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: Rodger Ballinger

Organization: Atmos Energy

Title: Sr. Field Construction Coordinator

Date of Interview: July 1, 2021

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

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

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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

Interview of: RODGER BALLINGER
Senior 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

GLEN CARTER
Bobcat Contracting

MICHAEL TAYLOR
FESCO Pipeline Services

JOHN McDILL
Atmos Energy

TOM TOBIN, Attorney
Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker LLP

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

MS. LYONS: Okay. This is NTSB pipeline case number PLD21FR002. (Indiscernible) energy June 28, 2021. Natural Gas Flash Fire in Farmersville, Texas. These interviews are being conducted at the Spring Hill Suites Hotel in McKinney, Texas, and today is July 1, 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 their review once completed. Transcripts will be redacted to remove any personal or sensitive information before being entered into the public docket.

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

MR. BALLINGER: I'm Rodger Lynn Ballinger, R-O-D-G-E-R L-Y-N-N B-A-L-L-I-N-G-E-R. My employer is Atmos Energy.

MS. LYONS: And your job title?

MR. BALLINGER: I am a senior field construction coordinator.

MS. LYONS: Okay. You're allowed to have one other person of your choice present during the interview. The other person can be an attorney, friend, family member, co-worker, or no one at all. If you would please indicate who you have chosen?

MR. BALLINGER: I have Thomas Tobin.

MS. LYONS: Okay. We'll now go around the room and have each person introduce themselves for the record. Please include your name with spelling and your employer's name. I'll start, and

we'll progress clockwise starting from my left. My name's Sara, S-A-R-A, Lyons, L-Y-O-N-S, and I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board.

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: My name is Alvaro Rodriguez. Alvaro, A-L-V-A-R-O. Rodriguez, R-O-D-R-I-G-U-E-Z. I am with Hansen as an accident investigator.

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

MR. CARTER: Glen Carter, 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-Z, and I'm with OSHA.

MR. TAYLOR: Michael Taylor, M-I-C-H-A-E-L T-A-Y-L-O-R. I'm with FESPA Limited.

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

MR. TOBIN: My name is Tom Tobin, T-O-M T-O-B-I-N. I'm an attorney with the Wilson Elser law firm.

MS. LYONS: Okay. With that, I'll get started.

INTERVIEW OF RODGER BALLINGER

BY MS. LYONS:

Q. So, Rodger, can you just give us a brief description of your

background?
A. With Atmos Energy? My time with Atmos Energy?
Q. With Atmos and if you had prior pipeline experience.
A. Okay. I've been with Atmos Energy -- it will be 38 years in October, and -- let's see, I started out as a -- in dispatch and moved into meter reading. From there, I moved into the customer service department and then into the construction and maintenance department. Worked as a construction operator and then a crew foreman and really didn't have any pipeline experience in any of those roles until 2009 when I took the position of a field construction coordinator.

And then I began assisting with pigging operations -- the FCC that I worked with -- assisted him, and, at that time, we had company crews that were working those jobs. They would be the ones that we would basically be overseeing for the project, and then that gradually moved into contracting that out to third party.

So all of my experience in pipeline has been since 2009. When I was assisting the other crew foreman, he was training me, and then, of course, my OQs for operating our system.
Q. Okay. Great, thanks. Wow, you've been with Atmos for a long time.
A. Long time, yeah.
Q. All right. So on the day of the accident, can you give just a basic description of the job that you were requested to do?

A. Yes. The -- that morning -- let's see, that was Monday morning. We got up, and we lost a pig approximately 4, 4:10 in the morning that we had preloaded the day before on Sunday afternoon. And so we launched -- lost the pig, got it running down.

We were monitoring the speed through the well counts that were -- we were getting from the guys out in the field that were listening for it and talking with gas control -- our gas control to monitor the flows, and then, once it got out of the McKinney district over to Garland district, they took over the monitoring -- the controls of the speed where they were going to be received there in Rockwall.

Then, later that day, we were to meet back at that site, the launch site, to preload the gauge tool for the next run.

Q. Okay. So focusing on the -- just the task that occurred at the site where the accident occurred, can you walk us through your experience that day from the time that you were given -- that you began working on that task through the completion of that event?

A. Yes. We arrived on site that afternoon. It was -- trying to remember the time we arrived out there. It was probably -- I think it was after 2 o'clock because we had met over at our warehouse to pick up the tool so that the Bobcat technicians could rebuild it to run it. We met out at the site.

They got out there before I did and opened the gate, and it started raining. It was raining pretty good that -- by the time I

got out there. Chris showed up -- I believe he showed up right after I did, and he walked out, talked to the Bobcat technicians. I believed at the time FESCO had not made it there yet. And told him since it was raining, we're going to stay in the trucks for a little bit -- kind of wait the rain out because he had been looking at the radar. It looked like it would clear out, so I stayed in my truck while he went and talked to them.

And then the FESCO man showed up, pulled into the site. So the rain had let up a little bit, and we walked out, talked to everybody that -- you know, this is what we'll be doing. Asked the Bobcat man to set up their umbrella. They had a large umbrella where they could do the rebuild and work on that while FESCO would flare down.

So we talked to the FESCO man about going ahead and opening the valve to lock the flare and flare that down while the pig was being rebuilt. Once it was down -- once it was flared down, I think they were finished. They were finishing up rebuilding the pig, so then they -- let's see, we opened the door of the launcher, got the door opened -- the Bobcat guys opened the door, and then they went over to hook onto the pig.

They latched a rope onto it -- the strap that they used to pick it up with the track hoe to move it into place into the launcher. Set it into the launcher -- the front end of it into the launcher, unhooked the strap, and then pushed it up in by hand a little ways. Then, they picked up the push bar, connected the

push bar to the -- or, put it up to the back end of the pig, pushed it in by hand a little ways as far as they could get it, and then they moved the track hoe in place with the bucket to connect to the back end of the bar, pushed it into the reducer and got it seated.

Pushed it, you know, just a few inches in just to make sure it seated, and then they backed off -- began backing off the track hoe and started pulling the bar out. And they got -- I think they got the bar pretty close to being out of the way when the flash occurred and blew the pig back out, and that's when we began trying to see what was -- what happened -- what was going on.

The -- we did have two men that were lying on the ground we didn't see moving. I grabbed my phone and dialed 9-1-1, and I think Chris had -- he picked up his phone to call 9-1-1. But he said he couldn't get through for some reason, so we immediately called our supervisor to let him know since -- and he asked me if I was calling 9-1-1. I told him that I was.

I got their dispatcher on the line. We had another man that was lying by the fence -- one of the FESCO gentlemen. He was conscious. He was lying down. He would pick up his head and try to look around. I went over and asked him, you know, if he was doing okay. He said, I'm okay, and he asked about the other guys. And there was another man with Bobcat that was walking around and looked like maybe he had some minor burns on his face. He was walking around. I think Chris grabbed him a cotton rag or

something and got him in the truck. He sat in the back seat of a pickup truck.

The dispatcher was trying to get the details from me, while all this was going on, about what happened. So -- and then she was asking the address because being on the cell phone it didn't give her an exact address, so I walked out -- was walking out to the road because there was a mailbox with the address. I told her what that address was, and it began raining slightly again, I think, at that time.

And I think I walked back into the facility to check on the guys again. The two men on the ground still were not moving. I think Chris was checking for a pulse. And I went back to the man by the fence, and he was still conscious. We told him just to, you know, to wait, to be still, that the ambulance was on the way, and I could hear -- I thought I heard something.

I went back out to the road, and the fire marshal showed up. He was the first one -- yeah, he was the first one on the scene, and then you could hear ambulances coming. So then I went back inside the facility. I told the FESCO gentleman on the ground, I said, the ambulances are coming. Just hang in there, and then more emergency personnel started coming in the site. And so we went back out.

They asked us if we could step outside the gate, and so we went back outside the gate and just let them do -- take care of the -- everybody. And then I remember right -- one of our super

-- operation supervisors showed up. Stuart Hill showed up, and then Greg Elmore (ph.) showed up a little bit later. And the emergency personnel -- they kept us outside of the facility while they took the two men to the hospital -- loaded them on ambulances, took them to hospitals.

Told us that -- well they didn't tell us. We just overheard them tell us that the other two were deceased. We just stayed outside the facility from now on until Stuart and Greg -- Stuart took us back to our office for a drug and alcohol test, standard procedure.

Q. Okay. So when you think about the work that was going on that day, before the accident on site, was there anything particularly challenging? Any obstacles you ran into?

A. No.

Q. Anything unusual?

A. No.

Q. Was this type of job routine for you? Is it something you have done -- similar tasks before?

A. Yes. Yes, we've done this similar task on all of our -- most of our pipelines. This particular line we hadn't -- we haven't run a pig on it in a few years, but there is another one that comes into that facility that we do annually. And so we do run maintenance pigs on that one annually, but this particular one we haven't done. But we do several a year every spring and summer.

Q. Okay. So -- let me see. I'm going to get out the photo we

call Exhibit 1. So as I'm doing a -- just thinking about the period of time from before the door was opened until the accident occurred, I was wondering if you could walk me through -- kind of point out who was where on site and what their responsibilities are, and, if you can, remember estimates of about how much time the different activities took.

A. Okay. This is the location of the -- this is the Bobcat truck with the umbrella. Their guys were under the umbrella working on the -- rebuilding the pig, putting the --

Q. Does that --

A. -- transmitter in it. They had to put a transmitter in the back end of it.

Q. -- all three Bobcat employees?

A. Yes. Let's see, this looks out -- I believe that's the FESCO truck where they had pulled in, and Chris and I came in and met everybody back here at the -- around the Bobcat truck. I can't remember what time that was. I'm thinking it was a little after 3 by the time we all got out there and got out of our trucks to go to work. I believe it was shortly after 3. Talked with the FESCO guys, told them that we could go ahead and flare this down, which they had done. They had been out there the day before to preload the pig that -- the Monday morning pig.

So they came out Sunday and met us out there, and we did the same thing Sunday afternoon. So they came over here -- well, one of them came over here to the igniter. They've got this igniter

to light the flare. One gentleman came over here, and the other one came over to the valve that they're tied into on the other side of the block valve --

Q. Okay.

A. -- to operate that valve.

Q. Okay.

A. I wouldn't -- I would walk back and forth between both of these sites where the guys were working to see how everything was progressing. Now it was -- it did -- I think it did start trying to rain a little bit more again, so it took a little bit to get the flare lit because of the rain coming on it. But they were able to get it lit, and I think Chris may have been -- I can't remember where he was exactly. He was -- we were both back in this area between the Bobcat truck and the flare.

Q. And about how long did it take them to get the flare lit?

A. I don't know for sure.

Q. You don't know? Okay.

A. No.

Q. Had you done a lot of jobs with flares before?

A. No. We haven't -- the portable flare on the launcher is something new for us this year. Normally, we would open the valve and just blow the gas to the atmosphere.

Q. Okay. Which valve would that be?

A. That would have been this valve that they had tied into for their --

Q. Oh. Okay. For the same --
A. -- flare.
Q. -- the valve on --
A. The same --
Q. -- on the other --
A. -- the same one.
Q. -- side of (indiscernible). Okay. Okay. So the FESCO guys are --
A. After it lit -- after the pot -- after it got lit and we could see the flame, the man that was working the igniter walked back over here where the other guy was, and then they would turn the valve up a little bit to get the flare going but not too high. And we would keep an eye on it, and if we felt like it was maybe too high, tell them to turn it down a little bit.

Or, as the gas pressure was coming down in the pipe in the launcher, it would need to be increased -- the flow would be increased a little bit by opening that valve that they were piped into. In the meantime, the Bobcat men were working on the pig getting it ready to go -- getting the transmitter inserted and bolted into place.

Q. Okay.
A. If I remember -- by the time we got the tube flared down, they were either finished, or really close to being finished, to having the pig ready to load. So once we saw that the flare was down and that it was out, didn’t have any gas on it, the Bobcat

guys finished up what they needed to do. One of them grabbed their -- they had a cordless impact drill because that door has two bolts, one top and one bottom, that you have to unbolt slowly one at a time to keep from torqueing the bolts, so they started doing that over here at the door.

Q. So who was that? Who was doing that?

A. That was two of the Bobcat guys.

Q. Okay.

A. One would work the impact wrench, and the other one would stand back where he could see the nuts being pulled back to make sure we didn't -- they didn't pull one out too far. Kind of do it evenly. So he would tell him to go from the top to the bottom, back and forth. So that took a few minutes, I think, to get that door actually open because one of those bolts runs real smooth, and the other one is a little bit slower. So going back and forth on the bolts, they finally got it where the door would open -- got the -- got those bars spread apart enough that the door would open up. Open -- and then opened up the door.

Q. Can I back you up for a second?

A. Sure.

Q. So before they opened the door, can you just review for me, what would -- how did they know it was time -- that it was safe to open the door at that point?

A. We watched the flare come down, and when we could tell that the flare was out. Then we told them that one of us -- I don't

remember which one of us -- I think Chris had walked over toward the flare to look up at it, and then we told them it was okay to start opening the door. They don't do any of that sort of thing -- and the, you know, don't touch the valves or anything else until we give them -- tell them to go.

Q. Okay. Now, do you recall how long the flare had been out before they started opening the door?

A. I sure don't.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm sorry.

Q. No, no problem. Okay. So let's continue. Sorry for --

A. All right.

Q. -- interrupting.

A. Okay. So once they got the door open, they fully opened the door. They walked -- went back over to the umbrella, got the strap to go around the pig, put that -- put the strap around it. One of the Bobcat men went over to the track hoe and brought it over a few feet to where the pig was, and they strapped it onto the bucket of the track hoe and then walked it over to the launcher to the open launcher door.

And then they could move it in by hand, actually, part of the way, with the -- with it still strapped onto the track hoe, so they got it in. I believe one or two of the FESCO guys had come over to help them undo the strap -- take the strap off of it and unhook the strap from the bucket of the track hoe, so once they

did that, the track hoe backed up, and they pushed it in by hand. A couple of the guys, I don't remember which ones, pushed it -- pushed the pig in so it was fully inside, and then a couple of the other guys picked up the bar, the push bar.

Took it over to the door and put it up against the backend of the pig, and two or three, maybe all four of them -- I'm not sure, pushed the pig in as far as they could by hand until it got up probably pretty close to the -- to that reducer and give -- just to the point you can't push it any further by hand. So then the track hoe rolls over and, while they're holding the bar up, he brings out his bucket -- the back of his bucket to connect to the back end of the push bar.

And one of the guys grabbed a -- their bonding cables, like they use their bonding cables every time they use that push bar -- connect the one end of it to the launcher, and the other end of it to the push bar. And then he's the one that -- as the push bar's going in, he moves that bonding cable to make sure it keeps contact. And then -- so once he got on it with the bonding cable and they directed the track hoe up and made contact with it, they were able to push it and start pushing it toward the inside to make it seat in the reducer.

I think -- so off -- there was one man in the track hoe, there were four of them right around the door. I think Chris may have been back over here by the truck.

Q. I'm going to put a star for Chris.

A. Yeah. I think that's where he was, and I've walked over this direction toward that -- this is the equalizer. Yeah, that's the equalizer. I walked over toward that.

Q. I'm just -- I'm going to put a star for you.

A. Okay.

Q. That time.

A. They pushed it in with the track hoe and got it seated. They just pushed just enough to get the front cup seated, the drive cup, and then they started backing off. Once the track hoe started backing off, I was making my way back over toward the truck. So they got that seated. Then they started retracting the push bar while the track hoe was backing up, and that's when the flash occurred.

Just heard a loud boom. I saw a flash out of the corner of my eyes because I think I was -- I was looking away. I had turned kind of to the right, so I was looking away from it, but I saw a flash and the loud boom and looked back. And that's when I saw everybody on the ground.

Q. Okay. So when they were doing the work, inserting the pig, did you notice anything that could have indicated gas was leaking? Or how would you have known had there been leaking gas?

A. We would have -- had it been leaking out the door -- we had that huge opening -- had it been leaking out of the door, you should be able to see the fumes of it and smell it, and I don't remember any of that, the fumes or any smell of it. Plus, we had

this valve that the flare was connected to. We left it open, so that would be -- if we did have any bleed by -- from this valve, the main line valve, then it would go up and out of the flare.

Q. So that was opened to atmosphere the whole time?

A. That was open to atmosphere the whole time, correct.

Q. Okay. Did anyone smell gas? Do you recall anyone, at any point -- even during -- after the accident portion?

A. I don't remember anybody saying anything about smelling it.

Q. And you didn't smell gas at all?

A. No, I didn't.

Q. Okay. Let's see. So was -- that you're aware of -- were you or anyone else monitoring for gas?

A. I don't know. I'm not aware of anybody that was monitoring. I wasn't.

Q. Okay. And that's before the accident, or after?

A. Right.

Q. Okay.

A. Both.

Q. All right. So do you know if the pig that you were using was intrinsically safe?

A. That I don't know.

Q. Okay.

A. The cups -- I don't know what material the cups are made out of, but it's a standard material that we use for the pigs.

Q. Okay. And then, when inserting the pig, how could you tell

that it was at the right position when the excavator was helping to do the insertion?

A. When the excavator was inserting? You kind of -- you know that the reducer just has a certain amount of space it can travel. Just looking at the reducer -- the distance before it reduces down to the mainline. And then you can also kind of hear it a little bit as it moves inside the pipe there, and normally, we just -- we'll push a few inches. You know, six to 10 inches. Something like that. Once it's -- makes connection with the reducer. So we --

Q. So at that part --

A. -- we also have --

Q. -- you were at the star location, right?

A. -- yes.

Q. And so were you hearing --

A. Yes, you can hear it rub in the inside of the pipe, and then, also, you have -- Chris was back here watching the push pole as it was going in, looking to see how far it would travel as it went in, and I think there was -- I don't think all four of the other guys were on the bar as the track hoe was pushing. They, you know, tried to move back a little bit to give it room except for the man that had the bonding cable.

So they're also watching -- to look at the travel, but you listen for the travel. You listen for it pushing in the pipe, and then you have someone that watches the push bar to try to -- to

gauge how far it goes in.
Q. Okay. And then -- so when you said the grounding cable, where was that attached?
A. I'm not sure exactly where he attached it because the door opened it. The hinges are on the north side, so it swung open to the north. And he attached it around over here somewhere. He reached around and attached it somewhere. I didn't -- I never did see that -- where it was attached.
Q. Oh. Okay. So -- but was it inside the door, or was it outside? Like, was it visible here? Was it on the other side of the photo?
A. I don't --
Q. Or did you not see it at all?
A. -- I didn't see where he had it connected --
Q. Okay.
A. -- no.
Q. Okay. All right. That's all the questions I have for now.
A. Okay.
Q. So.
MR. JENNER: This is Steve Jenner with the safety board. You doing okay? You need a break?
MR. BALLINGER: I'm doing okay.
MR. JENNER: Great. You're doing great.
MR. BALLINGER: Thank you.
MR. JENNER: I just have a couple questions.

BY MR. JENNER:

Q. Just going to bounce around. Could you just, from the diagram, show us where you were standing when you saw the flash and heard the noise?

A. I'm not a hundred percent sure. I was headed back over toward where Chris was, back over toward the truck, so I think at that time I had made it -- I was pretty close to the tailgate of the truck, I think. I had walked past the opening of the launcher. It was kind of on my left. I had walked past that.

Q. What did you detect first? Did you hear the noise or see the flash first?

A. It was pretty much simultaneous. I heard the blast and caught a glimpse of the flash -- the fire out of the corner of my eye.

Q. Right. Could you point, on the map, where you believe that the flash originated.

A. I don't know where it originated. I know it came -- as far -- well, I don't know for certain that it -- I'm pretty sure it came out of here --

Q. You're --

A. -- out of the opening of the launcher. I know the -- I'm pretty sure that the pig was blown out at the same time. Later, I think I saw it lying on the ground by the fence, that south fence.

Q. So as far as the flash, you're detecting it outside the open door. Did you see any other flash along the length of the pipe?

A. No. No, I didn't.
Q. I -- during the process, you guys gave the okay to open the door.
A. Correct.
Q. Do you recall -- can you estimate how long the door was open until the time of the incident?
A. It would just be an estimate of time. You know, before the blast, and by, you know, I'm -- 10 to 15 minutes. Just an estimate.
Q. And you're estimating just based on the number of tasks that need to occur between the time that the flare goes down and the time that --
A. Correct.
Q. -- the pig was being inserted.
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. Is that a normal amount of time that the door would be open?
A. Yes, that's pretty normal.
Q. Okay. So let me just ask, in general, if you think back on all the operations leading up to the incident, was anything out of the ordinary?
A. No. I did not notice anything out of the ordinary that afternoon.
Q. Did anything about any of the equipment, either the meters or the pipeline itself or valves, give you concern?

A. No. No, everything we had -- I mean, everything in the correct position. Didn't notice anything that was -- that would give me any concern, you know.

Q. Okay. How was your working relationship with the two contractors? How would you describe that?

A. I'm -- I would say we have a good working relationship with them. The two men from FESCO, I think I may have worked with them before on a project. I don't know if it was last year or the year before. They did look familiar, but I think I have worked with them before. That was the first time I had seen them -- well, this day was the second day that I saw them on this project.

The guys with Bobcat -- I did help Chris with digging another pipeline before on -- this year before, the pig one once before. I went out and helped him, and I met these Bobcat guys out there. And I think I've worked with one or two of them before in a year or two past.

We all had a great relationship, you know. We'd joke around with each other, you know. So we, you know, everybody got along, and we could joke around with each other. Everybody knew their job and relied on each other, so I think we had a good relationship with, you know, each other.

Q. Okay. Between you and Chris -- when you're out at this site, is one of you more in charge than the other?

A. Typically, not. We try to co-work that. Sometimes Chris is -- he's a very out-spoken, take charge kind of a guy, and

sometimes he will, you know, just kind of take over running things, you know. He's a little more outspoken than I'm -- I am. I'm kind of a quiet person. And -- but, you know, we work great together, and we try to partner up on jobs, you know, like this as much as we can to, you know, to make sure that we try to cover everything.

Q. Very good. Thank you for this. I'm going to follow up questions in a different area, but I'd like other people to do some follow ups first. Thank you.

A. Okay.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you very much. I'm Alvaro Rodriguez with Hansen.

BY MR. RODRIGUEZ:

Q. Can you tell me about the grounds from the beginning of this work?

A. The beginning of the work on this line -- we -- everything was pretty much the same as this day began. It was determined that -- because of the power plants on this pipeline, that before they started generating really hard during the day that we needed to try to be finished with our runs by 9 -- 9 to 9:30. So it was determined, since it's about a five hour run, that we needed to start at 4 in the morning, and that it would be best, since we were using the portable flare, to take the gas off the launcher that we would preload in the afternoon the day before.

So we would -- the day before, we would meet up -- whatever

time. It kind of varied a little bit from day to day. Whatever time was convenient for us and the Bobcat and FESCO guys. We would try to meet up out there to do the -- to flare down, to get the pig loaded, ready for the next day -- the next morning's run.

In the morning, we would show up 3:15, 3:30, so that I could get in touch with gas control to make sure that the flows in the pressure were correct to make the run. And then that would give them 30 to 40 minutes to tweak the flows and the pressure if they needed to.

So about 4 o'clock we would be ready to launch. The FESCO guys, they would go down to the receiver that morning because they needed to work separator and frack tanks down there to watch for liquids -- any liquids coming in. So we would meet here with Bobcat and their supervisor -- Marshall Cross would show up as well to help us launch because, once we got it launched, these valves would take -- we had to operate this valve down here in the right corner, which is the southeast corner there.

We had to operate that one as well as the main line valve to open the launcher, and it would take 2 or 3 -- 4 people to operate them. They're so long winded. So once we got the pig launched into the line, two of the Bobcat men would go head out to go to their listening points. Marshall would stay with Chris and I to make sure all the valves got turned back into position for the normal operations, and then we would wait a little while for our well counts. We were all on the text message for the well counts

to see if we needed to call gas control back.

And, after a few minutes, we would leave the facility. Marshall would go work with his guys to follow it on down to the receiver, and then, later that afternoon, we would meet back out there to preload for the next day.

Q. Thank you. When you began work on the Monday before with the job, how many pigs do you run and what kind?

A. Let's see. We did -- I'm trying to think -- the -- we ran one per day. The first couple of runs -- they had us set up to run, I believe we ran what they call the bullet nose pig first, and then the next two days we would run a disc (ph.) pig, which would pick up more material that might be inside the line.

So that was -- let's see, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for those three, and on Thursday it was determined that the line was still dirty -- that we had to run on Friday to run another disc pig to try to clean it out some more. If I remember correctly, they said that it was clean enough that we could run -- well, let's see.

No, we didn't run the foam disc all three times. We ran -- I think Thursday and Friday we did the brush pigs, which have magnets and brushes that scrape the inside of the pipe. It was picking up a lot of material, so we made -- they left Friday and Monday open in case we needed to run extra, which we did. We ran the brush pig Friday and Monday, and by Monday, when it was done, they determined that it was clean enough we could run the gauge

pig on Tuesday. That was the one that we were loading into the line that Monday afternoon.

Q. Thank you. What is the difference in length of the pigs?

A. That I don't know.

Q. Okay. For the gauge pig, on that one about the incident, do you have -- or do you know if Bobcat has any instructions to assemble the tool?

A. I don't know. I don't know if they have instructions for that. I know they do so many of them they just do them, you know. I don't know if there's instructions that someone gives them to actually assemble it.

Q. And there was a transmitter on this pig --

A. Yes.

Q. -- and where is that transmitter?

A. It is inserted into a cavity in the rear of the pig.

Q. Okay. And how big is the transmitter?

A. It's approximately 12 inches long. It's a small diameter, maybe inch and a quarter in diameter -- maybe two inches in diameter. There's a transmitter that fits inside the -- they load with C batteries, and that transmitter is fitted inside of a container. That black container that it's fitted into is what's about 12 inches long.

Q. Would you mind drawing the pig and where the transmitter was at?

A. Okay.

Q. Would that be possible?
A. Sure.
MR. RODRIGUEZ: Can we hand him a piece of paper if you don't mind? So we're getting a piece of paper to --
MS. LYONS: Exhibit 2.
MR. BALLINGER: I'm trying.
BY MR. RODRIGUEZ:
Q. Yeah. It's going to be Exhibit 2.
A. Okay.
Q. And we are asking Rodger to draw the pig for us. Thank you very much.
A. And excuse my drawings. Okay. So this would be the rear of the pig. You've got a cup back here that's attached to the rear end of it -- the drive cup that is. It's -- I'm not sure how to describe it, but it's basically -- it's set so the gas can come up behind it and kind of catch it. It's like a cup that will catch the gas flow and push it forward. There's one on the rear, and there's one on the front end of it that would catch the gas as it would flow forward. And inside the very center of it -- in there in the middle part that's bolted onto is where the -- there's a cavity, and it's got bolts that go into it that hold a plate over the end of it.
So they -- the transmitter is loaded into it, and then you -- it just slides up inside that cavity. And a lot of times they'll wrap that transmitter, and the transmitter that it -- the holder

that it goes into -- wrap rags around it, that sort of thing -- that keep it from moving around inside of that cavity just to hold it in place. Then, they would bolt that plate back over that opening of the cavity. It's got several bolts -- I'm not sure how many. It's got several bolts that go around it that they would bolt that plate on there to hold it.

Q. Thank you very much for explaining that.

A. Sure.

Q. Do you know if the other transmitter is live at that moment?

A. Yes. They do have a receiver that picks up the signal that it sends out that they test it to make sure that is -- that it is picking up that signal -- a signal from that transmitter.

Q. Who?

A. That's Bobcat that does that.

Q. Okay.

A. They're the ones that track it, so -- and each of the guys that are out tracking it, they'll have listening devices that they can listen to it and hear it -- the pig as it goes through the line. It hits the wells on the inside of the pipe, and you can hear it thump in those wells. And we use this receiver to put on the end of the launcher just past the main line valve, and that helps us verify that it has left the launcher.

And then, at the receiver, they put it over at the receiver as well so that they can see. You know, you can hear it and feel it vibrate in the pipe, too, when it comes in, but then they also

use that as another way to detect and make sure because it will detect it -- that transmitter signal as it comes by.

Q. Do you know where information is collected?

A. On this one, I think it's just a signal that's sent out to it. It's not actually collecting any information.

Q. In terms of procedures, do you have procedures for pigging operations?

A. I don't know of any procedures. I've never read any procedures for pigging.

Q. Okay. And can you access those procedures?

A. I don't know if we have any to be --

Q. Okay.

A. -- honest with you.

Q. How about the flare device?

A. The flare device -- the only, I mean -- that's operated by the technicians that bring it out.

Q. Okay.

A. They're the experts in operating the flare device.

Q. Thank you very much for your --

A. Yes, sir.

Q. -- time. I don't have anything else.

A. Okay.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Thanks.

MR. COLTERYAHN: You still good? You need a break or anything?

MR. BALLINGER: I'm okay.

MR. COLTERYAHN: Okay. Kevin Colteryahn with the railroad commission.

BY MR. COLTERYAHN:

Q. So we understand that you're run several pig runs the previous week. Chris was out for sick leave for a couple of days, and you'd come in in the middle of the week. During those previous pig runs, it was discovered that that valve, the main line valve going out of the pig launcher, had a seepage and -- that needed to be adjusted to a precise location that it could seal off. Is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. And that valve was marked with a Sharpie, or something you used to mark that location, where you were able to cut off the gas?

A. Correct.

Q. And I guess that's kind of something that happens on various occasions that you would have a valve leak like that?

A. Occasionally, we will have one, and the indicator on top of it might -- it kind of tells us where it's open and where it's closed. And you can watch it move as you're turning -- operating the wheel.

Q. So how would you indicate or how did you learn where to put that -- the seepage -- that it stopped the seepage of the gas?

A. We had the flare set up in Vernon, and it was taking a good

several minutes. And it wasn't -- the flare wouldn't decrease any for us like they normally do. So Chris was not out there, but Marshall was there with me to assist in turning valves and that sort of thing, and so we know the set up on that facility is a little -- they're all set up a little bit different. And we thought that maybe the kicker line on that -- we could see where it tied in -- thought that's where it tied in.

But we didn't know if there might be something else feeding into it, so I went out to my truck and got on my computer. And I was able to find the file that shows the design of the station, and I could see where that pipe tied into. And there was another.

So we went over and turned off those two valves over there to shut off that feed to the kicker line, and it tied into the other D-17 nine (ph.) lines – it tied into that one's kicker line as well. Both of those came off of D-17.

The main line valve above ground that we operate over in that southeast corner to launch -- we started turning that one off as well, and the flare was still burning pretty strong. It wasn't coming down. Marshall -- he said, well, maybe this valve on the launcher -- maybe there's something -- maybe it's bleeding by. Or maybe we need to operate it just a little bit. He said, let me turn it back because I think every now and then, some of them can be overturned.

And so he turned it back just a little bit. I didn't watch him actually do it. I was standing there but didn't see him

actually do it. And we waited a few minutes, and the flames started dropping. So we knew that that valve was overturned just enough to let it bleed by and marked the location where it actually stopped the gas flow so we wouldn't overturn it past that anymore. Marked the indicator -- it's got a little pointer on it, and so we marked that indicator and the line on the top of the valves so that we just turn it to that point.

Q. So after that -- the runs after that, that successfully cured that issue?

A. That stopped that issue every time, so.

Q. The other valve you're talking about on the main line, there's -- in front of that, there's a little riser out of the ground -- the valve that runs back in the ground.

A. Yes.

Q. Is that the main -- is that part of the line? I forget the configure.

A. It is part of the line.

Q. Does the pig go through that loop or --

A. No.

Q. -- it bypasses that?

A. It bypasses that.

Q. And it goes onto the --

A. That is the feed on D-17 -- that's where it ties in from the north feed into the feed going out of this station going south.

Q. Okay.

A. So we have to turn that valve -- we have to close that valve to stop that flow from the north to get the pig to actually move out of the launcher because of the -- we open the kicker line and get that pressure flowing there, which is before that valve -- that above ground valve we shut off. So once we shut off that above ground valve, then that decreases the pressure behind it and gets that -- I mean, in front of it -- gets that pressure behind it to actually get it pushing.

Q. Keeps you from fighting the main's -- flow of the main --

A. Correct.

Q. -- ordinary flow of the main.

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. So were -- on these other runs, did you all have -- did you put a gauge in the barrel at all to monitor that or just --

A. A couple --

Q. -- use the --

A. -- a couple of runs -- the first couple of runs we did, it was on top of the blow off down by the door of the launcher which comes off the top of the launcher. There's a large valve there, and then your blow off cap that you would use if you take the gas off the launcher. Just doing it that way instead of flaring it. You had to climb up on top of the launcher pipe to put your gauge in, and I didn't feel it was safe enough to continue doing that.

So -- but you could do a gauge up there. We did it the first

couple of times to watch the pressure come down and actually equalize once we loaded the pig in. We needed to purge the air out and get the gas equalized in it, and we could watch that gauge to see it come up to operating pressure. But, from then on, we just used the flare to see when it was flared down, and then you can listen to it. When you reload it, you can listen to it -- the gas pressure equalizes out into -- it just gets quiet once it's equalized out. You're got equal pressure.

Q. Okay. So the -- there was the two inch valve. You have the line go to the flare, and then, halfway back to the barrel, there's a two-inch valve that was inoperable with the pig?

A. It had been over-tightened at some point, and I think it's set back past the reducer when they -- up the larger part of the pipe -- if I remember correct, where the larger pipe was. I think it was back there.

Q. Somewhere in that vicinity.

A. Right, and the plug that was in it. It was tightened down so tight in there, you couldn't see any more threads on the plug, and I think at one point, the last time we pigged the line, Chris had said he tried to take that plug out. And it would just start turning the valve on it, so we didn't even attempt it.

Q. So would that be a location that possibly a gauge would be used -- utilized in the process on a --

A. Yes.

Q. -- normal basis?

A. You could.
Q. Not -- maybe not necessarily depending on --
A. Not necessarily. In the runs past, we would use the other valve that the flare was tied into this year.
Q. Right.
A. Previous runs, you know, we just opened the atmosphere and blew it down to atmosphere, so we could put a gauge in that one.
Q. Okay. So with starting to utilize the flare -- portable flare -- it's kind of new to the operation. Would we have any idea if it would -- were you using the ground cable on the push pipe to ground the push pipe to the tube? Would you know whether they -- should the flare grounded to a ground -- rod in the ground, and the, possibly, the barrel of the launcher? Has that ever been -- to your knowledge, ever been grounded out that way, or just that ground to the push tube?
A. I believe that -- I don't know for sure, but I believe those are grounded to -- I don't know what they're grounded. Maybe a rod in the ground or, a lot of times, the flares -- typically we use the bigger flares to flare down the six (ph.) in the pipeline. Have not used the smaller ones before, but they will have to tie those -- because those risers are so tall, they have to stake them down to the ground to keep the wind from blowing them down, you know.
Q. Okay. Just kind of thinking of a possible source of ignition with the cathodic protection -- the coating on the pipe, whether

that would need to be ground to -- possibly take the current through that as opposed to the individuals if there's any kind of static electricity, you know.

A. Right.

Q. So just kind of thinking that through.

A. Okay.

Q. And then, as far as the push bar -- previously you pushed the pig in. It was a straight bar that had a cup on the end to go around the upper apparatus on the pig. That was all intact and straight at the beginning of the process?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. And then as -- when it happened -- when you heard -- saw the flash out the corner of the eye and heard the explosion, you were past the end of the barrel. You saw it to your side, and you estimated that they were coming out with the rod at that time -- about halfway or so or more out of the tube?

A. I'm estimating it was probably halfway out of the tube or more. I'm not sure.

Q. And, when they pull that rod off, it's kind of kept in the middle of the pig so when they -- when the hoe lets loose of the pressure and they go pull it. Then it just falls --

A. It --

Q. -- in the tube to the bottom of the tube to be --

A. -- right.

Q. -- pulled out?

A. Right. It drops to the bottom of the tube, and that's another reason they use the grounding -- the bonding cable, you know, to make sure that it's grounded.

Q. It should be neutral --

A. Right.

Q. -- when it comes in and drops off?

A. Right, and they keep that on the bar the whole time. They slide it down the bar as it's coming out. It's only so long, and so they -- they've got a guy that will slide it -- as it's coming out, he's sliding his magnet toward the end it's coming out toward the door.

Q. Well that was something I kind of noticed -- that it was a short length. Is there any reason for the length on the ground cable that you would know of? Or --

A. No, sir.

Q. -- or why it would not be, maybe, attached at one end? That the far end was long enough and magnetic to the barrel or something like that so that to alleviate that issue of having to follow that.

A. I know on those push rods they'll have -- they may have three sections of rod that they can bolt together depending on how long the tube is, so that may, you know, that may be why they don't have it bolted. It's not bolted to the end because they have to change the length of the push rod depending on the length of the launcher.

Q. Okay. So -- maybe you -- doing a pig run, you said that you had not looked at any procedures and not really aware of what procedures there are for that.
A. Correct. The only -- the -- I know we have OQ tests that we take, training that we do for taking gas off the line and reintroducing gas on the line, looking for abnormal operating conditions; but I don't know of any task or procedures that are specific to pigging.
Q. To the pigging?
A. Correct.
Q. Purging -- a purging procedure or something would be --
A. That would be related to it, yes.
Q. -- decompressing the --
A. That we're trained --
Q. -- chamber.
A. -- yes. That we're trained on -- the purging and removing gas, deactivating the line, and then reactivating -- purging it.
Q. And part of that in AOC would be a leaking valve?
A. Yes.
Q. And those procedures would be expected to be possessed by Bobcat or FESCO? If they're out there helping you, they should --
A. If --
Q. -- have a copy of those procedures a --
A. -- they're --
Q. -- purging --

A. -- they're --
Q. -- procedure.
A. -- they're trained on the abnormal operating conditions as well. That's part of their training and requirements.
Q. Okay. I believe that's all I have -- that I can think of currently.
A. Okay.
MR. COLTERYAHN: I don't have anything relative.
MR. TAYLOR: It's Mike Taylor with FESCO. I just have one quick question, and I asked Kevin this.
Any -- do you have any idea what length of time it took to blow down the barrel from the time the ignition started to the time the flare was out?
MR. BOLLINGER: I would estimate approximately eight to 10 minutes.
MR. TAYLOR: Okay. That's all I had.
MR. BOLLINGER: Okay.
MS. LYONS: All right.
MR. McDILL: John McDill with Atmos Energy.
BY MR. McDILL:
Q. I just -- as you recounted your history, you began training in your role of FCC in 2009, correct?
A. Correct.
Q. And that was part of -- for pigging operations?
A. Yes, that was pretty much on the job training. I worked with

an FCC -- senior FCC that had done many pigging operations.
Q. So in the last 10 plus years, I -- you've done quite a few pigging runs?
A. Yes, several.
Q. And you mentioned that there can be various configurations for launchers?
A. Yes.
Q. That's it for right now.
A. Okay.
MS. LYONS: Do you need a break? Are you okay?
MR. BALLINGER: I think I'm okay. I may need some more water in a little bit.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There you go.
MR. BALLINGER: Thank you.
MS. LYONS: All right.
BY MS. LYONS:
Q. So I wanted to just revisit the interaction with the emergency responders. Did you speak with any of them, emergency responders, or give a statement to them?
A. I did. There was -- I know there was one that pulled up that asked my name, you know, who I was with -- that sort of thing. Asked for my ID, mine and Chris', and he asked, you know, what's going on? What happened out here? I told him that we had -- I can't remember exactly what I told him. I was running on adrenaline so much I don't remember exactly, and I had just gotten

off the phone with the 9-1-1 dispatcher. You know, so I don't remember exactly what I told him. You know, just that we had an accident out here.

I don't remember exactly how I put it, what I told him it was -- if it was a flash fire, an explosion, or what, but I told him, we've got men down out here. And then he took our ID and, I guess, was filling that out for his report.

Q. Was that the first emergency responder that arrived or were there several people there? Do you know?

A. Oh, there were several that showed up, and the first one that showed up was the fire marshal, I believe. And just kind of -- I was on the phone with the dispatcher when he showed up, and I think he asked me something about the incident. I don't remember what he asked me. Really, it's kind of fuzzy.

Q. Okay.

A. But I know he went inside the facility, and I think I -- I did see him a little bit later inside -- one of the trips I made back inside. But there were other emergency responders on the scene by then -- several guys walking around getting their equipment out.

Q. Did any of the emergency responders ask you to help determine whether the site was safe?

A. I think I overheard him -- somebody asked if we had any smell of gas. He -- you know, he said he didn't smell any gas and asked if it was safe or whatever, and, at one point, I did -- I think --

I had gotten off the phone with the 9-1-1 dispatcher and went over to secure the door on the trap. And one of the Bobcat guys were directing me as I operated the drill to close it and seemed like I remember him saying, I don't smell gas in here. But that was -- I don't know if he asked anyone to check for gas. He didn't ask me to check for any gas.

Q. Okay.

A. It seems like I do remember him saying -- overheard that I don't smell any gas.

Q. And you said earlier you didn't smell gas either?

A. No.

MS. LYONS: Okay. That's all the questions I have. Steve?

MR. JENNER: Yes, Steve Jenner. I'm going to change directions on you a bit. Part of my job is to do human performance, human factors investigations, so I'm interested in the people and their backgrounds and training, which we've covered some, but also their fitness for duty at the time that they were working. So if I could ask you some questions about your overall health and any medical conditions that you may have -- if that's okay?

MR. BALLINGER: Sure.

BY MR. JENNER:

Q. Okay. So we'll start off -- how was your overall health?

A. My health is great. I just had a physical back in March, and everything was great. [redacted]

[redacted]

Q. [redacted]

A. [redacted]

Q. So -- glad to hear you're overall great.

A. Thank you.

Q. So are there any types of chronic conditions? High blood pressure?

A. [redacted]

Q. I hear you. Anything more acute? Allergies or colds?

A. [redacted]

Q. Good. So I'm not hearing any prescription medications right now --

A. [redacted]

Q. [redacted]

A. [redacted]

Q. Any non-prescription painkiller types?

A. [redacted]

Q. Okay. Thank you. Also, I'm interested in your schedule -- your work and rest schedule two -- three days before Monday. So

if I can tap your memory a bit --
A. Okay.
Q. -- starting Saturday morning. I'm interested in if you worked and when you woke up, what you did during the day, when you went to bed. So if we can start Saturday morning --
A. Saturday morning, I got a good night's sleep Friday night. Typically, I'm an early riser. It's hard for me to sleep late, but I think I slept in a little bit that morning, 6:30-ish, 7-ish, which is late for me. And -- I'm trying to think what I did that day. I can't remember exactly what I did that day.
Q. -- were you off duty?
A. I was off duty.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
A. My wife and I did some running around, ran some errands.
Q. Sure.
A. Got another good night's rest on Saturday night.
Q. Okay. Just about what time you went to bed do you think?
A. 9:30, 10 o'clock.
Q. Okay. And you slept until Sunday morning?
A. Sunday morning was probably 6:30-ish.
Q. Okay. Did you work Sunday?
A. No, not until Sunday afternoon when we met out at the site.
Q. And what -- between what hours were -- did you leave your

house and return home -- when you went to the site on Sunday?
A. When I went to the site? Let's see, I left my house about probably 3:15 p.m. to arrive at 4 and left the site to go back home probably quarter 'til 5, maybe 5 o'clock. I don't know for sure.
Q. Okay. And it takes you 45 minutes to get home?
A. Takes me about 45 minutes to get home, depending on the traffic.
Q. Okay. So I've got you at home before 6?
A. Correct.
Q. Okay. And then it's now -- it's Sunday evening.
A. Sunday evening -- just a relaxing evening with the wife and dogs.
Q. Okay. You went to bed Sunday night?
A. Sunday night? Probably around 10.
Q. And you slept until Monday morning?
A. Slept until Monday morning. Let's see, Monday morning we had a launch, and we had to launch at 4. So I was up at 2:15, left my house about 2:45, which would put me out at the facility -- oh, I think I arrived shortly before 3:30 because that early on a Monday morning there's not that much traffic. So I got there -- got on the phone with gas control, as I normally do, to check on the pressures.
Q. Right. So from 3:30 on you were on duty up until -- you were at the site?

A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Terrific.
A. After we launched the pig – a few minutes after we launched the pig, we left the site. I did drive back home.
Q. Okay.
A. I didn’t have to be -- none of my other contract crews were working. The jobs aren’t -- they don’t show up until around 8 a.m., so, you know, it’s 5:30, 6 a.m. So I’ve got some time to downtime at home. I can sit and relax at the house and grab another cup of coffee if I want, you know, so.
Q. Okay. And how did you feel on Monday, you know, waking up early and -- up until the time you went on site?
A. I felt fine. It was becoming routine, you know, getting up that early and getting out.
Q. Appreciate all that. Thank you.
A. Yes, sir.
MR. RODRIGUEZ: Alvaro Rodriguez with Hansen.
BY MR. RODRIGUEZ:
Q. Could you describe the steps before loading a pig? I would like to know -- what are the first place that you check -- or, if you look at this (indiscernible) of the launcher? Maybe look at certain valve? You can briefly describe that process?
A. Okay. We will walk in, we’ll look -- we will walk around the launcher checking all of the valves to make sure they’re in the position that they need to be in to flare down. We check those

valves several times while we're out there on site, and that's one of the first things that we do is we go check our valves -- make sure that they're in the correct position so that we can then start flaring down.

Then, we'll talk to everybody out there. Just kind of have a little tailgate talk – bumper talk, and what they're going to do when it's time. Typically, where everybody's there a little early -- several minutes early before we're ready to launch, so that gives us time to discuss that procedure again and get gas control pressures and flows in place.

Then, usually, since there's so many of us out there, Chris and I will check the valves. Both of us typically check the valves first thing. Then, before we start flaring, we'll take a look at them again. Sometimes the other technicians that are out there -- the Bobcat guys, they may walk around and look at the valves as well.

Then, we give the signal to the FESCO men to -- that it's time to light the flare, and so they'll operate their igniter. And, in conjunction with the valve, we tell them, okay, you know, open your valve. Get some gas flowing to it, get it flaring.

And we'll -- a lot of times a pig is being finished up. Sometimes it's ready to go. Other times they still have some work to finish up while it's flaring down. But that always gives us time to get it flared down, and once the flame goes out, then, you know, we make sure the pig's ready to go. And we open up the --

start the process of opening the door, and this door -- the configuration of it, it takes several minutes to get it open. It's a slower process than some of them, just the configuration of it.

So we'll open the door, bring the pig into place, they'll hook up to it, latch onto it, bring it into place to load into the line to the launcher. Once it's -- we get it pushed in -- once we get it pushed in and seated up against the reducer, we can then close the door, get the door bolted back up, then we can actually start introducing gas slowly to purge the air out of it. And, of course, we're making sure that our equalizer valve is in the open position at this time because we don't want to push that pig -- have it closed, and the gas reintroduced behind it.

We don't want that gas pushing the pig all the way through the reducer up to the valve, so, you know, once again, we're checking that equalizer valve to make sure it's open. Introduce the gas slowly, slowly increasing it as the pressure comes up.

Once it's equalized in this tube, we can, then, close the equalizer valve, and we can begin opening the main line valve that goes from the launcher out. We get that open. That all takes -- that takes several minutes to get that open. It's -- takes many turns to open that valve, and we can open the kicker line with a crescent wrench.

And then we will walk over to this other main line valve in the southeast corner that ties into it, and we begin the process

of closing that valve. Once that valve is closed, then we can go back over to the launcher and listen for the pig to start moving, and that normally takes several minutes, as well, to get moving.

And we have our indicator that picks up our signal from the transmitter just past that valve before the pipe goes into the ground, but once it starts -- once the pig starts moving, you can hear it and feel it in the pipe. It's above ground, so it's -- there's no doubt that it's moving, especially when it goes to that valve, but then we also have that indicator that tells us that, yes, it did pass that point and is off and going.

Q. Thank you very much.

A. Yes, sir.

Q. I appreciate it. Do you have any logbook to track operations on site?

A. No, we don't.

Q. And do you record who is on site?

A. No, sir.

Q. Okay. How about leak detection devices? On the first day that you started this job -- so that would be the Monday before the incident report -- did you use any? Did you have any?

A. I do have a floor gas monitor. We have floor gas monitors to wear, like, on our shirt, and I was not wearing mine that day. And I don't know whether any of the other men on site had one to wear.

Q. I think that's it. Thank you very much.

A. Okay.

MR. COLTERYAHN: I don't have anything else.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

MR. McDILL: John McDill, Atmos Energy.

BY MR. McDILL:

Q. Rodger, can you just reconfirm for us, please -- is it a need to contact gas control when a pig is being loaded, or when it's being launched?

A. When the pig is being launched.

Q. Okay.

A. Yes.

Q. That's -- make sure that was correct. I think that's the only clarifying question I had. Thank you.

A. Okay.

MS. LYONS: Okay. Well, just one last question, Rodger. With everything that we've discussed today, is there anything that we didn't ask you that you think is important to this accident?

MR. BALLINGER: No. You know, I keep reliving it and going over it, but I can't think of anything else. I think you guys probably covered everything.

MS. LYONS: Well, we really appreciate your help. This concludes the interview.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

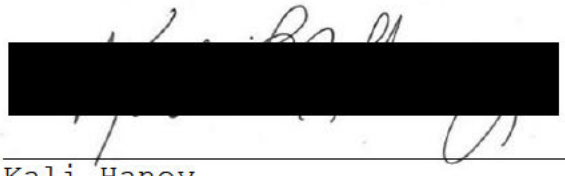
CERTIFICATE

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 Rodger Ballinger
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.



Kali Haney
Transcriber

EXHIBIT 1
ROGER BALLINGER

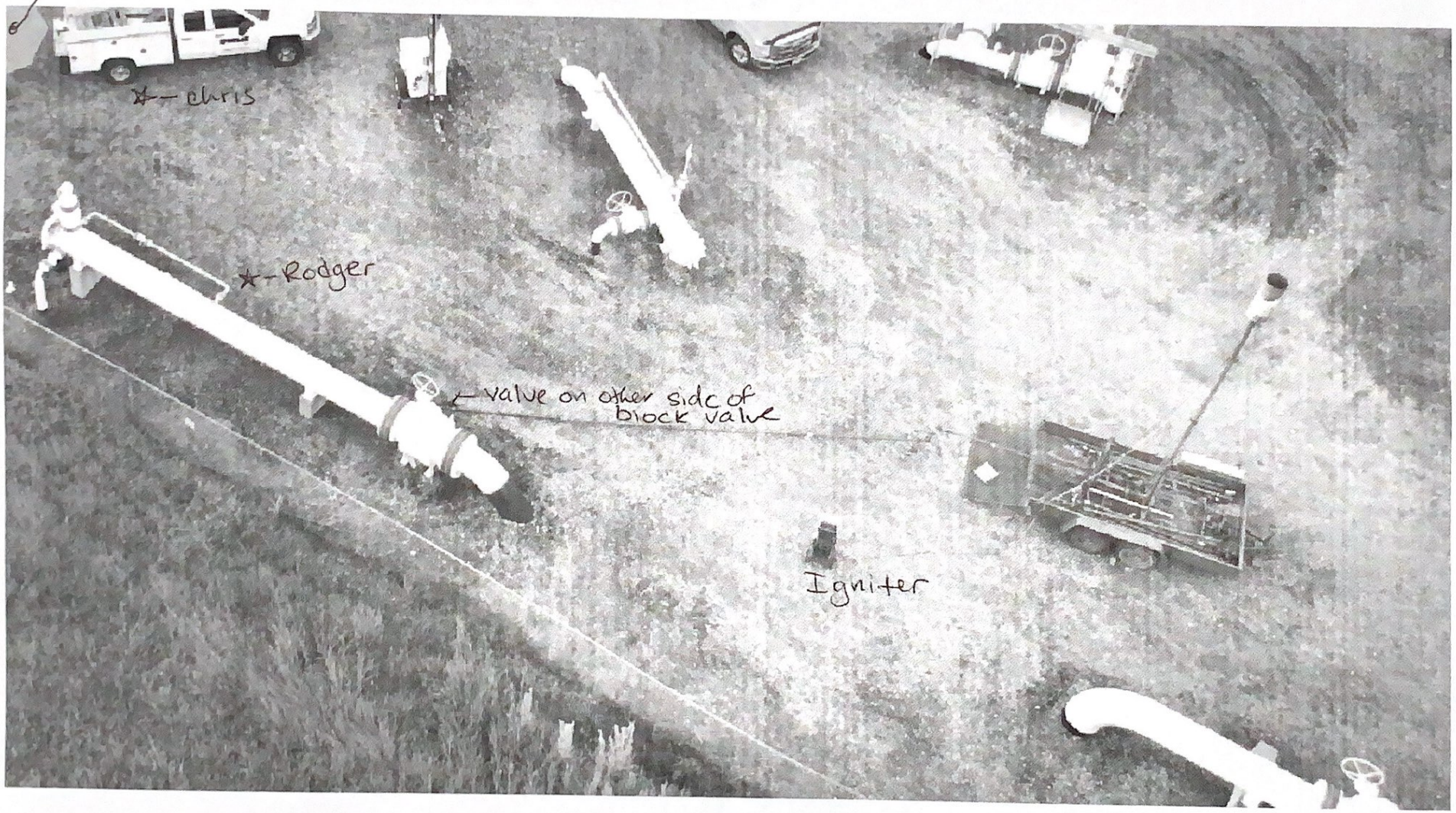


EXHIBIT 2
RODGER BALLINGER