National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

June 22, 2022

Mr. Francisco Sanchez:

Reference: **Interview Regarding the August 15, 2021, Coolidge, Arizona Pipeline Rupture and Fire - NTSB case number PLD21FR003**

Attached is a transcript of your interview on August 18, 2021 as a part of the on-going investigation of the above referenced accident. Please review the transcript for accuracy and make any necessary editorial changes.

You may either reference the relevant page and line number along with the suggested change or redline a copy of the document. Please initial any changes when marking up or redlining the original document.

When replying be sure and checkmark one of the three statements below, even if you have no changes.

Please submit replies to me via email no later than **July 8, 2022**.

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.

Please note that these transcripts must be treated as confidential at this time. These transcripts are for your use only, and not for release outside of the investigation. If you have any questions, please contact me by phone or email.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation,

Alex C. Colletti

Pipeline Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Railroad, Pipeline, and Hazardous Materials Investigations
[redacted], SW
Unit [redacted]
Washington, D.C. 20594

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
NATURAL GAS PIPELINE RUPTURE IN COOLIDGE, ARIZONA, ON AUGUST 15, 2021	*	Accident No.: PLD21FR003

Interview of: FRANCISCO SANCHEZ, Electrical Controls Tech IV
Kinder Morgan

Casa Grande, Arizona

Wednesday,
August 18, 2021

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I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

(10:44 a.m. MST)

MS. GUNARATNAM: Good morning. My name is Rachel Gunaratnam. I'm a HAZMAT investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board out of Washington, D.C.

Today is August 18, 2021, and the time is 10:44 a.m. Mountain Standard Time. We are currently at the Radisson Hotel in Casa Grande, Arizona. We here in response to the natural gas incident that occurred on August 15, 2021, in Coolidge, Arizona.

Today we are interviewing -- and if you could say your name and spell it for the transcriber?

MR. SANCHEZ: Yes. Francisco Sanchez, F-R-A-N-C-I-S-C-O, Sanchez, S-A-N-C-H-E-Z.

MS. GUNARATNAM: And you are free to have a representative to consult with you during the interview. Is there anyone here that you would like to be your --

MR. SANCHEZ: Yes. John Pearce.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. John, can you --

MR. PEARCE: John Pearce, P-E-A-R-C-E.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Thank you. And I'll go ahead and introduce -- go around the room for introductions.

MS. BAKER: All right. I'm Tiffany Baker, T-I-F-F-A-N-Y, B-A-K-E-R. I'm a program analyst with PHMSA Southern Region out of Atlanta, Georgia.

MR. CARROLL: I'm David Carroll, D-A-V-I-D, C-A-R-R-O-L-L,

and I am the operations manager for the Phoenix area for Kinder Morgan.

MR. WEIGHT: Ryan Weight, R-Y-A-N, W-E-I-G-H-T, and I am a lead senior investigator and inspector for the Arizona Corporation Commission's Pipeline Safety Section.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. Thank you.

INTERVIEW OF FRANCISCO SANCHEZ

BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

Q. So just to let you know, the purpose of this investigation is to improve safety. We don't assign fault, blame, or any liability. Our sole mission is to improve and prevent these accident -- improve transportation safety and prevent these accidents from happening again. Unfortunately, NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from any legal proceedings by other agencies, local, state, or federal.

A transcript of this interview will be placed on our public docket, where you can access it, but I'll be sending you a copy of that for you to review. You can read it and say, "Hey, the transcriber didn't get this right," you know, and then you can make your correction, or whatever, and send it back to me.

A. Okay.

Q. And I'll get your e-mail off the record. So do you have any questions?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Great. All right. We'll go ahead and start. Tell me

a little bit about yourself professionally. Tell me about your time with Kinder Morgan, your title, and then after that, just kind of go back into your other career jobs, and stuff like that.

A. Okay. I'm currently an electrical controls technician, level 4. I've been with the gas company 20 years. Prior to my current position, I was the operations supervisor for Phoenix area before that, I believe, from 2014 to 2020, I believe. Then prior to being a supervisor, I was ~~a electronic~~ controls technician, or controls tech for El Paso Natural Gas.

I started my career in 1993 at Gila Compressor Station. Then transferred over to Casa Grande Compressor Station. Then I've worked in the Tucson area in 2000, 2004, and I've been back here in Phoenix since 2006. ~~Mostly~~ my knowledge is in compression and turbines. As I moved up through to the pipeline area, I picked up knowledge in the pipeline in Tucson --

Q. Okay. Sorry. You were a control tech?

A. Controls technician.

Q. Oh, for Kinder or --

A. For El Paso Natural Gas prior to --

Q. Oh, right.

A. So El Paso ~~quality~~ controls technician. Kinder Morgan calls it electrical and controls.

Q. Got it. And that was El Paso with -- you were with them --

A. From '93 to 2012.

Q. 2012. Got it. All right. Thank you. All right. Could you

describe -- oh, what is your education?

A. Excuse me?

Q. Your education?

A. Just high school

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah.

Q. Can you describe your training qualifications -- certifications?

A. Oh, while I was a controls technician when in El Paso, we had to pass the electrical journeyman's test in New Mexico to become electricians. Had to take the Narti-4 (ph.) test for communications to work on electronics. Then just throughout the on-the-job training with El Paso and Kinder Morgan, they sent me to various schools.

As a technician, I had to learn to maintain, operate PLCs for the turbines, so it's (indiscernible) Rally (ph.) programming, and call it man/machine interface that you analyze is -- you have a program called Wonderware, and so I had to learn how to operate that program, as well, to help gas control -- gather information from the stations so you can monitor (indiscernible). Other than that, it just, just throughout the years, you have on-the-job training experience.

Q. Okay. Great. Have you ever worked with line 2000?

A. Yes.

Q. For how long?

A. Since we took over in 2000.
Q. Oh, okay. All right.
A. Yeah. So my first involvement was just working in the plants, and then I worked in doing actual pipeline maintenance.
Q. Okay. Like pipeline maintenance?
A. Yeah, and right-of-way, and controls, yeah.
Q. Okay. Yeah. So in 2000, did line 2000 get -- were there any repairs on line 2000 in that, in that incident location?
A. Oh, I don't know --
Q. Not familiar? Okay. All right.
A. No. I wasn't involved at that time. I was mostly in the plant, so, yeah.
Q. Okay. All right. When did you start moving into the pipeline stuff?
A. Probably in -- probably 2001, 2002, when I was in Tucson. I was -- started getting involved to helping converting the 1100-003 (ph.) and the 1600 line, converting them over to make them capable. So that's when I started working the pipeline stuff.
FS In line inspection
Q. Okay. Great. All right. So now going to what happened on August 15th.
A. Okay.
Q. If you could just tell us about your day, you know, the point where you first got notice of the incident and, you know, who called you, times, how you traveled, that kind of thing. So give us as much detail as you can.

A. Okay. Dave Carroll called me at 5:45 Sunday morning, put me on a conference call with gas control to, to discuss the line pressure. And then, then, of course, that's when I heard that there was a fire, too, as well. So after that conversation, I got ready, and I proceeded to drive out to the rupture site, or the area they gave me. And as I drove from my house, I could see the fire from the house.

So at that time, I decided to go ahead to go to valve 39 and start doing the line isolating. And as I left my house, I called Kenny. Then I told him to go ahead and go to valve 38. So I got to the valve 39 and got it to -- I got it closed at 6:29. And then that's -- I made contact with Dave, and I told him that the valve was closed at that time.

So prior to -- the way to put the fire out was we had to blow the pipeline down. Prior to blowing the pipeline down, I knew we had several taps along the -- from there -- between there and the rupture site that we had to isolate. So then after I got the valve closed, another ~~corporate~~ co-worker FS came in. I told him to get the valve -- or get the blow-off read to blow down, and I'm going to go down the pipeline and start ~~popping and~~ to FS isolate the line. And so I started moving towards, towards the east at that point.

Q. Where is valve 39 exactly?

A. It's just off of [redacted] and [redacted] Road, [redacted] corner.

Q. How do you spell [redacted]?

A. [redacted]

Q. Oh, [redacted] [redacted] Road. Was anyone with you?
A. Rogelio Chavez (ph.) was there with me.
Q. Okay. Who called him?
A. I called him at 6:12.
Q. Okay. To come join you at valve 39?
A. Yes.
Q. Oh, okay. So when you got to valve 39, can you tell us how you went about the steps you took to close the valve?
A. Yes. I got there, opened the gate, needed a wrench, so I had to go back to my truck and get a wrench to open up the valve for the power gas so I could not break the valve. Opened up the power gas, proceeded to pull the handle to pneumatically close it. We did not have enough pressure to actually get the valve to unseat (ph.), so I shut the power gas off. Then I put in manual, started using the hydraulic pump, and I got the valve to move hydraulically, and we took it off the seat. Then I turned the power gas back on, pulled the handle. Then the valve closed by itself --
Q. Okay. And then how do you confirm?
A. There's an indication and it just stops. You can actually feel the valve, it just stops, and it was closed.
Q. Okay. And you said you left your house. Where is your house?
A. I'm about [redacted] miles away.
Q. [redacted] miles, you said?

A. [redacted] miles.
Q. [redacted] miles.
A. Maybe a little bit less than that. I don't know off the top of my head. I left around -- it was after 6:00 by the time I got ready and left my house.
Q. Right. Okay. So after valve 39 was closed, you went towards the fire -- well, in that direction?
A. Well, I was going, going in the direction of the --
Q. Yeah, and you started bleeding out --
A. No, I started, I started to close -- verify that if there's any, any ~~tax~~ taps FS off that line, so I wanted to make sure that those valves were closed.
Q. Do you remember how many?
A. So the first one I went to is a location called the line 2000/1007 crossover. So I stopped at that location and verified that valve was closed and isolated from the pipeline, and it was. The next one down would be Sundance Powerplant.

At that time, James Morton called me. He is the measurement technician for the area. He called me at 6:52 and told me that he was going to close the valve at Sundance. So I told him okay. Then I told him I was going to head over to Picacho station, which is just west of the rupture site. He called me back at 7:01, around there, told me that he was done at Sundance, that he was also going to Picacho.

And prior -- let's see -- that -- so then right at -- I got a

call from Mike Mayerhofer, who is my supervisor, and he told me there was a technician out of Tucson going to valve 37. I haven't heard back from Kenny, so I tried contacting Kenny, and so I'm not sure where he was at en route to 38, so when I heard that there was a technician from Tucson going to 37, I called Richard Posey, the supervisor at Tucson, and I got the name and number of the technician at 37.

Q. What was his name?

A. His name was Alex. And I called --

Q. Do you know his last name? Sorry.

A. I think it's Dietz.

Q. And he's coming from Tucson?

A. He was coming out of the Tucson area, probably Catalina.

MR. PEARCE: D-I-E-T-Z.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay.

BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

Q. Just to back up a little bit.

A. Uh-huh.

Q. So you went to 1007 and you verified it was closed or it was closed or --

A. Yeah, it was closed. Yeah, I went to see if it was open, but it was, it was closed.

Q. Oh, it was closed. Okay.

A. Yeah.

Q. And then on the way to Sundance Powerplant, James Morton

called you saying he's already closed it.
A. He's the one who closed it, yes.
Q. And then you guys discussed going to Picacho or --
A. No -- yeah, I told him because he had one more valve there that his -- at Picacho station, the ~~201--20-~~ 20120 (ph.) line, it gets fed off from the 1600 line or 2000. Normal operation is that it gets fed off the 1600 line. So I told him, "Hey, just go to Picacho and just verify that line 2000 is closed." And it was closed, because that's the normal operation --
Q. I see.
A. So -- and that was the last valve that we need to confirm to isolate it before we blow ~~it~~ down the pipeline.
Q. At that time, did you know of 37/38 yet?
A. No, I did not hear about 38. Let's see. When did I hear -- okay. I think last -- when I heard from 38 was from James Pigg called me at 7:31, that he just said that Kenny was having difficulties getting to 38 because of the recent rains and washed out. So -- and that's when I heard that Brett Berry was there. And then I -- and then, then Thomas met me at Picacho, and then that's when I sent Thomas to go help Brett out at 38.
Q. Okay.
A. And at this time, Alex was already at 37, and he was closing valve 37.
Q. When did you --
A. I'm not sure exactly what time Alex closed his valve. I

don't have that time. But I did -- he did call me, and then I called Rogelio, and we had a conference call. And we started -- and once he got his valve closed and we had the blow-offs open, and then at 7:41, that's when we started blowing down the pipe.

Q. What time did you talk to Mike Mayerhofer?

A. Michael, I talked -- he called me at 7:09. Sorry about that.

Q. Yeah, that's -- thank you. Okay. So then you started -- walk me through what happened when you started blowing down the pipeline --

A. So once we got the valves -- line isolated, valves closed, blow-offs -- we started blowing down the pipeline, that was at 7:41, and roughly right around 8:00, that's when the fire went out. We had the fire extinguished at that point.

Q. Okay. So you got confirmation at 37/38, before you started blowing down, you got confirmation that they were closed?

A. Yes. Well, at 37 was -- I got confirmation on the 37. Alex called me. He said he's closed and he's got his blow-off ready to blow down, and that's when I conferenced in Rogelio right about 7:30 -- I have my phone -- I told him go ahead and -- just go ahead and open up the blow-offs and start blowing down. We started blowing down at 7:41. Yeah. So I didn't hear about 38 until after, after the fire was out.

Q. Right. So I hear that you know this line very well, line 2000?

A. Yes.

Q. And so you know the, the valves that needed to be done right away?
A. Yes.
Q. So in your thinking, when you were talking to Dave in the beginning, why those valves?
A. Given from the location of the intersection that gas control gave me, I know it was right close to Picacho station, and I knew that the next downstream valve was 39 and the next ~~downstream~~ upstream FS from there is 38.
Q. Okay. So was that your focus, 39 and 38?
A. Yes. Once, yes, once I left the house, I saw the fire. And for me -- there was no reason for me to go to the fire; it was for me to get the pipeline isolated.
Q. Right.
A. So I went to 39 first, and I told Kenny to go to 38, so I wanted to get that line isolated as quick as possible.
Q. Okay. So when you heard that Kenny couldn't -- or you couldn't reach Kenny about 38, what was your next thought?
A. When I didn't hear from Kenny, then that's my -- you know, Thomas, when I told Thomas, well, we needed to go to 38 and go help Kenny, that's when James called me, and then James told me, "Well, Brett is on his way over there." I said, "Okay. Great. At least Brett hopefully can help Kenny get there, help him out." And then that's when I decided to -- I was talking to Brett, and Thomas was with me at Picacho, and I told him, "Why don't you go

help ~~Thomas~~ Brett FS out?" And I didn't know that James was heading out, as well. They ended up -- they all headed out to that area, you know, and they all went to a different location, because the way that we normally go was washed out. So Kenny, I guess, had problems getting there, so they eventually all got there. I just don't know what time they got there.

Q. Right.

A. But once I knew Alex was at 37, then I kind of, "Okay, we're going to blow down from 39 and 37.

Q. Okay. Yeah.

A. So --

Q. So those were 37 and 39?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. And then you knew -- when you finished with -- when you started blowing down the pipeline, could you see the fire?

A. Yes. Yeah, I was at Picacho station ~~blowing~~ during the blow FS down, so I was a half a mile away.

Q. Okay. And you could see --

A. And I could see it --

Q. Go down?

A. Yeah, go down.

Q. How long did it take to go down? Do you remember?

A. Once we started blowing, blowing off the pipeline --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- like I said, from 7:40 to 8, 20 minutes. But you know,

the pipeline has been -- once -- I closed 39 at 6:29 in the morning. So that section from 39 to the rupture site, that was constantly being blown out in the fire -- it started -- about that time. So once we got 37 closed, we started blowing it down, then we had -- it went a lot quicker than, you know, so --

Q. Okay. Okay. Thank you. Okay. So afterwards, you saw the fire go out. Where did you go?

A. I stayed there at Picacho station. I saw Ray Garibay (ph.), which is the measurement supervisor, head over to the command post. So then I followed him over to the command post, and went there with Ray. And then roughly sometime around 8:00 is when Mayerhofer, my supervisor, showed up, and I talked to him for a while. And then once we got the okay to go to the rupture site, then I walked up to the rupture site and took pictures and sent them to Dave. And after that, I finally went back to Picacho station and waited for further instructions from Mike and Dave.

Q. How long was that, all that took?

A. What time did I send the pictures to Dave? Let's see -- give me a time -- I sent the pictures to Dave at 8:58. So it was --

Q. And you --

A. You know, after the fire went out, I waited for Ray, we went there. Maybe 8:10, 8:15, Mike showed up, kind of waited there for a while. I didn't go up to the actual site -- I waited a little bit. It was still hot, you know? So I sent the pictures to Dave about -- at 8:58. Then after that, that's when I went -- walked

back towards, towards Picacho.
Q. Okay. And then after that?
A. I just waited there and showed them and just waited to hear what we were going to do next, so --
Q. And --
A. And then I don't know when the police roped it off and said this was closed off for their investigation, so I, I just don't know what that -- what time that was --
Q. And then you went home?
A. I went to Casa Grande Station, because the ~~seat~~ C FS plant (ph.), which is on the line 2000, it had ESD'd on low suction. So I went to ~~seat~~ C FS plant to make sure everything is okay over there.
Q. And what did you find?
A. Yes, that the ~~clamp~~ plant FS was ESD'd. I decided to leave it like that till the next day. So Monday morning, I went back to Casa Grande and reset the station to get the ~~clamp~~ plant FS back in service.
Q. Okay. So you left it as is, and then did you go home after that?
A. I went home. I got home around 6:30, 6:40.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. So that was your last thing was plant -- and then --
A. Yeah, I went to Casa Grande Station.
Q. Okay. So you went home at around 6:30, and you were done for the day?

A. I was done for the day.
Q. Yeah, okay. And then did you go back to the site after that?
A. I didn't go back till -- excuse me -- Monday I was at Casa Grande -- till this morning. I went to Picacho yesterday, but I didn't go to the site. I went to the site this morning to help set up a table for (indiscernible).
MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. I'll stop there for now.
Tiffany?
BY MS. BAKER:
Q. Hello to you, by the way. I didn't get to speak to you when you came in.
A. That's okay.
Q. All right. So with the valve isolation, so when you went to -- you went directly to valve 39. You said you spoke to Dave first, correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Did he direct you to go to 39 or you just knew -- you knew that's where you needed to go, and you just went?
A. No, I just -- talking to Dave, Dave -- I think I said I needed to head out and start -- I'm not sure if I said close the valve. I was like, "Well, I need to go out there and see what I need to do." But once I saw the fire, then that's when my thought process changed. I went -- you know, I need to close the valves.
Q. Okay. So you went to see if you needed to close the valve, and in the interim, you stopped at the 1007 on the way to 39?

A. No. I did 39 first. Then I went to, then I went to the crossover.
Q. Okay. So you closed 39 and then you went to verify --
A. Verify.
Q. -- if the crossover was closed?
A. Yeah. Yeah.
Q. Okay. All right. And when you --
A. Yeah.
Q. When you closed 39, can you tell me about what was done at that point once you closed the valve, what your next thought was and what you were going to be doing with your --
Q. So, okay, when I closed 39, I -- when Rogelio got there, so my next step was we needed to get this line ready for a blowdown. There was a ~~L~~ (yale FS) cap, a 10-inch ~~L~~ (yale FS) cap on the ~~blowout~~ (blowoff FS), so we need to get that knocked off. I'm in my personal truck, because my company truck is in the shop, so I didn't have any tools with me. So Rogelio came in his company truck. Just the blowoff is approximately 7 feet high, so Rogelio had to go back to the office to get a ladder and come back and knock the blowoff.
Q. And who did this? I'm sorry.
A. Rogelio.
Q. Okay. Got you.
A. Yeah.
Q. All right. So he went and got tools, basically, to assist you getting to the ~~L~~ (yale FS) cap?

A. He knocked off the ~~L~~ yale FS cap.
Q. Knocked off the ~~L~~ yale FS cap?
A. I told him, "Go ahead and go get what you need, get the line ready, knock off the cap to blow it down, because Kenny is going to be another" -- you know, I'm thinking another 20 or 30 minutes to get to his blowoff to his valve. So we knew -- I knew he had some time to go get his tools and come back and --
Q. And you're referring to valve 38?
A. So I'm referring to 38. Kenny is going to 38. So I left Rogelio there to go get a ladder and come back and get the cap off, and then my next thought process, well, I need to get the line isolated, so I started going down the pipeline and get the line isolated. And that's when I heard from James. And he was helping me do the same thing. So --
Q. Okay. So is there a particular reason why once you did communicate with Kenny -- because I know you said you didn't hear about valve 38 until after the fire was out at that time?
A. No. I knew that Kenny was getting -- having trouble getting to 38 before the fire was out.
Q. Right.
A. That's when just around the same time I was getting the calls that I knew that Alex was going to 37, that's when I said, "Okay, Alex, go ahead and when you get there, close it, get ready for -- get your knockoff -- cap off and get ready for a blowdown. Let me know when you're done."

So but this time I was -- James was telling me Brett is going over there, Kenny hasn't gotten there yet, and I told Thomas to go ahead and head over there, give Brett a hand. So --

Q. Okay. So you called Thomas?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So you called Thomas and got him heading to 38 to assist?

A. Yes. Yeah, because, you know, Brett was already at 38. Brett sent us -- sent Thomas a drop pin, so Thomas went over there. Thomas --

Q. So did you all actually blow anything off at 37, where Alex was?

A. Did what?

Q. Did you all blow off any product at 37 where Alex was?

A. Yes, we blew down at 37.

Q. So you all blow down --

A. We did blow down 37.

Q. Okay. So, typically, what's the process once you get a closed valve in an emergency? What else should you do there?

A. In a fire like that, you got to close, close your line, isolate it, and then blow it down.

Q. And then once you physically get the valve closed, is there anything else that you should be doing?

A. I can't think of what -- where your question --

Q. So I'm actually getting into, like, lockout/tagout.

A. We didn't lockout/tagout until after we blew down the pipeline.
Q. The next day?
A. No. Rogelio locked out his valve that day. And Alex, Alex --
Q. So valve 39 --
A. Thirty-nine.
Q. -- was locked out/tagged out --
A. Tagged out.
Q. -- on Sunday?
A. Valve 37 was locked out/tagged out on Sunday. And then once, once the fire was out, I'm not sure when 38 was closed, but when it was closed, it was locked out/tagged out, too.
Q. So you're saying valves 37 and 39 were both locked out/tagged out on Sunday?
A. On Sunday, yes.
Q. All right. So once you left the valve site 39 and confirmed 1007 was closed, you said you went to Picacho Station next, correct?
A. I was heading towards Picacho Station, yes.
Q. And once you got there a meeting facilitated at that time, or you said you were standing by at that time?
A. What does meeting facilitated mean?
Q. Did you all meet there to discuss anything at Picacho Station or did you just go there to await orders?

A. I waited there to await orders, yeah. I waited there to wait to hear back from Alex. Then soon as I heard from Alex -- between when I was waiting there, I was getting those calls from James Pigg, and then Thomas showed up -- I don't know -- maybe 5, 10 minutes after I got there. We were talking -- we're still discussing valve 38 and got communication with Brett. Brett was there already. I told Thomas go ahead and head over and go help Brett out. After Thomas left, then that's when we started -- Alex got in contact with me that he's ready to blow down. Then we blew the pipe down at that point.

Q. Okay. So that was kind of where the discussion took place at that point?

A. Right. Yes.

Q. Okay. All right. And then you left from there. And what made you go to Casa Grande at that point? Did you receive the suction alarm or did somebody call and tell you about it?

A. No, I received the suction alarm.

Q. Okay. And that was at the station that you got onto your phone --

A. At the station.

Q. -- to the station?

A. No, I got, I got a text message on my phone.

Q. Text message on your phone?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. And take me back real quick. Who went to Sundance

plant the morning of the incident?
A. James, James Morton.
Q. James Morton?
A. Morton, um-hum.
Q. Okay. And what did he do there that day?
A. He closed the, the valve from the line 2000 feeding to the power plant
Q. So from line 2000 feeding --
A. Sundance Power Plant.
Q. Okay. Was that particular valve also tagged out that day?
A. No, that, that valve was not tagged out that day. On the next day, they tagged that out.
Q. Okay. All right. And you said once you left Casa Grande, you went home at that point, correct, and that was --
A. Yeah, in the afternoon. I got to Casa Grande around, around 4:00, 4:30.
Q. In the afternoon, correct?
A. In the afternoon, yeah. Checked the plant out, verified everything was ESD'd and blown down, and then I came home after that.
Q. Okay. And then on Monday, where did you go?
A. On Monday morning, I went back to Casa Grande to put the plant back in service.
Q. Okay. And that was your day was spent at Casa Grande on Monday?

A. That Monday, yes, yes.
Q. Okay. And then you said yesterday you went to the site?
A. I went to Picacho Station.
Q. Oh, Picacho Station. That's right.
A. Yeah. I didn't go to the rupture site.
Q. Oh, okay. So at Picacho Station, what did you do yesterday?
A. I helped, I helped James Pigg and ~~Joey Di Loesch~~ (ph.) with the plan for the pressure restriction.
Q. Pressure restriction plan?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. All right. And did you talk to Brett any?
A. I talked to Brett when -- after everything was said and done. Well, I talked to him when he, when he was at the site, when he got to 38. He called me, and then I talked to him and then told me that he was there. He goes, "Yes." "Okay. Well, send me a drop pin." Then I talked to him again until after everything -- it was like, I don't know --
Q. But at Picacho Station?
A. 1:00 or 2:00 at Picacho Station, yeah. It was sometime a couple hours later after everything was done.

MS. BAKER: Okay. All right. That's all I have.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. David?

BY MR. CARROLL:

Q. Okay. Frank, you said -- going back through your history here -- you were a controls tech, and that was with El Paso. At

one time, El Paso went to cross-functional techs, right?
A. Yes.
Q. Where were you with the cross-functional?
A. I was a senior cross-functional tech with El Paso.
Q. Okay. And the senior cross-functional tech has -- you had your plant tasks, and what other tasks did you have at that time?
A. You had to have certain measurement tasks, corrosion tasks, and pipeline tasks. To be cross-functional, you had to learn certain -- you had -- I believe back then, A, B, and C, A being more advanced. We had to have a certain amount of C tasks or I can't remember the -- or one or two -- I can't remember the types they were back then. We had to have knowledge of a certain amount of tasks of measurement, corrosion, pipeline, and the plant.

Since my strong area was in controls, so I had a lot of my A-level tasks in controls, and I had certain tasks in the pipeline and measurement and corrosion. So back then, we could take ~~part~~ pipe FS ~~in the~~ to FS soil (ph.) readings, help measurement do ~~regular~~ regulator FS reliefs regulators and FS and do valve servicing, pipe patrol of the pipelines (indiscernible).

Q. So at that time, you had some pipe patrol tasks and --
A. Yes, some pipe patrol tasks --
Q. -- valve servicing tasks?
A. And valve servicing, yes.
Q. Okay. And that's how you go more familiar with line 2000?
A. Yes. Well, you know, just that -- well, the -- Casa's

previous incident, like I said (indiscernible) we had to make our lines piggable. So I have a lot of experience sort of to blowdown (indiscernible) air movers. And then as, as time went on I went from running an air mover to being ~~(indiscernible)~~ trained FS to do hot (ph.) work and do the cutouts and actually writing, actually writing the actual hot ~~water~~ work FS ~~(indiscernible)~~ plans, because there was a lot of work trying to make ~~(indiscernible) paperworks~~ the pipeline piggable FS.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Right.

BY MR. CARROLL:

Q. So were you involved in the town next to Casa Grande making piggable project on the line 2000?

A. When all of the -- I was in the Tucson area. I did a lot -- all -- all my work was the 1100, 1103 pipeline.

Q. Okay.

A. So I was not involved in the line 2000 make piggable. I believe line 2000 already had ball valves, so as that the line 1600 had ball and gate valves. So those lines, like, line 1600 was, like, one of the first lines we, we pigged after the incident, because that -- there were already -- they had installed the pig launchers and pig receivers, but the mainline valves were already gate valves, so pigging (indiscernible). But I did a lot of work in the line 1100, 1103 in Tucson area because all those valves were ~~cut~~ plug FS valves -- they were ~~cut-in~~ plug FS (ph.) ~~valve~~ valves FS, so --

Q. Okay. And when you got to valve 39, you said you were in your personal truck, so you didn't have tools? You didn't have --

A. Yeah, I happened to grab a crescent wrench and a pipe wrench when I left my house just, just -- I'm going to grab -- bring these two wrenches with me as just, just --

Q. Okay. So you could take care of closing the valve --

A. So at least I --

Q. But you couldn't do anything with the --

A. I couldn't to anything with the, with the cap, yeah. But I had the wrench to open up the power gas valve --

Q. Okay. That's all I have.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Yup.

Ryan?

BY MR. WEIGHT:

Q. Let's take, Frank, let's take you back. You mentioned earlier that, you know, you opened the cabinet, pulled the lever, and then started in and then used the gas pressure to start blowing down, but you said that, that you had an issue getting it to seat?

A. Getting it to unseat. So that was open. It was sitting there. The pressure is already. I had -- I got the alarm from -- Casa Grande Station was another what 10 miles, 5 miles -- I can't remember how far it is. I'm talking about the alarm for the low suction -- at 5:54, I got the alarm that it had low suction at Casa Grande Station. So that tells me that I'm at close to 400 pounds at Casa Grande Station, so probably I got less pressure at 39, which is upstream of that. So I don't have enough

power gas, enough pressure to initially, to initially unseat the valve. So I shut off the power gas, and then I use a hydraulic pump, got the valve to move about a quarter of an inch to get it off its seat. I felt it getting easier to, to, to operate. So at that time, I said, you know what, I'm going to try the power gas again. Opened the power gas, pull the lever, then the valve ~~(indiscernible)~~ closed FS.

Q. Okay. So you had the hydraulic to get it started?

A. Yeah, yeah.

Q. And when you get those alarms from the station, do they come from -- where do you get those from?

A. Yes, they -- from our ClearSCADA. So it's the same alarm that gas control gets. So -- and so the -- the HMI, the, the station receives the alarm, and gas control gets the alarm straight from the PLC, and it's the same alarm that HMI sends us. We just have the script that -- okay, we get this alarm. Who do you want to send it to? And since I'm responsible for Casa Grande, the ~~(indiscernible) junket~~ senior technician FS, I get those alarms.

Q. Okay. So that's, so that's -- SCADAs. So that PLC system at Casa Grande automatically sends you that text, saying --

A. Yes.

Q. -- no suction on seat plant?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. All right. And so you were trying to get your power gas from the downstream side of valve 39?

A. From the downstream side, yeah, away from the rupture, yeah.
Q. Okay. All right. And you said that once, once you managed to hydraulic -- manually hydraulically get the valve to move off the seat to start closing, then you had enough power -- pressure to complete the closure?
A. Correct.
Q. When you got the alarm for low suction, did it give you, like, a number of what it was registering on the sensor?
A. No. It just says 6:49 a.m., CGC alarm, suction pressure alarm low. So it doesn't give us -- give me an indication, but from knowledge of my plant, our ~~(indiscernible)~~ low FS suction is set at 400 pounds.
Q. 400?
A. Yeah. And then soon, soon after that alarm, I get unit one and unit two unavailable, telling me it's, it's tripped.
Q. So did the entire plant ESD from this time or just the CU (ph.)?
A. Just the ~~seat~~ C FS plant, seat plant is only on the line 2000.
MS. GUNARATNAM: Right.
BY MR. WEIGHT:
Q. Okay. And then you said that once you -- you said Julio [sic] was with you. And you sent him to get the -- go get the ladder and get a couple of tools so that he could start knocking off the, the blown-out cap?
A. Yes.

Q. When did you send him -- I'm not sure if I got -- what time did you send him to go get the tools to --

A. Oh, it was, it was after 6:30. I don't know the exact time. It was after 6:30, after I got the valve closed, so he needed to go get a ladder to get access to the ~~L~~ yale FS cap. It was, it was around 6:30 when I saw him and talked to him.

Q. Okay. I'm sorry. I'm still writing here.

A. It's okay.

Q. And then when you went over, then, to the crossover, how were able to then confirm that the crossover valve to town 7 (ph.) line was closed.

A. Yeah. Brought my truck, opened the gate, walked to, to the valve, and I, I see the indication that it was indicating that it was closed already.

Q. All right. And did you notify -- did you notify -- and I don't know. I may have not caught this, but did you -- once you got valve 39 closed, did you notify anyone who -- saying that valve 39 is closed?

A. Yes, I called Dave, and I informed Dave at that time. I called Mike and Dave.

Q. So what was the time that you called Dave to report that the valve was -- valve 39 was closed?

A. I called Mike at 6:30 and Dave at 6:33.

Q. So then you start towards Sundance plant to try and isolated that. That's when Mr. Morton said that he'll take care of that.

And then did you have to check any valves by the time you got to Picacho?

A. No. No. James, James got to Sundance, got that closed. He went to Picacho and verified that that was closed. I didn't see James till after the, after the fire was out and see James then (indiscernible) gathered at Picacho's. I don't remember time it was, but --

Q. All right. So James got to --

A. But James --

Q. -- Picacho before you did?

A. Yeah, he got to Picacho before I did.

Q. What time did you get to Picacho --

A. Oh, shoot. Let's see. It was probably around 7:20 -- around there. I received a text from Brett that he was at 38 at 7:39, and so I was already at Picacho at 7:39, and so I had been there for maybe 10, 10, 15 minutes, so 7:15, 7:30. I don't know the exact time I got there.

Q. Okay. So 7:15 -- I just want to kind of reiterate and make sure I heard you right. So somewhere around 7:15 to 0720 hours, you got to Picacho, and then Brett texted you at 0739, saying that he made it to valve 38?

A. Correct.

Q. Okay. And then at what time did you instruct Tom, then, to go to valve 38 to help out?

A. Just shortly after I received the text from Brett.

Q. Okay. And then did you receive any -- and then aside from your initial low-pressure alarm, or low-suction alarm at the seat plant at Casa Grande, did you receive -- I'm just making sure -- did you receive any other alarms from the plant automatically besides your first one that you got?

A. I received that first one, and then soon after that, I got the two alarms that the units were unavailable. And then the next one after that was a low fuel gas pressure. And then, then an RTT temperature failure, but I'm not sure that anything to do with the low pressure, but that was all the alarms I got on Sunday.

Q. Did the PLC at Picacho Station send you any alarms?

A. No, because its, its reading pressure is already downstream, and it's on the 1600 line, so 1600 line didn't see any rupture, any, any, any disturbance, so Picacho Station didn't see anything around there, so --

Q. Okay. I guess the last question is, is there anything that you -- any additional information that you have relevant to this that you would feel that would help us in our investigation?

A. No, I don't -- no, I, I don't think I have anything. I mean, after we got the line isolated and blowing down, that's the -- that was my main objective that morning.

BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

Q. We'll just do a quick second round.

A. Okay.

Q. Just follow-ups. Just to get down some important times, so

valve 39 was closed at 6:29 a.m.?
A. Yes.
Q. And then you proceeded to then around the time 6:52 -- okay -- and then the other time was 7:41, you were blowing down the pipeline, right?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And then around 8, a little after 8, the fire you saw was out?
A. Yeah, I can't -- I don't know the exact time, but around, around 8:00, yeah.
Q. Okay. All right. In that time from closing valve 39 to not seeing the fire, how often were you updating Dave?
A. Let me tell you -- from the initial call from Dave, I called at 6:19, 6:33, 6:56, 7:05, 7:22, 7:37, and that was -- then the last call was at 8:00. And --
Q. So you called him about --
A. 9:00, called him again at 8:59. So I've been talking to Dave --
Q. Yeah, okay.
A. And I got calls to Mike, my supervisor. If you want those times, I have them here.
Q. No, that's fine.
A. Then I -- then a couple text messages that we had as a group, so --
Q. So I counted. It was about seven times by the time you saw

the fire was out. Okay. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. And you were just telling him what you did?
A. Yeah, yeah. I think the one at 7:37 was probably letting him know we're getting ready to blow down.
Q. Oh, okay.
A. Because 7:41, we started blowing down.
Q. Okay. And what kind of training -- I want to go back to your training about emergency response. What kind of training have you had with emergency response with Kinder Morgan?
A. Well, we go, we go through a yearly procedure at 159. So we do that yearly training with Kinder Morgan.
Q. And what type of training is it?
A. Our ~~mission~~ emergency FS response plan. Then we go over our own -- our emergency procedure manuals, like --
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah.
Q. And do you ever cover, like, these situations, like, isolating valves quickly and --
A. Yeah. So we have tabletop, you know, scenarios, and discuss, you know, something like this, a ruptured line hit, something hitting a major station, what's, what's the, you know, procedures and steps to go through, notification, stuff like that.
Q. Okay. Who do you do -- at your level, I mean, who do you do this training with? Is it usually, like, other ops specialists

or --
A. No, usually it's just the Phoenix area, include the, the measurement (indiscernible) service group and -- is involved.
Q. Measurement and other -- are you -- other ENCs?
A. Well, yeah, well, ENC is part of the measurement area, Phoenix area --
Q. Oh --
A. But measurement and corrosion fall under the technical group.
Q. Under the what group?
A. Technical.
Q. Technical? All right. Okay. Great. And Mike is who you report to, Mike Mayerhofer?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Great. Okay. So you did a table -- you do these kind of -- so were there any challenges, did you find, during the response? Was there anything that you noticed was a little, like, challenging to you trying to respond?
A. Not, not me. You know, I mean, other than, you know, getting to go out there, and then I had to park on the street because it was a washout, and I took my truck -- personal truck -- I don't want to get it stuck, so I parked on the street and walked, you know, 50 -- 35 feet to the valve. So -- but, you know, it wasn't that far, so I walked back and forth. So getting to the other crossover wasn't too bad after that, checked that one out, and then, you know, get over to Picacho, and other than what I hear

afterwards that Kenny had issues, you know, because, because of recent rains --

Q. Right.

A. So other than that, no, I didn't have -- I didn't think I had any, any issues doing my job.

Q. All right. Thanks.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Tiffany?

BY MS. BAKER:

Q. Okay. So valve 1007, why did you go to verify if that valve was closed? What happens if that valve is open?

A. So we -- there's -- at that site is -- there's a set of regulators and monitors, and basically, it's the -- you can supply or help supply gas pressure to the 1007 line. So we know our normal operating pressure in line 2000 is between 750 and 850, and the 1007 normally runs around 550 to 600 pounds. So we have ~~rigs~~ regulators FS (ph.) set there in normal operations to -- we could -- if we needed to, we could supply extra gas into the 1007 if we needed to through that site.

They were doing some work on 1007 a couple weeks prior to the, the incident. So we had that valve, had that valve closed to eliminate issues in 1007. So there's a check valve on, on that ~~rig set~~ regulator site FS so gas can't back-feed from the 1007 to the line 2000, but you know, through my training and knowledge, I've been told you trust the check valve, so I just wanted to make sure it was closed.

Q. Um-hum. So you wanted to make sure it was closed so it didn't back-feed into --

A. So if that check didn't hold, then we (indiscernible) pulling gas away from the 1007 into the line 2000 as we're going down and causing some other outages.

Q. Got you. Okay. That was all I had.

BY MR. CARROLL:

Q. Frank, when you were ops supervisor from 2014 to 2020, do you remember any type of unauthorized or unnotified encroachments or any encroachments between 38 and 39 on line 2000?

A. Not, not in the top of my head, Dave, no. I don't remember seeing ~~any~~ anything FS between that valve section. I would have to look back, have to dig that up for you.

Q. Okay. Do you remember any --

A. And I don't remember off the top of my head having any issues between that valve section.

Q. Okay. Do you remember any work that was done in that area that we may have done?

A. We, we in 2018, I believe, you were in there doing an anomaly repairs in 2018 between 38 and 39. There were upstream of that, the location that ruptured, some work was upstream. I can't remember anything downstream or nothing, but I know upstream of that in the fields, we had some, some work done in there. But I can't remember anything in that specific area of the rupture.

Q. Okay. And last question. Can you go through -- you said a

tabletop. Can you explain what the tabletop would be as far as our training?

A. So, so normally, the manager or the (indiscernible) operations supervisor will set up a scenario for the technicians, basically, pick a line and location and set up a scenario saying, you know, we get a call from so-and-so police department saying we have gas blowing at this particular meter station or offsite, and so we set up the scenario for the technicians. And then we, we (indiscernible) technicians get (indiscernible) go, you know, what, what is the first thing you do required by the procedure? You know, who -- the first one that gets on site is the incident commander till he's relieved from a higher -- somebody in a higher position, and then he's relieved.

But we sort of go to the sites and, you know, who gets called when, open up the line of communication with, with the -- either the command center would either be at Phoenix conference room or Casa Grande conference room, wherever that -- so manager/supervisor gets the information of -- that way we know the times when people get to each site. And then so you walk through the scenario of this tabletop as a group and trying to get everybody's input to make sure everybody is on the same page and understands what, what the process is, how to do it correctly, and do the notification process.

But you know, it's -- everything going through it on tabletop, you go through all your little details, but in

emergencies, you kind of -- adrenaline gets to you, you know? So you try to pick up -- just like an athlete. You have most of the memory through practice, so we try to go -- muscle memory to the brain through these tabletop exercises, you know, and hopefully, something, you know, you can remember what you're supposed to do. I guess I've answered that correctly.

Q. Great.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Thank you.

MR. CARROLL: That's all I had.

BY MR. WEIGHT:

Q. Just a couple more questions. So when you were at valve 39, Julio stayed behind to prepare for blowdown?

A. Yes.

Q. And was he able to execute blowdown?

A. Yes.

Q. And what time did he -- did he notify you to say that the blowdown was complete on your -- on --

A. Oh, yeah, let's, let's see if I got it. He called me at, he called me at 7:51. 7:51, he called me to tell me that he was down to a ~~laze~~ lazy FS (ph.) ~~event~~ vent FS, down to where it's -- well, I don't want to do -- I don't want to suck air into the pipeline and create another bomb, you know, for lack of a better term. So I told him when he gets down to a ~~laze event~~ lazy vent FS, to go ahead and close off his blowoff, and that's, that's --

Q. When you do a blowdown, what pressure do you take it down to

before you close the blowdown valve?

A. What pressure do I take it down to? There's -- in this case, there is -- you, you just blow it down. There's no -- I'm not sure what the -- the line was already down below 400 pounds or below 300 pounds that moment, so I'm just guessing what the pressure was, because I know it's below 400, because (indiscernible).

MR. CARROLL: Yeah, can you explain the ~~laze event~~ lazy vent FS?

MR. SANCHEZ: The ~~laze~~ lazy FS, oh, the ~~laze~~ lazy FS -- just, just the ~~laze~~ lazy FS ~~event~~ vent FS is just gas that you can barely feel coming out, out of the blowoff. Because the -- depending on the elevation between one and the other end, because gas is lighter than air, so you got possible gas getting sucked into the pipeline, so you don't want -- so you close one end off to prevent that air getting sucked in and getting a mixture in the pipe --

MS. GUNARATNAM: Right.

MR. WEIGHT: All right. And then the -- did ~~Julio~~ Rogelio FS also notify you when he completed the lockout/tag-out on valve 39?

MR. SANCHEZ: He did. I just, I just don't remember exactly what time he did it, though. I think they got the fire out (indiscernible) and I got a call from him at 8:44, and I'm thinking that's the time he had put this lockout/tag-out. Then I talked to Alex at 10:16 just to tell him where we were at, tell him to stand by for a while, and I think we talked about -- make sure that before he leaves to lockout/tag-out his valve, and he

said that, that he was going to take care of that. And that's at 37.

MR. WEIGHT: So the ~~laze event~~ lazy vent FS valve is just your standard practice to make sure you're not sucking air into your system once you evacuate the, the line?

MR. SANCHEZ: Correct. Yes.

MR. WEIGHT: Okay. But there's no set pressure when the ~~laze~~ lazy FS ~~event~~ vent FS comes in?

MR. SANCHEZ: No, it's already below pound, yeah, at that time, yeah.

MR. WEIGHT: Okay. All right. I have no further questions.

MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. All right. I don't have any others. Everyone is good? Okay. I'm going to end the interview.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

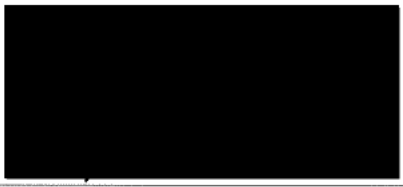
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	NATURAL GAS PIPELINE RUPTURE IN COOLIDGE, ARIZONA ON AUGUST 15, 2021 Interview of Francisco Sanchez
ACCIDENT NO.:	PLD21FR003
PLACE:	Casa Grande, Arizona
DATE:	August 18, 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.



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