

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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RESIDENTIAL GAS EXPLOSION
ON SPRINGDALE LANE, MILLERSVILLE,
PENNSYLVANIA, JULY 2, 2017

Accident No.: DCA17FP006

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Interview of: DENNY HOFFERT

Blue Rock Fire Hall
Millersville, Pennsylvania

Wednesday,
July 26, 2017

APPEARANCES:

ROGER EVANS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

EDWARD KENDALL, Attorney
National Transportation Safety Board

RICHARD DOWNS, Survival Factors Group Chair
National Transportation Safety Board

TERRI COOPER SMITH, Fixed Utility Evaluation
Engineer III
Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission,

GARY MAURER, Manager, Operations Programs
UGI Utilities

ROBERT KRIEGER, Vice President of Operations
UGI Utilities

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(On behalf of Mr. Hoffert)

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:15 p.m.)

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3 MR. EVANS: Good afternoon. Today is July 26th. It is now
4 -- 2017. It is now 1:15. My name is Roger Evans, and I'm an
5 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board out of
6 Washington, D.C. We're at the Blue Rock Fire Hall here in
7 Millersville, Pennsylvania. This interview is being conducted as
8 part of the investigation to the residential gas explosion on
9 Springdale Lane here in Millersville, that occurred on July 2,
10 2017.

11 The NTSB case number for this case is DCA17FP006. The
12 purpose to the investigation is to increase safety, not to assign
13 fault, blame, or liability. The NTSB cannot offer any guarantee
14 of confidentiality or immunity from legal action.

15 This interview is being recorded and may be transcribed at a
16 later date. A copy of the transcript will be provided to the
17 interviewee for review prior to being entered into the public
18 docket.

19 Denny Hoffert, you are permitted to have one other person
20 present during the interviews. This is a person of your choice --
21 an attorney, a supervisor, a friend, family member, or nobody at
22 all. Please state, for the record, who you have selected, as long
23 as -- as well as the spelling of your name, your company, and job
24 title.

25 MR. HOFFERT: My name's Denny Hoffert. My name is spelled

1 D-E-N-N-Y, H-O-F-F-E-R-T. I'm a commercial and residential
2 inspector for LASA, Lancaster Area Sewer Authority.

3 MR. EVANS: And who have you asked to represent you?

4 MS. COBURN: Michelle Coburn.

5 MR. EVANS: And spell your name, please, and your firm.

6 MS. COBURN: C-O-B-U-R-N. White and Williams LLP.

7 MR. EVANS: Okay, thank you.

8 Now I'd like to go around the room and have introductions
9 with a name, a job title, and affiliation.

10 MR. KENDALL: Edward Kendall, K-E-N-D-A-L-L, attorney, NTSB.

11 MR. DOWNS: Richard Downs, D-O-W-N-S, NTSB, Survival Factors
12 Technical Working Group Chairperson.

13 MS. COOPER SMITH: Terri Cooper-Smith, C-O-O-P-E-R, and
14 Smith, S-M-I-T-H, Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Utility
15 Evaluation Engineer III.

16 MR. MAURER: Gary Maurer, Manager of Operations Programs with
17 UGI Utilities. M-A-U-R-E-R.

18 MR. KRIEGER: Robert Krieger, K-R-I-E-G-E-R, Vice President
19 of Operations for UGI Utilities.

20 MR. EVANS: Thank you. And thank you, Denny, for allowing us
21 to speak with you today.

22 MR. HOFFERT: Yes, sir.

23 INTERVIEW OF DENNY HOFFERT

24 BY MR. EVANS:

25 Q. Before we begin the questioning, we'd like to get a little

1 bit about your background, if you can give us your -- you know,
2 how long have you been with this firm, what your job title is, the
3 positions you've held at this firm, and where you worked prior to
4 this company, and your educational level.

5 A. Okay. I've worked for Ephrata Borough for 17 years. That's
6 a municipality in the town Ephrata, PA. I've worked for LASA
7 around 10 years now. I'm a commercial and residential inspector
8 for LASA. Throughout my years of working in municipal work, I've
9 always worked in the sanitary sewer part of it.

10 I have all kind of training, PA one-call training, confined
11 space entry training, training on operating a televising unit,
12 plumbing certification training. I'm certified through UCC Code
13 for Pennsylvania for plumbing, Category 21. I've been involved in
14 this line of work for almost 28 years, so --

15 Q. All right. And high school? College?

16 A. Yep, high school. I went to Garden Spot High School. It's
17 located in New Holland, Pennsylvania. I took different courses
18 throughout the years, math courses, you know, and different
19 courses to better me as far as my job goes. LASA's good at
20 providing training. I've never been turned down from training
21 with them. They're big on that, and we have a lot of qualified
22 people that work with us.

23 Q. Okay, great. Your -- just walk us through a typical day of
24 what you would do out on a site. You know, so typical tasks that
25 you do.

1 A. I would --

2 Q. And if it's by yourself or if you're with a crew or whatever,
3 just kind of go through that.

4 A. I'm usually by myself. I go from job to job. Say, like a
5 new development starts, and I go out and inspect the new sanitary
6 sewer lines that they're installing. I inspect the manholes that
7 they're installing.

8 For a commercial property, say, like a big commercial
9 property as far as stores and restaurants, I go out and inspect
10 the sanitary sewer pipes that they're getting installed, grease
11 traps that are getting installed, manholes that are getting
12 installed. After they're installed, they have to get air tested.
13 I witness the air test, everything about the installation.

14 I have to inspect, even on older stuff, like, say, repairs.
15 Like, say, a house has a backup with a sewer system and they have
16 to get their pipes replaced, I have to be out there. They make an
17 appointment with us, and I go out and inspect the repair and make
18 sure everything's put together right. And then I make -- and just
19 make sure the job's done right.

20 Q. Okay. And do you have the authority -- like, when you do a
21 new business or a mall or a new restaurant or something, do you
22 have the authority to, like, sign off for their building permit
23 occupancy and all that? Are you the last signature for that?

24 A. I'm the signature as far as -- after I inspect something,
25 there's a permit for that job, and I sign off on the permit.

1 Q. Okay. So you're like the final guy with the sewer piece of
2 the --

3 A. As far as the installation. As far as like the occupancy and
4 stuff like that -- as far as what our guys down in the engineering
5 department or as far as billing, they probably handle something
6 after me. But they see that I inspected it and it's ready to go.

7 Q. Okay. So as far as a property like Springdale Lane, are you
8 able to call up on the -- on a device of some sort, an iPad or
9 laptop, phone, what have you, can you actually look at the
10 drawings for --

11 A. We have everything on a mapping system through our phones,
12 and I can -- like, say, a one-call would come through. I would
13 see where the one-call is. I would bring up the address on our
14 phone, and then I could see what sewer lines were there for that
15 address, and I would go out there. Say, like, the lateral that
16 ties into the main line, I would see where that is on our GIS, and
17 then I would mark it accordingly.

18 Q. Okay. So when you went out to this address that day -- and
19 the purpose of your visit that day, can you go through that with
20 us?

21 A. Emergency one-call came through for a gas leak. And when
22 they put an emergency one-call in, the utilities have to -- the
23 other utilities have to go out and mark their lines if they're in
24 the area. If not, if they're clear, then they respond clear to
25 the one-call.

1 I went out. I seen where the dig zone was. It was marked
2 out in white. And I went out and I marked our laterals on the
3 curb line stating where the laterals tie into our main line out in
4 the street.

5 Q. Okay. So what time did you leave to -- from the moment you
6 got the call? Do you have that on your phone, a timestamp?

7 A. I think the original one-call probably came in about 11:27
8 a.m. on -- I guess it was, what, July 2nd? The one-call came in.
9 A had a work truck at home because I was on call for work. Got
10 the one-call. Drove into the work site, which I would've got
11 there right around 12:00, probably. Assessed the situation, what
12 I had to do. I marked the laterals. I talked to the three
13 gentlemen there from UGI.

14 After I was done doing what I had to do, I talked to them,
15 told them I was done. They thanked me and I wished them good
16 luck, and then I turned around and walked back to my truck because
17 it was in the cul-de-sac. My truck was on the other side of the
18 cul-de-sac. I walked back to my truck, and that's when the
19 explosion went.

20 Q. Okay. So when you got this call, what -- and you have to go
21 out and do the marking, what do you use to mark this? Do you --
22 did you call the drawing up as well on your phone, or did you just
23 use your tool to locate?

24 A. I bring the drawing up on my phone. I usually do that before
25 I even get there, okay?

1 Q. All right.

2 A. I had a drawing up on my phone. I went out to the site. I
3 seen the footage-wise. We always mark from the downstream
4 manhole, upstream. I located the downstream manhole, and then I
5 got my footage off my phone, walked it off with a wheel, and then
6 I marked it, what I had to mark.

7 Q. And what is the level of detail that are on your drawings?
8 Does it just go from main to lateral? Does -- is the 4-inch from
9 the home, is it on there?

10 A. It just shows the lateral.

11 Q. Just the --

12 A. And the main line.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And it shows the -- it shows the tie-in station would be --
15 which that would be where the lateral ties into our main line. It
16 shows that, and it shows like the manholes on the GIS. It shows
17 the main line pipe on our GIS, and it shows the lateral
18 information.

19 Q. Okay. We'd like you to stand up here just for a moment and
20 point -- this is the -- this home here, 206, is the home that
21 exploded. And there is a manway. So can we have you point to
22 where the piping runs, the main and the laterals?

23 A. Okay. That's a manhole there, and if I remember right,
24 there's a manhole down here. Okay? So that's a downstream
25 manhole. So I would've walked up from that downstream manhole and

1 marked the lateral where it comes in. I think it comes in like
2 175 feet or 172 feet. So I would've walked from that downstream
3 manhole, walked up to that footage, and then I would've marked at
4 that curb where it ties into the main line.

5 Q. Okay. So the manway up there is between house number 201 and
6 house number 197. And from the edge of the -- from the manhole to
7 the manway up -- manhole up there, it's 190 feet?

8 A. I think like 172 feet. So I would've marked right there at
9 the curb line where it ties in. And being -- 206, being that UGI
10 was working over in here, okay? I marked that lateral for 206,
11 too, just to -- for a heads up, if they would've had to come over
12 farther.

13 Q. Okay. So the main -- from the manhole all the way back up
14 the road there on Springdale, what is that material?

15 A. That would've been -- the main line would be PVC line.

16 Q. What size?

17 A. Probably 8-inch.

18 Q. And what type of connections would you have for that pipe?

19 A. What do you mean what type of connections?

20 Q. Glue or grommets or --

21 A. No. PVC is gasketed. That's pushed together.

22 Q. It's gasketed?

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. Okay. And that gasketed material, do you commonly find leaks
25 in the gasketed material of those types of --

1 A. We do an air test on that. When you install a PVC line,
2 after it's installed, you do an air test on that, okay? Usually
3 you don't have any leakage after a PVC line's installed with
4 gasketed. Now when you're talking older pipe, like, say, clay
5 pipe or terracotta pipe, then you're going to have issues where
6 roots can get in the line. They can, you know, make a joint come
7 apart, anything like that. But a PVC line, no.

8 Q. Okay. Let's just say that that black line, let's call that
9 the center of the clock, okay?

10 A. Yep.

11 Q. Where does the lateral run in relation to that center of that
12 clock?

13 A. It all depends. It all depends on the right-of-way of the
14 street.

15 Q. The lateral for 206?

16 A. I cannot -- I'm not going to give an answer on how far back
17 that comes in the yard because I don't know without looking at the
18 footage. But as far as, for us, when we have to mark it, we only
19 mark it right at the end of the road because that -- and that's
20 going to show where it ties in at the street.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. As far as the lateral being back, it all depends because it
23 varies on the way the right-of-way is as far as for the sewer
24 there. So some places it could be a foot back in past the curb;
25 sometimes it could be back in farther past the curb.

1 Q. Okay. When you arrived on scene, did you smell gas?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. On a scale of 1 to 10 --

4 A. I couldn't tell you that. I'm not going to guess on
5 something that I don't know for sure.

6 Q. Okay. But you did smell gas. As soon as you arrived in the
7 neighborhood, you smelled gas?

8 A. Down there, yeah.

9 Q. But you did not smell gas when you -- up the way here?

10 A. I can't say that. I'm not going to guess on something I
11 don't know for sure.

12 Q. Okay. Okay. So when you arrived, did you see anyone -- or
13 did you observe a -- the manhole cover off of its position?

14 A. When I arrived, that manhole cover was off.

15 Q. Okay. And did you speak with anyone about why that manhole
16 cover was off?

17 A. I didn't speak with anybody why it was off. I was under the
18 impression they were taking readings to see if the gas got down in
19 the sewer system.

20 Q. Okay. And for gas to get into a, into a sister -- a system
21 like that, what would be a common way for that, that you've heard
22 in the past?

23 A. I'm not educated on gas. I don't know, you know, how --

24 Q. Okay. No, that's great. That's great. I'm just asking a
25 question.

1 A. Yep.

2 Q. As far as the material that is the lateral material that's
3 tied into this main, what type is that?

4 A. If that's a PVC line --

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. -- that would be PVC too.

7 Q. Okay. And would that be with the rubber connectors as well?

8 A. Yep.

9 Q. Okay. And when it turns to 4-inch, which is all the home --

10 A. Responsibility.

11 Q. Right. That would be --

12 A. That would be PVC too because they have to -- even though
13 that's not our responsibility, the 4-inch line, they still have to
14 follow our regs.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Okay? So that would be a PVC 4-inch line too.

17 Q. Glued?

18 A. No, that would be gasketed.

19 Q. Oh, that would be gasketed as well?

20 A. Yep. Yep.

21 Q. Where does the glue start and the gasketing stop?

22 A. The only thing in our system that you're allowed to do glued
23 joints is, like, the trap. Say, the 4-inch trap, that could be
24 schedule 40 pipe, okay? Now, if -- and I don't know if they had a
25 schedule 40 trap there or not. They could've had an SDR35 PVC

1 trap. And that's all gasketed fitting.

2 Q. Okay. So this home -- this neighborhood was built in 1998.
3 Would you expect that all these homes would have, by code
4 requirement, have a trap out in the yard before it went into the
5 home?

6 A. I would think that they would have a trap, yeah.

7 Q. Okay. And plus, they're going to have a P-trap for the
8 building code inside the house?

9 A. Probably, yeah.

10 Q. Yeah. Okay. The depth of the main and the -- what is it
11 typically at? The lateral --

12 A. For a main line?

13 Q. The main and the lateral, what would that --

14 A. For a main line typically, you know, 8 feet.

15 Q. Eight feet.

16 A. Yep. For a lateral coming off the main, back in the yard,
17 typically, you know, 5, 6 feet.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Depth-wise. Some are shallower. It depends. Some are
20 deeper if the main line out in the street's deeper.

21 Q. Okay. So let's make sure I understand. So you arrived, you
22 had minimal discussion with the UGI guys. That -- was that kind
23 of like a courtesy, hello, how are you?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. But nothing about gas levels? Anything at all?

1 A. No. I mean, when you go out on a one-call like that, I mean,
2 they're already there. You assume that it's safe to be there.

3 Q. But there was never any discussion with anyone on site with
4 you that said, we found this kind of level of gas?

5 A. No.

6 Q. So when you were down there at that area, you never knew
7 anything about there being gas in the sewer?

8 A. I don't know to this day if there was gas in the sewer.

9 Q. Okay. Okay, good. Oh, you can have a seat then.

10 So when you were down in that area, did you hear anything
11 unusual? Any kind of unusual noises?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Did you hear a compressor running from the UGI truck?

14 A. I know the truck was running because they were starting to
15 hydro excavate above the gas line.

16 Q. And when you say a hydro excavate, did you hear the noise
17 that made?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And was that like 80 decibels, so you'd probably want to have
20 hearing protection?

21 A. I don't know.

22 Q. Was it loud?

23 A. It's -- I can't say for sure how loud it was, but you could
24 hear it.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I mean, we -- yeah. I mean, we have a truck. We have a
2 Vactor truck that we hydro excavate with that every now and then,
3 I mean, and that makes a sound. I mean, you know, it's loud.

4 Q. But are you required to wear hearing protection for that
5 truck?

6 A. For that truck? I don't know if you're required to, but guys
7 do.

8 Q. Okay. Okay. So whenever you have -- whenever you turned and
9 walked away back towards your truck, correct?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. And then the explosion. Prior to the explosion, did you hear
12 anything unusual? Like did you hear a whoosh or any sort of a
13 clicking sound or any sort of a --

14 A. I can't say for sure. I mean, it exploded -- I can't say if
15 I heard a whoosh beforehand or not. All I know is I was sort of
16 walking back to my truck to put my tools away and that's when the
17 house exploded.

18 Q. Okay. Can you spot on that map where your truck was located?
19 If that -- if that's a clock, what time spot would it be? About
20 1:00?

21 A. My truck was over here.

22 Q. Okay. And when you --

23 A. Around there. It was on the side there.

24 Q. Okay. When you --

25 A. It was the other side of the cul-de-sac.

1 Q. Okay. When you pulled in, was your truck facing west?

2 A. My truck was facing that way.

3 Q. Okay. Okay. And then, when you were going back to your
4 truck to leave and the explosion happened, exactly where in
5 position to your truck were you located?

6 A. All I can say, I was in between my truck and where I marked.
7 It would've been in here somewhere. I can't say for sure how many
8 feet off the curb or how many feet from my truck I was.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I was in between there.

11 Q. Were you impacted by debris?

12 A. I got hit. That's why I got all my lacerations and stitches
13 and stuff on my back and arms. I got hit with debris. I got hit
14 in the back of the head with debris. And all I know is after
15 that, I started running away from the explosion. I had blood
16 running everywhere, and I had another gentleman from UGI that came
17 and got me. He had -- must've just pulled up after the fact, and
18 he came and got me and he took me up to the paramedics. And there
19 was another gentleman from here that I -- actually helped me too.
20 So --

21 MR. EVANS: Okay. Okay, that's all I have for right now.

22 BY MR. DOWNS:

23 Q. Downs, NTSB. Denny, thanks for joining us today. I want to
24 just walk through, again, just to make sure in my mind that we
25 have everything. You got the call to respond to the site.

1 Routine call --

2 A. Yep.

3 Q. -- for you, pretty much?

4 A. Yep.

5 Q. You came westbound on Springdale Lane, and you were given a
6 specific address to respond to?

7 A. Yes, ma'am. I mean, sir.

8 Q. What was that address? Do you remember?

9 A. On the one-call, I think it was for -- was it 206 or 202? It
10 was one of them.

11 Q. One or the other, 202, 206? We can get that later. It's not
12 important.

13 A. Yeah. Yeah.

14 Q. You pulled into the cul-de-sac, and was the address fairly
15 visible to you at that time when you pulled in?

16 A. Yep.

17 Q. And you pulled, you said, to roughly the 12 or 1:00 position
18 of the cul-de-sac on the north side --

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. -- facing --

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. -- sort of northwest, west orientation. Your truck was at
23 the curb?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. And this is the truck that's assigned to you? You can take

1 it home?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. You get emergency calls middle of the night, you have to go
4 out, right?

5 A. Yep. I was on call that week and weekend. That's why I
6 would've went out to respond to that one-call, and I had a work
7 truck.

8 Q. And you work all the time emergency calls, or are you on a
9 rotating --

10 A. We're on a rotating --

11 Q. Shift?

12 A. Yeah. We're on --

13 Q. And this just happened to be your weekend to --

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. -- the work? Okay. This is a pickup truck type of vehicle
16 with a cap on it?

17 A. It don't have a cap on it. It's a small pickup truck.

18 Q. Just a pickup truck?

19 A. Yep.

20 Q. And you have all the tools you'd ever need --

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. -- set right there with you?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. A routine call for you. Mark the sewer line was the request,
25 right?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. So, you stop your truck here. You get out of the truck. You
3 go over across the street. You see the UGI truck. Is that
4 correct?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. How many UGI employees were there? Do you remember?

7 A. Three.

8 Q. Three?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Were they all clustered by the truck or were they scattered
11 about, or --

12 A. They were scattered about, but two of them were over like
13 near the gas main.

14 Q. And the truck was about here in roughly the 6:00 position on
15 the --

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. -- on the map here?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Two were near the truck and where was the third? Do you
20 remember?

21 A. I don't want to guess, but two of them were near the gas
22 main, and then another guy was walking around near the truck.

23 Q. Walking around by the truck?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. Okay, great. So you went to them immediately and conferred

1 with them?

2 A. I went to them and said that I'm here to mark the gas, the
3 gas -- like our sanitary sewer.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. They basically said where they were going to be working, and
6 it was marked out in white. And I did what I had to do. I got
7 done and I went back and told them I was finished.

8 Q. Right. Yeah, let's go through step by step. So you had the
9 address and you proceeded to take -- you have spray can of paint?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. What color paint is it?

12 A. Green.

13 Q. Green paint. Okay. We did see green markings, so I'm going
14 to ask you kind of to identify where are the green markings. We
15 have this walkway, which actually runs down to the park. It runs
16 downhill between the 197 property and 201 property. Did you go
17 that direction first? You had indicated you always go to the down
18 side and work up?

19 A. Yep. I would've walked from that downstream manhole, which
20 would've been located where your finger is, down farther. No.
21 There's a manhole down in here.

22 Q. Oh.

23 A. I would've walked from there, up.

24 Q. Is the manhole along the pavement here?

25 A. It's right off the pavement. It was right here.

1 Q. Just off the pavement?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Let's call it a little bit to the west of the pavement, maybe
4 two-thirds of the way down the hill --

5 A. Yeah. Yeah.

6 Q. -- roughly?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Were you able to recognize that pretty quick?

9 A. Well, I recognized -- I couldn't locate the manhole itself,
10 but on our GIS, it says exactly where the manhole is. So lined
11 myself up with there --

12 Q. So that pointed you in the right direction?

13 A. Yep. Yep. Correct.

14 Q. Great. Okay. And you found the manhole? Do you have a
15 wheel to walk off the dimensions?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. And you walked up the hill, the dimension you were given on
18 your map, right?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. And does it tell you exactly where the next manhole or line
21 is, or how is that set up?

22 A. Yeah, it would show that. That's the next manhole, right
23 there.

24 Q. And so you walk it up the hill, and when you get to the top
25 of the hill, does your device show you make a slight curve, or do

1 you go to the middle, or is it your experience you just know where
2 to look?

3 A. It's my experience, but it also shows on our GIS where that
4 next manhole is located. So I walk from that downstream manhole
5 up through. Like I said, that lateral tied in -- I think it was
6 at 1.75 or 1.72, which would've been 175 feet. And then I seen
7 where it tied in, then I marked it up here.

8 Q. Then you just mark it.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Your common practice to mark the curb, right?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. And anybody --

13 A. And it also goes by dig zone. Okay? Say, they would've
14 been --

15 Q. Dig zone?

16 A. Dig zone. They have to mark that out in white. Say, they
17 would've been working out here, okay?

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And no laterals were involved, just the main line. I
20 would've just marked the main line.

21 Q. Okay, very good. All right. You work with UGI all the time.
22 Is that correct?

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. Did you happen to work, to your best recollection, with this
25 particular crew before?

1 A. Well, they -- two of them didn't look familiar to me. The
2 one person did look familiar to me.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Like I said, our guys -- we do one-calls -- you know,
5 different guys do different one-calls. You know what I mean?

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. It all depends who's on call, you know.

8 Q. Okay. So you marked out whatever you needed to do. How long
9 does that take typically?

10 A. Not long at all.

11 Q. Five minutes?

12 A. Yeah, 5, 10 minutes.

13 Q. So that's what, roughly, it took you to mark out your --

14 A. Yeah. I mean, it could've been a bit longer because I had to
15 walk down there, and I tried --

16 Q. Right.

17 A. -- to locate it, then I walked up through.

18 Q. Okay. So you marked of the curb or whatever you needed. Are
19 you marking actually through the intersection itself, through the
20 cul-de-sac on the pavement, or no?

21 A. I would've just marked it right here.

22 Q. Just on the curb line?

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And, I mean, depending where they had the dig zone at, that's

1 where I would've marked it.

2 Q. And you said you came over to 202 to mark off the lateral
3 there, or no?

4 A. I also marked -- I marked the one for 206, and I also marked
5 the one for 202.

6 Q. 202, 206, and the 201?

7 A. No, not the 201.

8 Q. Just the 206?

9 A. The one for 206 ties in below that manhole, like 175 feet.

10 Q. Kind of to the north side of the driveway here a little bit?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. Okay. 206, and then 202 --

13 A. Yep.

14 Q. -- which were the addresses you were given? As best you can
15 recall.

16 A. Well, the one I was given, but I just did that on a courtesy
17 thing because I didn't have --

18 Q. Professional courtesy --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- because that's what you guys do?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Great.

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. Okay. And you completed the 202 second to the 206?

25 A. I think I did. I can't say for sure which one I marked

1 first.

2 Q. Not important. But one, then the other, whatever it was.

3 A. Yeah. Yep.

4 Q. Okay. And then you had walked back to your truck. Did you
5 have any other discussion with the guys?

6 A. After I got done doing what I did, I told them guys I was
7 finished, what I had to do. I turned around, started walking out
8 back to my truck, and then that's when --

9 Q. And your truck is over here at kind of the 12, 1:00 position.
10 Best guess, recollection, you were halfway through?

11 A. Best guess, yeah, I was --

12 Q. Right in the middle of the cul-de-sac?

13 A. Yeah, or a little more than that.

14 Q. So your back was to the 206 property, roughly?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. And the explosion occurred?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. You were knocked off your feet?

19 A. I wasn't knocked to the ground. I was hit in the back of the
20 head, in the back and pushed forward, but I wasn't knocked on the
21 ground. And as soon as I got my bearings, I knew that I was being
22 hit with debris, and I seen blood running everywhere. That's when
23 I started running.

24 Q. You just bolted?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Great. Which way -- direction did you run?

2 A. Up this way.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And then that's when another gentleman from UGI -- like I
5 said, he grabbed me and he started walking me up through.

6 Q. Okay. So you headed east on Springdale.

7 The fire department, was the fire department there at the
8 time?

9 A. I know the fire department was called. I'm pretty sure they
10 -- I can't say for sure if they were there when I got there or if
11 they were there after I got there.

12 Q. Meaning you were off doing something and they arrived?

13 A. Yeah. Yeah.

14 Q. Is that --

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. -- a good characterization?

17 A. Or if they were there when I showed up.

18 Q. Great. But did you happen to notice when you were running
19 down through the --

20 A. Oh, yeah. The fire companies were there --

21 Q. You saw the fire department there?

22 A. -- and paramedics were there.

23 Q. And paramedics were there. Okay.

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. And one of the -- some UGI employee was able to help you,

1 maybe as soon as you got out of the cul-de-sac, heading east, and
2 where did --

3 A. He got me.

4 Q. Where did they take you?

5 A. He took me up to the paramedic or fireman to get -- start
6 getting worked on.

7 Q. Was that in the road or on somebody's lawn or --

8 A. That was in the road.

9 Q. In the roadway. Okay.

10 A. Yeah. Well, off to the side of the road.

11 Q. And the paramedics attended to you a little bit there?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. Were you unconscious at that point or you were reasonably
14 conscious, or --

15 A. I was conscious. I mean, I was worked up, of course. But
16 yeah.

17 Q. To say the least.

18 A. Yeah. Yeah.

19 Q. But how long were you with the paramedics there, roughly?

20 A. I don't really want to guess, but probably like a half hour.

21 Q. Half hour-ish?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Did they transport you by ambulance?

24 A. Yeah, they -- by ambulance to the trauma unit at Lancaster
25 General Hospital.

1 MR. DOWNS: Lancaster Hospital. Great. Okay.

2 That's all I have at the moment for my questions.

3 BY MS. COOPER SMITH:

4 Q. Terri Cooper-Smith, PA PUC. Did you see anyone else while
5 you were walking from the manhole between 197 and 201, when you
6 were walking up towards the cul-de-sac? Did you see anyone?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Did you possibly see a car driving through the cul-de-sac
9 going east?

10 A. Yep. I seen a car, and a woman was in the car, and she was
11 leaving. And I think she was the property owner for 206 or --

12 Q. For 206?

13 A. Yep.

14 Q. And you saw her as you were walking towards the crew to tell
15 them --

16 A. No. I seen her, I'm pretty sure, when I was driving down
17 when I first got there.

18 Q. When you got -- first got there. Okay.

19 A. Yep.

20 Q. So you were probably still in your car when you saw her?

21 A. In the truck.

22 Q. In the truck when you saw her?

23 A. Yeah. Yeah, if I'm --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I know I seen her and I think I was in my truck as I was

1 pulling down there.

2 Q. Okay. And you saw nobody else on the street, or you weren't
3 really paying any attention?

4 A. I wasn't paying attention.

5 MS. COOPER SMITH: Okay. Okay, that's all I have for now.
6 Thank you.

7 BY MR. MAURER:

8 Q. Denny, Gary Maurer with UGI. Is any of your locate equipment
9 or measurement equipment, would you consider it -- would it be red
10 in color or does it have any specific color?

11 A. Our locating equipment as far as --

12 Q. Yeah. Like your measurement device, your wheel, or anything
13 you have red that you use?

14 A. The measuring wheel, I think maybe inside the -- no, the
15 counter would be black. I can't think of anything red. Unless,
16 on the wheel, maybe the ticker that's on it could be red. I don't
17 know.

18 Q. So you had no exchange or no interaction with the lady that
19 was leaving, the owner --

20 A. No. No.

21 Q. -- that was happening as you were arriving?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Did you see anybody on the site in the cul-de-sac with a red
24 device that might've been this big? Some kind of electric device
25 or something --

1 A. No.

2 Q. -- walking anywhere?

3 A. No.

4 MR. MAURER: That's all I have.

5 MR. KRIEGER: Do you use a --

6 MR. HOFFERT: Well, a red -- the wheel, I think, the wheel
7 was red. The walking wheel was red. Like the handles and stuff.
8 Is that what you mean?

9 BY MR. MAURER:

10 Q. Yeah, I'm just trying -- yeah. I mean, there -- just, we had
11 some other testimony about a red device somebody had and we're
12 just trying to figure out what that was, or --

13 A. The wheel, the walking wheel was red. Like that handle and
14 stuff like that on it. That's red.

15 Q. That you use?

16 A. Yeah, that we use.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah.

19 MR. KRIEGER: You done?

20 MR. MAURER: Yes, now I'm done.

21 BY MR. KRIEGER:

22 Q. Robert Krieger, UGI. The wheel that you're using, you don't
23 use any type of electrical device then to do the locating?

24 A. No.

25 Q. You're using a wheel. You're using maps and measurements to

1 do that?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. That wheel, what is the diameter, approximately, of that
4 wheel that you're saying is red?

5 A. The diameter of the wheel, I'm thinking 12. I'm -- it's a
6 guess, but 12 inches.

7 Q. Would you say -- is it between 12 to 18 inches?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. 12 to 18 inches.

10 Where did you meet the UGI employees to explain you were
11 done? Kind of -- when you were finally finished, you had come up
12 and you had done the lateral, on the map or just, you know, by
13 description, where had you met the UGI employees? And was it one
14 employee, two, or three that you --

15 A. I think I talked to one gentleman.

16 Q. One gentleman.

17 A. And it would've been right around the curb line.

18 Q. At 206? Close to where you had marked the lateral?

19 Somewhere --

20 A. In between that and then the lateral for there. They were
21 working around in here. It was in here somewhere.

22 Q. And then was that you kind of briefed him and then you turned
23 and started to walk to your truck?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. And that's when the explosion occurred?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 MR. KRIEGER: All right. I have no further questions.

3 MR. EVANS: I have no other questions.

4 MR. DOWNS: I have no further questions.

5 BY MS. COOPER SMITH:

6 Q. I did have one question. What is -- what would the uniform
7 have looked like that you had on that day?

8 A. Just like this.

9 MS. COOPER SMITH: Okay. No further questions.

10 MR. EVANS: Okay, that concludes the interview. Thank you.

11 MR. KRIEGER: Or -- could I ask one more, Roger?

12 MR. EVANS: Yes.

13 BY MR. KRIEGER:

14 Q. Real quick. Back to the wheel again. If you were looking at
15 -- uneducated about what -- or unknowing about what that wheel is,
16 would you say that it looks like a fan?

17 A. A fan?

18 MS. COBURN: I just have to interject here.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Should we go off the record?

20 MR. EVANS: Let's go off the record?

21 MS. COBURN: Yeah.

22 (Off the record.)

23 (On the record.)

24 MR. EVANS: Back on the record.

25 This is Roger Evans. We have in the room, a Lufkin measuring

1 wheel that the witness has brought in from his truck, and we have
2 reason to believe that this device was mistaken as being a fan.
3 And looking at it, it's easy to see that one could misconstrue
4 this as a fan from a distance. We have no other evidence to
5 support the fact that a fan was anywhere near the scene.

6 We know that there was fans asked of by the UGI folks from
7 the fire department. They were not supplied. So this kind of
8 clears the air about the fan because this is the same color as
9 another witness has stated. And that concludes it. That
10 concludes the interview.

11 And, oh, by the way. And you have a blue shirt on, and the
12 person that -- in the other interview, spoke of a person with a
13 blue shirt that was carrying an object that looked to be a fan.
14 And the shirt you're wearing today would be similar to what you
15 were wearing on the day of the incident. Same garments, right?

16 MR. HOFFERT: Yeah.

17 MR. EVANS: Okay, thank you. That concludes the interview.
18 Thank you.

19 (Whereupon the interview was concluded.)
20
21
22
23
24
25

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 Denny Hoffert

ACCIDENT NO: DCA17FP006

PLACE: Millersville, Pennsylvania

DATE: July 26, 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.



Wendi LaBelle
Transcriber