

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL FIRE AND SINKING OF THE  
DREDGE *WAYMON L BOYD* IN CORPUS  
CHRISTI, TEXAS ON AUGUST 21, 2020

Accident No.: DCA20FM026

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Interview of: WESTON JOHNSON, Pipeline Technician  
Enterprise Products

Via videoconference

Wednesday,  
September 16, 2020

APPEARANCES:

ANDREW EHLERS, Marine Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

PAUL STANCIL, Rail and Pipeline Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

LUKE WISNIEWSKI, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

ROGER EVANS, Pipeline Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

LCDR [REDACTED], Senior Investigating Officer  
U.S. Coast Guard

LT [REDACTED], Investigating Officer  
U.S. Coast Guard

JEFF MORTON, Senior Director of Transportation  
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NHAN TRUONG, Compliance Manager  
Enterprise Products

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GLENN SEVAK, Mechanical Engineer  
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Railroad Commission of Texas

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(On behalf of Mr. Johnson)

TAYLOR KRAFT, Attorney  
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(On behalf of Mr. Johnson)

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:31 a.m.)

MR. STANCIL: Okay. The recording has begun.

Okay. This is Paul Stancil. I'm an NTSB hazardous material accident investigator and the pipeline group chairman for this investigation of the August 21, 2020, fire and explosion on the dredge *Waymon L. Boyd* in Corpus Christi, Texas. This is an interview of Mr. Weston Johnson, who is employed by Enterprise Products. The NTSB accident reference number is DCA20FM026.

Today is September 16, 2020. It is 10:31 a.m. Central Time. Mr. Johnson is located in a meeting room at the Omni Hotel in Corpus Christi, Texas. The NTSB team and several others are participating in this interview remotely via videoconference.

Mr. Johnson, would you state your name and spell it for us, please?

MR. JOHNSON: It's Weston Johnson, W-e-s-t-o-n J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

MR. STANCIL: Thank you very much. And so I wanted to tell you that this interview is being recorded, Mr. Johnson. Do we have your consent to record this conversation?

MR. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thank you.

And I would like to remind everyone to state loudly and clearly for an accurate recording, and please let me know if we have any issues with audio quality on the video feed.

Okay. At this point, I'm going to ask everyone to introduce

1 themselves. Please state your name, organization, and spell your  
2 last name for me. And please also indicate whether you're in this  
3 meeting room with the witness or participating via a video  
4 conference.

5 Again, this is Paul Stancil. My last name is spelled  
6 S-t-a-n-c-i-l. I'm an accident investigator with the NTSB, and I  
7 am on the videoconference. So I'll pass to my colleague, Luke  
8 Wisniewski.

9 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Hi. Good morning, everyone. Mr. Johnson,  
10 my name is Luke Wisniewski, W-i-s-n-i-e-w-s-k-i. I'm the  
11 investigator in charge from NTSB, and I am conducting it via  
12 videoconference.

13 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Luke.

14 Drew Ehlers.

15 MR. EHLERS: Good morning. This is Drew Ehlers. Last name  
16 is spelled E-h-l-e-r-s. I'm a marine accident investigator and  
17 also the operations group chairman for this investigation with the  
18 NTSB. I'm participating remotely.

19 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Drew.

20 Roger Evans.

21 MR. EVANS: Yeah, good morning. This is Roger Evans,  
22 E-v-a-n-s. I'm a pipeline investigator with the NTSB, and I am  
23 participating remotely.

24 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Roger.

25 Coast Guard?

1 LCDR [REDACTED]: Good morning. Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED]  
2 [REDACTED], and I'm at the Omni Hotel.

3 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Lieutenant Commander.  
4 Enterprise Products?

5 MR. MORTON: Yeah, good morning. This is Jeff Morton,  
6 M-o-r-t-o-n. I'm the senior director of transportation  
7 compliance, and I'm participating at the Omni Hotel.

8 MR. TRUONG: This is Nhan Truong with Enterprise Products.  
9 I'm also here at the Omni Hotel. Last name spelled T-r-u-o-n-g.

10 MS. DOWNS: This is Devon Downs with Farley and Partners,  
11 D-e-v-o-n D-o-w-n-s, and I'm here at the Omni.

12 MS. KRAFT: This is Taylor Kraft, K-r-a-f-t, with Farley and  
13 Partners, participating remotely.

14 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thank you.  
15 The Orion Group?

16 MR. KENYON: This is Graham Kenyon. I'm the VP of risk  
17 management. First name Graham, G-r-a-h-a-m. Last name Kenyon,  
18 K-e-n-y-o-n, and I'm participating remotely.

19 MR. SEVAK: Glenn Sevak (ph.), mechanical engineer here for  
20 Orion, participating remotely.

21 MR. STANCIL: Thank you.  
22 PHMSA?

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Good morning. I'm Alvaro Rodriguez,  
24 A-l-v-a-r-o, Rodriguez, R-o-d-r-i-g-u-e-z, accident investigator  
25 with PHMSA. I'm participating via videoconference.

1 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Alvaro.

2 Railroad Commission of Texas?

3 MR. PEREZ: Good morning. This is Ron Perez. Last name is  
4 P-e-r-e-z. Regional lead inspector for Region 7, participating  
5 via Teams.

6 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Mr. Perez.

7 Is there anyone else on this call who I have not called?

8 LT [REDACTED]: Hey, Paul. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] from  
9 the Coast Guard. Sorry. I was on another call, but I am here. I  
10 am an investigating officer with the Coast Guard. Last name is  
11 spelled is [REDACTED]. Thank you.

12 MR. STANCIL: Thank you.

13 Anyone else? I don't see anyone on the line. Okay. All  
14 right, let's continue, Mr. Johnson. You're free to have a  
15 representative of your choosing in the room with you, but that  
16 person cannot speak for you or ask questions. Do you understand?

17 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

18 MR. STANCIL: Okay. And I understand that Ms. Devon Downs,  
19 who represents Enterprise Products, is there in the room. Is this  
20 the person that is representing you today?

21 MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

22 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Mr. Johnson, if there are any questions  
23 that are unclear to you or you do not understand the question,  
24 please ask us to clarify or restate the question. And if you do  
25 not know the answer to any question, we encourage you to tell us

1 that you simply don't know. Okay?

2 MR. JOHNSON: Okay.

3 MR. STANCIL: All right. All right, so the purpose of this  
4 investigation is to improve safety. It's not to assign fault,  
5 blame, or liability. Our sole mission is to improve  
6 transportation safety and prevent accidents. The NTSB, therefore,  
7 cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from any  
8 legal proceeding by other agencies, whether they be local, state,  
9 or federal. Also, a transcript of this interview will be placed  
10 in the public docket for this investigation, which will be  
11 available via the NTSB website.

12 Do you understand all of that, Mr. Johnson?

13 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

14 MR. STANCIL: Okay. I'll start off with the questioning, and  
15 then we'll pass it around to my NTSB colleagues and then continue  
16 until everyone has had an opportunity to ask questions. And as  
17 with the previous interviews, only the designated party  
18 spokesperson from each organization may ask questions.

19 And before I continue, I'm going to apologize in advance if  
20 some of these questions sound a little overly simplistic to you,  
21 so please bear with us. Okay.

22 INTERVIEW OF WESTON JOHNSON

23 BY MR. STANCIL:

24 Q. All right, sir. So, Mr. Johnson, would you please tell us  
25 about your background and beginning with your education and



1 employment history?

2 A. Currently, I've been employed for Enterprise Products for  
3 4 years, 11 months. Before that, I had gone to school at Del Mar  
4 College for firefighting, fire science, and EMS. I was a  
5 firefighter for 5 years and then was employed with a safety  
6 company here in the refineries locally for 2 years, and that's  
7 when I had moved to Enterprise Products.

8 Q. Okay. And with respect to your work experience, how many  
9 different positions have you held there at Enterprise?

10 A. Just the one.

11 Q. And, again, the title of your position is?

12 A. Pipeline technician.

13 Q. Pipeline technician. All right. And you said you were there  
14 for 4 years. What was your hire date?

15 A. October 21, 2015.

16 Q. Okay. And who do you report to at Enterprise?

17 A. Doyle Westworden (ph.).

18 Q. And what is his position?

19 A. Area supervisor liquids.

20 Q. Okay. All right. Why don't you tell us a little bit about  
21 what a pipeline technician's duties and responsibilities are?

22 A. Mainly, our day-to-day routine would be one call tickets. We  
23 also do or oversee pipeline integrity work, such as coding repair,  
24 anomaly repairs. We do oversee right-of-way mowing, facility  
25 maintenance, painting of above-ground piping, and valve

1 inspections.

2 Q. Okay. And that seems to be quite a bit. How much of that  
3 involves reviewing one calls?

4 A. Every day. Monday through Friday.

5 Q. So in a typical day or workweek, how many of these line  
6 marking requests would be assigned to you?

7 A. Average on a daily basis, 10, 12.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Not really locates --

10 Q. I'm sorry. I cut you off. Say that again, please.

11 A. These aren't necessarily locates but just tickets in general.

12 Q. Okay. And tell us about any specialized training that you  
13 received from Enterprise that relates to your current job duties.

14 A. Upon hiring, we go through what is called Enterprise  
15 right-of-way college, and every 3 years, we do a refresher  
16 right-of-way college.

17 Q. In addition to that, do you take any recurring training or  
18 certifications for your job?

19 A. Just the CBTs that Enterprise requires.

20 Q. Can you tell us what those are?

21 A. A general CBT is about fire extinguishers, valve inspection,  
22 maintenance. Just general CBTs.

23 Q. Okay. And a CBT is what? What is that acronym?

24 A. Computer-based training.

25 Q. Computer-based training. Okay. I should've known that. All

1 right. How familiar are you with the company's damage prevention  
2 program?

3 A. Familiar.

4 Q. Is that something you use in your day-to-day work?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And could you describe any specialized equipment that  
7 you use to perform your job?

8 A. We have a -- of course, our line locator and then spray paint  
9 and yellow paint flags as well as wood stakes.

10 Q. And how does a line locator work?

11 A. A line locator puts a signal on the pipe via test stations.  
12 It creates a conductive current, and we use, like -- another part  
13 of the line locator is we fix up that current. So we would be  
14 walking with the locator, picking up that signal every 20 foot.

15 Q. And is that something that you're trained on at your  
16 right of-way?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. And your normal work hours, what are they?

19 A. Monday through Friday, 7:30 to 4:30.

20 Q. And are you ever called upon to work overtime or outside  
21 these normal shift hours?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. And how often does that happen?

24 A. On a regular basis, not very often unless we have a project  
25 or something come up, then we will have a few overtime hours.

1 Q. Okay. So where do you physically report to work?

2 A. 741 Cantwell Lane is our office.

3 Q. And is your day pretty much in the field or you spend most of  
4 your time there in the office?

5 A. I'd say in the field mostly.

6 Q. And do you work alone, or do you have assistants out there?

7 A. I have two other coworkers that work on a area on the liquid  
8 side.

9 Q. Okay. All right. So tell us a little bit about how you do  
10 your job with respect to reviewing and responding to these one  
11 call or 811 tickets. Walk us through that whole process if you  
12 would please.

13 A. Either a laptop or cell phones. We use a Cortera (ph.)  
14 platform. Our 811 department, called e-call, sends these phone  
15 calls to our area, and then from there, we can transfer them to  
16 ourselves. And once we transfer them to ourselves, we review the  
17 address, description, and any GPS coordinates or anything in there  
18 to see if this is going to be conflict or no conflict.

19 If it's no conflict, we'll give them a call and review the  
20 work area and then clear it. If it is a conflict, we speak with  
21 them on the phone, figure out a meeting time, and then go out  
22 there and locate a pipeline, take pictures, and close it as a  
23 locate.

24 Q. And what sort of evidence do you require to have before you  
25 can close out a ticket?

1 A. Evidence?

2 Q. In other words, in all -- let me back up one second. If --  
3 in all of these locate requests, do they require you to physically  
4 go to the scene?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And if you review the ticket and determine that there's not  
7 going to be a potential conflict, do you still have to go to the  
8 scene?

9 A. If we can't verify via the ticket and a phone call, sometimes  
10 we will drive out and just double-check, make sure everything is  
11 the way they said it is or verify an address.

12 Q. Are you ever able to close out these tickets without going to  
13 the scene?

14 A. Sometimes. Yes.

15 Q. And so what evidence do you need in order to do that?

16 A. The address on the ticket, the description, and any GPS  
17 coordinates or other directions, and what the person says over the  
18 phone.

19 Q. Okay. And so there's -- is there a minimum distance that  
20 triggers the need to determine whether or not there's a conflict?  
21 A minimum distance for mechanical excavation, for instance?

22 A. 50 foot from the centerline of the pipe.

23 Q. So anything inside of 50 feet requires you to go to the  
24 scene; is that what that means?

25 A. Anything within 50 foot of the centerline requires locating.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. We mark it.

3 Q. And then to locate and mark a pipeline, what conditions are  
4 necessary before you're required to do that?

5 A. Conditions?

6 Q. In terms of the type of project, where it's located, how  
7 close it's coming to your line, or are there other factors that  
8 are involved in determining when it's necessary to locate and mark  
9 the line?

10 A. No, anything within 50 foot.

11 Q. Okay. Is -- are there other times when you might mark a  
12 pipeline even if the excavation is being done further away than  
13 that?

14 A. Yes, if the excavator requests so, or if their job scope  
15 changes and they call and say that their job scope has changed,  
16 we'll go and mark that.

17 Q. Okay. All right. So let's focus on the EPIC dock project  
18 and your interaction with the Orion group, the project that we're  
19 talking about today that involved the *Waymon Boyd* damage. Tell us  
20 what happened after you received the one call assignment, and give  
21 us as much detail as you can remember.

22 A. For 2020 one call?

23 Q. Yes, the 2020 call, and I'll probably get into -- I  
24 understand there was a 2019 call as well. Let's talk about the  
25 2020 call.

1 A. Okay. We received a one call ticket. Chris and myself  
2 contacted Ashley's cell phone. We were both sitting right there.  
3 We shared an office at that time. So we told her, given the  
4 directions that were on the ticket, this would be a locate, and  
5 we'd have to figure out a way to get out there and mark it. And  
6 she said okay. That was pretty much that.

7 Q. Okay. Did you have the direct contact with Orion, or was one  
8 of your colleagues the main point of contact?

9 A. Chris was the main point of contact. I was there when he  
10 called her originally, but since she had his number and  
11 information, she's the one that contacted him after that.

12 Q. Okay. All right, Weston, I'm going to share my screen with  
13 you and bring up a document, which I believe is the ticket detail  
14 report. Now, this is document number ENT-NTSB-PR-000018, and it  
15 appears to be a one call ticket detail report. And the ticket  
16 number listed there is TX2067555147CB. Do you recognize this  
17 document?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Okay. And the date that's on the ticket, is that the project  
20 that was assigned to you?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Okay. I'm going to read some highlighted text at the bottom  
23 of page one where it -- this is underneath the tab work location.  
24 Above this is going to be -- there are some GPS coordinates and  
25 some street address information. And then it states in the text

1 that I've highlighted, dredging area begins at water's edge,  
2 southeast corner, GPS point noted below, and extends north off the  
3 coast 344 feet of the northern boundary of the dredge template.

4 So where did this information come from?

5 A. That's Orion's directions.

6 Q. Okay. So they would've completed -- this is what would've  
7 been in the ticket that they completed and -- before it was  
8 forwarded to you?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. Tell us what you did in response to the location  
11 information that's provided here.

12 A. Any ticket that has GPS points, we always enter them onto a  
13 Google Earth to verify their location. So same with this ticket,  
14 we entered the GPS coordinates listed below. And that's when we  
15 told Ashley that this will need to be located, and we would have  
16 to figure out a way to get to that area to locate it.

17 Q. Okay. So the information provided there suggested to you  
18 that the pipelines would require location?

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. And what steps, if any, did you take to verify whether that  
21 location information was accurate and conflicted with your  
22 pipeline?

23 A. Just we verified through GPS Google Earth and -- those GPS  
24 points and where our pipeline was located on Google Earth as well  
25 as where we knew it to be.



1 Q. Okay. And then the next step would've been to actually visit  
2 the site in person to verify the information?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. All right. I'm going to scroll down a little bit  
5 further. Toward the bottom, there's -- under the tab completion,  
6 there is an internal remark. Is that -- highlighted text -- is  
7 that information that you entered on the ticket?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. That text states, for the record, ESQ Pipeline DX219  
10 will be clear from work area by 55 feet. There will be no  
11 dredging near the channel shoreline. Where did that information  
12 come from?

13 A. That information came from Orion via email to Chris.

14 Q. Okay. So that doesn't seem to coincide with the information  
15 at the top of the ticket. How did you reconcile that?

16 A. I believe that Ashley had sent Chris an email with the  
17 drawings and plans, and she stated on the email that there would  
18 be no dredging near the shoreline. That had already been  
19 completed, and the work area would be 60 foot from the shoreline.

20 Q. And was this all verbally communicated to you, or did you  
21 actually review some plans?

22 A. Chris told me about the email. I think he forwarded it to me  
23 as well, and we reviewed the email together.

24 Q. Okay. So the 811 ticket -- I think you should be seeing me  
25 now. The 811 ticket indicates that Ashley Stephens was their

1 point of contact. Did you have any discussions with her in  
2 response to this ticket, or were they all through Chris?

3 A. It was through Chris.

4 Q. Okay. Did you have any direct contact with anyone else at  
5 Orion?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. I'm going to share my screen once more. Bear with me  
8 one second. I lost that. Okay. You should be seeing an email --  
9 I'm going to zoom in to help you see it a little better. You  
10 should be seeing an email between Ashley Stephens and Chris  
11 Besherse regarding the location. This is a Monday, June 29, 2020,  
12 email. The document number is ENT-NTSB-PR-00025.

13 And the email states, and I'll quote it, the highlighted text  
14 there, it looks as though we will be 60 feet off the shoreline,  
15 and the areas where the shoreline and pipelines are furthest in  
16 the water is closest to the new template. We have already  
17 completed dredging to grade where the dock platform is on page  
18 three, so there shouldn't be a need for concern.

19 Was that email ever shared with you, Mr. Johnson?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. And what discussion did you have either with Mr. Besherse or  
22 Orion about that information?

23 A. Just me and Chris reviewing that paragraph, and we also  
24 viewed the drawings that she attached to it.

25 Q. Okay. So scrolling down, there are some drawings. Do you

1 recall reviewing these plans?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. So were you satisfied based on your review of these  
4 plans that the information in her email was correct?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Tell us where you believed the dredging area was supposed to  
7 be located, looking at this plan. Now we're on document number  
8 27, which is an attachment to that email. What area was supposed  
9 to be dredged according to Ms. Stephens?

10 A. She stated in the email that the dredging would be within the  
11 prism that's offshore there.

12 Q. Are we talking about this line that I'm moving my cursor on?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay. And where are the pipelines located? Pipeline 219,  
15 where is that located on this plan?

16 A. It's marked there at the bottom in blue.

17 Q. Okay. I'm going to zoom in on that just so that we  
18 understand which pipeline is pipeline 219. Okay. So we're  
19 looking at the shoreline south of the dredge prism template.  
20 Which of these blue lines is pipeline 219?

21 A. I believe it's the furthest one to the north on this drawing.

22 Q. So I'm moving my cursor over a line that has a bend in it,  
23 and it's marked with a W. Is that the pipeline?

24 A. No, sir. The one next to south. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. So we're talking about the line inside of the line

1 marked with a W, but it's the most channel-ward pipeline in this  
2 drawing. Is that correct?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. Now, in your understanding again, how close to this  
5 pipeline was the dredging activity going to occur?

6 A. 60 foot.

7 Q. Now in her email, she discussed -- I'll go back up to the  
8 text. She said that the -- we have already completed dredging to  
9 grade where the dock platform is, so there shouldn't be a need for  
10 concern. Is that -- would that have been in the area closest to  
11 these pipelines? Where would the dock platform be?

12 A. The new dock platform would be extended to the north of our  
13 pipelines, and then they were going to fill that area with sand.

14 Q. This area would've been filled with sand. Was that separate  
15 of what you were there to look at?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. All right. If you or the company had been given information  
18 that the work was going to be done any closer than 60 feet, would  
19 you have done anything differently with respect to this ticket?

20 A. Yes, then that would be considered a locate within 50 foot.

21 Q. Okay. And would you typically actually be physically on the  
22 site during the construction activity or the excavation activity  
23 when you know it's going to occur closer than a certain distance?

24 A. Within 12 foot, we're required to be there, but if it is a  
25 locate, we would've checked on that project daily just to verify

1 work location.

2 Q. Okay. So this one call ticket indicates that it was closed  
3 out on June 30th. Is that right?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Did you have any follow-up communication with Orion  
6 after that time?

7 A. No, sir.

8 Q. Okay. There was a July 16th meeting. Did you participate in  
9 that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Could you tell us what that was all about?

12 A. That meeting, to my understanding, was Ashley called Chris  
13 and said that an anchor would need to be placed closer to the  
14 shoreline than 60 foot, and she would like the pipeline to be  
15 marked so that anchor wouldn't affect it.

16 Q. Did they say where the anchors would be placed?

17 A. No, she just said closer to the shoreline.

18 Q. Okay. And as a result of that, you went to the site on July  
19 16th to do what?

20 A. Based on that information, we went to the site to do a  
21 courtesy locate for the anchors.

22 Q. And tell me all about that. What happened that day?

23 A. We met. Orion provided a boat and some cane poles for us.  
24 So we met with Ashley. She had a boat operator take us to the  
25 site, and first, we landed at a sandbar, got off on the sandbar

1 with the line locator and put some yellow flags on the sandbar.  
2 After that, got back onto the skip and used the line locator and  
3 cane poles to mark the pipeline, that point, heading towards the  
4 east.

5 Q. Okay. I'm going to share my screen with you one more time,  
6 and you should be seeing a plan or an aerial view of the pipeline  
7 with some flags identifying the location of markers and a blue  
8 line that supposedly identifies the location of the pipeline.  
9 This is document number ENT-NTSB-PR-00834, and in the legend for  
10 this document, it says it was generated based on a site survey  
11 that you completed on September 3rd. Are you familiar with this  
12 document?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay. So tell us where on the diagram you installed these  
15 cane poles that you just mentioned.

16 A. The cane poles would've installed in between that red flag  
17 and then the shoreline closest to the east nearing the blue flag  
18 as well as the -- if you travel further to the east, we did that  
19 section of water as well.

20 Q. In the far right side of the image here?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. So let's focus on this area again. This blue line  
23 signifies which pipeline?

24 A. 219.

25 Q. And is that line based on your survey or was that from some

- 1 data that was stored about the pipeline?
- 2 A. Data about the pipeline.
- 3 Q. Where is that data retained if you know?
- 4 A. It would've been in Enterprise records.
- 5 Q. Okay. So that -- you didn't, on that day on September 3rd
- 6 when you went out there, you didn't survey the location of the
- 7 pipe itself; is that correct?
- 8 A. No.
- 9 Q. Okay. All right. And between the -- you mentioned between
- 10 the red and the blue flag, you placed some markers. How many
- 11 markers were placed in that area?
- 12 A. Approximately five, six through that area, cane poles.
- 13 Q. And how far apart would you say they were? Did you measure
- 14 it?
- 15 A. We did not measure.
- 16 Q. Did anybody take pictures when you put the cane poles in?
- 17 A. No, sir.
- 18 Q. Is that something you would typically do?
- 19 A. At a typical locate, yes, sir.
- 20 Q. How come not this time? Why wasn't this typical?
- 21 A. Because it's located in the Corpus Christi Ship Channel as
- 22 well as EPIC private property.
- 23 Q. So was photography not allowed?
- 24 A. Correct.
- 25 Q. Okay. So how close to the pipeline were these markers

1 placed?

2 A. These markers -- the cane poles were offset to the north of  
3 the pipeline approximately 10, 15 foot some places to create a  
4 buffer zone.

5 Q. Did you use any of your line locating equipment to identify  
6 where the pipeline was?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. And tell me about that process.

9 A. Before we met with Ashley, I had put a transmitter -- the  
10 locator transmitter further to the west on the other side of the  
11 grain terminal there. We have a test station. I hooked up to the  
12 test station and turned it on so it'd be ready for when we got in  
13 the boat. And from that point, we went and waited for Ashley. I  
14 had the locator receiver onboard with us, and so while on the  
15 boat, I used the receiver to pick up the signal on the pipeline,  
16 and then Chris installed the cane poles.

17 Q. Were you able to see the pipeline in the water, or was it  
18 buried at some distance?

19 A. Some areas, you can see the line.

20 Q. Where were -- explain to me how it looked. What areas you  
21 could see? Where could you not see?

22 A. The area with your mouse, on a clear day, can be -- I'm  
23 sorry. Yeah, they're right there. It is exposed on a clear,  
24 low-tide, calm day. You can see the pipe there.

25 Q. Where would it have been buried?



1 A. The location of your mouse.

2 Q. Okay. So from this segment of the pipeline on the west side  
3 of the area exposed in the water.

4 A. Okay. Yes, from that part, heading towards southeast, it is  
5 exposed.

6 Q. It's exposed from -- so the entire length or just part of it?

7 A. The entire length.

8 Q. The entire length is exposed. Okay. And how far beneath the  
9 surface of the water was the pipe on the day you were out there?

10 A. A few inches.

11 Q. So you were able to see the pipe?

12 A. Maybe a foot. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. Did you provide any direction to Ms. Stephens or  
14 anyone else at Orion about how far away from the markers the  
15 dredging activities must be?

16 A. That visit was -- we were concerned about the anchor. She  
17 still said that dredging activity was going to be away from the  
18 shoreline 60 foot.

19 Q. Was there any further discussion about that? How far they  
20 had to give a buffer zone for? You mentioned that the 10 feet for  
21 the cane pole. Is that what you said was the buffer zone, or was  
22 it going to be greater than that?

23 A. It was the buffer zone plus 20 for the anchor.

24 Q. Buffer zone plus 20 for the anchor. What about for the  
25 dredging?

- 1 A. Still 60 foot.
- 2 Q. So nothing changed there?
- 3 A. No.
- 4 Q. Okay. Did anyone mention 20 feet -- a 20-foot buffer zone?
- 5 You said a 10 foot plus 20?
- 6 A. Right. We set the cane poles 10 foot away from the pipe to
- 7 create a buffer zone, and we instructed her -- or we agreed upon
- 8 that the anchor would not be within the 20 foot from the cane
- 9 pole.
- 10 Q. Okay. That was only the anchor?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. Okay. All right. Let me unshare my screen here. All right.
- 13 I think I have a few other questions. So where were you on --
- 14 were you on-scene when the accident occurred?
- 15 A. Yes, but I was further to the west and didn't have a really
- 16 great view. We were standing with the RTFC fire chief.
- 17 Q. Was that at the time that the gas line release occurred -- or
- 18 I'm sorry -- the propane release occurred, or was that sometime
- 19 after?
- 20 A. Approximately 45 minutes after.
- 21 Q. Okay. So what were you doing there?
- 22 A. We had called from one of our operators that there was a fire
- 23 in the area. We went outside of our office there on 741 Cantwell
- 24 to see if we could see anything in the sky. We saw the large
- 25 plume of black smoke, and me and another coworker decided that,

1 you know, we could go in for a little bit better view just to see  
2 what was going on. We drove to Navigation Boulevard to get a  
3 little bit closer.

4 At that point, we decided to head closer to the scene, and at  
5 that time, a police officer was looking for pipeline operators  
6 just to ask questions. He said the fire chief wanted to talk to  
7 operators in the area, and he waved us ahead to where the RTFC  
8 fire chief was there at the EPIC property. So that's where we  
9 stayed.

10 Q. Did you stay with the fire chief during their response to the  
11 incident?

12 A. Approximately 45 minutes to an hour, and then we went back to  
13 the office.

14 Q. Okay. Tell me about your interaction with the fire chief.

15 A. He just had questions about if it was our line and what the  
16 product was. That was it.

17 Q. And so what assistance were you able to provide them?

18 A. We gave -- we told him it was a 16-inch pipeline. We did not  
19 know, at that time, if it was our line, but we said we had propane  
20 in the pipe.

21 Q. Okay. And if you know, at what point did Enterprise learn  
22 that it was their pipeline?

23 A. I don't know the time frame on that.

24 Q. All right. Was there anything unusual to you about the way  
25 this line marking work was done? Is there -- is this the way the

1 one call system typically works?

2 A. Typically, yes.

3 Q. Okay. And when you've done marking in other scenarios where  
4 there were large projects, is identifying the location of the line  
5 something that's always done just a few days in advance of the  
6 digging, or are there other times when maybe you locate and line  
7 during the early project beginning phase?

8 A. Right. We typically try to mark the pipeline within 48 hours  
9 of one call generation, and then if the company puts in a update,  
10 we mark the line again within 48 hours.

11 Q. So that's pretty much regardless of how large the project is?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. All right. So you mentioned the 2019 one call  
14 request. What can you tell us about the previous project that  
15 occurred at this location?

16 A. At that time, EPIC had bought the grain terminal. They were  
17 going to turn it into a temporary loading facility for crude oil.  
18 We had a few one call tickets there for installing electrical  
19 conduit and some pipework, so we were familiar with the lead  
20 inspector there on that project. He was our main point of contact  
21 for any questions we had other than the contractors that were  
22 putting in the locates. So we're familiar with that area and  
23 somewhat, you know, what was going on there.

24 Q. So this previous project, that involved dredging as well,  
25 correct?

1 A. Yes, that put in a dredging ticket as well.

2 Q. Was this same segment of pipeline marked before?

3 A. Not by Enterprise.

4 Q. Not by Enterprise. So were there -- when you went out there  
5 in July of this year, you said there were some cane poles already  
6 there?

7 A. Correct. I believe the EPIC survey put out the original  
8 poles.

9 Q. Okay. Now, with respect to those cane poles, would you  
10 recognize those cane poles as some sort of marking for a pipeline?  
11 Is that standard in the industry?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 MR. STANCIL: Okay. All right. I think that's all I have  
14 for the moment. I'm going to pass on to my colleagues. We'll  
15 start with Luke Wisniewski.

16 MR. WISNIEWSKI: All right. Thank you.

17 Mr. Johnson, I know we've been going now for almost an hour.  
18 I mean, please feel free to take a sip of water, if you need to  
19 take a break, a five-minute head call, you just let us know, okay?

20 MR. JOHNSON: No, I'm good.

21 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. Thank you.

22 BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

23 Q. I'd like to just go back through a few items that Mr. Stancil  
24 brought up and hone in a little bit more about your training at  
25 the company you do for, let's say, on-land surveying of pipelines,

1 and then also, if you can give us a little bit of description,  
2 walk us through, like, offshore training that you received.

3 A. Okay. We do not do surveying; we do locating. But, when I  
4 said Enterprise requires us to go to right-of-way college, it's  
5 put on by the company, and for several days, we go and you have to  
6 cut some tile; we learn how to use a locator, what to look for,  
7 and then also go out into the field and they, you know, watch us  
8 practice applying locating there. And then that requires a  
9 refresher every 3 years, go back and do it again.

10 Q. And when was the last refresher that you'd taken on this?

11 A. Approximately 2 years ago.

12 Q. Okay. And is there any difference between locator training  
13 onshore versus offshore?

14 A. We don't really talk about any offshore.

15 Q. Okay. So, in this case, I've heard this described as an  
16 onshore, on land pipeline that you were locating. So I'd like to  
17 go to a little bit on -- you indicated you went to the test  
18 station. You hooked up a device and your locating receiver, take  
19 me to that a little bit. Tell me your training on that. Is that  
20 part of that as well?

21 A. Yes, that's what they teach us at their right-of-way college,  
22 and then it's on-the-job training as well with our other  
23 coworkers --

24 Q. It -- I'm sorry. Go ahead.

25 A. -- who also have the exact same job.

1 Q. Is there calibration on the locator that you were using on  
2 the July 16th?

3 A. No, sir.

4 Q. So there's no periodic calibration for this locator receiver  
5 that you're aware of?

6 A. (No audible response.)

7 Q. Okay. And the -- you indicated that it was a private  
8 property, and you were not allowed to take pictures. Did someone  
9 tell you that, or is that something that you just don't do because  
10 it's private property?

11 A. That's something we don't do given the area that we're in.  
12 The local -- all the other property owners there, Valero, Citgo,  
13 Flint Hills, do not allow pictures, so that's pretty much a  
14 written rule all up and down the ship channel.

15 Q. And is that because you don't have a camera that, let's say,  
16 is intrinsically safe because of environment, or how does that  
17 relate to is what I'm trying to figure out?

18 A. Intrinsically safe, sure. Yeah. And then they don't want  
19 anybody taking pictures and selling it to terrorists or what have  
20 you. It's a safety issue.

21 Q. I understand from a security standpoint, yes. There are  
22 times security don't want them taken. Great. Thank you. I just  
23 have a couple more, and this deals with reviewing the drawings.  
24 Mr. Stancil brought up and showed you the GPS coordinates that was  
25 provided -- was laid out in that one call ticket, and it was a

1 Cortera, the numbers was a Texas-206755147-Bravo. So take me  
2 through how you go about taking those coordinates. What did you  
3 do with them again?

4 A. I entered them into Google Earth, a service that we use to  
5 help to understand and locate tickets. It helps us figure out  
6 where exactly these people are going to be working.

7 Q. So how do you translate when you're on-scene taking Google  
8 Earth, and do you have a GPS locator in your hand to figure out  
9 where the pipeline is or where they're excavating? Was it  
10 performed based on their GPS coordinates provided? How do you do  
11 that? Like, transfer it from the Google Earth to now you're  
12 on-scene; you're looking for the location.

13 A. Usually, companies will have us stake out some sort of what  
14 we was surveying, have markings. Like, hey, this is where we're  
15 going to be excavating, or using certain type of landmarks to go  
16 by pipeline right-of-way markers.

17 Q. So, when you went out there on July 16th, representative from  
18 Orion Marine Group, was there anything out there that you could  
19 see that they located or indicated for you to give you a visual of  
20 where this excavating was to be performed?

21 A. No, sir. I did not have anything in the water as far as  
22 anything from Orion.

23 Q. Okay. Thank you. And you indicated there was a portion of  
24 the pipeline in the water that was close to the rock pile that was  
25 exposed. Is that a concern for your company? Did you do anything



1 with that information knowing that the pipeline 219 was exposed?

2 A. I believe Enterprise has known that it's been exposed due to  
3 watching out there from the ship channel, but it was scheduled to  
4 be covered back up with sand.

5 Q. Do you know how long that was exposed for?

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. Okay. And specifically, that area that was exposed, and I  
8 want to make sure I clarify correctly, did you put a cane pole off  
9 the centerline in that exposed area?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And how many in that exposed area?

12 A. Approximately five or six.

13 Q. Okay. So I know Mr. Stancil showed you the whole drawing.  
14 So it was five or six within that exposed portion?

15 A. Yeah, the pipeline.

16 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. I think that's all I have at this  
17 time. Thank you.

18 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Luke.

19 Drew?

20 BY MR. EHLERS:

21 Q. Good morning, Mr. Johnson. Again, thanks for your time. I'm  
22 going to, unfortunately, have to ask you some more questions about  
23 the locator, because I am not familiar with the device, so this is  
24 really helpful for me. You mentioned that you start by hooking up  
25 a part to the test station, and I think you told Mr. Stancil the

1 test station that you used was on the western side of the grain  
2 terminal; is that correct?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. How far apart on test stations on the lines, and how far  
5 between one test station and the next?

6 A. It varies on the -- every line.

7 Q. And how far away from a test station might you -- what's the  
8 farthest you'd get from a test station to where you're trying to  
9 locate a line? In other words, it could be miles, or are we  
10 talking hundreds of yards? What's the normal sort of distance  
11 we're talking about here?

12 A. About 200 yards would be the maximum, 300 yards.

13 Q. Okay. So they're fairly close then; is that correct?

14 A. Well, that was a question for the locator in the test ring.

15 Q. For the test station -- between test stations and -- I guess  
16 you said this, but I'll move on. What's a test station look like?  
17 Is it a -- is it just a pipe sticking out of the ground? What is  
18 it?

19 A. This particular one is a PVC-2 that has two wires, and it  
20 helps protect the two wires that are coming -- that are welded on  
21 a pipe and has like a little cap on the top that you can clamp  
22 something or, you know, clamp your locator onto or that corrosion  
23 guys see to it to test the pipe there. This one was a PVC pipe.

24 Q. Is there -- do you have a map of where all your test stations  
25 are? Is that how you --

1 A. No.

2 Q. How did you locate the test station?

3 A. I've been in that area before and knew we had one there.

4 Q. Okay. All right. And was the -- I understand there was  
5 another pipeline -- Enterprise pipeline there, line 124. Was  
6 there a similar test station nearby for 124?

7 A. Yes, Chris has one in that approximate area as well.

8 Q. Okay. And how do you identify the test station to the  
9 pipeline itself? How do you know, so for instance, that the test  
10 station is for pipeline 219?

11 A. It has a petroleum sign attached to it, and Chris would have  
12 natural gas.

13 Q. I see. Does it have any other identification, such as the  
14 number of the pipeline or anything like that?

15 A. Sometimes, in a congested area, we will write with Sharpie on  
16 there which corresponding line that goes to.

17 Q. Okay. And I know there are also other companies, pipelines  
18 through there. How do you identify it as something as a  
19 Enterprise versus another pipeline?

20 A. Their signs would be different.

21 Q. Okay. All right. Is that sign attached to that PVC pipe, or  
22 is it on a post next to it? How is it -- where is that sign at?

23 A. That sign is a metal post and then a PVC pipe is -- it can  
24 either be screwed on there or some sort of like wire clamp.

25 They're usually stuck together somehow.

1 Q. Okay. So directly to the test fitting is the sign?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. All right. All right. The -- so for the locator device, the  
4 handheld device, how accurate is that device as far as finding the  
5 pipeline?

6 A. Fairly accurate. I've always had good success with it.

7 Q. Okay. How about underwater? Does it work through water?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. And did you have a good signal as you were using the  
10 test device on the day that you were putting the cane poles out?

11 A. Yes, it was a good signal.

12 Q. Okay. For the part that was not visible, did you use  
13 anything else besides the locator to locate where the pipeline  
14 was?

15 A. No, just the locator.

16 Q. Okay. And I'm sorry if you've already answered this  
17 question: how long of length, estimate, would you say was buried  
18 or not visible?

19 A. Not visible? Okay. Like I said, there was a sandbar that we  
20 originally pulled up to, and I'd say the sandbar was approximately  
21 20 foot long, 15 foot long. And then, from that point on, we used  
22 the cane poles as the pipe was exposed in the water to the east of  
23 the sandbar.

24 Q. Okay. All right. And was there cane poles along the entire  
25 distance from shore to shore?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. I'm going to pull up the document here that you saw  
3 before. This is NTSB-PR-00027. This was the dredge plan that  
4 Enterprise -- excuse me, that Orion sent to you in preparation for  
5 this, staying advised. Okay. This is the second page from that  
6 dredge plan. You're familiar with this per the earlier  
7 discussion?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. All right. And you mentioned a prism here in this photograph  
10 or this diagram. I'm going to scroll down to the next page, which  
11 is PR-00028 and then 00029; 00029 and following are crosscuts of  
12 dredging. Do you review these at all or did you review these at  
13 all when you were looking at this particular locating project?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. Okay. All right. Did you respond to any other tickets in  
16 this area that you remember in July, August -- June, July, August  
17 timeframe? And when I say other tickets, whether it be Orion or  
18 another company?

19 A. In that area, no.

20 Q. Okay. And did you have any one call tickets for a company  
21 named Terracon that you recall in June, July, August timeframe?

22 A. I do not recall.

23 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. That's all the questions I  
24 have for now. Thank you very much.

25 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Andrew.

1 Roger Evans?

2 BY MR. EVANS:

3 Q. Yes. Thank you, Weston, for appearing today. Just a few  
4 questions here. Can we go back to the GPS and Google again? When  
5 you say that you get coordinates and you make sure with your  
6 Google Earth view that -- you pretty much index, I guess, your  
7 coordinates so that, when you go out, you're going to be accurate.  
8 Is that a good way to summarize that?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. So, once you have those coordinates in your hand, then  
11 you have confidence that what you have in your machine is fairly  
12 accurate, because Google kind of confirmed it for you, correct?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Had you done previous locates like this for dredging  
15 in your career?

16 A. Not for dredging. No.

17 Q. Okay. Just curious about that. When you use these  
18 numbers -- when you say, well, we put the cane poles 10 to 15 feet  
19 away from the line, I guess, on the north side, is that  
20 information written down that you use a number like that, or what  
21 is that? Is that practice? Where does that number come from?

22 A. That's what we agreed upon on the boat that something they  
23 would recognize since she stated that they used cane poles nearly  
24 on every project for markings. She said that they would see the  
25 cane poles and know that there was something there, so we agreed

1 upon that we would offset it just to give a little bit of extra  
2 room.

3 Q. Okay. Then how did you ascertain that this dimension you  
4 had, based on the location of the pipe, was at this number of 10  
5 to 15 feet? I mean, could you have placed the pipe 2 foot -- or  
6 could you have placed the cane pole 2 foot north of the pipe in  
7 lieu of 15 feet because the method you were using was, you know,  
8 kind of like an averaging or, you know, a best guess or something  
9 like that?

10 A. It was a best guess. It looked like far enough place from  
11 the buffer zone.

12 Q. Okay. And when you make that best guess, is that from visual  
13 of the pipe?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. The other one, when you said that you're going to use  
16 a 20 foot -- when you did the courtesy and you used the 20 foot  
17 number for the buffer plus 20 feet for the anchor point, when you  
18 mentioned that, where does that 20 foot come from? Is that a  
19 written-down procedure, or is there something there? Where did  
20 that come from to make it 20 feet?

21 A. Not a written-down procedure. That's what we discussed on  
22 the boat would be an acceptable place for them to put an anchor  
23 that they would still have enough room to do what they needed to  
24 do and be far enough away from us.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It's just an agreed-upon number there at that time.

2 Q. Okay. When you place the -- was this your first rodeo, so to  
3 speak, with cane poles?

4 A. Yes, this is the first time we used cane poles.

5 Q. Okay. Had you ever heard of, you know -- had anyone ever  
6 talked about placing cane poles in your career and using some sort  
7 of way to mark the cane poles with flags or something?

8 A. No, sir.

9 Q. Okay. And then the other part about this is, you know, I  
10 know most channels have varying soil conditions. How did you  
11 ascertain that the poles were, you know, securely mounted so the  
12 weight of the tides would not move them about or perhaps have  
13 caused them to just kind of disconnect from the bottom of the  
14 channel?

15 A. I didn't put the cane poles in. That'd be a question for  
16 Chris. He's the one that installed them.

17 Q. Okay. Let's go back to the reference point you're talking  
18 about. I trust that was the cathodic protection point for the  
19 pipeline is what you're tying into?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Is that correct? And then, when you say you test, are you at  
22 that point making sure that you have coordinated data that is  
23 consistent with what you think, or is that what you're trying to  
24 get when you do the test as you're indexing your locator?

25 A. No, the locator puts an electronic signal to the pipe that



1 the locator picks up. The transmitter puts a signal on the pipe,  
2 and then the receiver picks up that signal.

3 Q. Okay. So, where the lids are mounted to, the cathodic on the  
4 pipe is what you're getting back. Okay. Good deal.

5 When you think of this dredging operation and someone says to  
6 you, well, they need this kind of a clearance, were you thinking  
7 in terms of that was the centerline of where the dredge was going  
8 to be, or is that going to be where the reach of the dredge head  
9 would be? Did you have any mindset as to what that distance was  
10 when they said they were going to be dredging this area? What  
11 were you thinking from a mindset what that would be there? The  
12 dredging point, or the centerline on the dredge device ship  
13 itself?

14 A. The tip. Like, they would be starting 60 foot away.

15 Q. The tip of the dredge, right?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Okay. The water part, when you say you go to this  
18 right-of-ways college, are locates above water, is that part of  
19 the training?

20 A. Locates on water?

21 Q. Yes.

22 A. It's not part of the training. There's no hands-on training  
23 for it.

24 Q. But is there any sort of instruction that you get along the  
25 way that says, okay, if I'm going to be doing the locate above

1 water, I have these steps to follow? Is that part of your  
2 training?

3 A. I don't know.

4 Q. I mean, you don't recall having any sort of instruction with  
5 regard to a water locate? I guess that's the question.

6 A. Yeah, I don't recall what the exact steps would be.

7 MR. EVANS: Okay. That's all I have for right now. I'm sure  
8 I'll have more in the follow-up. Thank you.

9 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Roger.

10 Coast Guard?

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: Thanks.

12 BY LCDR [REDACTED]:

13 Q. Have you been involved with pipeline markings in the water in  
14 the past?

15 A. No.

16 Q. So this was your first pipeline in the water that you  
17 marked --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- or that you were involved in marking? Okay. Are you  
20 aware of any statutes or regulations regarding damage-prevention  
21 and pipeline marking other than what you used from the company?  
22 Like Texas regulations, federal regulations?

23 A. Yes. I know Texas has its own rules, and as far as each  
24 state has its own rules, Enterprise tries to follow, you know,  
25 whichever rules are the most stringent, state or local.

1 Q. Okay. When you're referencing or making decisions, do you  
2 reference those regulations, or do you reference Enterprises  
3 guidelines?

4 A. Enterprise guidelines.

5 Q. And then what are those -- what procedures do you follow when  
6 you're marking pipelines?

7 A. When marking pipelines, we use flags, spray paint, or like  
8 wooden latts. We mark the pipeline every 20 foot, every 5 foot if  
9 there is a turn or a PI.

10 Q. And what if Orion had not supplied you with pipeline -- with  
11 the cane poles? What would you have used to mark this pipeline?

12 A. We would've used PVC.

13 Q. Would it have been putting a piece of PVC pipe?

14 A. The white PVC and then we would've painted the tops yellow --  
15 painted them yellow.

16 Q. Okay. And how do you know that's what you would've used?

17 A. That's just what was suggested at that time before they said  
18 that they would supply them.

19 Q. Okay. Do you know how long the PVC pipe would've been?

20 A. You can buy them at 8-foot lengths, so approximately 8 foot.

21 Q. Okay. So, as I understand it, a one call ticket was  
22 submitted, but it was determined that it wasn't needed. It was  
23 closed. But then Orion comes back to you and said, we actually  
24 have an anchor potentially in the area. Why wasn't another one  
25 call then opened for that anchor?

1 A. Typically, setting an anchor is not an excavation, so we did  
2 a courtesy locate for that.

3 Q. Okay. So what you're specifically concerned about is the  
4 excavation?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. So, hypothetically, if you knew the anchor or other  
7 equipment used to complete the excavation -- I guess, in this  
8 case, it's part of the dredging process -- was coming in close  
9 approximation of the pipeline, would you have located the pipeline  
10 using a different anchor ball?

11 A. Correct. If this was -- we were going to put this as a  
12 locate cane pole, it would've been 20 foot away, and then we would  
13 have marked it as located.

14 Q. Is there a reason you didn't use the 20-foot mark? You used  
15 50 and 7?

16 A. For a courtesy locate, it doesn't have to be.

17 Q. Okay. And, from your experience in marking pipelines, do you  
18 think it was sufficiently marked so that someone could get the  
19 general idea of the location of the pipeline?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. Were you involved after the accident at all with any  
22 of the post-shutoff -- shutting off the pipeline or securing the  
23 pipeline?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Do your responsibilities with the pipeline cover any

1 maintenance or inspections?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Did you do any maintenance or inspection on this pipeline  
4 specifically?

5 A. The last time we had a smart PIG approximately 3 or 4 years  
6 ago.

7 Q. And what was done for the -- smart PIG? Is that what you  
8 said?

9 A. Yes, it's an inline inspection device that checks for  
10 anomalies.

11 Q. And that was 3 or 4 years ago?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Do you know if any anomalies were found?

14 A. No. I don't recall for that area.

15 Q. Do you recall any concerns that came up surrounding the  
16 condition of the pipeline at any point since you worked at  
17 Enterprise?

18 A. No, not that have been communicated to me.

19 Q. Is that something that would have been communicated to you?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Are there procedures for -- do you just do the kind of  
22 regular PIG inspections, or would you also do some sort of anomaly  
23 inspection? Or, if there was a concern, would that also fall to  
24 you?

25 A. Right. If the integrity department noticed an anomaly that

1 needed attention, we would dig it up, and they would check it, you  
2 know, a non-destructive test some sort of way. And then we would  
3 have to repair it.

4 Q. Okay. And, in your time at Enterprise, nothing we're talking  
5 about came across your desk regarding this pipeline or any sort of  
6 anomaly or issues like that?

7 A. No.

8 Q. What kind of -- were you involved in the maintenance, just  
9 routine maintenance as well?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. I'm not familiar with what that would mean, routine  
12 maintenance, other than a PIG would be done on a pipeline.

13 A. Correct. I don't do pump maint. We have a mechanic for pump  
14 maintenance or anything else like that. We just -- it's general  
15 oversee of -- we would oversee the inspection digs and stuff like  
16 that.

17 Q. Okay. And what type of documents do you keep for all of that  
18 stuff? Are there documents like every day somebody checks the  
19 pressure of the pipeline, or every day somebody does, you know,  
20 something? Are there routine documents that come up for  
21 maintenance or inspections?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And what would those look like or what would those be?

24 A. I don't check the pressure. That's something that they do,  
25 you know, in Houston at our liquid control office or the operators

1 that we have at Origin Station.

2 Q. Okay. So you don't really produce any documents regarding  
3 maintenance or --

4 A. No.

5 LCDR ████████: Okay. I think that's all I have. Thank you.

6 MR. STANCIL: Thank you.

7 Enterprise Products?

8 MR. TRUONG: We don't have any questions, sir. Thank you.

9 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thank you.

10 Orion Group?

11 BY MR. KENYON:

12 Q. Hey, Weston. My name is Graham Kenyon. I just have a few  
13 questions for you. Fortunately, you'll probably avoid some of the  
14 questions your predecessor had because I can put them in more main  
15 questions and get rid of them quickly. Starting with the one  
16 call, on the particular pipeline in question, which was  
17 breached -- ultimately breached, do you have GPS coordinates in  
18 relation to that line?

19 A. Yes, via Google Earth, we can obtain them, yes.

20 Q. All right. Did you provide them to Orion at all?

21 A. No, sir.

22 Q. Were you asked to provide them to Orion?

23 A. No, sir.

24 Q. Okay. The pipeline in question, and my understanding, is  
25 classified there as an onshore pipeline, correct?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. How many pipelines that you deal with venture into water at  
3 various points? Is that common, or is that unusual?

4 A. I -- we have three more that cross the ship channel.

5 Q. All right. Do they go actually under the ship channel, or do  
6 they sort of go parallel like this one does?

7 A. No, those actually cross.

8 Q. Okay. So this is the only one you've got that kind of runs  
9 parallel?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. Do you -- obviously, after the incident, have you any  
12 idea whether you believe that, that pipeline moved in any way,  
13 apart from, obviously, the rupture in the pipeline itself?

14 A. That information, I don't know.

15 Q. Okay. When you were marking the pipeline, obviously, you  
16 were on the skiff. Is it unusual, I'm presuming it is, that you  
17 mark the pipeline from a skiff if you only have one that runs  
18 parallel?

19 A. I'm sorry. Is it unusual that we marked it with a skiff?

20 Q. Yeah, having to be in a skiff to actually mark the pipeline.

21 A. Sure. Yeah, that was unusual.

22 Q. Right. And, obviously, I think you've already indicated  
23 that, when Orion came back to you with regards to the questions  
24 regarding anchors, you indicated that, in relation to that, they  
25 needed a 20-foot buffer zone from wherever the stakes were placed



1 in or the poles were placed in, correct?

2 A. We had agreed on the boat that they would -- that, that was  
3 good enough for them.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. With regard to marking the pole, whose responsibility  
7 is it to mark those lines?

8 A. That line, it's my responsibility.

9 Q. Okay. So, if you would have had any concerns about using the  
10 cane poles, the lengths that were used, you could've changed --  
11 you could've said, no, we'd rather do something else, correct?

12 A. Sure. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. With regards to the incident itself, you stated that  
14 you originally didn't -- obviously, that you weren't originally  
15 aware that it was your pipeline that had been involved.

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Have you any idea how long it took after the fire broke out  
18 for Enterprise to close off that pipeline?

19 A. I don't know that information.

20 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any other incidents in relation to  
21 that pipeline prior to this particular event?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. Right at the start, when you were talking about your  
24 job description, you talked about the fact that you do a lot of  
25 one calls and you also are involved with anomaly repairs and

1 things like that.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Is that true? Okay. I think we have a report which kind of  
4 fits in with what you were just saying or questioned about very  
5 recently. I think it is a report from November 9, 2016, which was  
6 basically a high-resolution metal loss and narrow axial feature  
7 analysis and high-resolution geometry and density analysis. So I  
8 think that's the one we have on record. Has there been any  
9 additional ones done since then?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. So, in that particular report, it indicates that the  
12 main metal loss that was involved was between 10 and 19 percent of  
13 the walls, which I'm presuming is that's not totally unusual, and  
14 it says there's no anomalies, in relation to the walls, that are  
15 greater than 80 percent.

16 A. That's not something I typically deal with.

17 Q. Okay. On that particular report, there were 472 anomalies  
18 listed or noted. Is that unusual, or is that fairly common to  
19 have that amount of anomalies?

20 A. That's not something I typically deal with.

21 Q. Okay. All righty. I will skip to a last quick section, and  
22 this should be fairly brief. I am presuming that, and I'll say  
23 this in one fairly long sentence, that you do not get involved  
24 with anything to do with cathodic protection, construction  
25 records, logs showing how the pipeline was pressurized and when it

1 was not, flow rates, the PIGing, or any of the analysis with  
2 regards to the condition of the pipeline generally.

3 A. No, sir.

4 Q. That's a true statement, correct?

5 A. Right. Yeah, that's not something that I do.

6 Q. All righty. Who would be the best person to talk to about  
7 something like that?

8 A. Asset integrity.

9 MR. KENYON: Okay. All righty. I think that's it from me  
10 for the moment. I appreciate your time.

11 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Mr. Kenyon.

12 PHMSA?

13 BY MR. RODRIGUEZ:

14 Q. Hi, Weston. Thank you for your time. How different one call  
15 is treated if you have a liquid versus a gas pipeline?

16 A. Both treated the exact same way.

17 Q. Okay. And could you explain your understanding of dredging  
18 operations and the distance for reference by Orion?

19 A. Can I explain my knowledge of drifting operations or dredging  
20 operations?

21 Q. In other words, what was in your mind when they mentioned 60  
22 feet away from the pipeline?

23 A. That's where dredging would begin. So, from that point,  
24 heading towards the north, that's where the dredging would take  
25 place.

1 Q. All right. And, when you have several pipelines close to a  
2 one call location, how many tickets would you receive?

3 A. If there's liquid and gas, we would receive two.

4 MR. RODRIGUEZ: All right. That's everything that I have for  
5 now. Thank you.

6 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Alvaro.

7 Railroad Commission of Texas?

8 BY MR. PEREZ:

9 Q. We're still in morning, so good morning, Mr. Weston. Thank  
10 you for your time. First question is based on your experience on  
11 this project going from 2019/2020 involving a EPIC terminal and a  
12 third-party excavator. Would you -- did Enterprise and your one  
13 call group consider this a large project -- any excavations for  
14 large projects?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. So you guys did have a process in place for managing  
17 this excavation on a large project; is that correct?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. And then we'll go back to the cane poles. I know we  
20 beat this one up; I just need some clarification. Are cane poles  
21 in Enterprise's procedures and your damage-prevention program?

22 A. It just says poles.

23 Q. It says poles. And you mentioned that industry standard. Is  
24 this an industry standard, or is this something that you read or  
25 heard about using cane poles?

1 A. This is what Orion suggested.

2 Q. So, again, I wrote these down, so I apologize if they overlap  
3 each other. And how was it derived to use cane poles if supplied  
4 by the excavator? Is it Enterprise's policy to use markers  
5 supplied by -- is it typical for Enterprise to use markers  
6 supplied by the excavator?

7 A. Typically, no, but in this situation, we didn't have any, and  
8 they volunteered theirs to be used.

9 Q. And then my last question is, how was it determined that cane  
10 poles were going to be suitable for marking on this project?

11 A. That was communicated to us that, that is what Orion  
12 typically uses on their jobs and that they would know that there  
13 was something there that they needed to stay away from.

14 Q. And then you mentioned that, if you had marked the line using  
15 PVC poles, you would've painted with yellow. What changed your  
16 mind on this marking, not to mark them with yellow?

17 A. It was a courtesy locate.

18 Q. Courtesy locate. And is courtesy locates in the Enterprise  
19 procedures as well?

20 A. Yes.

21 MR. PEREZ: Okay. That's all I had.

22 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Mr. Perez.

23 So, Mr. Johnson, before we run through a round two of  
24 questions, which hopefully won't take too long, would you like to  
25 take a break right now?

1 MR. JOHNSON: Let's do it.

2 MR. STANCIL: You want to take a break? Let's take five --

3 MR. JOHNSON: No, no. Let's keep --

4 MR. STANCIL: You want to keep going? Okay.

5 MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

6 MR. STANCIL: It's totally up to you now. I don't want to  
7 pressure you there. Okay. I'm probably going to have a question  
8 or two at the very end, so at this time, I'm going to continue  
9 with our NTSB team, Luke Wisniewski.

10 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Stancil.

11 BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

12 Q. I just have a couple here, and I want to go back to that July  
13 16th evolution while you're on the skiff. Was the Enterprise  
14 representative onboard with you?

15 A. Myself and Chris are both Enterprise representatives.

16 Q. And how about Orion? Was Orion present on the boat?

17 A. Correct. Ashley and then she had a boat operator with her.

18 Q. Okay. I just want to make sure that was clear, because you  
19 brought up that it was agreed upon on the boat. And, to clarify,  
20 no GPS locations were taken when you were -- when your colleague  
21 was taking the cane poles into the water?

22 A. No, they did not request any GPS location.

23 Q. Okay. And, on that day, and this is just in general, did you  
24 have any unclear instruction or anything as far as marking the  
25 cane poles that was unclear to you that you needed maybe further

1 clarification or anything we haven't brought up at this point?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay. So, from your understanding, you felt they were well  
4 marked, and Orion's representative was clear on the instruction  
5 that you provided with Chris?

6 A. Correct.

7 MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. I think that's all I have right now.  
8 Thank you.

9 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thank you, Luke.  
10 Andrew?

11 MR. EHLERS: I have no further questions. Thanks for your  
12 time.

13 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Andrew.  
14 Roger?

15 MR. EVANS: Yes, just a couple more questions.

16 BY MR. EVANS:

17 Q. When you say that you used Google Earth coordinates, I am  
18 curious about one thing. Have you ever had a request from  
19 Enterprise to supply the coordinates to them?

20 A. From Enterprise?

21 Q. Yes. Not for this particular case. I'm just saying, in  
22 general, whenever you obtain coordinates, have you had Enterprise  
23 ask in the past to say, yes, please supply the coordinates you're  
24 going to be using. Have you had that kind of request?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Have you ever had that request from other pipeline companies?

2 A. I believe some in the past, yes. Not pipeline companies but  
3 an excavator has requested that.

4 Q. Okay. The one thing about the painting of the PVC pipes, do  
5 you have a spec for a paint that you use as to like fluorescent  
6 yellow or something or what?

7 A. It's just yellow marking paint.

8 Q. So is it the type of paint that, you know, when the sun hits  
9 it, it kind of like glows at night? Is it that type of paint?

10 A. Glows at night, no.

11 Q. Okay. I was just curious, because they do make paint like  
12 that.

13 MR. EVANS: Okay. That's all I had. Thank you.

14 MR. STANCIL:. Okay. Thank you, Roger.  
15 Coast Guard?

16 LCDR [REDACTED]: Just one follow up.

17 BY LCDR [REDACTED]:

18 Q. We understand that I think you said that EPIC was involved in  
19 the 2019 one call or marking of the pipeline.

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 Q. Do you know why they weren't involved with this marking?

22 A. The lead inspector that we were talking to in 2019 was off  
23 that project, so we did not have a -- at our level, we did not  
24 have a EPIC contact, somebody we could ask about it.

25 Q. Okay. And so nobody from EPIC reached out to you either?



1 A. Not to me.

2 Q. Okay. Typically, I guess, if you've been involved in -- had  
3 you been involved in a situation where multiple parties in play,  
4 such as an excavator, is different from the person who, you know,  
5 a pipeline might be running to the land?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Is that -- would you typically get all the parties involved  
8 in those discussions, or do you just talk to the excavator?

9 A. Typically, just to the excavator in the situation.

10 LCDR ██████: Okay. That's all. Thank you.

11 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Lieutenant Commander.

12 Enterprise Product?

13 MR. MORTON: This is Jeff. I just have one clarifying  
14 question.

15 And, Paul, if you could, we've had this drawing up earlier,  
16 so hopefully, you can pull it up quickly. It's the dredge plan  
17 that was in the email from Orion to Enterprise, and specifically,  
18 it's number 0028.

19 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Bear with me one second, and I'll get it  
20 up.

21 MR. MORTON: Thank you.

22 MR. STANCIL: Okay. You should be seeing it now.

23 MR. MORTON: Okay. If you could zoom in, please, and  
24 actually -- there, that's good and then scroll down some all the  
25 way to the bottom. Now scroll over. Okay. That's good.

1           There's been several questions about your understanding what  
2 "at 60 foot" meant in the email from Ashley. This plan  
3 demonstrates or highlights dredge limits in that gray shaded area.

4           MR. JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

5           MR. MORTON: So, when you say your understanding, it was 60  
6 feet from the tip, am I understanding you correctly, you thought  
7 the closest the dredge ship would be to shore would be 60 feet  
8 based on this drawing, the dredge limit identifying?

9           MR. JOHNSON: Based on what she said, yes.

10          MR. MORTON: Okay. That's all I have.

11          MR. KENYON: And, Paul, it's Graham. If you can keep that  
12 drawing up, I'd appreciate it.

13          MR. STANCIL: Okay. Bear with me again.

14          MR. KENYON: Sorry. If we can go into the first page of  
15 that, 00027.

16          MR. STANCIL: Okay. Bear with me one second, sir.

17          MR. KENYON: I appreciate you bearing with me, Weston. I've  
18 just got three more questions.

19          BY MR. KENYON:

20 Q.       So the dredge template you see basically here, which is the  
21 area that you initially pointed out, which is this area here,  
22 which is, I believe, you stated the area you presumed was going to  
23 be dredged, correct?

24 A.       Yes.

25 Q.       Okay. So this point where my cursor is here is the tow of

1 the -- basically the dredge, so the bottom. So that's the deepest  
2 point. So, from there, what this plan actually shows is that,  
3 that will be the lowest point, but the edge will slope or come  
4 towards the pipeline here.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't see your mouse, sir.

6 MR. KENYON: Right. Can someone else do that for me?

7 MR. STANCIL: Okay.

8 MR. KENYON: Okay. There you go. So --

9 MR. STANCIL: So you're talking about this location here?

10 MR. KENYON: Yes.

11 MR. STANCIL: Okay.

12 BY MR. KENYON:

13 Q. So the slope is going to come towards where you see the  
14 handprint at the moment. So, basically, that's just -- I want to  
15 point that out. My follow-up question is, are you used to  
16 reviewing dredge plans at all?

17 A. No, sir.

18 Q. Okay -- oh, sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt.

19 A. This is what -- based on what Ashley had told us.

20 Q. Okay. So did anyone else review these plans apart from  
21 yourself?

22 A. Just myself and Chris.

23 Q. Okay. So it never went further up the chain than you two  
24 guys?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. With regards to the incident site itself where the  
2 pipe ultimately ruptured, do you know if that particular area was  
3 floating in water, or whether it was like under the -- under  
4 cover?

5 A. No, sir. I don't know that.

6 Q. You don't know that. Have you any idea, when pipe is in  
7 water, how far below the surface of the water it needs to be to  
8 meet requirements?

9 A. No, sir. I don't.

10 MR. KENYON: Okay. That's it from me. I appreciate it.  
11 Thank you.

12 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Kenyon.

13 PHMSA?

14 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I don't have any other questions. Thank you  
15 for your time, Weston.

16 MR. STANCIL: Thank you, Alvaro.

17 Railroad Commission of Texas?

18 BY MR. PEREZ:

19 Q. Just one last question. I keep hearing this 60 foot. I want  
20 to make sure I understand. Was that 60 foot from the shore or 60  
21 foot from the pipeline? And, when we reference from the shore,  
22 can someone tell me where that measurement starts, please, because  
23 I don't know marine terminology. I don't know if that's where the  
24 water meets the sand, or -- I don't understand where shore starts  
25 or begins, so --

1 A. Is that directed towards me?

2 Q. Yes, sir. When you're referencing the 60 foot, is it 60 foot  
3 from the shore or 60 foot from the pipeline?

4 A. From the shoreline.

5 Q. Okay. And can someone explain to me or what your  
6 interpretation of the shoreline was to me? I don't --

7 A. My interpretation is where water meets the sand.

8 MR. PEREZ: Okay. Thank you. No further questions.

9 MR. STANCIL: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Perez.

10 Does anyone have any final questions before we wrap up?

11 (No response.)

12 MR. STANCIL: Okay, hearing none, so my final question for  
13 you, Mr. Johnson, is there anything else -- I know we've talked  
14 about a lot here today, but is there anything else that we have  
15 not asked you that you feel should be important for us to  
16 understand about this incident?

17 MR. JOHNSON: I don't believe so.

18 MR. STANCIL: Very good. Well, thank you very much for your  
19 valuable assistance and your patience with us, sir, and we very  
20 much appreciate your time today.

21 The time is now 12:12 p.m. Central Time, and this interview  
22 is complete.

23 Thank you very much, sir.

24 (Whereupon, at 12:12 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL FIRE AND SINKING OF THE  
DREDGE *WAYMON L BOYD* IN CORPUS  
CHRISTI, TEXAS, ON AUGUST 21, 2020  
Interview of Weston Johnson

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA20FM026

PLACE: Via videoconference

DATE: September 16, 2020

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.



---

Lindsay Brown  
Transcriber



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

## Transcript Errata


TABLE OF CORRECTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH: WESTON JOHNSON  
RECORDED ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
9	17	Doyle Westworden	Doyal Wes Worden
12	14	sends these phone	sends these One
17	9	ESQ Pipeline DX 219	EFA Pipeline TX 219
22	2	the skip	the skiff
29	1	that	they
30	5-6	we go and you have to cut some tiles;	we go; note- the remainder of the sentence makes no sense
33	3	watching out	washing out
34	14	in the test ring	unknown - this makes no sense

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEEDED. \_\_\_\_\_  
Initials

Weston Johnson  
Printed Name of Person providing the above information

  
Signature of Person providing the above information

10-23-2020  
Date