



National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C. 20594

June 22, 2022

Mr. Thomas Barber:

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

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Investigation of: *

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NATURAL GAS PIPELINE RUPTURE *

IN COOLIDGE, ARIZONA, *

Accident No.: PLD21FR003

ON AUGUST 15, 2021 *

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* * * * *

Interview of: THOMAS BARBER, Operations Specialist
Kinder Morgan

Casa Grande, Arizona

Wednesday,
August 18, 2021

APPEARANCES:

RACHAEL GUNARATNAM, HAZMAT Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JOHN PEARCE, Representative

TIFFANY BAKER, Program Analyst
FMCSA

DAVID CARROLL, Operations Manager
Kinder Morgan

RYAN WEIGHT, Senior/Lead Inspector and Investigator
Arizona Corporation Commission's Pipeline Safety Section

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:50 a.m. MST)

1
2
3 MS. GUNARATNAM: Good morning everybody. My name is Rachael
4 Gunaratnam. I'm a HAZMAT investigator with the National
5 Transportation Safety Board out of Washington, DC.

6 Today is August 18th, 2021, and the time is 9:50 a.m.
7 Mountain Standard Time. We are currently at the Radisson Hotel in
8 Casa Grande, Arizona. We are here in response to the natural gas
9 incident that occurred on August 15th, 2021, in Coolidge, Arizona.
10 Today, we are interviewing -- and can you say your name and spell
11 it for the transcriber?

12 MR. BARBER: Thomas Barber, T-H-O-M-A-S B-A-R-B-E-R.

13 MS. GUNARATNAM: Thank you. You are free to have a
14 representative to consult with during the interview. Is there
15 anyone here you would to represent with you?

16 MR. BARBER: This man.

17 MS. GUNARATNAM: Can you go ahead and say the name?

18 MR. PEARCE: John Pearce.

19 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay, and spell it real quick?

20 MR. PEARCE: P-E-A-R-C-E.

21 MS. GUNARATNAM: Thank you. The purpose -- so you know, the
22 purpose of this investigation, as I was saying earlier, is to
23 improve safety. We don't assign fault or blame or liability, and
24 our sole mission is to prevent these accidents from happening
25 again and to improve transportation safety.

1 Unfortunately, we -- the NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of
2 confidentiality or immunity from other legal proceedings by other
3 agencies, whether local, state or federal. A transcript of this
4 interview will be -- this interview will be transcribed and I will
5 be sending you a copy so you can review it in case the transcriber
6 got anything wrong.

7 Do you have any questions about this?

8 MR. BARBER: No.

9 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. All right. So we'll go ahead --
10 actually need to go through the introductions again. Every
11 interview I have to do this, so if you can go ahead and spell your
12 name?

13 MS. BAKER: My name is Tiffany Baker, T-I-F-F-A-N-Y
14 B-A-K-E-R. I am a program analyst with FMCSA, Southern Region,
15 out of Atlanta, Georgia.

16 MR. CARROLL: I'm David Carroll, D-A-V-I-D C-A-R-R-O-L-L,
17 operations manager for Kinder Morgan in the Phoenix area.

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

21 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. All right. Thank you.

22 INTERVIEW OF THOMAS BARBER

23 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

24 Q. So let's just start off. If you could tell us a little bit
25 about yourself professional, your background, your title, how long

1 you've been with Kinder, who you report to, your department, that
2 kind of stuff.

3 A. I'm an operations specialist. I've been with Kinder Morgan
4 for three years, four months.

5 Q. And before that?

6 A. I worked for -- I guess the last company was Marathon for 10
7 years, but they were several companies before, but I was with the
8 same -- same place for 10 years.

9 Q. Okay. What'd you do for Marathon?

10 A. Same thing.

11 Q. Same thing? Okay, and you were with them for 10 years?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. Who do you report to?

14 A. Mike Mayerhofer.

15 Q. And your division is?

16 A. My division? 1.

17 Q. What's the name of your office?

18 A. [REDACTED] Street.

19 Q. [REDACTED] Street. That's the location?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay. Is it call the Operations Department?

22 A. No. It's just called the [REDACTED] Street office.

23 Q. Oh, okay. What is Mayerhofer's -- what's your supervisor's
24 title?

25 A. Dave, what is that?

1 Q. That's okay. You can --

2 MR. CARROLL: Operations supervisor.

3 MS. GUNARATNAM: Oh, okay. Ops supervisor. Okay.

4 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

5 Q. Okay. Can you tell us a little bit about your OQ
6 qualifications and your last training and everything, what you're
7 certified in?

8 A. Operator qualifications, I have, like, 26 of them. I
9 probably can't name all 26 of them but --

10 Q. No problem. Can you name as many as you can?

11 A. Purging and packing pipeline, line locating, damage
12 prevention, backfilling, patrol and leak survey, pipeline
13 lowering, operating ~~values~~^{valves}~~values~~^{TB}, servicing values, coding valves,
14 inspecting -- or, I mean, ~~coding~~^{coating}~~pipe~~^{TB}, inspecting pipe,
15 right-of-way maintenance, vault maintenance.

16 I don't know. That's about all I can think off the top of my
17 head.

18 Q. Okay. That's fine. All right. Great. So tell us about
19 your day on August 15th. Tell us the very beginning, how you
20 first heard about the incident and then all the actions that
21 followed after that. Just --

22 A. They -- James -- they called me at 5:55 a.m. and said there
23 was a possible rupture or leak, to -- in Coolidge, to head that
24 way with my line locator, gas detector. So I headed that way and
25 I got about halfway there and I could see the big flame and I was,

1 like, uh oh. Not good.

2 Then Rogelio (ph.) called me to tell me to -- because I think
3 James sent me to Sundance Power Plant, but then Rogelio called me
4 and said, "You don't need to go there anymore. I got that one.
5 Go to 39," and I'm still on the same route to get to this -- to
6 that place.

7 So I just kept driving and then Frank called me and said,
8 "Let's go to Picacho Station. We already got 39." So I went to
9 Picacho Station. I met with Frank there and then we kind of had a
10 discussion of what was going to happen next because someone was
11 already at 37 and 38 doing stuff in -- on both ends.

12 So then I think Mike might've told me to go to 38 -- Mike or
13 Frank, one of those two, told me to go to 38 so I headed that way.
14 Of course, I had to go around the long way because the road was
15 closed. So and then I got there and Kenny and Brett was there and
16 I got out and took over hand pumping the valve and then Kenny took
17 over and did the last few pumps and closed it.

18 I applied the lockout/tag out on main line valve 38 and both
19 crossovers at 8:19 a.m.

20 Q. And that was --

21 A. It was 8:19 a.m. is when I put the lock on. I don't know the
22 exact minute when the valve was actually finished closed, but
23 somewhere around 8:10 to 8:15.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And then we just hang out there for a while. I verified that

1 there was no pressure up, downstream of valve 38 and then went
2 back to Picacho Station, had a little meeting with us. We didn't
3 talk about much, but then I went home. There was nothing else I
4 could do.

5 Q. What time did you go home?

6 A. About 1:00.

7 Q. Just to back up a little bit. So James Pigg called you at
8 5:55 a.m. He -- and directed you to go to Sundance
9 (indiscernible). What would you have done there if you --

10 A. Closed the valve.

11 Q. Closed the valve. Okay, and as you were going there,
12 somebody else called you and redirected you?

13 A. Yeah. Rogelio called me, said, "That one's closed," to go to
14 the next one. I live the farthest away so, by the time I got
15 there everything was done.

16 Q. Okay. Is ~~Julio~~^{Rogelio TB} -- what's his last name?

17 A. Rogelio Chavez (ph.).

18 Q. Chavez. Okay, and he is?

19 A. He's an ops -- operation specialist just --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- like me.

22 Q. Okay, and then so ~~Julio~~^{Rogelio TB} [sic] told you go to Picacho Station?

23 A. No. He told me to go to 39.

24 Q. Oh, he told you to valve 39?

25 A. I think that's what he told me.

- 1 Q. Okay.
- 2 A. 39 or 39 and a half.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. But I didn't get very far and then somebody else called me to
5 go somewhere else. Frank called me and told me to go to Picacho
6 Station.
- 7 Q. Oh, okay. What'd you do at Picacho Station?
- 8 A. Just waited for further direction.
- 9 Q. Oh, okay, and then you went back to valve 39?
- 10 A. Valve 38.
- 11 Q. 38. Sorry. Sorry. 38. You went to 38. So Frank -- did
12 Frank tell you to go to 38?
- 13 A. (Indiscernible).
- 14 Q. No? Okay, and this is Frank Sanchez?
- 15 A. Uh-huh.
- 16 Q. Okay, and as you were driving to 38, describe. Were there
17 any challenges to getting there?
- 18 A. Yeah. That road was pretty muddy, puddles, and plus if you
19 go the other way, you've got to go through a lot of farm road
20 zigzag back over ^{to TB} ~~in~~ Randolph.
- 21 Q. So how long from Picacho Station to valve 38 do you think it
22 took you?
- 23 A. Probably about 30 minutes.
- 24 Q. Thirty minutes? Okay, and is that normal?
- 25 A. Yeah.

- 1 Q. Okay. When you were trying to get there, did you interact
2 with any responders, emergency responders?
- 3 A. (Indiscernible.)
- 4 Q. No? Okay. No one stopped you or anything then?
- 5 A. (Indiscernible.)
- 6 Q. Okay, and so you were able to get there 30 minutes later at
7 valve 38 and did you see -- who did you see when you got there?
- 8 A. Brett Berry and Kenny Harris.
- 9 Q. Oh, okay, and what did you witness when you go in?
- 10 A. They were standing by the valve.
- 11 Q. Okay, and so tell us -- describe as, like, what you had to do
12 to manipulate the valves and everything?
- 13 A. We just lift up the handle and put it back down just like a
14 pump --
- 15 Q. Okay.
- 16 A. -- and slowly it goes closed.
- 17 Q. Okay, and then, after that, you did the lockout and tag out?
- 18 A. Yeah.
- 19 Q. Yeah. So you -- how long do you think that took for you to
20 finish the job?
- 21 A. Five minutes.
- 22 Q. Five minutes? Okay.
- 23 A. Or less.
- 24 Q. Okay, and then -- okay. You said 8:19 you put the lock. So
25 it was --

- 1 A. I've got a timestamp on the picture.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. That's how I know.
- 4 Q. All right, and afterwards, what did you do when you were
5 finished with lockout/tag out?
- 6 A. Just hang out until we heard something else that we needed to
7 do. So then later -- later we started to put the lockout on the
8 crossover, verified that there's no pressure.
- 9 Q. How did you -- so to verify the pressure, what do you do to
10 do that?
- 11 A. There's a valve that you can open.
- 12 Q. This is at valve 38?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. Okay. Is there, like, a gauge that you were seeing?
- 15 A. Yeah. I can put a -- I put a gauge on there first, but it
16 didn't show anything so then I closed the valve, took the gauge
17 off and opened it and it was just a lazy vent in there.
- 18 Q. Right. Okay. So did you wait for anyone at valve 38 before
19 you went on to the next --
- 20 A. No. We all left together to make sure nobody got stuck.
- 21 Q. Right. So who was that?
- 22 A. Eventually James Pigg showed up --
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. -- and Brett and Kenny and myself, we -- we all left. All
25 four of us left at the same time.

- 1 Q. Okay. Okay. When James Pigg came, what did he do?
- 2 A. Nothing.
- 3 Q. Nothing?
- 4 A. He just was there in case we needed him.
- 5 Q. Okay. Did he look at the valves or anything? Was he just
- 6 watching?
- 7 A. Oh, yeah, I'm sure he looked at them.
- 8 Q. Yeah. Okay.
- 9 A. Probably verified the position of the valves and that they
- 10 were closed.
- 11 Q. Okay. So who told you to go to Picacho Station afterwards?
- 12 A. I think James said we were having a meeting there --
- 13 Q. Okay.
- 14 A. -- so we all went there. Didn't really have a meeting. Just
- 15 hung out for a minute and went home
- 16 Q. Okay. Did -- so nothing happened at Picacho? You just
- 17 (indiscernible) there?
- 18 A. (Indiscernible.)
- 19 Q. Okay. So you went home at 1:00 p.m. For the rest of the day
- 20 were you at home or did you try to come back to the site?
- 21 A. No, I was at home.
- 22 Q. You were at home? Okay. So when you saw -- you said at
- 23 5:55, when you were on the way to the site, you said you saw the
- 24 fire?
- 25 A. Yeah, probably about [REDACTED] miles down Highway [REDACTED] from [REDACTED]

- 1 it was [REDACTED] Road for -- highway.
- 2 Q. Uh-huh.
- 3 A. That weird intersection there. From -- from there about 10
- 4 miles probably I could see it.
- 5 Q. Uh-huh.
- 6 A. Or noticed it. I probably could've seen it if I was looking
- 7 for it.
- 8 Q. How large of -- like, can you describe the fire?
- 9 A. It was pretty big --
- 10 Q. Pretty big?
- 11 A. -- if you can see it from that far.
- 12 Q. Yeah. Have you ever dealt with, you know, a fire like that
- 13 before --
- 14 A. No.
- 15 Q. -- a rupture?
- 16 A. No.
- 17 Q. Okay. Have you -- when was that last time you did any
- 18 emergency response training with the company?
- 19 A. We do a CBT every year.
- 20 Q. What's -- say it again?
- 21 A. C -- computer based training.
- 22 Q. Computer based training. Okay, and what does that involve?
- 23 A. A lot of reading and watching videos and taking a test at the
- 24 end -- or a quiz.
- 25 Q. Is it on the response procedure?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Okay, and so what does your training tell you to do in times
3 of an emergency?

4 A. There's so many of them. There's, like, the -- the big one,
5 like, the incident commander and all that -- that training.
6 Emergency response training is separate. We've got a red book
7 that you can read or you're supposed to do knowing the -- knowing
8 the procedure, step to step of what to do.

9 I don't know who is involved in that part of it. Probably
10 one of the first management heard about it probably did that part
11 of it.

12 Q. So for the procedure itself, what applied? Like, what steps?
13 What does the procedure tell you to do in times like what happened
14 on August 15th?

15 A. Well, it was the first -- like, if I was the first person to
16 see it?

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. Notify your supervisor --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- and then I'd have to have it with me if you want me to
21 tell you exactly how it goes. r

22 Q. Okay. But the first step is to contact --

23 A. And I have --

24 Q. -- your supervisor?

25 A. -- access to it in my truck at all times.

- 1 Q. Okay. Good.
- 2 A. If something happens, I can grab the book and I can read it
3 and follow it.
- 4 Q. Okay. So with this incident, you were just taking direction
5 from your supervisors, right?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. Okay. Tiffany (indiscernible)?
- 8 MS. BAKER: My time?
- 9 MS. GUNARATNAM: Yeah.
- 10 MS. BAKER: Yeah.
- 11 BY MS. BAKER:
- 12 Q. So when you finally made it to -- well, just so I'm clear.
13 You never made it to the Sundance plant nor valve 39, correct?
- 14 A. Yeah.
- 15 Q. You were redirected before you reached those locations?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. Okay. So once you essentially got to valve 38, you did
18 facilitate the actual closing of the valve? You closed the valve?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. Okay. Did you communicate that closure with anybody once you
21 got it done?
- 22 A. I did not but somebody did. I -- Brett or Kenny did.
- 23 Q. So they communicate -- do you know who they contacted to say
24 the valve was closed?
- 25 A. I don't.

- 1 Q. Okay. James -- was James Pigg there when you closed?
- 2 A. No. He was -- he was there later.
- 3 Q. He came after the fact?
- 4 A. Yeah.
- 5 Q. Okay. Gotcha, and once you guys got to Picacho Station for
6 the meeting, were there any further instructions given to you guys
7 as far as the incident was concerned or anything else to do --
- 8 A. No.
- 9 Q. -- with the incident? Okay. During the meeting was there
10 anything about the timeline that you can tell us as far as when
11 things happened when the fire was put out? Anything of that
12 nature discussed?
- 13 A. The only thing I've heard was, like, they heard the explosion
14 at 5:30 in the morning --
- 15 Q. Uh-huh.
- 16 A. -- and I got called at 5:55. The valve was closed about 8:10
17 to 8:15 and about as far as the timeline goes, that's the only
18 things that know times of.
- 19 Q. Okay. Okay.
- 20 A. I mean I can look at my phone and tell you what time Rogelio
21 called me, what time Frank called me.
- 22 Q. Okay. She may ask that when you get back to her so that
23 would be good to have, and as far as your training with emergency
24 response, is your position one of the positions that typically
25 gets called during an emergency or release of any kind?

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 Q. Okay. So in that training, you said you do computer based
3 training. Do you guys do any other types of training other than
4 computer based for emergencies?
- 5 A. Yeah. We do a lot of instructor led training.
- 6 Q. Instructor led -- is that, like, in person --
- 7 A. Yeah.
- 8 Q. -- training? Okay. What happens at those trainings? Is it,
9 like, exercises or --
- 10 A. It's, like, a PowerPoint presentation where the safety --
11 somebody from Safety or somebody that knows -- knows about that --
- 12 Q. Uh-huh.
- 13 A. -- a lot and just talks about it, explains it, reads the
14 PowerPoint and goes over everything --
- 15 Q. Okay.
- 16 A. -- that needs to be -- that needs to be learned or taught.
- 17 Q. Any -- no -- so nothing else, exercises, just that and then
18 the computer based training, instructor led and computer based?
- 19 A. And then some safety stuff in Monday morning meetings --
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. -- which can be a variety of things that we discuss. Safety
22 to safety things.
- 23 Q. Okay. Was this your first time going to a response or have
24 you been involved at Kinder Morgan with any --
- 25 A. Oh, I've --

- 1 Q. -- other responses?
- 2 A. I've been involved with liquid leaks.
- 3 Q. Okay. Does that differ from this type of response? Do you
4 get a separate training for liquids versus this or is it just one?
- 5 A. No. They have, like, a -- a boom deployment in rivers. We
6 did a lot of that hands on training. We actually put the boom in
7 the river a lot.
- 8 Q. Okay. Okay. So you actually got --
- 9 A. Because we have --
- 10 Q. -- (indiscernible).
- 11 A. -- we have river crossings, so if -- if a liquid line was to
12 rupture in the river, we've got to get the oil out of the water.
- 13 Q. Okay.
- 14 A. Other than that, I've never -- never had anything.
- 15 Q. Okay.
- 16 A. Or I've never had anything.
- 17 Q. Did you have to do anything following up, as far as the
18 incident was concerned, once you returned to work after Sunday? ^{TB}
- 19 A. Yeah. the following day, on Monday, I went with Jody ~~Alvarez~~ ^{Olivarez}
20 (ph.) to lockout all the valves on both sides of the -- the
21 explosion.
- 22 Q. What -- you know what valves those were?
- 23 A. ^{TB} ~~39,~~ 39 and a half, 1 double 07.
- 24 Q. 1 double 07?
- 25 A. Yeah, 1-0-0-7.

1 Q. Uh-huh.

2 A. And Sundance Power Plant, Picacho Station and I did 38 on
3 Sunday, so we didn't have to go back there.

4 Q. Okay. So I'm clear. So valve 38 was locked out and tagged
5 out the night of the incident?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. But valve 39, 39.5, 1007, Sundance and Picacho stations were
8 locked out on Monday?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. Who told you to go do those on Monday?

11 A. James.

12 Q. Pigg?

13 A. James Pigg, yes.

14 Q. Okay, and once you got done with that was there anything else
15 that you had to do that day related to the incident?

16 A. No.

17 MS. BAKER: No? Okay. I think that's it for me.

18 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. David?

19 BY MR. CARROLL:

20 Q. When you got to valve 38, did you open any blowoffs or
21 anything?

22 A. Just the one right -- right below the blowoff to see if there
23 was any pressure in it.

24 Q. Just the half inch valve, but as far as the main valve caps,
25 you didn't --

1 A. No.

2 Q. -- take any of those off?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. Nobody mentioned anything?

5 A. But I -- I did have to close the downstream crossover.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. The upstream was already closed.

8 Q. Okay. As far as training, have you had any mock emergency
9 taning [sic] -- training, tabletop exercises or anything like
10 that?

11 A. To simulate an explosion like this?

12 Q. Pardon?

13 A. To simulate an explosion like this?

14 Q. Yes.

15 A. I -- I don't think so.

16 MR. CARROLL: That's all I have, Rachael.

17 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. Thank you.

18 BY MR. WEIGHT:

19 Q. All right. Tom, what's -- what direction did you take to
20 close valve 38?

21 A. I live a [REDACTED] off of [REDACTED] which is Highway
22 [REDACTED]. So I took that all the way.

23 Q. Okay. Now when you got to Picacho Station and then Frank --
24 so let me just kind of -- all right. So you -- when you met up
25 with Frank at the station and then he told you to go to valve 38,

1 what -- did you approach -- what direction did you approach valve
2 38 from?

3 A. I had to go [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] to get back to the highway. I
4 don't know what highway that is, but the one that's right next
5 to --

6 Q. [REDACTED]

7 A. -- the one that goes through [REDACTED].

8 Q. Yeah, that's Highway [REDACTED].

9 A. Still? Okay, and I went to, like, [REDACTED] or something like
10 that and zigzagged the farms, cross --

11 Q. Now did -- okay. Did you receive information from anybody
12 saying to approach it from the west side or is it --

13 A. Well, I think Brett sent me a pin and I used my Google maps
14 to get there, because I -- I don't know the area. That's not my
15 area.

16 Q. Okay. So Mr. Berry then told -- gave you the indication of
17 how he got there. He said take my route or --

18 A. No. He just sent me a GPS location --

19 Q. Oh, okay.

20 A. -- and I put that in my Google maps and Google maps took me
21 there.

22 Q. Okay. What was the condition of the right-of-way once you
23 got to the right-of-way?

24 A. A lot of mud.

25 Q. And then who told you when you were going to Sundance or was,

1 like, who told you to no longer go to Sundance with -- go the
2 station, was that Frank or James?

3 A. That was Rogelio Chavez.

4 Q. Okay. All right. So Rogelio told you, you know -- he
5 (indiscernible)? Okay. Now normally when you do these kind of
6 valves, is it -- are those normally gas pressure operated?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Could you describe what the norm -- under normal
9 conditions, if you had to operate that valve, what -- what would
10 you normally do?

11 A. Well, I'd open up the cabinet. When it says -- there's a
12 handle that says open and a handle that says closed. You just
13 pull the handle that says close and watch it close. When it's
14 done, you let go of the handle and you're done.

15 Q. Okay, and then I guess it would -- I heard descriptions that
16 you kind of had to manually work a lever to close the valve?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. When would you have to work that lever?

19 A. When you don't have any line pressure to operate the
20 automatic.

21 Q. Where on the valve would that lever be located as a backup?

22 A. It's inside the box. You open the container. You've got the
23 two ~~levers~~ ^{levers TB} or you got the hydraulic pump.

24 Q. Okay. So the hydraulic pump is inside the box -- the control
25 box?

1 A. And then there's a -- a lever you've got to push to go open
2 or closed.

3 Q. Uh-huh.

4 A. So you can open it using the pump too. You've just got to
5 move the lever over.

6 Q. Okay, and then how many movements of the lever did it take
7 for you to finish closing off the valve that Kenny had started?

8 A. Probably maybe 20 and it was over halfway closed when I got
9 there.

10 Q. If you have full gas pressure, normal gas pressure, how long
11 would it normally take once you move the lever to close? How
12 would it then take to completely close?

13 A. I would say about five seconds.

14 Q. I guess in conclusion is there any other information that you
15 would like to add relevant to this incident that would help us in
16 our investigation?

17 A. No.

18 MR. WEIGHT: Okay. All right. Thank you. No further
19 questions.

20 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay.

21 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

22 Q. Just to go back when he was -- when Ryan was talking about
23 closing the valves and this time you had to manually do it because
24 there's was no line pressure, why was there no line pressure?

25 A. Because they blew it down.

- 1 Q. Because they blew it down? Okay.
- 2 A. To put -- so the fire would go out.
- 3 Q. Right. So does that mean other valves had been closed?
- 4 A. Yeah. I think 39 and a half and 37 --
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. -- and I think 39 and a half or 39, I don't know which one,
- 7 but they were blowing off from both ends to put the fire out.
- 8 Q. Okay. Did you hear that from anyone?
- 9 A. I think Frank told me that. I was there --
- 10 Q. Okay.
- 11 A. -- when Frank was talking about it.
- 12 Q. Okay. Okay, and sorry if I asked you this already. Did --
- 13 have you seen fires like this before or ruptures like this in your
- 14 previous experience?
- 15 A. A pipeline.
- 16 Q. A pipeline? So this is your first time seeing something like
- 17 this?
- 18 A. Yeah.
- 19 Q. Were there any unique challenges you had to deal with while
- 20 trying to close the valves or anything like that?
- 21 A. Uh-uh.
- 22 Q. No? Okay. So it went as expected?
- 23 A. Yeah. The muddy road's pretty normal, so it's not really --
- 24 MS. GUNARATNAM: Right. Okay. Any follow ups, Tiffany?
- 25 BY MS. BAKER:

1 Q. I did want to know about the valves that you named. The
2 1007, what is that for?

3 A. Well, it's part of the -- the system so if, like, Phoenix
4 needs more gas --

5 Q. Uh-huh.

6 A. -- to help, like, you can get some from -- you can get some
7 gas from the 2000 line to go into the 1007.

8 Q. So it's a crossover kind -- type?

9 A. (Indiscernible.)

10 Q. What do you label it to be, 1007? What valve is that?

11 A. I don't -- I don't know. It's not my area.

12 Q. Well, 30 -- so 39 and 39.5, valves 38 and 37 are main line
13 valves, correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. 1007 is located where in relation to those?

16 A. I think it's just -- I think it's between I-10 and valve 39
17 and a -- and valve 39.

18 Q. Okay. So it's a valve that let's product come off of the
19 main to go to Phoenix?

20 A. If needed, yes.

21 Q. Okay, and you said it's not your normal area. Where is your
22 normal location?

23 A. Phoenix metro.

24 MS. BAKER: Phoenix metro. Okay. That's all I have.

25 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. David (indiscernible)?

1 MR. CARROLL: No.

2 MS. GUNARATNAM: Ryan?

3 MR. WEIGHT: Just so, you know -- so I'm familiar with your
4 crossover valve for (indiscernible) line. So where is valve 39
5 and a half in relation to valve 39 that Frank closed?

6 MR. BARBER: I want -- 39 and a half is [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Avenue
7 and the other was between [REDACTED] Avenue and [REDACTED] if I remember
8 correctly. That's the first time running any of that stuff.

9 MR. WEIGHT: Okay, and again, I mean you've probably already
10 mentioned this. The only reason why James told you to go to these
11 valves is to make sure they were locked out and tagged out?

12 MR. BARBER: On Monday. That was with Jody -- well, James
13 wanted me to learn the system because I'll -- I'll probably be
14 involved a little bit through this whole -- the whole thing, like,
15 whenever it comes to time to possibly repair it, I'll probably be
16 somewhere around there.

17 So he wanted me to go with Jody to learn everything that's
18 in-between there --

19 MR. WEIGHT: Okay.

20 MR. BARBER: -- so that I was familiar with the area because
21 Jody could've done that by himself, but James wanted me to learn
22 the -- where the valves are and everything.

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

24 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. Thanks. Just one follow up.

25 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

- 1 Q. You said 37, 38, 39, all those valves were the first time you
2 ever dealt with them ever? You've never had to work with these
3 valves ever?
- 4 A. No.
- 5 Q. Okay. Why do you think they called you then to do this?
- 6 A. Because they needed more help.
- 7 Q. Just more help? Okay. So you're kind of a backup?
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. Okay. Who -- do you know who the people are normally that
10 work this area?
- 11 A. Jody ~~Alvarez~~ ^{Olivarez TB} and --
- 12 Q. Was he there?
- 13 A. No. I think he was out of town that weekend.
- 14 Q. Okay. Do you know anyone else?
- 15 A. Kenny Harris.
- 16 Q. Okay.
- 17 A. I mean I don't know a lot of them. I think we just lost two
18 people to retirement and transfer, because Casa Grande has three
19 and Phoenix has three operations specialists.
- 20 Q. Okay. They typically have three in Casa Grande?
- 21 A. Yeah, but they only have one at the moment.
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 A. Like this recently happened, like, last couple weeks.
- 24 Q. Okay, but two retired?
- 25 A. No, one retire, one transfer.

1 Q. One transfer. Okay. Okay. All right. So you've never --
2 so you haven't heard anything, any issues, with line 2000?

3 A. No.

4 MS. GUNARATNAM: No. Okay. Okay. Any last minute follow
5 ups?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. I have a couple more.

7 When the line 2000 -- when you worked with line 2000 closer
8 to the [REDACTED] metro area, like, out near [REDACTED] or
9 wherever that general (indiscernible)?

10 MR. BARBER: The 2000 line, I -- I don't think I've ever done
11 anything with it --

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

13 MR. BARBER: -- off the top of my head in three years.

14 (Indiscernible.)

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right. Okay. I have no further
16 questions.

17 MR. BARBER: I don't even --

18 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay.

19 MR. BARBER: -- think the 2000 line don't even go through
20 Phoenix area.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, it -- I know it passes through
22 the [REDACTED] once it hits that main corridor to (indiscernible)
23 system.

24 MR. BARBER: I think --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- near 1600 --

1 MR. BARBER: -- I think that whole --

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- and then Transwestern's (ph.).

3 MR. BARBER: I think that whole right-of-way is all Casa
4 Grande.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Okay. All right. I'm -- all
6 right. Appreciate your information, sir.

7 MS. GUNARATNAM: All right. Do you have any follow up you
8 want to give us, any further information?

9 MR. BARBER: I don't think so.

10 MS. GUNARATNAM: That's it? Okay. All right. Okay. I'm
11 going to end the interview.

12 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

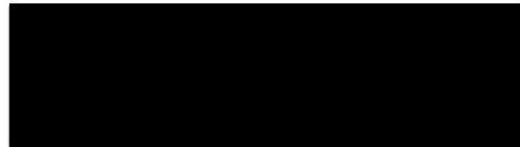
IN THE MATTER OF: NATURAL GAS PIPELINE RUPTURE
 IN COOLIDGE, ARIZONA
 ON AUGUST 15, 2021
 Interview of Thomas Barber

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.



Lisa Smith
Transcriber