

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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NATURAL GAS LEAKS RESULTING IN FATAL *

HOME EXPLOSION ON JANUARY 24, 2024 *

Accident No.: PLD24FR003

& SECOND HOME EXPLOSION ON JANUARY *

27, 2024 IN JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI *

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Interview of: GABRIEL PIERCE, Paramedic Assistant Supervisor
American Medical Response
(Regarding January 24, 2024)

AMR Main Office
Jackson, Mississippi

Wednesday,
January 31, 2024

APPEARANCES:

ELENA BOZHKO, Pipeline Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

RYAN WILSON, Operations Manager
American Medical Response

KALEB GIBSON, Pipeline Safety Investigator
Public Service Commission

GREG SMITH, Director of System Integrity and Compliance
Atmos Energy Corporation

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:10 p.m.)

1 MS. BOZHKO: So, today's January 31st, 2024, and it's about
2 3:10 local time. My name is Elena Bozhko with National
3 Transportation Safety Board. I'm a pipeline accident investigator
4 with the Office of Railroad, Pipeline, and Hazardous materials.
5 For this accident, I'm the emergency response group chair.
6

7 We are at AMR main station at 616 (ph.) Melvin Bender Drive
8 in Jackson, Mississippi. This interview is being conducted as
9 part of the investigation into the explosion that occurred on
10 January 24th, 2024, at 185 Bristol Boulevard in Jackson,
11 Mississippi. The NTSB case number for this accident is
12 PLD24FR003.
13

14 The purpose of this investigation is to increase safety, not
15 to assign fault, blame, or liability. The NTSB is an independent
16 federal agency charged with determining the probable cause of
17 accident and promoting safety. NTSB has no regulatory or
18 enforcement powers.

19 This interview is being recorded and may be transcribed at a
20 later date. A copy of the transcript will be provided to you for
21 review prior to being entered into the public docket. You are
22 permitted to have one person present during the interview. This
23 is a person of your choice: a supervisor, a friend, family member,
24 or nobody at all.

25 Please state for the record who you are -- who have you

1 selected, and if they can provide spelling of their names and
2 affiliation as well. So, I'm going to start with you. If you can
3 please state your name and -- with the spelling, your job title,
4 and the company you work for.

5 MR. PIERCE: Gabriel Pierce, G-a-b-r-i-e-l P-i-e-r-c-e,
6 paramedic assistant supervisor for AMR, American Medical Response.

7 MS. BOZHKO: All right. And the person that you've selected
8 to be present during an interview.

9 MR. PIERCE: Ryan Wilson.

10 MS. BOZHKO: All right.

11 MR. WILSON: Yeah. Ryan Wilson, R-y-a-n W-i-l-s-o-n. And
12 I'm the operations manager for American Medical Response.

13 MS. BOZHKO: Great. My name is Elena Bozhko. I'm a pipeline
14 accident investigator with NTSB. It's E-l-e-n-a B-o-z-h-k-o.

15 MR. GIBSON: I'm Kaleb Gibson, pipeline safety investigator
16 with the Public Service Commission, Pipeline Safety Division. My
17 name -- first name Kaleb, K-a-l-e-b. Last name Gibson,
18 G-i-b-s-o-n.

19 MR. SMITH: I'm Greg Smith, G-r-e-g S-m-i-t-h, with Atmos
20 Energy. I'm director of System Integrity and Compliance.

21 INTERVIEW OF GABRIEL PIERCE

22 BY MS. BOZHKO:

23 Q. All right. So, to start off, can you tell us about your --
24 how long you've been with the company and what your work
25 experience is and just --

1 A. I've been with AMR for 15 years. Started as a EMT, moved up
2 to a paramedic, and now I play a role as a paramedic and assistant
3 supervisor for 400 rotation.

4 Q. Okay. What -- can you describe what your general functions
5 are?

6 A. Respond to emergency calls, provide ALS care to any patient
7 that is on scene.

8 Q. What is ALS?

9 A. Advanced life support.

10 Q. Okay. Were you part of the team that responded to Bristol
11 Drive?

12 A. Yes ma'am.

13 Q. Boulevard?

14 A. Yes ma'am.

15 Q. Can you describe to us what happened there?

16 A. Well, I arrived on scene. Jackson Fire requested AMR due to
17 having a patient. Arrived on scene. Jackson Fire flagged me
18 down. They had a elderly male sitting in the front of their Crown
19 Vic car -- I'm not sure whose it was, but it was a Jackson Fire
20 vehicle -- stating that he was inside the house at the time that
21 it caught fire and possibly exploded, is what we were told.

22 I provided care for him, checked his vital signs, called for
23 a responding unit to come transport him to the hospital. That's
24 when the crew responded, and they transported him out to the
25 Baptist Medical Center. Non-life-threatening injuries that we

1 could tell at that time.

2 The DC on scene advised that there was possibly one other
3 patient inside the house that they have not found yet, and asked
4 us to stay on scene until they completed the -- got done with the
5 fire and possibly found this other patient.

6 Q. Have you talked to him much, to the, to the gentleman that
7 was transported?

8 A. Not after he was transported, I have not.

9 Q. Okay. All right. So, you guys being called on scene by fire
10 department?

11 A. Yes ma'am.

12 Q. Okay. So, you -- do you, do you get call from dispatch,
13 then?

14 A. Yes, dispatch calls -- dispatches us to the call.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Jackson Fire dispatch -- calls our dispatch and requested us
17 to respond.

18 Q. Do you know what time you arrived there?

19 A. I do not. I don't remember --

20 Q. Would you guys have it somewhere recorded?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. And so, you arrived to the scene, and then what
23 happens?

24 A. I take care of initially that first patient that we had, the
25 elderly gentleman. Called for the second unit. They transported

1 him. I made contact with the DC that's on scene with Jackson
2 Fire.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. She asks me to -- or tells me that there's a possibly second
5 patient that they have not found yet.

6 Q. So, you wait for the second patient?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And somebody else takes the --

9 A. First patient. Yes ma'am.

10 Q. -- first patient.

11 A. I stay initially on scene until the DC releases us from the
12 scene.

13 Q. Okay. Was there any interaction between you and the first
14 patient?

15 A. Yes. I checked vital signs and passed them off to the
16 responding crew that transported the patient.

17 Q. Okay. Had he sustained any injuries due to the fire
18 explosion?

19 A. He said he complained of a little bit of shortness of breath,
20 but there was no obvious signs of any smoke inhalation. There was
21 no black around his nose or his tongue or anything like that. His
22 oxygen levels were within normal reasons and his lung silence were
23 clear.

24 Q. Okay. So. Okay. So, why was he transported still? Is that
25 a standard practice?

1 A. He wanted to be -- just go -- he wanted to go be evaluated
2 just to make sure that everything was okay with him.

3 Q. Okay. Do you remember if he was transported by himself?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. There was nobody else with him?

6 A. Just him and the crew that were -- that was there.

7 Q. Okay. Which kind of records, I guess, do you guys create as
8 it's happening? Or would you create any records of the event?

9 A. The transport?

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. We have PCRs that we create.

12 Q. What's a PCR?

13 A. It's a care report, a personal care report.

14 Q. Okay. All right. Were you making any observations of the
15 scene as you were there? That anything that you noticed?

16 A. You could tell it was a fully involved house fire. That it
17 was -- before Jackson Fire got there, you could tell it was pretty
18 well -- like, a good-going house fire. It wasn't just a small,
19 little bitty one.

20 I did notice that there was a lot of talking about the gas
21 was still on, that they couldn't get the gas turned off. And
22 that's when Atmos came out. They actually had to bring a track
23 hoe and dig up to cap the lines, what I understood. And then
24 while we were there, we were asked to actually back up after Atmos
25 got there and move off of scene, because of a possible gas leak.

1 And we were out away from the house for probably 30 to 45 minutes,
2 staging back until they could get it completely cleared for the
3 fire department and us to go back in to finish safely.

4 Q. Okay. So, at some point you were pulled back, and then were
5 able to --

6 A. Go back in. Yes ma'am.

7 Q. Okay. Do you, do you know about -- you don't know exactly
8 the time you arrived, but what -- was it the first like half hour
9 of the call being -- or you wouldn't know?

10 A. No, it was up -- it was up, well up into the time of the call
11 because Atmos had got out there and then capped it and then found
12 the possible leak or told us they had a possible leak for us to
13 back away. I don't know the exact time. Jackson Fire maybe can
14 give you that.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. Sorry, but I don't know the exact time.

17 Q. Okay. Have you spoke to neighbors or anybody else there?

18 A. Family lived across the street from them, we finally got them
19 to answer the door, but I did not speak with them. Jackson Fire
20 did all the speaking with the neighbors across the street.

21 Q. Across the street from the house on fire?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. All right.

24 MS. BOZHKO: Do you have any questions? What I want to do is
25 just go in round. I don't know if you --

1 MR. GIBSON: I don't have any right now.

2 BY MR. SMITH:

3 Q. You made a comment about the elderly male. He requested to
4 go to the hospital to be --

5 A. Evaluated. Yes.

6 Q. -- evaluated. So, it was not decided for him. It was a
7 request of his?

8 A. Yes. And we asked him which hospital he wanted to go to. He
9 requested to go to the hospital.

10 Q. And which one hospital did you say it was?

11 A. Baptist Medical center.

12 Q. Baptist medical center. Okay. Thank you. And then I guess,
13 to follow up on the timeline of, you said Atmos arrived and asked
14 you all to back up. I guess just trying to establish a safety
15 perimeter.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Okay, so Atmos asked you to --

18 A. Yes. They asked the fire department and AMR to --

19 Q. To back up?

20 A. -- to back up.

21 Q. Okay. Thank you.

22 BY MS. BOZHKO:

23 Q. When you guys arrive on scene, how many people are with you?

24 A. I was -- I sprinted the call, so I was by myself.

25 Q. By yourself?

1 A. And then the other unit that responded, there was two of
2 them, I believe.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I don't think they had an orientater (ph.) training that day.
5 So, it's just two of them.

6 Q. And what time generally do you stay until?

7 A. I stay until the DC of the fire department releases us.

8 Q. Okay. And do you recall -- what time were you released?

9 A. I don't recall. I'd have to -- that'd be from dispatch
10 because I don't recall what time it was.

11 Q. When you guys transport somebody to the hospital or to a
12 treatment facility, do you guys wait for them to bring them back
13 or --

14 A. No, ma'am. We drop them off, and the hospital takes over
15 patient care.

16 Q. And when the second vehicle came and took the gentleman over
17 to the hospital, did they come back to the scene?

18 A. No, ma'am.

19 Q. No, they --

20 A. I was the only one that stayed on scene.

21 Q. You were staying?

22 A. Yes ma'am.

23 Q. And what's the -- what is your function as you're staying?

24 A. I just -- I keep in touch with DC to make sure that none of
25 the fire guys get injured, make sure that there's not another

1 patient that gets injured or anything like that.

2 Q. Do you stay outside of your vehicle or inside?

3 A. We can do both. The DC can talk to us on the radio or we
4 stay right there next to DC, just -- we stay visible and within
5 their perimeter of what they have everything lined up.

6 Q. And DC is district chief?

7 A. Yes ma'am.

8 Q. Okay. Were you outside the vehicle?

9 A. Yes, ma'am.

10 Q. And --

11 A. Well, a little bit of both because it was raining that day.
12 So, I would go and warm up a little bit and then go back out there
13 with DC and --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- so back -- I was parked right there with all the fire
16 trucks.

17 Q. Do you recall smelling anything as you were there?

18 A. No. Just the smoke from the house fire.

19 Q. Smoke. Okay.

20 A. I never smelled the gas or anything like that but --

21 Q. Okay. Do you know, how the gas would smell?

22 A. Natural gas? Yes, ma'am.

23 Q. Okay. Do you -- can you tell us where roughly you were
24 positioned if like, you know, it's a street and goes to the cul-
25 de-sac?

1 A. Yes ma'am.

2 Q. Were you closer to the intersection or to --

3 A. I was probably -- so the house that was on fire was here. I
4 was sitting right over. This was where my truck was parked at.

5 Q. So, closer to the -- or not --

6 A. I wasn't real close to intersection at all. And then we was
7 all up in the cul-de-sac with DC and all the other fire guys
8 because that's where they would come and change out their tanks
9 and all that. So, I stayed in that area to make sure they were
10 all okay as they were changing their air breathers and all that
11 kind of stuff out. So, we stayed in the cul-de-sac, just down
12 from the driveway of the house that was on fire.

13 Q. Okay. So, you are watching the firefighters and what they're
14 doing --

15 A. Yes, ma'am

16 Q. -- the whole time. Okay. Is there anything else of interest
17 that you want to share with us that you think is relevant to what
18 we're asking?

19 A. Nothing that I can think of.

20 Q. All right.

21 BY MR. SMITH:

22 Q. Let's go back to the second victim.

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. They told you that there was a second victim they had not
25 located.

- 1 A. Correct.
- 2 Q. You stayed until they --
- 3 A. Located the second victim.
- 4 Q. -- located the second victim?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. But then they just dismissed you because --
- 7 A. Well, I did a, what we call a JSIS (ph.), report of
8 pronouncement -- or a pronounced report. Pronounce the patient
9 deceased. And then after that, and they started picking up all
10 their equipment, then DC released me from scene.
- 11 Q. Okay. At that time, they had brought the body out of the
12 house?
- 13 A. No, the body was still in the house. They were waiting for
14 all their arson investigators and all that to come. But I had
15 pronounced the patient, still there at the house.
- 16 Q. So, you entered the house?
- 17 A. I did. I walked up enough to see the patient to say that it
18 was deceased --
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. -- with obvious signs of death.
- 21 Q. Yeah. So, specifically where did you, where did you go when
22 you stopped and --
- 23 A. I walked up on top of the concrete steps that was right there
24 at the front of the house, where the front wall had come down, and
25 I could see where the patient's --

- 1 Q. The body was?
- 2 A. Yes, sir.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. Enough to where I didn't burn my boots or anything like that
- 5 but enough to where I could see.
- 6 Q. Sure. So, at that time the fire had been put out?
- 7 A. Correct.
- 8 Q. It was in a safe to --
- 9 A. Yes, sir.
- 10 Q. -- approach? And again, even then after the fire was out and
- 11 you were there, no smell of gas?
- 12 A. Nothing that I recall.
- 13 Q. You're smelling just the char of the --
- 14 A. Yes sir.
- 15 Q. Did you have any interaction with --
- 16 MR. SMITH: Is it okay to ask, ma'am.
- 17 MS. BOZHKO: Yes, yes.
- 18 MR. SMITH: Okay.
- 19 BY MR. SMITH:
- 20 Q. Did you have any interaction with Atmos Energy personnel,
- 21 besides them asking you all to backup --
- 22 A. I did not.
- 23 Q. -- and establish the --
- 24 A. I did not.
- 25 Q. Okay. So, after that there was no more --

1 A. No. That's just -- that's the only time I even socialized
2 with them or anything like that, when they asked us all to back
3 away.

4 Q. To back away.

5 A. They were all busy doing their work and all that so --

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. If there was any interaction, it's, hey, how you doing, and
8 that was about it. There were so many -- there's always so many
9 people around. You don't know exactly who all works for who when
10 it comes to energy, and all that out there, so --

11 Q. Sure. No, I understand. I was just curious if there was any
12 other interaction with the gas company.

13 A. No, sir.

14 Q. I imagine that probably went through the DC.

15 A. Yeah.

16 BY MS. BOZHKO:

17 Q. So, you would be the person who declares that the patient is
18 deceased?

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. Okay. And then are you the one who calls the coroner's
21 office?

22 A. The coroner was actually already there.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. They had already called -- the coroner was already there. I
25 guess JFD called them, but they were already there when we -- when

1 they did find the body.

2 Q. Okay. All right. So, you come in, pronounce the person
3 dead, and then step away, and then they take over and --

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. Okay. While you were at the scene, were you taking any
6 pictures or --

7 A. I didn't take any pictures.

8 Q. Okay. And the only record that you created was the personal
9 care report? If you were to create a record that would be a
10 personal care report that --

11 A. Yes, ma'am.

12 Q. And for the gentleman, it would be with the crew that
13 transported him?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. And you wouldn't create that?

16 A. No, ma'am.

17 Q. Okay. Do you create the personal care report for the
18 deceased person?

19 A. I did.

20 Q. You would. Okay. All right.

21 MS. BOZHKO: I don't think I have any more questions. I
22 don't know, Greg, do you -- feel free what you --

23 MR. SMITH: I can't think of anything else. I assume --
24 yeah, (indiscernible).

25 MS. BOZHKO: All right. I guess that will be it.

1 MR. PIERCE: All right.

2 MS. BOZHKO: I'll just stop the recording.

3 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: NATURAL GAS LEAKS RESULTING IN FATAL
 HOME EXPLOSION ON JANUARY 24, 2024 &
 SECOND HOME EXPLOSION ON
 JANUARY 27, 2024 IN JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI
 Interview of Gabriel Pierce

ACCIDENT NO.: PLD24FR003

PLACE: Jackson, Mississippi

DATE: January 31, 2024

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.


Melissa Bousquette
Transcriber



Signature of Person providing the above information

04/25/2024

Date