would be more than likely the person that said, we want you to excavate down to this point. We want you to do this, we want you to do that, we want you to evacuate, we want you to --
A. Potentially, yes.
Q. Okay.
MR. EVANS: That's all I had.
This concludes the interview, if we have no other questions. Thank you very much. Appreciate your time.
(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	RESIDENTIAL GAS EXPLOSION ON SPRINGDALE LANE, MILLERSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA, JULY 2, 2017 Interview of Jose Figueroa
ACCIDENT NUMBER:	DCA17FP006
PLACE:	Millersville, PA
DATE:	July 25, 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.

Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber