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: CHRISTOPHER J. THOMAS

Organization: ATMOS ENERGY

Title: SR. FCC

Date of Interview: 7-1-21

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.

Changes provided by Christopher Thomas are indicated in red.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION DURING ROUTINE MAINTENANCE, FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS ON JUNE 28, 2021	*	Accident No.: PLD21FR002

Interview of: CHRISTOPHER THOMAS, Field Construction Coordinator
Atmos Energy

McKinney, Texas

Thursday,
July 1, 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

MICHAEL TAYLOR
FESCO Pipeline Services

GLEN CARTER
Bobcat Contracting

JOHN MCDILL
Atmos Energy

THOMAS TOBIN, Attorney
Wilson Elser Law Firm

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I N T E R V I E W

MS. LYONS: This is NTSB Pipeline Case Number PLD21FR002, Atmos Energy June 28th, 2021, natural gas flash fire in Farmersville, Texas. These interviews are being conducted at the Spring Hills Suites Hotel in McKinney, Texas. Today is July 1st, 2021.

This interview is being recorded for transcription at a later date, copies of the transcripts will be provided to the parties and the witness for review once completed. Transcripts will be redacted to remove any personal or sensitive information before being entered into the public docket prior to release of the final report.

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

MR. THOMAS: Christopher James Thomas, FCC with Atmos Energy. Do you want me to spell that?

MS. LYONS: Please.

MR. THOMAS: Oh, Christopher, C-H-R-I-S-T-O-P-H-E-R, Thomas, T-H-O-M-A-S.

MS. LYONS: Thanks. All right, so you're allowed one other person of your choice to be present during the interview and the person can be an attorney, friend, family member, coworker, or no one at all. Can you just state for the record who you've asked to join you today?

MR. THOMAS: Thomas Tobin.

MS. LYONS: We'll now go around the room and have each person introduce themselves for the record. Please state your name with spelling and your employer's name. I'll start and we'll progress clockwise starting from my left.

My name is Sara Lyons, S-A-R-A L-Y-O-N-S, and I'm with the NTSB.

MR. JENNER: I'm Stephen Jenner, S-T-E-P-H-E-N J-E-N-N-E-R. I'm a human performance investigator with the NTSB.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Good morning, Alvaro Rodriguez. Alvaro, A-L-V-A-R-O Rodriguez, R-O-D-R-I-G-U-E-Z. I am with PHMSA, I'm a pipeline accident investigator.

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

MR. CARTER: Glen Cart, G-L-E-N C-A-R-T-E-R, Bobcat Contracting Operations.

MR. JIMENEZ: Eduardo Jimenez, E-D-U-A-R-D-O J-I-M-E-N-E-Z, with OSHA.

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

MR. MCDILL: John McDill, J-O-H-N M-C-D-I-L-L, with Atmos Energy.

MR. TOBIN: My name's Tom Tobin, I'm a lawyer with the Wilson Else Law Firm, T-H-O-M-A-S T-O-B-I-N.

BY MS. LYONS:

Q. All right, so, we'll get started. Chris, to get started can you just give us a little information on your background?

A. I started with Northern Pipeline roughly back in 2006 where I worked for them for two or three years. In 2009 I went to work for Atmos Energy out of the Plano Service Center as a senior construction operator. I did that for one year then I moved over to the McKinney Service Center with Atmos Energy as a crew foreman in our construction group. I worked as a construction foreman for roughly -- approximately two years and then I hired in as an FCC -- or was promoted to an FCC out of the McKinney Service Center. And roughly after approximately three years I made senior FCC, which is my current role today.

Q. Okay. Can you describe what an FCC does?

A. It is a field construction coordinator, and so we take all the aspects of the different jobs as they're relayed down to us, and we coordinate the work being done.

Q. Okay, great. I appreciate that. So, when you -- can you give us a description of the job that was to be performed the day of the accident?

A. The day of the accident the job being performed is that we were going to be pigging line D17 from the junction of D17-9 going towards rock wall, and we were going to be running what is called a gauge pig, which is to try and detect any hang ups or anomalies within the pipeline itself before we would introduce a smart tool.

Q. Okay. And is that a typical type of job for you? Is it challenging? Was it different, or was that kind of a routine job for you?

A. It was just -- it was -- the gauge pig is just another tool in the series of different runs that we provide for the pipeline maintenance.

Q. Like, have you done a lot of pigging work in the --

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So, that was just for context before we get into your description of the events of the day. So, starting on the day of the accident, if you can just walk through your day in as much detail as possible? Anything that is relevant to the work that was done out there, how you're feeling, what time it was as you're going through, and we're just going to listen to you as you go through it.

A. Okay. I'll try and stay as focused as I can through this. Our day started at 3:30 a.m. that morning. We had previously loaded a gauge pig the night before, so at 3:30 in the morning we showed up, we contacted gas control, we already had a pig loaded in the trap ready to go. We contacted gas control, we got them to go ahead and start making the pressure adjustments for the actual gas flow that we needed to run the pig. We do that so that the pig doesn't run too fast or too slow.

So, we -- over the last few runs we kind of had it already dialed in, so we got a hold of gas control, we gave them a little

bit of time to get that all set up. Once they were ready, we notified them that we were going to launch. We went ahead at 4:00 a.m. roughly. Around 4:00 a.m. we went ahead and opened up our tubes and proceeded to push the pig out of the launcher and into the line.

We had -- the bobcat gentlemen were out at locations and there's a group text, so we start following along with the text to track the speeds and the location of the pig during the run. At that time, after about 20/30 minutes we go ahead and close up the yard and we leave the facility and go back to our normal jobs. And then we track -- basically while bobcats tracking towards the receiver, our group would just kind of monitor the speed through the group texts, and what they would do is they would actually text us with weld counts. So, most of the pipe is 40-foot joints, so they would give us how many seconds between welds, and that's how we'd dial in the speed, if we need to, we would call gas control to increase flow or decrease any flow.

So, that run was actually going very well, and once we got passed AGM, I believe 10:00, we kind of hand it off to the garland FCCs and to the garland group. We -- I proceeded back to the house, started doing some email, went and visited some other job sites. We decide -- they received that pig, I can't tell you the exact time, I believe it was somewhere in the 9:00 in the morning range, but I don't have the exact time with me right now.

At that time they were going to clean that pig, and we were

to meet at the Atmos McKinney Service Center around -- I think we were going to meet around 1:00, 1:30 to try and -- to get them the gauge pig and to go back up to the hill and do the -- or go back up to D17-9 pre-load that pig for the next day's run. We met at the service center and there were some questions with the engineers that we were going back and forth with because we also had a caliber tool at our office.

I had never ran a caliber tool before so I wasn't as familiar with setting those up. When we run a caliber tool usually the engineer will come and set those up prior to the run, but they had a -- since it had sat at our office for a week, they'd asked us to put it on a charger. So, we had to go back and forth with them to make sure we did the charging correctly so as not to damage the tool.

Bobcat representatives arrived at the office, they assist us in setting up the caliber tool, basically just undid the Allen -- they had the Allen wrenches with them, so they just took the back off for us. We got it plugged in and while we were waiting on that, had them load the gauge pig, which we had at our location. The gauge pig they had in their truck, and then we proceeded to head up to the launcher.

Upon -- the caliber tool slowed us down quite a bit so it was close to about 3:00 when we made it up towards the launcher, and we had a lot of real heavy storm clouds coming our way. By the time we arrived it had just started to rain a little bit. When we

got there FESCO was not on site yet, FESCO is the company who does the portable flare, and on the receiving end they would handle the separation in the frac tanks. But on this end, all they were there for is to operate the portable flare.

They weren't there yet, so as we got there the rain was increasing and we decided to stay trucked up, you know, in our trucks for a little bit while we waited on them. I did get out and go talk to the Bobcat crew foreman if he had heard from them, he said yes, they were on their way. I checked the radar to see what the weather was doing, and I told the crew foreman -- I said it looks like, you know, this is going to kind of pass, and it should lighten up, but it looks like heavier is on the way. I said so we should be able to have a window to go ahead and get this loaded.

The crew foreman, at that time, said well, he'll go ahead and start getting the gauge pig ready because we have a transmitter that we have to put in the back. So, there's a bunch of bolts that have to be removed, the back plate has to be taken off, the transmitter put in there, and then resealed up. So, he was going to start getting that ready, I told him he may want to go ahead and set up his tent or an umbrella to keep them out of the rain to do that. And while we waited on the FESCO, I went back to my truck and informed Roger Ballinger, who is the other FCC that was on site, also out of the McKinney service area, that they were going to start getting the tool ready, and we were just waiting

and that FESCO was on the way. We got back in our trucks the rain was starting to increase pretty heavy.

FESCO pulled in and drove straight -- Roger and I were parked just outside of the fence of the yard, FESCO pulled in, went straight to the yard. I had met both of those gentlemen on Sunday, it was the first day I had worked with them, but it was the same two gentlemen; they pulled into the yard. The rain was kind of on and off, it started to lighten up a little bit, so I got out of truck, walked back into the yard and the FESCO gentlemen had already gotten out and asked if we were ready to go to flare the tube.

Bobcat was -- had their umbrella set up -- had a large umbrella set up to keep the rain off them and they were working on taking the bolts out of the back of the gauge pig to install the transmitter. I went over to the FESCO gentlemen, I said, yeah, let’s go ahead and flare, and then I talked to them, I said you guys are going to go ahead and flare down the tube. When we’re done flaring, I want you to leave the valve in the full, open position so that we can use that as a vent for the tube, they had no problem with that.

I stayed with them for a couple more minutes because with the rain we wanted to make sure that we could still light the flare, that the rain wasn’t going to impede that. There were some complications to get it lit, but after two or three minutes it did light. We went ahead and started to do the flare operation. I

then walked -- while the flare was burning I walked over to the Bobcat gentlemen, there were three of them and they were working on the tool under the umbrella. And so, I talked to them, I said when the flare is -- we went through their roles, I just talked to them about their -- what their responsibility was. I told them that we're going to go ahead and when the flare's done, I said you guys will go ahead, open the trap, load the pig, and we'll get this -- and re-secure the door. They were fine, went back, waved at Roger, Roger had already come in and around.

And then while we were waiting for the flare to go down -- we were watching the flare, the rain started to really increase to where, you know, I thought it was going to be lightening up but it started getting heavier and heavier. So, as the flare went down -- the flare finally went all the way down, the rain had really increased pretty heavy. So, while the flare was down the tube had blown down, I double checked to make sure that the valve was left in the open position. I walked over and made sure that the flare was completely out, and then I double checked our valved settings. I checked the main line 24-inch valve, which isolates the trap, and I went to the four-inch kicker line, which is on the back of the trap, and made sure that it was in the complete off position.

Went back over -- under -- the rain was heavy enough I went over and stood under the umbrella while they were finishing working on the tool. The back of the gauge pig had -- we'd noticed a bunch of rust on it at the beginning, so I was a little

concerned to make sure the bolts were in good-working order. And I -- when I went over, I asked Marco, who was the crew foreman for bobcat, I said how did those bolts look? He said they looked fine, he said it was just some surface rust on the back of the plate. I said good. They finished tightening up all the bolts, it was probably about another -- I would -- and I'm just going to estimate, maybe about another five to ten minutes before they were ready with the tool.

At that time, they went over and cracked the door. There was no gas on there, so we opened the spreaders all the way, which are what secure the door, opened the door. At that time Roger was over with me, Bobcat had the pig in front of the door. The crew foreman went to the track hoe, and he got in the track hoe, the Bobcat hands put a sling around the pig so that we could lift it with the track hoe.

They lifted it up, slid it over to the trap -- excuse me, prior to all that, after they got the pig set up the crew foreman did his whiteboard photos of the tool, which is -- has the information for the pig run and also has the date, the project number, and a picture of the tool before it's launched. So, he had already done all of that.

The guys loaded the pig in the trap, took and unslung it from the track hoe, took the strap -- lifting strap off, track hoe backed off. They then grabbed a large push rod, which it was -- I believe a two-inch push rod with an expanded head on it to fit on

the back of the tool, and they began to push that in. I did notice -- I made sure and observed they did use their grounding cables. Those are magnetic cables that they use to ground; they put the one end on the trap, and they put the other end on the metal rod. Those were in place.

I then positioned myself at the back of the trap by the door, probably about four feet back from the guys and in between where the track ho's going to line up and the door itself. Roger Ballinger moves over to actually the neck of the trap because it's an oversized tube to load, and as they push it in there's -- it reduces to the 24 inch, and so they push it all the way up to where that trap reduces. That's as far as you could push it by hand.

The FESCO gentlemen had both come over and started to assist with the two Bobcat gentlemen. There were three Bobcat guys, the crew foreman was back in the track hoe, they had two Bobcat guys on the pole -- on the push rod, and the two FESCO gentlemen came over to help assist them. They pushed it all the way in to where it had hit the reducer, and they held the bar and guided the track hoe in. The track hoe then put its bucket on the bar and began to push.

The thing that we're watching for there is how far they push it in. We don't want to over seat because there's an equalizer line that goes around from the 24 inch to the back of the trap so that we can equalize gas in front and behind. So, we just try to

make sure we don't push too far to go passed that. We watched the push, they probably pushed it, I would say, about 12 inches -- one foot, which seemed about perfect. Roger was over at the neck, and you can hear it slide in. Roger kind of turned and gave a thumbs up, thought it sounded good to him.

At that time, the loaded of the pig was complete. Then the track hoe had started to back out and -- the track hoe had started to back away which left the guys on the pole, they had the grounding rod on. They were removing the push rod at that time. At the time they started to remove the push rod they were -- you have to slide the grounding cable as you go because it's up front as you're pulling out if you -- you know, and it's attached to there, so they slide it along as they pull. They were doing that.

As soon as they started to extract the pole and I saw them moving the grounding rod, I had turned to start walking away and that's when we had the explosion. I turned and maybe had taken two steps and it kind of knocked me off balance, and my ears were ringing, I didn't know what happened. You know, my first initial thought was a lightning strike or something, and then I turned -- I was very disoriented for a second. And then I turned, and I saw we had guys down.

There was no fire at the tube, and then at that time, I grabbed my phone and I started to try and call 911 but the rain had started to pick back up and I was having trouble getting the buttons on my phone to work -- you know, the screen of my phone

was getting wet, and I couldn't get the buttons pushed. I heard -- I saw Roger coming passed me and he had already made contact with 911. I then went ahead and turned and called Bert Slaughter, who is my Atmos Energy supervisor to notify him that there was an incident and that we had people down.

I notified Bert, he picked up the phone, I told him that we had an explosion in the pig -- in the trap, and that we had people hurt. He said -- and I said I can't talk right now, and he said he'll notify management and call me right back. I ran to my truck, and I grabbed all the cotton rags that I had in my back seat, I grabbed them all. Ran back into the thing and started checking on the injured gentlemen.

The crew foreman was very shaken up at that time, he was just in complete panic mode, and I don't know where he -- you know, he was pacing back and forth. I went to the first gentleman who was with FESCO, he was kind of laying on his side, and so I checked on him, there was a lot of blood. I checked for a pulse, at that time I thought I found a pulse.

The other gentleman for Bobcat was walking around, but he -- you could see he had, you know, a blackened face a little bit. And he was trying to stagger around so we set -- I set him in the truck, we got him to go ahead and sit in the truck. And then I went to the FESCO gentleman -- the other FESCO gentleman, he was between the trap and the fence. He was alert and conscious, but very disoriented. I told him not to try and move, I said help is

on its way. I don't know why, but I gave him a rag to hold onto, I said hold onto this.

And then I went over to the other Bobcat gentleman who was on the ground, and I put the rags on the back of his head and was holding him there. And I was just telling him to stay with us, helps on its way, stay with us. At that time the crew foreman was there, I told him to come over and just to hold those rags on the back of his head, and I said just keep talking to him.

My phone, by now, was going off quite a bit. I got back ahold of my supervisor and relayed how serious the event was. I did -- I had checked the other Bobcat gentleman, and maybe it was wishful thinking, but I thought I found a pulse on him as well. My supervisor asked me the address of that location so that they could start getting people that way, and my mind -- I was drawing a blank. So, I ran outside the yard, down that road where there's a mailbox. I gave him the numbers from the mailbox which would've been the house right next door to us. I yelled at Roger, what FM road is this? Roger was still on the phone with 911, and Roger told me the FM road, which I can't recall right now again. I relayed that information to my supervisor, he said I'm getting people heading that way, and at that time the fire marshal was showing up.

So, we waved the fire marshal in, ran back into the yard. I went back over and took back over for Marco because he was so upset with the gentleman on the ground, holding the rags on the

back of his head. Before I had done that, I checked on the first -- on my way back in I checked on the first FESCO gentleman, and I just slid the dirt and stuff away from his -- where his mouth was to try and keep his airway clean. And then I did the same thing for the Bobcat gentleman, and I took over for Marco holding the rags.

The fire marshal came in and I told him, I said we have two down right here, we have a gentleman hurt, and I pointed to the other FESCO gentleman by the fence, I said we have a man hurt there and we have one over here in the truck who's injured. And the fire marshal asked me, he said is this a gaseous -- do we have natural gas here right now? And my immediate answer was no, and then I said well, I don't know -- Roger had came back in with him as well. I said I can't answer that right now, and so I said but I don't believe so. And he said well, I don't -- the fire marshal said I don't smell any gas or hear anything. I said -- he said but we've got four ambulances on the way. I said -- told Roger and the Bobcat crew foreman -- I said let's get the door secured so that way we could get emergency personnel to come in there with no risk.

Roger then -- and Marco both secured the door, and I said to leave the flare stack open to continue to vent anything that may or may not be in the tube. At -- as soon as they secured the door, I informed the fire marshal that the area was safe. The ambulances had arrived, the fire marshal then directed us to move

to the outside out to the entrance, and then as -- and he had started checking on the gentlemen himself. As we moved out there the ambulance guys were coming in with equipment, the fire marshal said get those two in an ambulance, and he said -- I heard him say those two are gone.

Then sheriffs -- everybody else I -- as soon as I heard that I made another call to my supervisor, and I told him that we had fatalities. I spoke to Kevin Reeves and told him we had fatalities. Marshall Cross, a supervisor, at some point had called me and I told him that we had fatalities. He said he was in Whitewright; he was heading that way as fast as he could. Then the sheriff started talking to us to get statements and discuss stuff with us, get -- they gave -- you know, our driver's license. They started trying to collect information from us.

At some point Stewart Hill, an Atmos Energy supervisor out of the McKinney Service Center, arrived. The police had us -- had given us statements and we were pretty rattle and stuff. At that time, Stewart said wait on your statement, he talked to the sheriff, he said we're going to let them calm down a little bit.

I don't know who all got there but there was a lot of people there, a lot -- there were sheriffs, marshals, I don't know, it just seemed like a lot at that time because a lot of different people were asking us questions. But at one point, I don't know if it was a marshal, or sheriff, or who it was, but he was -- they were trying to get the names of all the employees so they could

get emergency contact information. I hadn't worked with the FESCO gentlemen very long, so they had given him the FESCO supervisor's number -- for Chad with FESCO. They came back and told us they couldn't get ahold of him, who else could they -- could we call? And he pointed at the helicopters overhead, he said we need to notify people before this gets out.

So, I called Abel with FESCO, and I said -- I told the officer -- I said I will get someone with FESCO management on the phone, I said give me one minute. I called -- I didn't have any other manager's number other than Chad's, so I called one of their employees that I had worked with previously, Abel. I told him that we had an emergency in Farmersville up on line D17 and that I needed a FESCO manager to call me back immediately. And I said, Abel, I said I need someone to call me right now from management.

Within a couple minutes -- he said okay, and within a couple minutes I got a telephone call from a FESCO manager who said his name was Randy and asked what it -- had gone on. I told him we needed the employee's information, that I needed -- I got his, I said I'm going to take your phone number, I'm going to give it to the first responders, they need to talk to you and get information from you. He asked what had happened and I said we got guys hurt, and he said who's up there? I said the one gentleman's Deric, and I said I don't know the other gentleman's name. I did not know at that time that Randy was Deric's father.

I got -- I ended up -- I got his information and throughout the

course of the next few minutes, we got him to be able to talk to someone.

And then at some point, Roger and I had moved back more towards the road to where the supervisors were parked, and the rains had came back real heavy. I went up and gave them a bunch of the tools out of -- the first responders, I gave them a bunch of tools out of my truck to secure tarps. I got back in my truck while the downpour's going on, spoke with Kevin Reeves who needed to know where the injured people were taken. And I didn't know where they took them, so I jumped out of my truck, ran to the firetruck, they told me that the two individuals who were being transported to the hospital were going to McKinney Medical City. I relayed that information onto Kevin Reeves with Atmos Energy so he could notify the contractors and their families where their loved ones were at.

Then at -- I'm not sure -- I mean, I think around 6:30, somewhere in there, somewhere Gregg Elmore, who's an Atmos Energy supervisor, arrived and kind of started taking over dealing with the police, the sheriffs, the marshals, the fire chief. Gregg used to be the McKinney Service Center supervisor, he's very familiar with that area. He's out of Greenville now, but he made that -- he got over there and he kind of took over for the Atmos side.

Stewart Hill then had us load up in the truck -- in his truck, he said just secure your trucks, we're going to leave your

trucks there. They took us to the -- Roger and myself to the McKinney Service Center. HR then arrived at the McKinney Service Center that evening where we went ahead and performed out breathalyzer and our DOT drug test. At -- somewhere around 7:30, 8:00 they went ahead and transported us home.

MS. LYONS: Thanks, Chris.

MR. THOMAS: Can we break for a minute?

MS. LYONS: Yeah.

Off the record.

(Off the record)

(On the record)

MS. LYONS: Back on the record with Chris Thomas.

BY MS. LYONS:

Q. All right. So, Chris I wanted to focus on the time right before the door to the trap was open, until when the event initially occurred. So, we're not going to -- for most of the rest of the interview we're not going to talk about the emergency response portion. I just have a couple of questions I'll ask later on that, specific questions. So, we'll just focus on the events prior to the accident.

So, I was wondering if you could start in right before the door is open? If you could kind of walk me through with the -- and I apologize for the black and white image, but, like, who was where, what they were doing, and --

MR. TOBIN: Sara, if we're going to use that image, could we

mark it as an exhibit to the interview?

MS. LYONS: We will, yes.

MR. TOBIN: Great, thanks.

MS. LYONS: So, this will be Exhibit 1 to the Chris Thomas interview.

BY MS. LYONS:

Q. Okay. So, with, you know, who was where, what they were doing, and, you know, approximate times where for the different tasks to take?

A. Okay --

Q. You can write on here too if that --

A. Okay. So, at the valve that leads to the flare we had the FESCO gentleman, and excuse me, because I don't know the other gentleman -- I don't remember his name.

Q. There's Michael or Deric.

A. It was Michael. Michael was at the valve where the flare tube comes off of the top of the trap, and he had his crescent wrench and was operating that valve. Deric was right here at the electronic ignitor for the flare, this is before we lit the flare. I had came in and I was positioned kind of in between both of them and talking to Deric as we were trying to get the flare to ignite. With the rain I didn't know if it was going to ignite, so I had asked him, I said do you have trouble with this one in rain? He said well, it's striking. And they just played with the gas flow a little bit and they finally got it to ignite.

At that same time, once the flare was going and the trap was starting to flare off, the Bobcat gentlemen were towards -- between the trap and the back of that truck. Just a little bit outside of that photo, they had a large umbrella set up, and they had the caliber tool, and they were working on that tool; removing the bolts and getting the transmitter installed into the back of that tool. I don't recall where Roger was at that time.

As we were waiting for the flare to burn down the rain was increasing, and we kind of walked over and stood by the flare, watching the flare burn down. As the flare reduced down to nothing, I then walked back over to where the Bobcat gentlemen were still working on finishing putting the -- they had already installed the transmitter and they were putting the cap back on and retightening those bolts.

Roger, at some point, had came up here; it was starting to rain pretty hard, so I said why don't you come over here under the umbrella with us? So, he walked over under there with us --

Q. Under the two Bobcat employees' umbrella?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. And I told the FESCO guys, you can come over here, they said well, we've been out in the rain all day, you know, we're fine. And so, they were positioned -- the one -- Michael was still here at the valve, and Deric was somewhere right in here, I believe,

and I'm just estimating.

The flare had burned on the way down. While they were still working on that, I think Deric was still somewhere in this area overseeing the flare operation. We listened to the flare completely reduce, I walked back over, checked the flare, there was no flame left on the flare. I walked back over here; I had told Michael we're going to leave that in the full, open position so that anything in the tube will continue to vent. And I then came and checked this valve position on the 24 inch, I made sure it was in the complete off position. I climbed up on here a little bit, and on the indicator they had it notched for the indicator to point to make sure where it was off. They had a notch on there, showing where to set it.

I then walked up here, the equalizer on the tube was in the open position, and I checked the kicker line, which is the four inch at the back, to make sure it was in the closed position. That's where all of our valve settings were at that time. That's when -- Bobcat then moved to start opening the door, and the crew -- they had the pig finished. Marco and -- I would say probably five minutes after the flare was out, they had the tool ready.

Marco and one of his other gentlemen unsecured the door, we opened the door, there was no pressure on the tube. The two FESCO gentlemen walked over as one of the Bobcat employees was putting the strap on the pig. The crew foreman went and got in the track

hoe to come over and lift it, and I had made a comment to him -- I said with this tool, I said we could've almost just picked it up and put it in there -- just talking with the guys because it's a lighter tool. But we used the track hoe.

A. They lifted the tool and they moved it over to the door. I'm just trying to think where I saw everybody. The two Bobcat hands were at the door, and Michael had come around and was helping them, so, you got those three there. Deric had started to make his way over to the back of the tube as well at that time with FESCO.

They got the track hoe, lifted it, they moved him in, they guided him down to where they wanted to set it, and they set it right on the front lip and then undid the strap. The track hoe backed away and they pushed it up in, and that's when -- Roger was over here with me, Roger and I were both by now -- had come over and we're both standing right here in this picture, I would say we were between the truck and the door somewhere in that area.

Q. Okay, and this is when they were -- sorry. This is when they're just using the backhoe to insert the pig, you were in this area?

A. That -- yeah, that was where they were just lifting it to get it setup on the trap.

Q. Okay, initially --

A. Right, before they grabbed the bar. Once the track hoe backed away, all four gentlemen grabbed the bar and proceeded to

push it in. At that time, I positioned myself between the trap door and the track hoe, probably about four to five feet, I was right here. As they hand-pushed in, Roger had made his way to right here by where the equalizer tube is because this is where our neck reduces.

Q. Okay.

A. Roger had made his way to there.

Q. So, initially, you were between the -- you were both between the truck and the equalizer, and then as they were pushing the pig in with the excavator, you were at the start location and Roger was at the start location?

A. No -- right, when they initially pushed it in, they push it in by hand all the way up to here, they hadn't moved the excavator in yet at that time, until they get it to where they can't push any farther until it's at the reduction.

Q. Okay.

A. That's when Roger moves over to here and that's where I positioned myself, where I can see how much of the rod enters into the tube with the track hoe so that we don't over push it. That's when they -- the guys were holding the push rod and they waved the track hoe in. Marco pulls in with his bucket in a down-face position so that we can put the -- push the bar on the back, use it as a push.

Q. So, you moved here so you could get a better view?

A. So I could have a full view of the rod because there were

four guys on the rod at that time.
Q. Okay.
A. I did -- and like I told you earlier, they did have their bonding cables attached to the rod.
Q. So, where were the ground -- can you -- is it on this photo? Are they attached?
A. No.
Q. The grounding cable?
A. I don't see them on that photo.
Q. Okay.
A. It's -- those get attached after the door is opened.
Q. Oh, okay, so you need the other angle? Let me see if I have something. So, after the doors open, can you just describe verbally about where they attach?
A. They have magnets, they attach one to the rod -- to the push rod, they attach the other one to the trap, usually on the face.
Q. Okay.
A. I don't recall visually seeing where the one on the tube was attached, I just saw that they had them on and that they had the one on the pole. But the other one would attach on the face of the flanch (ph.) where the door is --
Q. Okay.
A. -- so that they have bare-metal contact. But I did not observe where that one was placed; I just saw that we had them set

up. But mentally, I can't visualize seeing it on there right now.
Q. Okay.
A. They were on, but I couldn’t tell you where exactly they had it attached.
Q. Okay, let’s see. So, when these activities from opening the door until right before the accident occurred, was anyone monitoring for gas?
A. I don’t recall.
Q. Okay. And how about monitoring pressure in the chamber here?
A. No, there was no monitoring for pressure.
Q. No? Okay. So, the pressure was the flare?
A. We --
Q. The flare was like an indication for you?
A. The flare was the -- we use the flare as a dual purpose; we use the flare to remove the gas from the trap, and afterward we used it for a vent. We had the door opened, which is -- I don’t want to speculate on the size of the oversize on the trap, but the pipeline is 24 inch, the trap is larger. So, we had a full open at the back of the door so you could not have pressure on there. We had the equalizer in the open position so anything in front and back would be equal -- would have the ability to travel between those two points. So, you had a full opening on the back, and we had the vent in the front with -- anything would have been going up and out this flare stack.
Q. Okay. So, right before the door opened, what -- is it

correct to say that the flare stack would've been opened, you would've had an indication of the flare going out? You, I think you said earlier, had waited for a period of about five minutes --
A. That is --
Q. -- with it in the off position still sparking? The flare continues to spark, so if gas was coming up the flare stack, would it have relit during that five-minute time?
A. No, that was at the -- we're going back into the beginning where we lit the flare.
Q. Okay.
A. That was when we first got on site to light the flare that it took a couple minutes to get it to light. I -- and there's an igniter right here --
Q. Oh, I'm -- sorry, I'm not -- let me clarify my question --
A. You -- okay, I'm -- yeah, I'm --
Q. -- because I think I may be misstating it. So, right before you opened the door -- and I'm not sure exactly how much before so maybe you can help me with that a little bit. The flare had been lit at some point prior; it went out because there was no more gas?
A. Correct.
Q. And that's your indication that there's no more gas, right, that you've completed --
A. That -- see, that -- we -- you can hear, and you visually see the flame and you can hear it because it -- you know, you can hear

the gas rushing in. You can hear it actually reduce just like if you were deflating a balloon or something. So, as that completely reduce all the way down to where the flame went out, the time between that being -- the flame being completely out, they were still finishing putting the bolts on the caliber (caliper) tool. I would estimate maybe five minutes time had passed -- three -- I would say three to five minutes time had passed, and I'm just estimating, between that and we opened the door.

Q. Okay. So, did anyone check pressure? Or the flare was the pressure check, right?

A. That's what we use the flare for, yes.

Q. And it continued to be open, and then you had an open door. So, you had many paths to vent to atmosphere -- two paths?

A. We had two paths to vent, correct, plus the equalizer tube, which would've helped assist anything to the back of the trap.

Q. Okay, thank you. That's helpful, thank you. Okay. So, did you smell gas at any point?

A. I did not.

Q. Okay. Even during the post-accident period?

A. I did not.

Q. Never? Okay. Did you hear of anyone else smelling gas?

A. Nobody had said anything to me.

Q. No one said anything? Okay.

A. At the time when they opened the door, we kind of stepped back, and at that time Bobcat kind of takes over the operation at

the door. And nobody indicated to me that there was an abnormal operating condition.

Q. Okay. Who actually opens the door?

A. Bobcat.

Q. Do you remember which employee?

A. Marco directs -- they use an impact gun because it's -- there's two nut drivers which spread the locking rings that secure the door, and they have to be opened -- you can't just open them all the way, they have to be opened in sequence. So, you do a little bit on this one, little bit on that one, and it continues to spread. And then at that time the door is loose, but you have to open them all the way out so that you -- it clears so that the door can be pulled.

Q. Okay.

A. And so, when you're spreading those out and you're going one to the other, at that time the door becomes loose. And so, if you were to have pressure on the tube you would know at that time, and you could always reseal, but there was no indication of any pressure. The flare was out, they continued to open -- I don't know who the gentlemen was with the impact gun at that time, I don't recall.

Q. Okay. Let's see. So, you said earlier you were using a gauge pig, do you know if it was intrinsically safe?

A. I don't know the answer to that question.

Q. Okay. And then when you were verifying that they had pushed

the pig into the proper position, how is that done? Like, how do you know it's at the right spot?

A. Where the neck reduces, they push it all the way up and you have -- I don't know the exact footage between the equalizer, but you don't want to push it -- you don't want to seat it all the way up and into the pipe past the equalizer because you still need gas to be able to flow around. If you push it too far when you come on to -- after you would close the door and reenergize, it would actually start to want to try and push the pig all the way up to your valve, which is not where -- then you have no control to equalize the pressure in front or behind.

So, you have a small window there between the reduction and the equalizer that you need to set it in between that -- you need to get the first few cups in between that. I think you have about two foot of space so we try to go -- make sure that we stay within 12 to 18 inches when we push it in, which is the reason why Roger kind of comes over here. You can't see it but you can kind of hear it as it slides in, and what we do is we watch the bar. When they start to push with the track hoe they had one of the gentlemen giving Marco, the crew foreman, hand signals to, you know, track forward.

And what we do is, they have the bar already in place so a lot of times the guys will position their hands about a foot so that when their hand gets to the tube, that's where they give them the stop sign. And they can -- you can also hear the cup starting

to seep.

Q. Okay. Is that what you saw them do, then?

A. I saw them do that.

Q. Okay. Let's see -- oh, before the work started on this day, was there a safety briefing?

A. On this day?

Q. Uh huh.

A. We didn't have an official safety briefing. What we did was more of a, what we'd call, kind of a bumper or tailgate meeting. With the rain being like it was at that time, and since everybody was trucked up, we didn't come together in one large group. That where -- I went over and met individually with the gentlemen from FESCO and we discussed what they were going to be doing with the flare and assigned their roles. And then I went over and talked to the gentlemen from Bobcat, and we discussed what we were about to do, and how we were going to do it and accomplish it.

And so, it was more of a bumper type meeting or a tailgate meeting like we like to call it. But we didn't all come together in a huddle for -- with it raining. We kind of -- as people were getting out of their truck, we broke it up and just visited with -- I visited with the FESCO gentlemen, and then I visited with the Bobcat gentlemen.

Q. Okay. During those visits what'd you discuss?

A. We discussed the roles of who would be doing what and where. I informed FESCO that their job was to go ahead, and they would be

doing -- operating the flare, and I informed them that we would be leaving that valve in the full, open position. And then I went back and I talked to the Bobcat gentlemen, and I explained to them that, you know, once the flare was down and we verified that there was no pressure on the tube, that we would have them open the door, and they would install the door.

Q. Okay.

A. And on all of our Atmos jobs, and we've worked with these contractors plenty, everybody on site from, and it doesn't matter who, all have the ability to call a work stoppage.

Q. Did -- was there any indication that somebody was thinking about that or concerned about safety that you heard?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Were you concerned about safety at any point before the accident occurred?

A. No, I saw nothing that had me concerned.

Q. Okay, and did you notice anything unusual that you haven't already talked to us about?

A. The only we've done that is different is going to be the portable flare. I'll just say that this is the second time I've used a portable flare. Normally, in the past, we had -- we would blow these to atmosphere, and then we would have these venting to atmosphere. Under -- and I can't tell you what the exact new rules are, that would fall under our compliance group, but it's been determined now that we will -- when blowing down the traps

that we will flare or use a compressor of a -- what they call a ZEVAC, which is a compressor which can take gas and compress it and push it into another pipe to get it down to zero.

Q. Okay. Did -- okay, did you notice anything unusual related to the emergency response, specifically the first responders' response? Anything that -- as far as your interactions with the first responders? Anything that you think is important?

A. Yes, the fire marshal, who was the first on scene. When he walked up, I was back here with the Bobcat gentlemen who was down, and when the fire marshal walked up -- and Roger was right over here with him. I'd like to just point out he did ask, you know, when he was asking me if there was gas, he said -- because he made the statement, he said I don't smell any gas or hear anything. And I -- that's when we made the decision, let's just secure the door, and, you know, because the ambulances we on the way. But the fire marshal had made that statement --

Q. Okay.

A. -- to me. And that's where I told him at first, I said yes, the area's safe, and then I said wait, let's secure the door. At that time, even after the event, the door was all the way open, and I did not smell or hear any gas.

MS. LYONS: Okay. Well, thank you. That's all the questions I have for now.

BY MR. JENNER:

Q. Great, thank you. You need a break or are you ready to

continue?
A. I'd like to continue.
Q. Great. This is Stephen Jenner with the NTSB. I -- wonderful recap, so appreciate that. So, I'm just going to bounce around semi randomly just to fill in some gaps, and for some clarification. Just the beginning, you were telling us about your work history, if you can just fill in some dates, you were a construction foreman for two years, do you recall the years?
A. I would have to estimate, because I'd have to go back and look at my, you know, employee record. But I hired on with Atmos Energy in 2009, I was a senior construction operator on a construction crew for roughly a year before I took the crew foreman job in McKinney. And I believe I was a crew foreman for roughly two years, which would've been until somewhere around 2012 when I moved into an FCC role, which is a field construction coordinator.
Q. Right, and that was in McKinney?
A. That was in McKinney.
Q. Right, and then you became a senior FCC, what year was that?
A. I don't recall, I think I was an FCC for two-and-a-half to three years before I made senior FCC. But I'm guessing.
Q. Okay. I'll -- so, give or take 2015, perhaps?
A. That would probably be very close, yes.
Q. Okay. So, you've been in that same capacity since around that time, around 2015, so about five, six years?

A. Correct. I mean, I've been an FCC for probably more like eight years, but a senior for roughly around five years. But, once again, I would have to go back double check those dates.
Q. That's fine. You had mentioned contacting gas control.
A. Correct.
Q. If you could just give some details about the conversation; who are they, and why do you have a conversation with them?
A. Gas control is -- they oversee all of the gas flow through our pipelines. They have the ability to, you know, move gas from one location to another, they're kind of like the operators of the system. So, anytime that we are going to be doing any work on a pipeline, we have to submit what's called a Gas Clearance Form. A Gas Clearance Form is submitted to Gas Control, it has to have their approval for us to move forward with the dates of our work.

The reason they do that is so that we don't run into a conflict with another project or somebody else doing operations. Gas Control can also -- will also set the flows, speeds, and pressure. So, where you have D17-9 feeding into D-17, they can control how much flow is coming through, which we do have to reduce quite a bit so that we can run the tool at the optimum speed.
Q. Thank you. Once basic question, this yard or this site, does -- how -- what is the name of this? How do we identify it?
A. It would be referred to as the D17-9 to line D17 junction, and in local area we refer to it as the Johnson Hills Station.

But technically it would be the D17-9 to D17 junction.

Q. You had talked about the weather, about the rain, besides the obvious, its unpleasantness, what is the concerns -- or are there any concerns in terms of operations efficiency when it comes to heavy rains?

A. The heavy rains, it just slows things down, makes things harder. But our immediate concern usually would be any kind of a lightning strike because -- we call it Johnson Hill, you're up on a hill, you're surrounded by metal, so we play real close attention to what the weather is doing at this point. And we had rain, there was no rumbling, and the rain was just kind of coming down harder and slower, there was no lighting and thunder at that time.

But it's a concern, which is why -- we knew there was more weather on the way, so we decided to proceed during the lighter part of the rain, which at times got really heavy on us, but there was no lighting observed. But that's our main concern with weather, is the possibility of lightning.

Q. Right. So, I think you're saying in terms of the venting operations or the flaring operations, is rain a factor in that?

A. I don't believe so other than -- like I said this was the first time -- well, I had used a -- this is the second job that we have used a portable flare on. And so, with it raining I didn't know if that was going to impede the ability for it to light, for it to create a spark up there. But it was able to light.

Q. Okay. You had, I think, mentioned it took a couple minutes -- two, three minutes?
A. It did, yes.
Q. And what is your understanding of why it took some extra time?
A. I think because it was wet.
Q. Did you notice that the flare had gone out before you had expected it to?
A. No. When they opened the flare -- I'll just add, they -- you know, we don't go -- Michael, who -- with FESCO was at the valve, once we get the flame about where we want it, as it continues to shrink, he continues to open up on the valve. So, he kind of stays at the valve and monitors that flame. So it -- and as we start to lose pressure, and as the flame starts to shrink, he continues to open up on that valve to try and just kind of maintain it at a respectable level, and then -- until he comes all the way open, and then you can hear it just slowly reduce, and see it reduce down to nothing.
Q. You had discussed the process for using the pole to insert the pig to a small window. I think you described about two feet to where it's properly positioned?
A. I would -- the footage I was estimating.
Q. Right.
A. But yes.
Q. Right. You know, I -- we noticed -- we were on site and saw

the pole you're referencing, there are no markings in terms of one foot, two foot, three foot, four foot, so, you know, for the length of the pole. So, I'm just interested in how you estimate how far the pole is pushing the pig?

A. What we do is -- well, they can put -- they'll push it all the way in as far as they can by hand, because once it hits the point where the tube reduces to the 24-inch line, they're not going to be able to push that by hand into there.

Q. And how far is that approximately?

A. Can I see the picture please?

MS. LYONS: I also have some other drawings if that's helpful. Or this review, any of this good?

MR. THOMAS: The problem is you can't really see where it reduces. Well, you can right -- see how it reduces? I mean, it's kind of hard to see in this photo, but you see there's a reduction right there to there. So, I would -- I don't know the -- I would have to -- they would have to be measured. I mean, it's probably more than ten feet.

BY MR. JENNER:

Q. Okay.

A. But I -- it would have to be measured from the door to the reduction -- to where it reduces to 24 inch.

Q. Right, and when you're --

A. And --

Q. Sorry.

A. Yeah, I'm sorry. And the measurement from the equalizer to the reduction would also have to be -- I would have to go back out and measure it.

MS. LYONS: I think we --

MR. TOBIN: Can we make that Exhibit 2 to the interview?

MS. LYONS: We will, Tom. I'll take care of that at the end of the interviews.

BY MS. LYONS:

Q. So, we can get an accurate drawing later, but I think that Steve's just trying to get clarification on --

A. Yes.

Q. -- if this is where the transition is occurring, what is your window?

A. They're going to push all the way up to here, and we want to take -- there's two sets of -- there's multiple sets of cups on that tool. So, you have the front of the caliper tool, and it has three to four cups on it -- discs, we want to get those first cups seated between there and that equalizer. And so, we -- you roughly figure it's about a foot, and then what we'll do is, they'll push it with the bar all the way in.

Once they can't push it any farther, I know that the first cup's hitting it there at the reduction -- at the reducer. That's when they bring up their track hoe, and that's where I told you, you have so much pipe that's left on the push rod that's out of the tube, and so what the guys will do a lot of times is

he'll -- I mean, he estimates, but he'll put his hand about a foot back. And that's what I watch, is how much -- I'll look at their hand place, and I'll look at the back of the rod, and when the track hoe starts to push, he'll let his hand walk with it, and when his hand's at the door, you know, we call it good. And that's why Roger usually would come up here and you can hear it seat, you can hear it -- as they push, you'll hear those cups pushing in on the pipe.

The other thing we would do, if we weren't sure, is we have the transmitter in there. So, we can always get the wave tracker and run it along the pipe to check where the back of that tool is sitting. If there's ever a concern that we pushed it too far, we could check it that way. The other check that we use is, when we would purge, is with the equalizer open, if gas isn't moving around, then we know we pushed too far and we blocked it.

Q. Okay.

A. But in answer to your question it was -- usually I look at their hand position and I watch their hand move with the push rod, and that's how kind of gauge it, and it's about a foot.

MR. JENNER: Right.

MR. THOMAS: And you can tell by the resistance on the track hoe.

BY MR. JENNER:

Q. So, when you describe it as push by hand, it's -- by hand also means using the pole, but not the excavator?

A. Correct. When I -- any time I say hand pushed, it's using the push rod without the assistance of the machinery.
Q. Do you how long -- is there a standard size for the push rod?
A. No, because multiple areas have different sized traps. Actually, some of the newer tubes that are coming out are much longer, and it's because some of the smart tools are very long, and so they have to be able to fit into that trap. So, different areas have different sized tubes, so a lot of times those push rods are adjustable, meaning that they can add in a section of -- they can add to them or take away from them. So, they've -- yeah, they can add another rod stem to make it longer if they needed to --
Q. Right.
A. -- to match the trap.
Q. I think you described there's a point where the first two Bobcat people were pushing with a pole, then one or two FESCO people joined in, in that effort?
A. Correct. I don't know exactly what point, I know when we -- when they picked up the caliber tool with the sling, I know Michael had come around and started to help with them, tracking it over and setting it on the front lip, and helping unsling it. So, you had the two Bobcat hands, and you had Michael who had moved over to help because the crew foreman, Marco, had moved to the track hoe. So, that -- he came over to kind of assist the Bobcat guys.

caliper

I don’t recall at what point Deric came around and helped, but it was some time where they had to pick up the push rod and had started to push it in. And I can't tell you who -- I don’t recall who was on the front of the push rod, but I remember watching them -- as you’re pushing in, you have to keep sliding the magnet back, because, you know, otherwise it’s going to be putting the pole down in there. But I did observe them doing that, and I did not see them break contact with that at all.

Q. Okay. I think you mentioned that you did not recall if gas was being monitored after the door -- before the door was opened -- no, after the door --

A. After.

Q. -- was opened. Is that a -- is monitoring during that period, is that sometimes done?

A. It could be. I believe at sometimes -- usually we allow Bobcat to have, you know, the front of the door, that we kind of transfer over that responsibility. Your FCCs don’t usually go -- we don’t open the doors. You know, at that -- it’s kind of like a transfer of custody. Once the tube is flared down and there’s no transfer on the tube, we kind of turn it over to Bobcat to let them go ahead and do that. I have seen them where they have gas sniffers, or gas detectors there, I just can't tell you if they had one there or not.

Q. And I think I heard you say it was about three to five minutes between the flare went out, and the time that the door was

opened?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Do you recall how long the door was opened before the accident occurred?
A. I would just estimate -- I would probably estimate ten minutes because the door was opened, once the door was completely opened Marco would've went and started the track how, he would've pulled the track hoe forward while they put the sling around there. So, they had to attach it to the bucket, he had to carry it in, put the tool in, they had to unsling it, he had to back out, then they would've done the push procedure. So, I would estimate -- I would just estimate maybe seven to ten minutes for all of that to take place with the door fully open.
Q. Thank you. You had described, as the pig is going into the pipeline, you obviously can't see it, but you can hear something. So, what is it that you're listening for? What time of sound?
A. When we're seating it?
Q. Yes.
A. Up at the neck you're hearing the cups scraping on the pipe as they kind of compress because it takes quite a bit of force to push those in. So, you'll hear them push, you'll hear them -- on the pipe wall itself, you'll hear that sound of those rubber cups scraping the pipe as they get compressed in there.
Q. Is it a pretty unique sound that an experienced person could easily identify that type of sound?

A. I think anybody could identify hearing something -- I mean, it's a distinct sound. You would -- it would be -- it's just a scraping noise, you can hear it scraping the pipe.

Q. I see. I'm interested -- you had mentioned Roger, your colleague a few times, if you can walk us through the interaction, or the coordination that you two have in terms of getting the job done? What -- you described your responsibilities, what are his responsibilities?

A. Roger and I are counterparts. Both of us -- we usually try to have both of us there on any of our pipeline tie ins, or any of our activities on stuff like this, just to have someone else there with you. I wasn't present at the very -- I actually didn't start on this project until Wednesday morning's launch. The week before I'd had a dental procedure, so Roger was there at the start, which would've been Monday, to have the -- was there -- had the flare -- with the guys to install the flare and get it set up. And he did the first load -- he was there to oversee the first load himself that day, and the launch Tuesday morning, and the load on Tuesday afternoon. I came back Wednesday morning and began covering, then we had both of us on site from there.

Roger and I usually will just split of the duties of what we're looking for. That's why when we get to the point where the pig's being loaded, it's easy -- one person could possibly do it, but it's better to have both of us, and that puts one of us at the back and one up at the neck of the trap just to observe that the

pig's being loaded properly.

Q. What is -- oh, I'm sorry. Go on.

A. I was going to add, also when we do launch in the morning, Roger and I will share duties because what we -- we have one person that's always assigned to, as we say, drive the pig. And I told you about the text messages that we'll be getting on a group text, usually him and I will trade on and off that responsibility. So, after -- about the first thirty minutes after we think it's running good, we'll leave the yard.

We'll both be able to watch the texts and talk, but usually we'll designate one to call Gas Control, that way we don't have multiple people calling to try and make different adjustments. Roger had been making the contact with Gas Control on these runs. So, in the morning when we got there, Roger would go ahead and oversee that, you know, Gas Control was called, and when we were good to launch. And then I would be over there with him to help us launch it.

Q. Just curious about -- you've launch pigs at this location previously?

A. Yes, we have.

Q. You, yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. Any estimate of, roughly, how many times?

A. Over the years I would say, I know at least two, possibly three different times that we've ran this line, and I would

estimate three to seven runs per time. So, I can say two for sure, possibly three going back.

Q. Is there anything particular about this arrangement or the equipment that you find challenging or unusual?

A. We were limited on the ports that we had available on that tube. We did -- upon the beginning of this -- and I don't know if Roger discovered it or what, but we have a two-inch valve that's on the top of the tube that we found to be inoperable. With the tube under pressure, we were not able to remove the cap, so it wouldn't come off without turning the whole assembly, so, basically it was non operable.

So, we talked with Marshall Cross during one of these runs in the morning about when we had the tube going down, just going ahead and changing that out. I actually did have a two-inch valve with the nipple and the plug, and we talked about changing it out, but I told him I had to get the MTRs for those fittings before we could do a change and install those, because we'd have to have the paperwork for the fittings and make sure that they're rated, and the correct fittings to put on that trap.

So, we had, at some point, planned, between finishing that run, securing that -- those documents, and probably changing that out when we had the gas off of the tube. But at the time, it just took away that two-inch port from us being able to use it. And then, with the flare being used -- the portable flare being used, that's hard piped in, and that was our only port available to us

up in front of this reduction, I believe. I don't think we had another port available, other than the one that we had to hard pipe to the flare. And I'm saying that from memory. I mean, if I went out and looked at the tube, maybe there's something there that I just forgot about. But at this time, what I'm trying to remember is we were limited on some ports available.

We did have a threadolet, which is a one inch on top of the blow down up on the top. But it really didn't serve any purpose for us at that time because if it's raining or whatever, someone would've had to climb up on top of pipe, and then actually stand on top of this valve to reach that. And even if you put a gauge up there, I don't think you could see it from the ground. I think that's maybe about eight feet tall, I'm not sure. But it really was -- it was a port that really provided us no access or any use.

Q. Okay.

A. So, we were limited on the ability to actually control what was going on here, in my opinion.

Q. Did any of these limitations give you pause or concern?

A. Not at the time, no.

Q. When you say not at the time, are you now thinking post-accident -- at any point did it give you concern?

A. No, it didn't give me concern because we were still able to use the flare as a purge. The only thing that gave me any concern was that when we were using it to purge, the purge stack is up here, and so I don't have any visual or audible confirmation of

that. That was just -- that was the only thing I worried -- but when we opened the door, you know, that's an indicate -- that was our -- your secondary check would've been when the door is fully open. And so, when the door is fully open, you can, you know, then you know that you're probably purging up here and you got a full, open purge there. But, like I said, we did -- it just takes one little piece of control away from us is all.

MR. JENNER: Thank you. That's all the questions I have right now.

BY MR. RODRIGUEZ:

Q. Thank you. I'm Alvaro Rodriguez with PHMSA. Thank you for your time. Some of the questions are for clarification for this. What was the purpose of the work?

A. The purpose of this work is to check the integrity of the pipeline on line D17. That is -- that all comes from our engineering group, our compliance group, and that is mandated on frequency that we have to do that. So, this would've been a smart tool run, which would've went through looking for any anomalies, corrosion, pipe-wall loss within our pipeline for this section of pipeline. So, this had been scheduled -- our original -- when you said -- can you go back and ask your question to me again?

Q. No problem.

A. I started talking and I got myself -- I started thinking ahead.

Q. Not a problem. What was the purpose of the work? You

mentioned checked integrity of the pipeline?
A. Correct. So, that's what -- that's why we started the process, and so, in that part of the process, before you can run that smart tool, that's where you have to comply with all the other runs. So, what we ran first was a bullet-nosed pig with crisscrossed brushes.

The bullet-nosed pig, it's a little softer, it's less invasive to the pipeline. So, what it does is it'll run through -- it helps descale with the crisscross brushes. It won't really push if you have liquids or any sediment, it really won't push it all out. But when it comes out the other end, you'll have an idea, kind of, what your pipeline shapes in. We can look at the brushes and see how saturated they are. Plus, whatever it pushes in gives you an idea of what's in your line.

So, at that point, we noticed there was no liquids that came in with that. I wasn't present on that run, but I saw the text and the messages that there was no liquids. So, then they went to a mandrel pig on the second run. The mandrel pig -- your mandrel pig's more of your cleaning pig, and the line has to be cleaned -- as clean as you can possibly get it so that when you do the smart tool it can get accurate readings.

So, we started the cleaning run, which was just the mandrel pig. With there being no liquids, we didn't do a foam-disc pig. Foam disc is another type of pig, but we didn't use it in this case. So, we went right to the mandrel. The mandrel has cups on

it, has magnets on it, and has wire brushes. The magnets are very strong, they'll pick up any metal shavings, any, you know, slag from welding debris, whatever. They'll pick all that up. The wire brushes will help descale or knock anything off the pipe wall, and the cups are -- will pretty much push anything in front of it.

And so, we started doing those cleaning runs. Upon the second run, they left some days open we were -- they were going to run two days and they had a couple open days. But we had to continue running because of the condition of the pig, when it was coming out was still dirty. So, we were having to add runs to ensure that the line had been cleaned.

So, actually the smart tool, which would've been scheduled for Wednesday, had gotten pushed back to Thursday to give us the extra cleaning day, which made us -- which meant we weren't going to run Monday, but we chose to run Monday. Those decisions are made by the engineer based on what comes out on the other end, which I'm -- Roger and I aren't down on that end. On this end we're only responsible for the launching, and for securing the pigs, and making sure Bobcat as the right tools, and the right pigs.

So, we came in Sunday and loaded, ran Monday, and then it was the -- then they were comfortable to go to the caliber (caliper) -- or not the caliber (caliper), to the gauge pig, which is what we were loading Monday. The gauge pig, its job is to run through the line. It

has an aluminum disc that is sized for that pipe, when it comes out on the other end what they're going to look for is any deviation to that sizing plate. So, if that plate were to be bent, distorted in any way, that meant there's an obstruction somewhere in your line. And based on that deviation, it determines kind of a go, no go, whether we can put a smart tool in the line. So, that's what we were doing at that time, was loading the gauge pig, which is a sizing plate.

Q. Thank you very much. How often do you conduct this work, the integrity of the pipeline?

A. On this line or in general do I do it?

Q. In this line?

A. On this line --

Q. If you know?

A. I would have to refer that question to our compliance group because they have the set schedules, and then as lines start to get scheduled and assigned to engineers. That's when it comes down to us, what our schedule is for the year, because we have multiple lines in our area, and they try not to get them all due on the same year. But there is a frequency that they are due to be ran, and that they have to be run.

In some lines we just do maintenance, some are scheduled for a tool run, and the tool run is mandated to be ran at a certain frequency. I just -- I don't know off the top of my head what that frequency is. But that comes out of our compliance group and

our engineers.
Q. Thank you. How did you talk to Gas Control? How do you communicate?
A. They have a gas clearance that has already been submitted and approved which clears us to do the work, and we do all of our communication with them over the phone.
Q. Okay. And when you talk to them about shutting down gas, or having the approval for the pig, do you hear -- I'm trying to determine timewise, like you call in the morning and let them know, you hear back a few minutes later? So, I'm trying to -- if you could describe --
A. No, they pick -- they answer.
Q. Okay.
A. They're kind of like a call center at the same time.
Q. Okay.
A. There's been times I've called and had to call back, you know, if they're on the line with someone else. But we'll make contact with them in the morning, let them know where we are, and that we're going to set up. They have our clearance, so they are already ready for us, and they will go ahead and start putting the flows. Like, you know, they -- on this line there was a certain line we had to stop injecting.
The reason we were running so early on this because of the heat, we were concerned about the power plants. Which that all was decided on the stake holders meeting where we had a Teams call

for the stake holders. That call has all the engineers, managers, it has the contractors, that's where everyone's kind of involved in make sure that -- you know, what kind of flows we're going to need and can we still, you know?

The reason for the early launch, at that time, and that was through Gas Control, was that we have power plants that come on. And with ERCOT already under so much scrutiny, we didn't want to be the ones in a hundred-degree day to disrupt their power. And they're Gas Control dictates to us when the peak load's going to start to pull, and that usually was coming on somewhere, I believe they said around -- just before noon is when they started to need peak loads.

So, we wanted to be in and out of that tube before their peak load, and that's when we also go over what kind of flows we're going to need to set that, and if Gas Control can safely meet those flows or demand, and they could. So, then when we go to call them that morning to set up that flare, so they pretty much already know what are set points are, and then we just adjust as we go based on the speed of the pig.

Q. All right, thank you. You mentioned something about contamination in the pipeline after the run of the pigs, what kind of contamination did you find, or did you see?

A. On this particular run?

Q. Uh huh.

A. I don't know what the composition makeup is. They usually do

send a sample of it to get tested, that would've been on the collecting point. But it looks like a black sludge, in my opinion, it's a carbon-type buildup. I couldn't tell you what the composition of it is.

Q. All right. In this process -- during the purging process, do you have any gauges in the system?

A. No, we did not have any gauges on that system.

Q. I'm going to move on into procedures. Did you have procedures for running a pig?

A. I had not read any of the procedures for that.

Q. Did you carry procedures with you in the truck or in the facility?

A. I have access to our procedures manual on my computer, which would've been in my truck.

Q. And how about on-site procedures?

A. No, there were no on-site procedures.

Q. Okay. Do you know if they're required for this facility?

A. I don't know the answer to that question.

Q. Okay, thank you. How about gas leak detection tools, do you have to carry any of those with you in the truck?

A. Yes, I have a CGI in my truck.

Q. Okay. And how about Bobcat and FESCO?

A. Yes. I know Bobcat usually carries some kind of gas indicator.

Q. And during the time that you were performing this work from

Wednesday of the week before, right? Do you see or do you use any of these gas leak detection tools?

A. I did not use mine, no. And I --

Q. Okay. Did you see anyone using?

A. I don't recall, and I don't recall if Bobcat had one at the trap or not. But no, there was nothing we used.

Q. And one more question, it is for clarification. I am confused about -- you mentioned caliber and then the gauge pig --

A. Correct.

Q. Are those two different things?

A. They're two different pigs. But -- I don't want to speak too much on the function of a caliber tool because I could be misleading you. But we had checked if there was going to be a gauge sizing plate run and a caliber, and that was up to the engineer, and the engineer said yes, we're going to run both. So, and like I said, normally we were -- in my experience, as I usually run a gauge pig, and then we go to the smart pig, which is sometimes one or two runs depending if it's a combination tool where you get the GO (ph.) and the MFL. But at this time, I was told that we were going to be running a caliber tool, and that was all -- that was the engineer who made those decisions and who -- and they ordered the caliber tools.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: All right, thank you very much. Those are the questions -- all the questions that I have for now.

MR. THOMAS: Okay. Can we take a little restroom break?

MS. LYONS: Sure, let's take a break. Off the record.

(Off the record)

(On the record)

MS. LYONS: We're back on the record with Chris Thomas.

BY MR. COLTERYAHN:

Q. Kevin Colteryahn with the Railroad Commission. I'm not exactly sure where to start. Let's kind of hit back here at the previous run Roger was on and you were not on site yet. The Monday before, you said they had -- your -- from what you know, they loaded a pig Monday, run it, lost it Tuesday morning?

A. That is correct.

Q. And then they loaded another one Tuesday afternoon for a Wednesday launch?

A. That is correct.

Q. And you -- were you in -- were you coming on scene at that time on Wednesday?

A. I came on Wednesday morning for that launch.

Q. For that -- okay. At that time was anything mentioned to you about the ball valve lock -- blocked valve at the launcher seepage? Any indication that they had had an issue with that?

A. Yes. At that time, on the first launch, Marshall Cross and Roger Ballinger were both there as we were getting ready to launch the pig, and they had informed me that they had marked the off position on the 24-inch block valve. Because apparently, and this was just hearsay of what they described to me, that the night

before when they first tried to blow it down, they had to make some adjustments on the wheel to get a complete shutoff. And so, what they did was they marked that position where it was at a full, closed position.

Q. Right. Okay.

A. So, apparently -- what they told me is they went -- if you pulled it down all the way tight, they think it was over seating.

Q. Over seating.

A. And so, they backed it up and it's what, someone I think at the time, referred to as the sweet spot.

Q. Right.

A. And so, that was marked and that's what we were using on all the runs going forward.

Q. Okay. And so, then also, they would've identified that two-inch valve on the barrel being inoperable, or was that something that you discovered when you started working with them?

A. I think that issue actually came up on -- sometime previously, and I can't tell you exactly when, but I think there was maybe a year earlier we tried to access that port for something and I can't remember what it was, but we couldn't do it. So, we knew it had to be done when the trap was down. And at that time of that run, they were not able to get it off, and so, that's when we were talking about replacing it. But I had -- I can't remember when we realized that that was -- I honest don't realize when that was out of service.

Q. Okay.
A. But I know we'd had -- we had struggled with that cap. Let me rephrase my statement, I know at some point there was something we were up there to do, earlier, where we had trouble trying to remove that -- the plug off that valve -- the two-inch valve.
Q. But when you came onto the project on Wednesday, you were aware of that?
A. Yes, I was. Yes.
Q. Okay. All right. So, there was some indication that Roger may have used a gauge on that stack by the door, but you all did not have any -- utilized the gauge during this -- the process when the incident happened? Is that correct? You indicated that it was kind of hard to see up there and --
A. No, I don't recall it -- being told or anything of a gauge being placed up there.
Q. But you all did not use --
A. No. I think -- I was told that they used it as an extra purge point on the first few runs, and I made the recommendation not to use it when we purged the tube, to use the flare stack, that way everything was going up and out and away from us.
Q. Away from the location.
A. And I said -- and that one inch, I said wouldn't be doing us any good.
Q. Right.
A. I said plus it helps us to know that gas is moving through

the equalizer. With that open you wouldn't be able to hear that.
Q. Right. Okay. Kind of looking for if there's an indication of a source of ignition. You have the ground on the push bar, would there be any other grounding on site of the barrel to the -- to a grounding rod in the ground -- the flare stack to a grounding rod in the ground or anything like that?
A. I don't know on the flare stack.
Q. You all just kind of using that --
A. That was a new setup for us. I don't know how that's grounded, or how that -- it's a portable flare, so I can't speak on that, and I don't know of any other grounding on the trap other than what we were using for the --
Q. Between the rod and --
A. -- push rod, correct.
Q. -- the trap, okay.
A. I mean, other than, you know, the pipe itself.
Q. Right. And with -- my line of thinking is that we have cathodic protection on the pipe, so we had the pipe coated, kind of insulated from the ground, and maybe there's an issue that could be addressed with grounding the barrel to it -- grounding the rod in the ground?
A. I wouldn't know --
Q. Just kind of --
A. -- the -- yeah, I wouldn't know the answer to that.
Q. Just kind of thinking that through, and if that's a potential

area where it might've created a static spark or something. But you had said earlier that you did not observe any lightning in the area or anything, so --

A. No. We had the storm clouds, we had the rain, but it wasn't putting out -- it wasn't one of those big lightning events. I don't recall hearing any lightning or seeing -- hearing any thunder or seeing any lightning.

Q. Right, okay. So, on the push bar, was that a straight -- complete straight bar at the time when they were pushing the pig in?

A. Yes. It's a --

Q. No bends in it, no --

A. No. And then it has an oversized head on it.

Q. That was my next question. It had a cup on the end that kept it kind of --

A. Yes.

Q. There's like a hook or something on that pig, and that cup would go around to push and push on that.

A. Correct.

Q. Was that pig --

A. Right, so, if there's any sensors or anything out of the back it fits around there and gives you a more even push. Yes, there was an oversized cup on the end of the push rod, correct.

Q. Okay. So, when they are holding the rod, and the excavator -- or you're through pushing it, the guys on the ground

come in and grab the rod and hold it, the excavator lets loose on his pressure, is there any way they just pull it out by hand, and it would just fall on the end of this cup against the pig? It would just fall to the bottom of the --

A. You're correct. Actually, I did hear it hit the bottom of the pipe.

Q. And when you turned -- I'm going to get to a different spot here where we're actually talking about what happened now. When you turned away, that had it -- you said you heard it drop and hit. How far out did they have it? Had they just started pulling when you turned away and start going a different direction? Had they --

A. They were halfway.

Q. They had already pulled up about halfway?

A. They were pulling -- the track hoe was still back up, tracking backwards, and I would say they had probably started -- I heard them pull it back, I heard the head it. And I would say they were probably about halfway pulling it out because I observed them moving the grounding cables as they were back it up.

Q. As they pulled it out?

A. And as they were pulling that out, I made the turn and took two steps to my right towards the gate when the incident occurred.

Q. Okay. So, is it kind of normal -- I mean, maybe not normal, but something that you would run across once in a while doing a pig run, that the block valve like that would not be sealed off,

or would have a little bit of seepage?
A. That is correct, it's the reason that we left. At times you will experience some -- what we call it is bleed by (ph.), where there is some gas that can get around the valve, and that's why we like to leave a vent open, so that it has somewhere to go if it is bleeding.
Q. And that's how you would basically address that, is leave a vent open to --
A. Correct.
Q. Any other measures that might be taken to --
A. Not that I'm aware of. I mean, it would depend on the -- you know, how much on the severity of the --
Q. Depend on the severity of the seepage?
A. Correct.
Q. So, on a situation like that, how would you verify how big of an issue you have with seepage? Would you --
A. Normally the guys at the door -- like I said, once we get the trap blown down, we kind of turn the door over to Bobcat, the contractor, to open, and they handle all the loading part, I've had them tell me that there was bleed by at the door before. And the other way we would normally tell would be on the upper end of the trap, through the threadolet. So, you would have those open for your vent to atmosphere, so you could put your hand over it, or you could hear it. In this case we had -- the only port that was up there that was available to us was hard piped in --

Q. To the flare?
A. -- to the flare. So, when I mentioned earlier somewhere in my statement, I felt like we had a little bit less control, that would've been something that would've helped us indicate that.
Q. So, if you had another port available, would there be a time that maybe we'd -- you would stick a gauge in, shut everything out to see how much -- how quickly it pressured up or anything like that?
A. I probably couldn't answer that. If I was to -- I don't know if that's something I would've done or not. I imagine it would've been based on if someone at the door had told me there was a problem and that we needed to find out what was going on there, there might've been more action taken, and that could've been a corrective step. But I don't know if I had another port available if that's something I would or would not have done.
Q. Okay, and so, we discussed procedures earlier, you have those, of course, on the Atmos website, or through your access to the Atmos -- how would Bobcat or FESCO -- would you expect them to have a copy -- hard copy of your procedures on how to operate a pig launch? Would they be provided with this, or should they be provided with those procedures?
A. I don't know the answer to that question. I do know that most of our contractors have availability to our procedures manual, I believe, through the ISN network.
MR. COLTERYAHN: Okay. All right, I believe that's all I

have.

BY MR. TAYLOR:

Q. Michael Taylor with FESCO, I just have a couple of quick questions. You said you inserted a -- Bobcat inserted a transmitter into the PHP?

A. Yes.

Q. Do we know who that -- who provided the transmitter, and who's the manufacturer of the transmitter?

A. Atmos Energy provided the transmitter, and it was a transmitter from Inline.

Q. Inline? Okay. And was it a fresh transmitter? Did you all have to change the batteries in it or anything?

A. Yes, batteries had been changed in the transmitter. We do new batteries on every run.

Q. Okay. Inline was the -- you said?

A. Inline was the manufacturer.

Q. Let's see that was answering that last one. Okay, do you roughly know from the time you gave them the thumbs up to start flaring until the time the flare was out? Estimated time it took to flare down the line to zero?

A. Maybe five to seven minutes.

Q. Okay.

A. And I'm guessing.

Q. Sure.

A. But it didn't seem very long.

Q. Right, okay. No, I'm just roughly trying to get a time. Okay, and then, I know you got there on Wednesday prior, you all were rebuilding the brush pigs -- the mandrel brush pigs as needed or every time?
A. Every time.
Q. Every time, okay. And then on -- so, you -- prior to this -- this was Monday. Sunday night, you loaded the pig, you all launched it Monday morning, right?
A. Correct.
Q. Did you pressure up the line -- was the line ready to go when you all left Sunday evening? Was the line pressured up?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Who would've operated those valves to pressure up the line once the tool is inserted?
A. That would've been Roger Ballinger and myself.
Q. Okay.
A. Well -- and if -- and I'll go one step farther, we don't always operate them completely ourself, we oversee the operation because some of those wheel valves are a lot of turns.
Q. Sure.
A. So, we'll have assistance, we'll have a couple guys get in there with us. But none of the valves get opened or closed without myself or Roger directing that.
MR. TAYLOR: Okay. That's all that I have. Thank you, sir.
BY MR. MCDILL:

Q. John McDill with Atmos Energy. Chris, you described earlier a notification to Gas Control. Loading a pig itself, as was happening right before the incident, does that require a notification to Gas Control? Loading the pig?
A. Loading the pig does not require a notification to Gas Control.
Q. Okay. You'd also mentioned earlier a stake holders meeting, can you describe that a little bit more for us, please?
A. Once compliance has deemed a -- assigned an engineer, there will be -- prior to any activity on that line, there will be a stake holders meeting, which puts all parties available into the meeting to discuss any issues, anything that we're going to have due, it discusses schedule.

It basically goes over the entire process of what line we're trying to do, and it allows local operations, the engineers, management, the contractors, all to get on the same page. It puts the dates on the runs, they provide what tools are going to be run. Usually, the engineer over the project will head up that conversation, and hold that meeting, and at that time any concerns or issues that people come up with will be addressed. That's where the contractors get their schedule and what equipment is going to be needed as far as frac tanks or separators, and what equipment will be needed at the launching point, and where those points are located.

So, in this case, then the contractors will contact the FCCs

and coordinate the days that they're going to move those in. Like, on our end, we had to have the track hoe and the portable flare. On the other end they would've had a ZEVAC tool, and the separator and frac tanks moved in. And that's kind of what that teams call goes over. And then they also -- on that stake holders meeting they address any safety issues or safety concerns along those lines as well, and that's with all the parties that are going to be involved.

Q. Thank you. You talked about, you know, a series of runs made prior to the day of the accident using various styles of pigs. Generally speaking, of the length of those pigs that preceded the gauge pig that was going to be run, are they generally equivalent in length?

A. They're all very -- they're mostly similar in length. The bullet nose might be just a little bit long, little, you know, little more thick. Then you have the brush mandrel, the brush mandrel and the gauge are very similar, maybe six, eight inches in difference in length. But they're all pretty similar in length at that point until you get to the actual smart tool, and then the smart tool, if it's a combo tool, your length increases dramatically.

Q. And that was going to be scheduled later?

A. Correct. The smart tool would be the final run after the cleaning unless it was deemed by engineering to insert any chemicals. If we were to do any chemical runs, or corrosion

inhibitors, then we would get a spreader pig to do those. But at this time, no chemicals were identified to be ran in this line.

Q. Okay. And there was -- as you've stated, there was no indication that there was bleed by at -- through a valve because it was blown to atmosphere, the door was opened without evidence of that, correct?

A. That is correct. And I wasn't in front of the door myself, but no one gave me an indication that there was an abnormal operating condition.

MR. MCDILL: Okay, thank you. That's all I have.

MS. LYONS: So, at this point I usually give everyone one more chance to ask second-round questions. I just want to -- if you could raise your hand if you have any second-round questions?

Steve, I'll yield to you. I just have one follow up at the end.

BY MR. JENNER:

Q. Very good. Steve Jenner, I think I may have introduced myself as a human performance and human factors investigator with the safety board, so I'm particularly interested in the circumstances that you're discussing and thank you very much. One thing I'm also interested is the workers' fitness for duty. So what I will -- what I do is for every worker that we interview on scene, I'm interested in their overall health, and their medical background, and their work/rest schedule. So, I'd like to change direction and ask you questions in that area if that's okay?

A. That's fine.
Q. Okay. If you can just describe your overall health?
A. Overall health, I feel physically fine. [redacted]
[redacted]
Q. Okay. Are you on any type of medications for that?
A. [redacted]
Q. Are you currently taking any of the medications -- those type of medications?
A. [redacted]
Q. Okay. Do you have any acute conditions, such as colds, allergies --
A. [redacted]
Q. Sure. Is there any type of medications that you take for that?
A. [redacted]
Q. Okay. In terms of any other chronic, like high blood pressure, or blackouts, or anything of that nature?
A. [redacted]
Q. [redacted]
A. [redacted]
Q. Have you ever been diagnosed for any type of sleep disorder?

A. [redacted]

Q. If I can ask, have you ever been told that you snore?

A. [redacted]

Q. [redacted]

[redacted]

A. [redacted]

Q. Okay. Just on occasion. So, I'm going to challenge you here, something I'm also interested is your -- sort of your work and on-duty and off-duty schedule two or three days leading up to the accident. So, if we can go back to Saturday because the accident was Monday, so if you can tell me your schedule on Saturday and Sunday in terms of if you worked, and your times that you were off, and the times that you went to bed, and slept, and woke up? So, if I could start, like, Friday night -- or into Saturday? Tell me about your day Saturday if you recall?

A. Okay. Saturday, I did not work, I still get up around 6:30, 7:00 a.m., coffee, walk the dog, did a little yard work, and it was kind of warm that day, so we didn't do a whole lot, just hung out. Saturday night, I would estimate that I went to bed probably around 11:00, 11:30 maybe because I started watching Saturday Night Live. Sunday morning, same -- pretty much same routine.

Q. What time did you wake up Sunday morning?

A. Sunday morning, I would estimate probably around 6:00, 6:30. 7:00, somewhere in there. Took the dog for a walk, had coffee --

Q. So, you were off all day Sunday?

A. I was off Sunday until roughly -- probably about quarter to 3:00 I went ahead and headed up to the pig trap. We met up there -- we were going to meet up there, we wanted to load the pig around 4:00, so I got up there roughly around 3:30. And the idea was to -- we moved it -- we kept it kind of at 4:00 to give guys time that were coming back into town and stuff, and I know some of the other guys had had other jobs going on. So, we wanted to make sure nobody was having to rush out there. But at 4:00 we went ahead an loaded the run for Monday.

Q. Okay. So, you're on -- you arrive 3:30. You're working from 4:00 until what time?

A. I probably was -- I probably got back around 5:30, quarter to 6:00, somewhere in there.

Q. And that's in the morning?

A. No, that was at night.

Q. Oh, that's in the --

A. That was -- yeah. So, it -- yeah, I went up there, we loaded around 4:00, and I mean, we were finished with that a little after 5:00, I think, and then Roger and I stayed for a little bit, you know, just catching up and going over some other projects that we had going on, and then headed back.

Q. So, back home Sunday evening --

A. Back home -- I went back home Sunday evening.

Q. Okay.

A. And Sunday night, I believe I went to bed about 8:30, 9:00.

I woke up at about 2:30, 2:45 -- actually, it was 2:30 because that's what I had my alarm set for. It gave me time to get dressed, get my coffee, and we were meeting up on site at 3:30 a.m.

Q. How was you -- how would you describe your sleep that Monday morning. Did you -- how did you feel when you woke up?

A. I felt fine when I woke up. You know, when you first wake up, the alarm goes off, you know, a little groggy, but I've never had a probably getting up. So, it was get dressed, you know, get the coffee, got my travel mug with my coffee, and then out the door. But I felt, you know, I felt fine. I felt no different than I would feel when I woke up on a normal work schedule.

Q. Very good. So, no concerns that day, health or alertness?

A. No.

MR. JENNER: Great. Thanks very much for that.

MR. THOMAS: Thank you.

BY MS. LYONS:

Q. All right. So, my last question -- this is Sara Lyons. First, thank you, you've gone through so much information with us, and I really appreciate it. Given everything that we've talked through already today, is there anything that we didn't ask you, or that you haven't told us that you think might be important to the circumstances of this accident?

A. There's nothing I can think of at this time.

MS. LYONS: Well, thanks again for the interview. This

completes the interview with Chris Thomas.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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 Christopher Thomas
ACCIDENT NO.:	PLD21FR002
PLACE:	McKinney, Texas
DATE:	July 1, 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.

Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber

EXHIBIT 1
CHRIS THOMAS

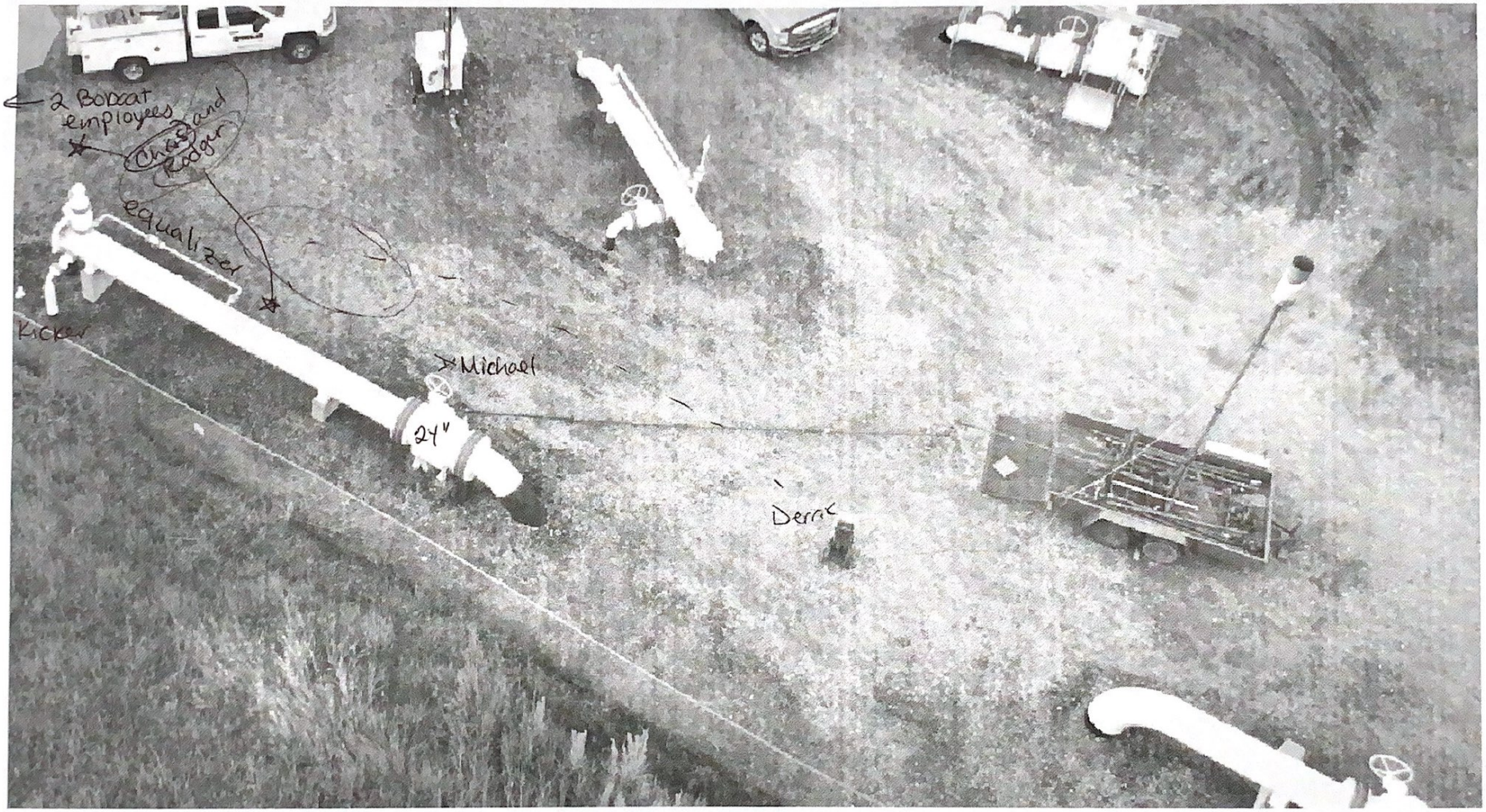

EXHIBIT 2
CHRIS THOMAS