



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations

Interview Regarding Investigation PLD21FR002

Atmos Energy Corporation Natural Gas-Fueled Explosion During Routine Maintenance in Farmersville, TX on June 28, 2021

Name: Adolfo Ruiz

Organization: Bobcat Contracting

Title: Labor

Date of Interview: July 8, 2021

I have reviewed my transcript(s) from the above referenced accident and:

- I have no comments to make.
- My comments are submitted herewith.
- My comments are marked on the attached copy.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION *

DURING ROUTINE MAINTENANCE, * Accident No.: PLD21FR002

FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS *

ON JUNE 28, 2021 *

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Interview of: ADOLFO RUIZ, Laborer

Bobcat Contracting

Via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday,
June 8, 2021

APPEARANCES:

SARA LYONS, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN JENNER, Human Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ALVARO RODRIGUEZ, Pipeline Accident Investigator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

KEVIN COLTERYAHN, Pipeline Safety Inspector
Railroad Commission of Texas

EDUARDO JIMENEZ
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

JOHN McDILL
Atmos Energy

GLEN CARTER
Bobcat Contracting

MARSHALL CROSS
Bobcat Contracting

MICHAEL TAYLOR
FESCO Pipeline Services

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MS. LYONS: We are on the record with Adolfo Ruiz. This is
3 NTSB pipeline case number PLD21FR002. Atmos Energy June 2021,
4 natural gas flash fire in Farmersville, Texas.

5 These interviews are being conducted virtually through
6 Microsoft Teams, and today is July 8th, 2021.

7 This interview is being recorded for transcription at a later
8 date. Copies of the transcripts will be provided to the parties
9 and the witness for review once completed.

10 Transcripts will be redacted to remove any personal and
11 sensitive information before being entered into the public docket,
12 prior to the release of the final record.

13 For the record, please state your full name with spelling,
14 employer name, and job title.

15 MR. RUIZ: Adolfo Ruiz. Work for Bobcat Contracting.

16 MS. LYONS: And what's your job title?

17 MR. RUIZ: Labor.

18 MS. LYONS: And do you mind just spelling your first and last
19 name for the record?

20 MR. RUIZ: Yes. It's A-D-O-L-F-O last name R-U-I-Z.

21 MS. LYONS: All right. And you're allowed to have one other
22 person of your choice present during this interview. This other
23 person can be an attorney, friend, family member, co-worker, or no
24 one at all. If you would please indicate who you have chosen to
25 be present with you during the interview?

1 MR. RUIZ: My friend, Marshall.

2 MS. LYONS: Okay. So we'll now go around the room and have
3 each person introduce themselves for the record. Please include
4 your name with spelling, and your employer's name. I'll start,
5 and then we'll progress in the order that we discussed earlier.

6 My name is Sara Lyons, S-A-R-A L-Y-O-N-S, and I'm with the
7 National Transportation Safety Board.

8 MR. JENNER: This is Steve -- Stephen Jenner, S-T-E-P-H-E-N
9 J-E-N-N-E-R, I'm also with the NTSB.

10 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Good morning. Alvaro Rodriguez. Alvaro A-L-
11 V-A-R-O, Rodriguez R-O-D-R-I-G-U-E-Z. I'm an accident
12 investigator with (indiscernible)

13 MR. COLTERYAHN: Kevin Colteryahn, K-E-V-I-N C-O-L-T-E-R-Y-A-
14 H-N; I'm a firefighter safety inspector with the Railroad
15 Commission of Texas.

16 MS. LYONS: John?

17 MR. MCDILL: Good morning. John McDill, J-O-H-N M-C-D-I-L-L,
18 I'm with Atmos Energy.

19 MR. TAYLOR: Michael Taylor, M-I-C-H-A-E-L T-A-Y-L-O-R, for
20 FESCO LTD.

21 MR. CARTER: Glen Carter. G-L-E-N C-A-R-T-E-R with Bobcat
22 Contracting.

23 MR. JIMENEZ: I'm Eduardo Jimenez, E-D-U-A-R-D-O J-I-M-E-N-E-
24 Z and I'm with the OSHA.

25 MS. LYONS: And Marshall, can you also introduce yourself

1 with spelling?

2 MR. CROSS: Marshall Cross, M-A-R-S-H-A-L-L C-R-O-S-S with
3 Bobcat Contracting.

4 MS. LYONS: So, with that we'll get started.

5 INTERVIEW OF ADOLFO RUIZ

6 BY MS. LYONS:

7 Q. Adolfo, can you start by telling us a little bit about your
8 background, how long you've been with Bobcat, what positions
9 you've held and any prior experience.

10 A. I'm about a month and a half or so since I started with
11 Bobcat Contracting. Prior to this I was working for Superior
12 Pipeline Services. I was doing landscaping/irrigation for them,
13 and before that I believe I was at (indiscernible) doing
14 pipelining.

15 Q. Okay. All right so we wanted to start by asking you to walk
16 through your experience on the day of the accident. Thinking
17 about the time when you got to the strog (ph.) and how things
18 progressed until the point of the explosion, not going beyond
19 that, and as much detail if you can remember if you have times for
20 different activities that you observed. If there was anything
21 regarding weather or how you're feeling at the time, anything like
22 that that you recall, you can include that, so. Feel free to talk
23 as long as you can about what you recall from that time period,
24 and we'll just listen to you.

25 A. As far the way day kicked out is we showed up to that

1 specific location early morning, around 3:30 to -- 3:30 in the
2 morning to kick off the day, and do our (indiscernible). And
3 everything was (indiscernible) everything was going as normal.
4 When we came to lunch (indiscernible) I did my regular routine and
5 procedure as far as tracking my locations. A few hours later is
6 when the thing had arrived to the -- it's location from there. We
7 did the standard procedure of having everybody there and bringing
8 the line of gas so we could remove the (indiscernible) tank from
9 the line and --

10 Oh, we did have to wait there a while because the procedure
11 is the z-acket (ph.) align and everything went as normal, and we
12 removed (indiscernible) and that day I do recall there was a very
13 small leak after we had already done the entire procedure and we
14 had shut the receivers, the door, and we had to remove the gas
15 once again to find the issue on that door, which was the bolt that
16 goes on -- in -- and the -- we did stop the leak.

17 From there we did I believe we had our, our lunch time, like,
18 I can't recall exactly the time. From there we did go to the
19 Atmos yard to pick up the pig (ph.) that we were going to use,
20 which was the gauge -- and we were going to use that afternoon to
21 load onto a -- the launcher at that site.

22 From there we -- I recall that we loaded up on to my vehicle
23 and then I transported it over there. By then on the way when we
24 were arriving, it did begin to rain. Then in some areas it was
25 raining heavily, and by the time I got to the location, it was

1 still pouring.

2 I was the first one there, and I had opened the gate. I
3 parked nearby the launcher to have the pig get unloaded. When we
4 unloaded it, it was still drizzling. We had set up an umbrella so
5 we could prepare underneath and during that time, we did
6 everything that was part of rebuilding it so we prepare to load
7 it. And at that point once we began the loading procedure, we did
8 have (indiscernible) down the line -- or, the launch.

9 There -- we were waiting a little while for it to blow down
10 until it finally did. And from what I recall, by the time we
11 opened the launcher door, I remember I was the one who put the
12 strap on the dig, and where the track will pick it up and we
13 carried it over. Once we loaded it in, we removed the strap and
14 we had picked up the bar out of -- I recall that (indiscernible)
15 we all had it, we all held it at one point, and I had
16 (indiscernible) table and they sit on the bar and boosted on, on
17 forward into the launchers as much as we could. From there,
18 that's when there were -- we used the track boat (ph.) to wedge it
19 on there.

20 And once he recognized that's when our lead pulled away and
21 we were moving the bar and in the moment that I had seen the bar
22 was at the very edge, already about to be pulled off and in that
23 moment right there like the last, the last vivid moment right
24 there that I was the bar was off the ground, off the pipe, and in
25 the air as I still held onto the bonding cable and in that

1 instance in like the blink of an eye my face was on the ground,
2 and I was turned over and as I opened my eyes that's when I saw
3 one of the workers like a feet in front of my face, and in my
4 state, I just jumped up -- I stood up and I was just very dazed
5 and confused and I started looking around and I felt myself just
6 kind of wander, just staring, not really knowing how to process
7 what happened. And I turn around and the guy that was one the
8 ground in front of me was trying to get up and I look around and I
9 tell him to stay down, and I look around and I do see my coworker
10 further out from where he was standing and the other worker, who
11 works for FESCO --

12 Q. Okay. You don't have to go beyond that, that's for today. I
13 mean you're welcome to if you like, but I think we can stop at the
14 time of the explosion for the discussions today. So, thanks for
15 going through that, your recollection. Just a quick
16 clarification, when you made reference to the Atmos yard that you
17 went to after lunch, what was that?

18 A. The Atmos yard was where we had gone to pick up one of the --
19 oh where was it, I'm sorry?

20 Q. Yeah, that wasn't the location where the accident occurred;
21 I'm just trying to get clarification.

22 A. No, it's their office yard I believe, or --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Pits and rebuilding kits.

25 Q. Okay, thank you. So, I have a picture I'm going to share

1 with you, let's see -- can you see that?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. I was wondering if you could talk me through the time
4 before the flare activity began, before the flare was ignited
5 until about the explosion, kind of describing who was where and I
6 put some labels on this photograph so, for example, if someone was
7 standing near the ignitor you could just verbally give the
8 indication of the position if they were between the igniter and
9 the 24 inch mainline valve you can say that verbally. Can you
10 read all the labels on there?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. You want me to tell you where they were like in the moment?
14 Like, before the blow down?

15 Q. Yes, so I'm trying to understand from before the blow down
16 happen until the explosion occurred where the different people
17 were and if you have their name, if you're not sure, you can just
18 see there was a FESCO employee here, an Atmos employee there.
19 Walk through the steps that occurred that day that you're -- to
20 the extent that you're aware of them.

21 A. Well, at the time before FESCO had arrived, excuse me -- we
22 were mainly near the Bobcat truck and the umbrella area where we
23 were working on the -- excuse me -- on the gate plate itself and
24 the rebuilding the pig and if I'm not mistaken around the time
25 that was one of the -- the Atmos employees were in between the

1 equalizer and the Bobcat truck.

2 When FESCO arrived, there was an employee -- the FESCO
3 employees they did their part in ongoings at night the igniter,
4 the other near the mainline valve.

5 As far as myself, I believe I mainly stayed near the Bobcat
6 truck in the (indiscernible) I was mainly around that area. I
7 don't recall which employee was near the igniter or mainline
8 valve, but I do recall the Atmos employees being near the
9 equalizer and Bobcat truck and the on the other side of
10 (indiscernible) times as we were still preparing we were just wait
11 -- do you need me to point out exactly we were?

12 Q. No, that was good. So, that's the initial positions of
13 everyone, and then it sounded like there were a few steps that
14 were taken to prepare for the loading, the pig loading activities.
15 Could you just walk through how people were moving around and what
16 they were doing, just to the extent that you were aware of it --
17 to the extent you know and remember during that period.

18 A. From the time -- during those moments I do recall walking
19 towards Marco's (ph.) trying to grab an attachment for the impact
20 so we can open the door when it was ready. During that time, I
21 believe that's when they were beginning to blow down. And then,
22 as far as the valves the Atmos guys they did their part making
23 sure things were shut and as far as everything else --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I just know that like we usually are on standby during that

1 whole procedure. I can't recall if that was during the moments or
2 not we were preparing the transmitter that goes inside the pig.

3 Q. Okay. Do you recall seeing the flare be ignited?

4 A. Yes, I do recall there was a -- they were having minor issue
5 with it firing up afterwards it did ignite and it being blow down.

6 Q. Okay, and did you see it extinguish? Did you see it go out?

7 A. I recall when it was beginning to go out -- I don't recall it
8 going out entirely, but by then when I didn't -- I can't recall if
9 -- I don't think I looked back it. Usually as far as it -- I'm
10 going out, I usually do, I didn't hear when the Atmos employees
11 that were announced that it was okay to open.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. For their clearance.

14 Q. Okay. And you heard that, that day?

15 A. Yes. Yeah -- I don't recall what was said exactly, but -- I
16 usually do like to hear everyone confirm.

17 Q. Okay. So, once you heard that it was clear what happened
18 next, what did you do next?

19 A. I cannot recall if it was myself that assisted in opening the
20 door -- the launcher door. I believe I was just on standby, and I
21 was watching as -- if I'm not mistaken, I believe it was Marco
22 (ph.) and Ethan (ph.) opening the door.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And I was on standby watching.

25 Q. And --

1 A. (Indiscernible) and once the door was open, that's when we
2 had a -- I remember I was the one who had the hook and put it onto
3 the hook for the truck.

4 Q. Okay. So, let me show you one other photograph, let's see
5 how I can do that. So, this is photograph two, so, earlier you
6 mentioned that you had the grounding or bonding cable when you're
7 loading the pig I don't have a picture of the launcher with the
8 door open, but I have this one that shows most of the area. Where
9 did the grounding cable attach, do you recall?

10 A. I don't recall. It was not too far from the entrance itself
11 because we always hold it against the bar itself as well.

12 Q. Okay. So, do you recall if it was attached inside of the
13 launcher on the frame of the launcher door, or on the outside?

14 A. It was right on the outside.

15 Q. Right on the -- just to clarify, when you open the launcher
16 door and you can see the metal that becomes visible there where
17 you open it, was it on that part or was it on the exterior that
18 would be visible right now if I was at the scene?

19 A. On the exterior.

20 Q. On the exterior on the white part?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. All right. You mentioned that it was raining --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. So.

25 A. It was lightly drizzle.

1 Q. Was that the whole time you were there?

2 A. I -- it was like most of the time, slightly on and off, very
3 lightly.

4 Q. Was there any time where it was heavier when you were going
5 through the activity?

6 A. At one point but not a -- it was when we were still preparing
7 the pig.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. That's when I recall it was still coming down a little bit
10 harder than the drizzle.

11 Q. Okay. When you actually had the door open and were doing the
12 pig loading activities, did it ever get harder during that period?

13 A. No, it was more light drizzle.

14 Q. Okay. All right. So when you were on scene either when you
15 arrived to the site or at any time after, did you smell gas? Gas
16 odorant?

17 A. I did not.

18 Q. You didn't.

19 A. From what I do recall I don't believe so.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Like usually I can get a light odor from when we do open the
22 launcher door.

23 Q. Do you recall that happening on the day of the accident?

24 A. No, I don't.

25 Q. That would be normal, is that what you're saying?

1 A. Something -- like I get a light odor.

2 Q. Okay. Okay. I just had some other basic questions about the
3 work that was going on, so it sounds like there were three
4 different organizations present. There was Bobcat, there's Fesco,
5 and there are Atmos employees there. Can you describe the
6 difference between the responsibilities of the three companies?

7 A. Yes. Atmos is usually there to oversee everything that goes
8 on and as far as their which valves remain open which valves are
9 shut, and ensuring that we follow the procedure that is expected.
10 And as far as Fesco, to my understanding they do the removal for
11 the gas, which is the blowing down portion in order for us to be
12 able to open the launcher door and load the pig, and we do the
13 track.

14 Q. Okay. Was this a crew that you'd worked with before?

15 A. The FESCO employees I had only -- I believe I only worked
16 with them one other day, which I'm not so sure if was a on Friday,
17 if I'm not mistaken, because I do recall there were two other
18 FESCO employees that I had to work with throughout the week and
19 then I only met these two guys I believe on Friday.

20 Q. Okay. So, let me go back to the photograph one real quick,
21 just get it on this screen. Sorry. Okay, can you see that
22 photograph again?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay, so after the launcher door was opened and the excavator
25 had pushed the pig in to the position that was desired, can you

1 tell me the position of the employees that were on site at that
2 time? I believe from your earlier description that would have
3 been about the time that they push/pull was being removed?

4 A. At the time when the -- once it was wedged in and we were
5 pulling away?

6 Q. Mm-hmm.

7 A. We were out by the launcher door. In the moment there was
8 one FESCO employee in front of me as I was holding the bonding
9 cable and the Bobcat employee was at the -- further back holding
10 the end of the bar, push-pull bar and there was one FESCO employee
11 near me on my side towards the chain link fence by the launcher
12 door.

13 Q. Okay. So, is that -- you were on the side of chain link
14 fence, and there --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- was one FESCO person in front of you while still on the
17 side of the chain link fence?

18 A. One near me, I would say behind me.

19 Q. Behind you.

20 A. And then another by the launcher door in front of the -- on
21 the other side of the push-pull bar.

22 Q. Okay. If I'm thinking of the launcher door as an initial
23 starting point, there was closest to the launcher door one FESCO
24 employee on the far side of the chain link fence, then you on the
25 close side of the chain link fence, a FESCO employee farther from

1 you, further from the launcher door on the side of the chain link
2 fence and then the Bobcat employee -- where was the last Bobcat
3 employee?

4 A. Further from the launcher door towards the umbrella, holding
5 the back end of the push-pull bar.

6 Q. Okay. Is it normal for FESCO employees to help with that
7 activity?

8 A. I have seen it in the short time of being here with Bobcat,
9 they're very helpful as far as -- I've noticed that the way we
10 work we do help each other out with anything.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So, if I'm doing the tiniest thing they do assist.

13 Q. Okay. My last question for now, did you monitor for gas or
14 did you notice anyone else monitoring for gas before or after the
15 accident?

16 A. Not that I was aware of.

17 MS. LYONS: Okay. Thank you. And I'll turn it over to
18 Steve.

19 BY MR. JENNER:

20 Q. Hi, this is Steve Jenner with the NTSB. Thank you for your
21 description so far. I've been taking notes as you've been telling
22 your story, so I was just going to jump around a bit and just ask
23 just to fill in some gaps just a little more detail, if that's
24 okay? You started off -- you told us about your background, you
25 just been with Bobcat for one and a half months, before that you

1 were with a landscaping service, but before that with a different
2 -- you were doing pipeline work before that?

3 A. Yes, I had done pipeline -- I can't recall what year I began
4 doing it but I had been sometime already and so --

5 Q. So, what were you doing with them?

6 A. It was a new line projects and as far new installations and
7 in my earlier years when I first did, I had been a lot of hydro
8 testing at the time as well.

9 Q. I see. Can you give a -- if you don't have exact dates can
10 you give approximate dates, the years?

11 A. Around 2013?

12 Q. Okay, for just one year or for --

13 A. Oh, the very first piping company was (indiscernible) energy
14 and this was for about three to four years, I believe.

15 Q. Okay, great. Now, you were within your current position just
16 for a month and a half, I'm just curious what kind of training you
17 received?

18 A. I did a lot of (indiscernible) before I entered the field and
19 a lot of education on the H2X and as far the procedure -- we'd
20 going for as wearing our full cover face mask and -- how to
21 prevent inhaling chemicals.

22 Q. Okay. Were you shadowing someone before you actually did the
23 actual work? Were you following someone who had experience on
24 other job sites?

25 A. Yes, yes. Yes, and the employee that I had to work with in

1 previous years around those times, that was -- I was at
2 (indiscernible) energy, yes, an old friend and a coworker.

3 Q. Okay. Going into this day did you feel comfortable or
4 confident in your experience to do what was asked of you of this
5 day?

6 A. Yes, I mean I thought that we were doing everything as
7 routine as possible, and since we had already been doing that --
8 for the entire week before that, and we thought the same.

9 Q. So, for the entire week you were doing the same task as on
10 this day?

11 A. Yes. Yes, for that same one.

12 Q. Great. You were describing the day of the accident, the
13 morning of the accident and all before lunch you had a pig-run and
14 ultimately you removed the pig from the line, but I think I heard
15 you say there was a small leak after the procedure? Can you just
16 walk through details, at what location was this?

17 A. It was at the -- where the dig breached the other end -- and
18 yes on the receiver after we did our regular normal removal of dig
19 when someone came around to sealing the door, we sealed as always,
20 normal procedure, and when after we tightened the bolt that goes
21 on the door that's when the it was where they put gas back into
22 the line and at some point I believe an Atmos employee heard the
23 gas leaking through there, and that's when the man called the z-
24 acket employee to return to remove the gas from the line knowing
25 what the issue was.

1 Q. So, just to be clear, this was at a different location?

2 A. Yes, yes.

3 Q. Okay. Very good. Okay. Getting you back to the incident
4 location when you were describing the events you said we all held
5 the pole at one point --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. So, who was actually holding the pole?

8 A. All four of us. I believe at that point too, I had the
9 bonding cable (indiscernible) and once it's placed on the pig,
10 that's when the bonding cable goes on there as well.

11 Q. Okay. So, when you describe the incident as just as the coal
12 was exiting the pipe, was there anything unusual about the process
13 of pushing the pole in and removing the pole. Anything that was
14 abnormal?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay. So, you asked earlier about smells, were there any
17 unusual sounds that you heard that day, unexpected?

18 A. No. Not that I can recall.

19 Q. Okay. We discussed that there are two contractors that Atmos
20 on the site during the work. I'm just curious who you take
21 directions from during the course of the process. If you could
22 just walk us through who's giving instructions, who are you most
23 paying attention to?

24 A. The FC, Chris (ph.).

25 Q. Did it appear that Chris was sort of in charge of the site?

1 A. Yes. I mean, both him and Roger (ph.).

2 Q. Okay. You were also working with Marco.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Is he giving you instructions as well?

5 A. Yes. Like as far as like our procedure as in when it comes
6 to -- you know, like, opening the launcher door.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And usually, when it comes to that, like, we'd use the impact
9 to loosen the larger bolts on there and he assists with loosening
10 and tightening when it comes to opening and close.

11 Q. Okay, so I think from your description and from your answers
12 that I think you describe things as just proceeding normal
13 throughout the -- throughout that period. Just a reflection, was
14 there anything that just did not appear normal to you?

15 A. No, not really, no. Like the only one thing was just the
16 torch burning a little longer but if I was not mistaken it
17 happened the week before as far as the blow down, took a little
18 bit longer than norm from the times it had been blown like -- it
19 just felt as if it was taking a little longer.

20 MR. JENNER: Okay. Well, thank you and that's all the
21 questions I have right now.

22 BY MR. RODRIGUEZ:

23 Q. I am Eduardo Rodriguez with FESCO. Thank you for your time,
24 Adolfo. From the beginning of the work on the Monday prior to the
25 incident, so that would be June 21st, what were the digs they used

1 during this work?

2 A. I'm sorry can you repeat the question?

3 Q. Yeah. So, when you began work for launching the pigs, what
4 other pigs were being used?

5 A. The nitrile (ph.) pig, that was the main one being used for
6 the entire week and it was only on this Monday that we had
7 switched over to the gauge plate pig.

8 Q. Thank you. Then, how long the blowing down of the pipe took
9 from the day of the incident?

10 A. I honestly don't know how long it felt longer than normal.

11 Q. Okay. Now you recall how long it took on previous occasions?

12 A. As far as the week before, I believe it was just one other
13 time, it felt like a little longer than normal the other previous
14 times and then feel as long.

15 Q. Okay, thank you. When you're conducting the preparation for
16 launching the pig, do you use any gauges?

17 A. Can you -- what I'm sorry?

18 Q. Did you use any gauges, or someone was using any gauges on
19 the pipeline?

20 A. Oh, yes.

21 MS. LYONS: Sorry, if I could just jump in for a quick
22 second. Adolfo, if you don't remember or if you don't understand
23 the question just feel free to say you don't know, because we
24 can't have the discussions in the room because we can't hear
25 those.

1 MR. ADOLFO: Oh.

2 MS. LYONS: Thanks.

3 MR. ADOLFO: Pressure gauges I have seen the week before, I
4 don't remember if I -- I don't recall seeing them on that day.

5 BY MS. LYONS:

6 Q. All right. Did you have any procedures for conducting
7 digging operations?

8 A. As far the loading?

9 Q. Yeah, that's correct.

10 A. Yeah, I mean usually it's a as far as us preparing the thing
11 that we building make sure all the bolting is tightened as far as
12 holding on the plates with the -- when it comes down to an open
13 door it's our task to load it in and push the pig in ourselves
14 with a push-pull bar. (Indiscernible) buckets and wedge it and
15 pull the bar out and I was holding the ground cable as well, and
16 we sealed the launcher door and secured it and make sure it's
17 tight.

18 Q. And did you follow instructions, like did you have written
19 instructions with you, or did you have access to these
20 instructions?

21 A. No, it's a -- like there at the moment.

22 Q. Okay, yeah, did you carry any type of instructions with you,
23 do you have those available with you?

24 A. No, like our -- at least my superior, he'll like, let us
25 know, I guess, by like, our (indiscernible) to let us know what

1 we're doing next as far as what steps to take.

2 Q. Okay. And what can you tell me about the prince (ph.) meter?

3 A. The transmitter is to help locate exactly where the pig
4 itself is and it gets loaded in as we're rebuilding, load it into
5 the pig and check to make sure it is picking up signal onto the
6 receiver for that transmitter.

7 Q. And what information is connected from the transmitter?

8 A. That -- I'm not -- I haven't been informed as to like, what
9 exactly what gets tracked. But it does help like tracking the
10 speed I believe, and as far like where exactly it's located in
11 case if it were ever to get stuck within the line.

12 Q. Okay, thank you very much. Do you have any logbook to track
13 operations? Did you take any notes? Do you have to sign in or
14 sign out?

15 A. No, we use an application on our mobile devices to I guess
16 keep track as far as -- to get information as fast a pig is moving
17 around what time it's expected to pass our locations as we're
18 listening for it.

19 Q. Thank you very much. And what kind of PPE were you wearing
20 the day of the incident? What kind of PPE is required?

21 A. It was steel toed boots, fire resistant clothes, hard hat,
22 glasses and gloves.

23 Q. All right, thanks. And, I don't think I have any other
24 questions for now. But, I think you for your time.

25 BY MR. COLTERYAHN:

1 Q. Hello Adolfo. This is Kevin Colteryahn from the Railroad
2 Commission of Texas and I thank you for your time today. You
3 mentioned you had been there the previous week on these other pig
4 runs, and during those runs when you're inserting the pig, and you
5 have a grounding cable, the bonding cable attached to the push
6 pole, was that kind of your duty to make sure that that stays in
7 contact with the pole during the previous runs?

8 A. Yes, and also if I'm not holding the bar, yes. As far as
9 pushing it on, if not that, then other Bobcat employee.

10 Q. Is there any kind of issues with keeping that attached? It
11 stays pretty well attached with that magnet, or how does that
12 work?

13 A. Well, yes. It's attached the entire time as it's pushed. It
14 -- if I'm pushing someone else is holding onto it the entire time
15 making sure it's bonded.

16 Q. Okay, very good. During these previous runs do you recall
17 whether that bonding cable was attached for those runs? To the
18 launcher itself?

19 A. Yes, it was -- well on the launcher.

20 Q. Would it be to the interior or exterior of the launcher
21 barrel?

22 A. The exterior.

23 Q. Okay. And once you've got the pig in there, and the track
24 hose (ph.) pushing on it and gets it seated, how do you all handle
25 the push-pull -- the push bar when the Trico (ph.) releases its

1 pressure on that pole? Does the whole crew grab the pole at that
2 point or how is that handled?

3 A. When it's being removed?

4 Q. Well, right before it, during the removal, but also right
5 before the Trico releases his bucket from the pole.

6 A. No, we make sure that the bonding cable is on and as far as
7 like when it's being pushed in, like once it's wedged in like, we
8 are there visually watching to make sure that the bar isn't
9 getting bent or anything like that as far as applying more
10 pressure than these. And as far as the removal there is a --
11 there's at least two of us that are ready to hold it as it's
12 pulled away.

13 Q. So, y'all step in and hold the pole then the Trico would
14 release pressure and y'all are holding it to keep it from falling
15 and hitting the barrel?

16 A. Yes, like the machine is stopped from applying any more kind
17 of pressure, and yes, like we are there ready to hold it.

18 Q. Okay. Gotten out of the way then y'all would start to pull
19 it out. It would kind of drop from the pig to the bottom bend on
20 the end of the pig would just drop from the pig to the barrel and
21 then y'all would slide it out?

22 A. No, no. It's being held onto, so it doesn't slam or
23 anything.

24 Q. Okay. You mentioned that you -- what you recall was that you
25 were almost completely out when the explosion happened.

1 A. Yes. The bar was off the launcher itself and there was like
2 right at the edges from what I last saw.

3 Q. Okay. Okay. And, so back to your training at your beginning
4 with Bobcat, you did OQ training. Was there any kind of OQ
5 training related to pigging operations? Including abnormal
6 operating conditions that might be related to the project?

7 A. Yes, I believe so.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And, as Alvaro was trying -- was asking -- the pigging
10 procedures, you didn't have any pigging procedures or anything
11 with you on the -- on this day? On location on the back of the
12 truck or anything?

13 A. No, sir.

14 Q. Okay. And, during the previous runs it was mentioned that
15 Atmos had verified some pressures with a gauge on those previous
16 runs, but not at this point in time. Is that correct?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Once -- do you recall once the flair was lit did the valve --
19 the one-inch valve that fed the flair, did it remain open the
20 whole time? Do you recall?

21 A. I don't recall.

22 Q. Okay. All right, I believe that's all I have at the moment,
23 I sure appreciate it.

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 BY MR. MCDILL:

1 Q. Hi, good morning, Adolfo. It's John McDill with Atmos
2 Energy, thank you so much for being here.

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. I had one thought -- question. It's -- when the door got
5 ready to be opened, do you recall there be any -- there was any
6 indication whether or not pressure was still in the launcher or
7 not? Do you recall that?

8 A. No, I don't.

9 Q. So, there was -- as best you recall there was no audible
10 sound that's pressure being released when the door was risen?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. And to your recollection there was no indication that
13 a gas was still in the launcher at all when the door was opened?
14 Is that correct?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Okay. Okay, thank you so much for being here this morning.

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Sir, you're muted.

19 BY MR. TAYLOR:

20 Q. Sorry, forgot to take this off mute. Michael Taylor with
21 FESCO LTD. I just got a couple quick questions for you sir. At
22 the time that Bobcat, Fesco, Atmos, Scott's location, were there
23 any JSAs that were filled out by any of the parties? First people
24 there, signed off on, anything of that sort?

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. And then when you were talking earlier about pulling the
2 push-pole around, if I'm understanding right, there was one
3 person, would have been you at this time I believe, making sure
4 the bonding cable was staying on the pole.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. So, then we get individuals physically pulling that pole out?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. You weren't a part of the pulling the pole, you were just a
9 part of maintaining the bond cable to the pole?

10 A. Yes, and that's Nick as I reported. Pulling and ensuring
11 it's still on.

12 Q. That's all I have for you sir, thank you.

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 BY MR. CARTER:

15 Q. Hey Adolfo, it's Glen Carter. Hey, just one quick question.
16 I know you said you were at the front on the bonding cable, and at
17 the instant right before the ignition you were holding the rod up
18 so it wasn't touching the launcher at all?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay, I just want to clarify that.

21 A. That's the last visual I remember is it was off the launcher
22 itself. I also had the bonding on there. Yes.

23 Q. Okay, that's all I've got. Thank you so much for being here
24 today.

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Thanks Adolfo, so we're going to go around one more time for
2 any second questions that folks have? I did have one
3 clarification myself. When you -- earlier it sounded like you
4 were not sure to what extent you were in opening the door, you
5 didn't recall. Is that correct?

6 A. Yes. I didn't have any -- I'm pretty certain I was just on
7 standby and watching the other two Bobcat employees open.

8 Q. Okay. Have you in previous pigging operations observed any
9 pressure change from that standby position? Have you ever seen a
10 situation where there was pressure in a launcher when you were
11 trying to open the door?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Do you think that you were in a close enough position to have
14 been able to observe that were it to be the case?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. You do, okay. So, you think you would have been able to hear
17 or -- do you think that your colleagues would have indicated to
18 you that something was unusual?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And did they say anything about that?

21 A. No.

22 MR. CARTER: No, okay. So, with that we'll go around one
23 more time for final questions. Steve?

24 BY MR. JENNER

25 Q. Yes, Steve Jenner. Actually, I need to change pace with you

1 a bit, we've interviewed other people on site and one area that
2 I'm interested in is just sort of your fitness for duty and your
3 health on the day that you worked. So, if it's okay, I just want
4 to ask you some questions about your health. So, on that day --
5 well let me just ask you, how is your overall health?

6 A. It's okay right now, it's been -- I'm still recovering --

7 Q. Right, I'm sorry I should have specified. On the day before
8 the event, on the day of the accident, how were you?

9 A. Good. My health was good.

10 Q. Do you have any long-term medical conditions like high blood
11 pressure or periods of fainting or anything like that?

12 A. [REDACTED]

13 Q. Did you have any colds or allergies or anything like that?

14 A. [REDACTED]

15 Q. Okay. Were you taking any prescription medications for
16 anything or nonprescription?

17 A. [REDACTED]

18 Q. Okay. Did you also work on the accident happened Monday, did
19 you work the previous days? Saturday and Sunday?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Do you recall the hours that you worked? On Saturday?

22 A. I think it was 6 or 7 a.m. to 4 or 5 p.m. if I'm not
23 mistaken.

24 Q. And for Sunday? So, this was the day before.

25 A. I believe 7 a.m. to I believe possibly maybe past 5 p.m.

1 Q. So, on the day of the Monday, did you feel -- you said you
2 felt healthy, did you feel you were rested and alert?

3 A. Yes, I felt fine.

4 Q. Okay, great. Good, that's all the follow ups I have, thank
5 you very much.

6 BY MR. RODRIGUEZ:

7 Q. Alvaro Rodriguez with FESCO. Two more questions. Do you
8 have safety meetings before the beginning of any work?

9 A. Yes, and (indiscernible).

10 Q. And did you have one the day of the incident?

11 A. Not a meeting.

12 Q. Okay. So, when the pig -- these were during the day of the
13 incident, when the pig is being purged with the help of an
14 excavator, who was the spotter?

15 A. It was me.

16 Q. Okay. And is it always the same person?

17 A. No. Sometimes it's the other Bobcat employee.

18 Q. Okay. So, who fill this position when you're not the
19 spotter?

20 A. If it's not me it would be the other Bobcat employee.

21 Q. Okay. So, you're the one that determining how far you can go
22 into pushing the pig in?

23 A. Yes, but we all keep a visual eye on it, making sure.

24 Q. Okay. And how do you signal the excavator, the operator in
25 this case?

1 A. (Indiscernible)

2 Q. Okay, I understand. Okay, that's everything that I have for
3 you. Thank you very much.

4 BY MR. COLTERYAHN:

5 Q. Adolfo, this is Kevin Colteryahn Commission again. I
6 apologize, I forgot to put my camera on previously, and I'm having
7 some internet issues so I may lose connection.

8 One of the questions I guess I have was the weather that day,
9 it was raining when y'all were starting and had to deal with the
10 drizzle, do you recall any lightening activity during the day
11 previously, or during this operation?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Nothing in the area on the way out there to the job site or
14 anything?

15 A. No, just heavy rain on the way.

16 Q. Okay. I guess that's all I have as well for today, thank
17 you.

18 MR. MCDILL: John McDill Atmos Energy, I don't have any
19 follow up questions, thank you again for being here this morning.

20 MR. RUIZ: Sir.

21 MR. TAYLOR: Michael Taylor FESCO LTD, I have no further
22 questions myself.

23 MR. CARTER: Glen Carter with Bobcat, I don't have any
24 further questions.

25 MS. LYONS: All right. Well, thanks for going through your

1 experience on the day of the accident with us, we really
2 appreciate it. On thinking back on this interview and everything
3 you've discussed with us, is there anything that you feel may have
4 been important to the accident that we didn't ask you? Nothing
5 unusual that you haven't shared yet?

6 MR. RUIZ: No.

7 MS. LYONS: Well, thanks so much for your time, we're off the
8 record.

9 (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-FUELED EXPLOSION
 DURING ROUTINE MAINTENANCE,
 FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS
 ON JUNE 28, 2021
 Interview of Adolfo Ruiz

ACCIDENT NO.: PLD21FR002

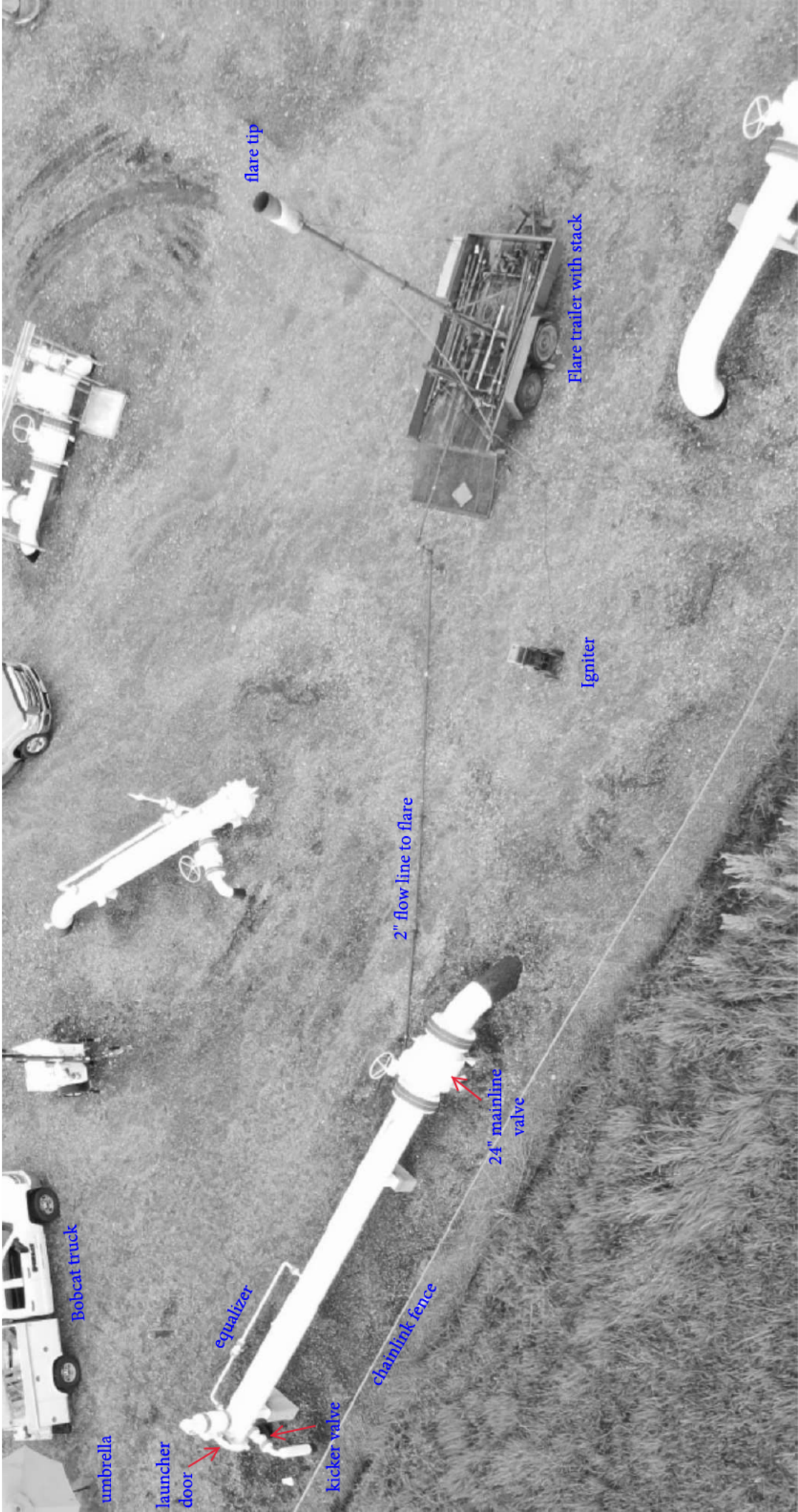
PLACE: Via Microsoft Teams

DATE: June 8, 2021

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.



Brittany Hay
Transcriber



umbrella

launcher door

equalizer

kicker valve

chainlink fence

24" mainline valve

2" flow line to flare

flare tip

Flare trailer with stack

igniter

Bobcat truck

flare tip



2" flare flow line

launcher door



kicker valve

