



**National Transportation Safety Board**  
Washington, D.C. 20594

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Name: Juan Cruz

Department Atmos Energy / Mid-Tex Operations

Title: Service Technician 2

Date of Interview: February 28, 2018

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.



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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION OF \*  
RESIDENCE, DALLAS, TEXAS \*  
FEBRUARY 23, 2018 \*

\* Accident No.: PLD18FR002

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: JUAN CRUZ

Hampton Inn and Suites  
Dallas, Texas

Wednesday,  
February 28, 2018

## APPEARANCES:

RAVI CHHATRE, Hazardous Materials Accident Investigator  
Emergency Response Group  
National Transportation Safety Board

RACHAEL GUNARATNAM, Hazardous Materials Accident  
Investigator  
Emergency Response Group  
National Transportation Safety Board

STEPHEN JENNER, Ph.D., Human Performance Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

DARREN LEMMERMAN  
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration  
(PHMSA)

ALEX COLLETTI  
PHMSA

JIM COLLINS, Regional Manager  
Railroad Commission of Texas

**HOFMANN**  
NICK ~~HOFFMAN~~, Associate General Counsel  
Atmos Energy  
(On behalf of Mr. Cruz)

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I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. CHHATRE: Good morning. Today is Wednesday, February 28,  
3 2018. We are currently at Hampton Inn and Suites, located at 3051  
4 North Stemmons Freeway, Dallas, Texas, and we are meeting  
5 regarding the investigation of explosion of a house located at  
6 3534 Espanola Drive in Dallas, Texas, that occurred on February  
7 23, 2018.

8 My name is Ravi Chhatre. I am with the National  
9 Transportation Safety Board located in Washington, D.C., and I am  
10 investigator in charge of this accident. The NTSB investigation  
11 number for this accident is PLD18FR002.

12 I would like to start by notifying everyone present in this  
13 room that we are recording this interview and we may transcribe it  
14 at a later date. Transcripts will be provided directly to the  
15 interviewee for review and identifying any typographical errors.  
16 The transcripts may be posted in NTSB's public docket.

17 Also I would like to inform Mr. Juan Cruz that you are  
18 permitted to have one other person present with you during the  
19 interview. This is a person of your choice -- your supervisor,  
20 friend, family member, or you may choose no one at all.

21 Please state for the record your full name, spelling of your  
22 name, organization you work for and your title, business contact  
23 information such as mailing address and whom you have chosen to be  
24 present with you during the interview. Please do not give any  
25 personal information.

1 MR. CRUZ: My name is Juan Cruz. Spell that J-U-A-N, last  
2 name C-R-U-Z. I work for Atmos Energy. I'm a service technician.

3 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

4 MR. CRUZ: And the person in the room with me today is Nick  
5 Hoffman.

6 MR. CHHATRE: Now I would like to -- I would like to go  
7 around and have each person introduce themselves. Please state your  
8 name, spelling of your name, your title and the organization that  
9 you represent and your business contact information, starting from  
10 my left?

11 MS. GUNARATNAM: Rachael Gunaratnam, R-A-C-H-A-E-L,  
12 G-U-N-A-R-A-T-N-A-M, hazmat investigator with the NTSB.

13 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins, J-I-M, C-O-L-L-I-N-S, regional  
14 manager for the Railroad Commission of Texas. Business contact  
15 information was provided on the card.

16 MR. HOFFMAN: Nick ~~Hoffman~~ <sup>Hofmann</sup>, Associate General Counsel, Atmos  
17 Energy. Business contact information as provided on the card.

18 MR. LEMMERMAN: Darren Lemmerman, PHMSA. D-A-R-R-E-N, last  
19 name Lemmerman, L-E-M-M-E-R-M-A-N. Contact provided on business  
20 card.

21 MS. COLLETTI: Alex Colletti, A-L-E-X, C-O-L-L-E-T-T-I, PHMSA  
22 accident investigation. Contact is on the card.

23 DR. JENNER: Steven Jenner, S-T-E-P-H-E-N, J-E-N-N-E-R. I'm  
24 the human performance investigator with the NTSB.

25 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. I just want to clarify permission and

1 have you chosen the person to represent you? Earlier you said the  
2 person, they are in this room. My question is do you want this  
3 person to represent you?

4 MR. CRUZ: Yes, sir.

5 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

6 INTERVIEW OF JUAN CRUZ

7 BY MR. CHHATRE:

8 Q. Mr. Cruz, for the record, your experience, training, when did  
9 you start with the company and your current duties, any training  
10 you received from the company or outside?

11 A. Okay. I started with the company July of 2016. Got hired on  
12 as a service technician. I acquired training by first riding out  
13 with the technician to get a feel for what it's going to -- what  
14 my job is going to be like while I'm on my own. Rode up -- rode  
15 with another service technician while I waited to go to class at  
16 the Charles K. Vaughan, which is our training facility. I rode,  
17 I'd say, about 3 months before I went to class. I went to class  
18 for 5 weeks. I got training. I got OQ qualifications.

19 After my training, I mean, we had to take tests, take our OQs  
20 and then we went back to the Dallas Service Center, which then my  
21 supervisor at that time had me ride out again with a technician.  
22 And that technician was pretty much looking over me to make sure  
23 that I was doing the proper thing before I was permitted to go out  
24 and work on my own.

25 After all of that, I rode out on my own doing regular work,

1 turn-ons, hard closes, I'd say about 4 to 6 months before they  
2 sent me to class again for another 4 weeks, I believe, to get leak  
3 certified, where I learned how to work leaks, identify leaks,  
4 proper procedures that I have to go through. And then I repeated  
5 -- I mean, they sent -- I took tests, got the proper  
6 qualifications. Went back to the Dallas Service Center where I  
7 did the same thing, rode out with another senior service  
8 technician and worked leak odors with him watching me to make sure  
9 I was doing the correct thing that I was supposed to do, again,  
10 before I got cleared to work on my own. Since then, I'm with the  
11 company now about a year and 7 months.

12 What else did you want to know?

13 Q. I mean, I think you answered everything I really wanted to  
14 know.

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. Let me say that. Very well, very well done. So just to cap  
17 off, initially your first 3 months you just rode with somebody  
18 when you started with the company?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. You didn't do any work, just watched that person?

21 A. Just watched the person, yes.

22 Q. Then you were trained.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. And then you rode with, about 3 to 4 weeks or 3 to 4 months,  
25 I guess, with another technician and at that time he was watching



1 you, meaning did you do work then at that time?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. Under that person's supervision?

4 A. Supervised, yes, sir.

5 Q. Okay. But during that period you could not do the leak  
6 testing?

7 A. No, not at that time.

8 Q. So tell me, you said about this training. Did you get any  
9 training material from the company during the classes? Operating  
10 procedures, how to do things?

11 A. Yes. They give us handouts, paper handouts at the Charles K.  
12 K. Vaughan Center, which they give us to study. We also have in  
13 class, I guess, a professor that teaches us all the material. We  
14 go through it all and then we would go outside to the training  
15 facility and perform those procedures. And that, those handouts  
16 that they gave out helped us to -- on our test as well to get  
17 qualified.

18 Q. And is there any written test to qualify after the training  
19 or it's just after the training is completed you are ready to go?

20 A. No, no written.

21 Q. No written test.

22 A. It's all on a -- I believe, an iPad.

23 Q. Okay. So just in general terms describe to me what is your  
24 job and what is your shift?

25 A. I'm a service technician and my shift is Monday through

1 Friday from 8:00 to 4:30 when I'm not on call.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. When I'm on call I -- usually once every other month, for the  
4 most part, and my shifts starts on -- my on-call shift starts on a  
5 Friday. I work 1 to 9 Friday. I'm on call on Saturday, Sunday,  
6 whenever they need me. If they call me out, I respond to that  
7 emergency. And then Monday through Thursday I'll go back to my 1  
8 to 9 shift.

9 Q. Okay. And you're on call once every 2 months, roughly?

10 A. Roughly. Yes, roughly.

11 Q. Yeah. You said Fridays 1 to 9?

12 A. Yes, Friday is 1 to 9.

13 Q. And Saturday/Sunday all day?

14 A. Well, when they need me.

15 Q. When they need you, yeah. Okay. And as service technicians  
16 what are your duties?

17 A. Our duties is to do turn-ons, hard closes, to make sure  
18 everything is good. I mean, testing the customer piping and vent  
19 to make sure that there's no leaks on their side, test the  
20 regulators to make sure everything's good on the company's side.  
21 I mean, it depends if -- that's regular. If it's a leak  
22 investigation you go about making everything safe. And if it has  
23 to be graded accordingly, then we will do that.

24 Q. Explain to me what is a hard -- you said hard closeouts and  
25 you said -- I think, you said, like, you turn off something or I

1 didn't quite get that.

2 A. Yeah. So what a hard close is, is maybe the, the BP -- the  
3 owner of the house or maybe they're renting, they move out and so  
4 we're there to turn the gas off. So we lock and seal the meter  
5 and then proceed putting all the information, the read in our  
6 system. And just that the gas is off and it has been turned off.

7 Q. Okay. And you said then -- now what is the other term you  
8 use? Now that I know what a hard closeout means.

9 A. It's the same -- turn off, hard close is the same. It's the  
10 same.

11 Q. Okay. For the new customer or owner who comes in, then you  
12 just turn the gas on. Is that what you do or -- did I get that  
13 correct?

14 A. Yes. So, I mean, we'll, like I said, pressure test the house  
15 line to make sure everything's good. Test the regulator to make  
16 sure everything's good on our side. And if everything's good,  
17 then, I mean, we'll go and proceed and turn the gas on. And if  
18 the customer needs us to relight any appliances or turn on any  
19 appliances for them, then we'll do that for them.

20 Q. Okay. So you leave it up to the customer to ask you to turn  
21 the appliances on?

22 A. It's usually -- well, I mean, customers, some customers know  
23 how to turn their -- at that point, if they want to turn their own  
24 customers on we have a red tag and we'll fill it out and we'll put  
25 -- we'll bubble in there it says customer lighting own appliances.

1 Q. Okay. Now when you turn on, and you said you check the  
2 regulators and you check customer lines. What do you check? I  
3 guess what are you checking for or looking for?

4 A. I'm looking that the -- our regulator is holding lockup. So  
5 we put a gauge to the swivel on the company side and we turn the  
6 gas on with both valves on our gauge on. We'll turn it on and  
7 make sure that, first, that the delivery pressure to the house is  
8 what it's supposed to be at, which is 4 ounces for most houses.  
9 And then we'll check lockup, and if it -- I think it exceeds 5.2  
10 ounces, then it's a bad regulator and it has to be changed out for  
11 safety, I mean, safety reasons.

12 And on the customer side we'll pump 4 ounces of air into the  
13 line because that's what the delivery pressure of gas is to the  
14 house, and we'll test it. If it holds for a minute, then, I mean,  
15 we'll turn it -- that's when we know that it's holding pressure,  
16 there's no leaks on the customer piping, and proceed to put the  
17 meter back on and turn the gas on.

18 Q. So on the customer side, where do you make your test? I can  
19 see a point where we are going to put the air in. But on the  
20 customer side there are various appliances. Where are you  
21 testing?

22 A. We test up to the customer appliance.

23 Q. So each appliance you will check for the leaks?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. Okay. And what happens if there's a leak on the

1 customer line?

2 A. If there's a leak on the customer line -- let's say I'm  
3 pressure testing and there's a leak at the range. There's a way  
4 to isolate the range by turning off the appliance valve. I'll go  
5 in and I'll isolate that appliance valve and I'll come back out  
6 and I'll pressure test, and if it's holding pressure then we  
7 know --

8 Q. It's the leak. Okay.

9 A. -- the leak is there. And if there -- I mean, if it's still  
10 ~~falling~~ <sup>failing</sup> pressure, then we know it's not the range, keep isolating  
11 valves until we hold pressure.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. After all valves are isolated and it's still ~~falling~~ <sup>failing</sup> pressure  
14 -- I mean, when all the valves are isolated to every appliance, at  
15 that point we're only testing the customer piping, which is  
16 between where the meter -- we're pressure testing at the meter up  
17 to the valve. And if there's a leak then, then we leave the gas  
18 off, red tag, and tell the customer to contract a plumber.

19 Q. Okay. At that time you do not turn the gas on then?

20 A. No, gas stays off.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And is this procedure of the company or is it just kind of  
24 your thinking of doing it for safety of the customer?

25 A. It's, I mean, company procedure.

1 Q. Company procedure.

2 A. It's what I would -- what I learned at the Charles K. Vaughan  
3 Center.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And for the customer safety as well, obviously.

6 Q. And now like I said earlier in my preamble, that we are here  
7 to look at this accident that happened.

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. But prior to that there were two other events in the same  
10 neighborhood, if you look at the map, on either side of the alley.  
11 Were you involved in any of those three incidences?

12 A. I was the first responder to 3515 Durango Drive.

13 Q. 3515 Durango Drive.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. Walk me through what happened to that call. How do you know  
16 that you had to go out to this location and what did you do and --

17 A. Okay. So I was previously -- I was on a different leak  
18 order. I believe I was about less than 2 miles out from the last  
19 order that I was at. My dispatcher calls me. She's, like, hey, I  
20 have two leaks on the same street. Can you get one for me? Can  
21 you respond to one of those leaks? And I told her yeah, that's  
22 fine; you can put whichever leak you want on me, it doesn't  
23 matter. And she -- she told me it was a fire and it was a regular  
24 leak. I'm like it doesn't matter, whichever one you want to put  
25 on me I'll respond to it.

1 She put the fire on me, the fire leak on me. So I cleared  
2 out the leak that I was at and I made my -- I was en route to the  
3 3515 Durango Drive. I responded. When I got there there was a  
4 police car on El Centro blocking the street.

5 Q. Okay. If you want, you can -- feel free to mark this thing  
6 if you want. If you don't, just tell us where you are.

7 A. Okay. So --

8 Q. And we have the same copy of the map. So if you can describe  
9 it, we can still do it.

10 A. Okay. So El -- so the squad car is in the middle of the  
11 intersection of El Centro and Durango.

12 Q. El Centro and Durango.

13 A. It's blocked off.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So I can't drive my truck in there. I parked on the side of  
16 -- on the Durango side, and I walked over to the scene of the  
17 fire.

18 Q. Let me just take a look at my notes. Are you on page two  
19 there? Okay.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Give me the house number where you are. Where were you?  
22 Which -- wherever the police car was?

23 A. It was at the -- right at the intersection of El Centro and  
24 Durango Drive.

25 Q. Okay. Okay. All right.

1 A. So I parked my truck over here on this, in front of this  
2 other house.

3 Q. In front of the alley or in front of the other house?

4 A. In front of the house across -- like, so you have this  
5 street, El Centro here --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- and you have a house here.

8 Q. Okay. Go ahead and mark it El Centro. Yeah, on -- write  
9 down El Centro and Durango or whatever the streets you are talking  
10 about. You can write.

11 A. So this is Durango Drive.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Then you have El Centro at the intersection.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I parked my truck here. Well, actually I parked my truck  
16 across like this because the police said for me to do that --

17 Q. You blocked it, okay.

18 A. -- to help traffic.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So I walked over to the fire, which was 3515. So we are --  
21 here like this. Because when I walked over there -- this is 3515  
22 on this side. Okay. So I walked over to the fire where I met one  
23 of the firefighters.

24 Q. Where is that again?

25 A. 3515.



1 Q. Oh, okay.

2 A. Let me see here.

3 Q. Right. Okay, I see it. Okay. And there's a fire from what  
4 you are told.

5 A. Okay. So --

6 Q. Is this wrong?

7 MS. COLLETTI: Yeah, it's the --

8 MR. CRUZ: Yeah, so I was parked on the opposite side on  
9 Larga.

10 BY MR. CHHATRE:

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. On Larga.

13 Q. So correct that --

14 A. So the squad car was parked right here. Which then is you  
15 have a street here, Durango Drive, and then you have a house right  
16 here. And I'm parked like this blocking traffic.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So I walk over to 3515 where the fire happened. I met one of  
19 the firefighters and he said that the fire chief wanted to --  
20 well, he walked me over to the fire chief.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Which then I met the fire chief right in front of the  
23 property, 3515 Durango Drive, and he pretty much told me what was  
24 going on. And I asked where the meter -- well, I know the -- I  
25 knew the meter was in a backyard. I asked for him to walk me over

1 to where the meter was at and he escorted me. I just wanted to  
2 verify that gas was off and there was no gas coming into that  
3 house.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. This is the alley. Okay, yeah, so that's --

6 Q. Do you want to trash that and use a different map?

7 A. No, no, this is fine.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So you have Larga on this side at 3515. What street -- is  
10 this -- the street over here is El Centro.

11 Q. Yeah, go ahead and -- yeah, take that and --

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's a bigger picture.

13 MR. CRUZ: So 3515 is right here. When I walked up to it, my  
14 house -- the house was on the right side. So, yeah, I was right  
15 here at Marsh Lane actually, I was at.

16 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

17 MR. CRUZ: No, this isn't right.

18 MS. GUNARATNAM: It's not actually. This isn't correct. I'm  
19 sorry. It's not Marsh Lane there -- if you cross out Marsh Lane  
20 -- it's El Centro.

21 MR. CRUZ: Okay. Yeah, so -- yeah, that's where I -- yeah.

22 MS. GUNARATNAM: It's confusing, sorry.

23 MR. CRUZ: So it was -- I was at the intersection when I  
24 parked at Durango and El Centro. Okay. So I walked over to the  
25 house where I met the -- 3515 -- one of the firefighters which

1 then walked me over to the fire chief. The fire chief escorted me  
2 to where the meter was at. I wanted to verify that the gas was  
3 off. And then we walked back to the front, which is when I called  
4 one of my distribution operators for him to come and assist me.  
5 He wasn't answering the phone, and I called my supervisor.

6 I explained, because the fire chief had explained to me that  
7 it was gas related and there had been an incident before that was  
8 also gas related three houses down, which I knew nothing about. I  
9 knew then that was something my supervisor needed to be notified  
10 of, which then I called my supervisor and he sent me help, one of  
11 the guys -- he's a distribution operator. When he got on-site he  
12 kind of took over the investigation and we started -- we checked  
13 the sewer. We checked -- we started punching bar holes on both  
14 sides, both directions of where the meter was at, to check for  
15 leaks and stuff like that.

16 Q. I want to let you go back a little bit because there's quite  
17 a few pieces of information that I just want to make sure I  
18 understand.

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. Earlier you said your dispatch called you and said there are  
21 two fires on the same street you are on.

22 A. One fire.

23 Q. One fire.

24 A. There was one fire and one leak that had been called in on  
25 this side of the street, which I'm not familiar with.

1 Q. Okay. So one fire, one leak?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And you were on that same street or nearby for some other  
4 job?

5 A. I was -- yeah, about 2 miles out.

6 Q. Two miles out.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. And what was that job for?

9 A. It was also a leak investigation.

10 Q. A leak investigation, okay.

11 A. Or a -- yeah, a leak investigation.

12 Q. Okay. So let me take you back a little bit, a small detour  
13 here. What was that leak?

14 A. She called it in. She was smelling gas.

15 Q. The dispatcher or the owner?

16 A. No, the owner of the property called in the leak. She was --  
17 she said she was smelling gas inside her house on -- in her kid's  
18 bedroom, which was on the left side of the house.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. The bedrooms were on the left side of the house. So I went  
21 inside, had my gas detector and my CGI Sensit Gold. I surveyed  
22 inside. I surveyed vents. I checked -- I went up in the attic  
23 and I checked to see if the gas was maybe coming from central  
24 heat. I surveyed all the appliances in the attic. I think she  
25 had a -- two furnaces and one tankless water heater that I

1 surveyed. I detected no gas in there.

2 I came back outside. Everything inside was clear. I didn't  
3 pick up no gas. I came back outside and I started walking to the  
4 meter, which that's when I started smelling gas. So I went back  
5 to my truck and I got what we call Leak-Seek. It's basically --  
6 it's like a soapy water that we spray onto the meter and if it  
7 bubbles up then that means there's a leak there.

8 I sprayed down the meter and there was a leak coming from the  
9 outlet swivel. And so I took the -- I turned the gas off to the  
10 house. I took the meter off and I pressure tested her line,  
11 because it was originally an inside leak so I wanted to make -- so  
12 I had already surveyed the inside the house and the appliances and  
13 the rooms and stuff like that. So I -- there was no leak in there  
14 but I wanted to make sure that there wasn't no leak by doing a  
15 pressure test on the house piping. We come -- we usually only  
16 test for 1 minute, but I tested for 3 minutes and it held pressure  
17 for 3 minutes.

18 I checked the regulator on the company side to make sure  
19 everything was good on our side. Everything was good, which then  
20 I replaced the gaskets before I put the meter on. I put the meter  
21 back on, turned gas on, and went inside to make sure that her  
22 appliances were working as they were before I arrived. After I  
23 went inside to check that the appliances were working fine, I went  
24 back outside and I ~~soaked~~<sup>soaped</sup> the meter ~~lube~~<sup>loop</sup> down to see if it'll  
25 bubble, still bubble up or not, and it didn't bubble up.

1 I checked the sewer. I punched a bar hole down by the riser  
2 to see if there was maybe a leak coming from underground, and  
3 everything was good.

4 Q. Now how was the weather that day? Was it raining? Was it  
5 sunny or windy?

6 A. It was drizzling.

7 Q. It was drizzling.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. Was the ground wet?

10 A. Yes, it was wet.

11 Q. Now, this swivel on the meter leaking, compared to those  
12 bedrooms where the initial complaint was -- the lady claimed she  
13 smelled gas over in the children's bedroom, did she not?

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. So were they the same location direction as the meter was?  
16 There was --

17 A. So -- yes. The bedrooms -- so the meter was on the left side  
18 as well, and that was only about a foot from -- it was -- so you  
19 have the house here. The meter was right here in the front left  
20 side.

21 Q. Of the house?

22 A. Yeah, of the house.

23 Q. So the meter is attached to the house --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- close to the house?

1 A. Close to the house, yes.

2 Q. And on the same side as the children's bedroom?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. And when you did the pressure test on the  
5 customer line, any of the appliance valves are open or closed?

6 A. Open.

7 Q. They're all open?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. With all open valves the pressure held for 3 minutes?

10 A. For 3 minutes, yes, sir.

11 Q. So no leaks. That tells you no leaks in the appliances, no  
12 leaks on the service line?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Okay. You said you did a bar hole near the riser, with the  
15 riser?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Did any water seep into that hole?

18 A. No.

19 Q. No water seeped into the hole.

20 A. No.

21 Q. And did you do any bar hole testing on the customer line?

22 A. The customer piping was coming out from the house.

23 Q. Okay, so not much -- so a really short distance to the  
24 customer piping, because the meter here is closer to the house?

25 A. The meter is -- so the -- so you have the riser that comes

1 out from the ground and it hooks up to the inlet side.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. But the outlet side came up, which was you have the swivel  
4 and it goes straight into the house.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And it was a brick house.

7 Q. Okay, a brick house.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Now your -- I guess the company pipe, so this company line,  
10 how far was this line, service line was from main to the meter?

11 A. From the main to the meter?

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. I'd say --

14 Q. Approximately.

15 A. Yeah, I don't, I don't know.

16 Q. Okay. But was it like a -- like 25, 30 feet as near this  
17 alley or was it like --

18 A. It was -- so the -- it was in the street.

19 Q. In the street?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. Did you do any bar holes on your line?

22 A. At -- no, I didn't.

23 Q. You did not do any bar holes from -- you're saying --

24 A. Well, at the riser. Yes, I did at the riser.

25 Q. Well, the riser, but nothing on the service line from main to



1 the meter?

2 A. I surveyed. I surveyed with --

3 Q. Above ground?

4 A. Above ground, yes.

5 Q. Was it asphalt or was it --

6 A. It was grass.

7 G. Grass.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. Did you see any dead grass in that area?

10 A. No.

11 Q. No dead grass.

12 A. No.

13 Q. So that was an -- how far that was from the incident, these  
14 three incident homes?

15 A. I don't know.

16 Q. Not in the same neighborhood?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay. So now let's go back to the call that you were  
19 dispatched for, 3515.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. And that was a fire call. But I didn't realize then which --  
22 and I'm not sure if I'm asking you in correct language here. But  
23 dispatch called. Do you have a priority assigned to certain calls  
24 that are high priority, medium priorities, and low priority when  
25 you get a call or are they all treated like a high priority?

- 1 A. All leaks are treated high priority.
- 2 Q. Okay. So when you heard about this 3515 call with the fire  
3 and she told you there are two calls on that street and one is  
4 this fire, what is the other call? Do you know?
- 5 A. It was a leak. I don't know.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. All I know was a leak --
- 8 Q. Sure, I understand. I'm just wondering whether she told you  
9 that, hey, you know --
- 10 A. No, she didn't tell me.
- 11 Q. So you do not know the other call whether inside leak or  
12 outside leak?
- 13 A. No.
- 14 Q. You would not know?
- 15 A. No.
- 16 Q. Okay. Now walk me through the <sup>3515</sup>~~1315~~ [sic] fire. You said you  
17 were in the front of the house and you talked to the fire --
- 18 A. A fireman, yes.
- 19 Q. A fireman. And the fireman walked you --
- 20 A. To the fire chief.
- 21 Q. -- to the fire chief.
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. And then they escorted you to the meter?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. Where was the meter compared with the house? Was it also

1 close to the house or was it further distance away?

2 A. It's further distance, in the backyard.

3 Q. The backyard.

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. How much distance you would guess? If you don't -- if you  
6 can't guess, that is fine. Just maybe 15 feet, more than 10 feet,  
7 more than 30 feet?

8 A. Definitely more than 15, I know that.

9 Q. Okay. So long customer service line?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. And the condition is still drizzling?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. The condition did not change to rain?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Okay. So tell me what did you do on that one?

16 A. On 3515?

17 Q. Yes, sir.

18 A. Like I said, I went back to make sure the gas was off, came  
19 back to the front. The fire chief pretty much explained that  
20 there had been an incident the day before to two, three houses  
21 over. I'm not sure.

22 Q. Right. Okay.

23 A. And that it had been gas related as well.

24 Q. So they told you that that incident was gas related and they  
25 are calling this as gas related, correct?

1 A. That's what they said.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yes. Which then I tried to call one of our distribution  
4 operators to come out and help me.

5 Q. So tell me, distribution operator, is it -- is he or she  
6 above you in experience and authority or is it the same or --

7 A. Above.

8 Q. Above you, okay.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And are they qualified to do everything you are doing and  
11 more?

12 A. And more, yes.

13 Q. Okay. And do you remember the name of the fireperson you  
14 talked to?

15 A. I don't know.

16 Q. Okay. Do you know the name of the -- you said district  
17 operator or what was --

18 A. Sergio Pedraza.

19 Q. Okay. Can you spell it?

20 A. S-E-R-G-I-O.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. P-E-D-R-A-Z-A.

23 Q. A-Z?

24 A. A-Z.

25 Q. A-Z, okay. And you said Sergio's title is?

1 A. Distribution operator.

2 Q. Distribution operator. Okay. And how long it took Sergio to  
3 to show up on the scene?

4 A. He didn't answer his phone.

5 Q. Oh, he didn't answer the phone.

6 A. I believe he wasn't working that day.

7 Q. I'm sorry?

8 A. I believe he was off that day.

9 Q. Off that day, okay. Okay.

10 A. But I didn't know that.

11 Q. Okay. So then what happened? He didn't answer.

12 A. He didn't answer, I called my supervisor.

13 Q. Okay. And what's the supervisor's name?

14 A. J-U-A-N.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Last name G-O-M-E-Z.

17 Q. G-O-N-E-Z?

18 A. G-O-M-E-Z.

19 Q. Okay, Gomez.

20 A. Gomez, yes sir.

21 Q. Okay. Okay. And what did -- what happened then?

22 A. I explained to him what was going on. The fire chief told me  
23 that there was an incident before, I'm not sure when, and there  
24 was an incident happened -- I explained to him both houses were on  
25 the same side of the street and he's like, okay, I will get you

1 help. He sent another -- well, a distribution operator and he --  
2 and so he got there. We're still -- I'm still on the phone with  
3 my, with my supervisor, and he --  
4 Q. With Mr. Gomez, right?  
5 A. Yes.  
6 Q. Okay.  
7 A. And so he said he'll send me some help, and which he did, and  
8 he was -- he showed up as well.  
9 Q. He showed up also. And who that person was who --  
10 A. Josh Wallis, the other distribution operator.  
11 Q. Okay. Can you spell the name?  
12 A. Well, his real name -- oh, well, J-O-S-H-U-A.  
13 Q. Joshua.  
14 A. Yes. Last name W-A-L-L-I-S.  
15 Q. Okay. And did Mr. Joshua and Mr. Gomez arrive at the same  
16 time or --  
17 A. No, no. No. My supervisor Juan Gomez arrived at at the same  
18 time with another one of my supervisors.  
19 Q. Okay.  
20 A. But Josh Wallis arrived before my supervisor did.  
21 Q. I'm sorry?  
22 A. He -- Josh Wallis, he arrived before my supervisor did.  
23 Q. Okay. And Mr. Gomez arrived with somebody else also. So he  
24 is -- Mr. Gomez shows up and somebody else?  
25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. And who that person was?

2 A. Salvador Sanchez.

3 Q. Okay. All right. And I'm sorry to go back and forth, but  
4 you arrived at this scene, talked to all these police people, did  
5 you smell any gas odor at all when you arrived?

6 A. No.

7 Q. You smelled no gas odor?

8 A. No gas.

9 Q. Did you go -- when you were escorted to the meter, did you  
10 smell any gas odor?

11 A. No.

12 Q. No. No gas odor?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. Okay. So now tell me what happened after all these  
15 people to help you showed up.

16 A. So Josh Wallis showed up and we proceeded our investigation.  
17 We checked, like I said, we checked the sewer, not only the ~~sewer~~ <sup>sewer</sup>  
18 behind that house but surrounding sewers. And we did bar holes on  
19 both sides, both directions of where the meter at 3515 was.

20 Q. Okay. And what was -- did you see any gas at all?

21 A. When we checked the sewer, well, he -- Josh Wallis, he's the  
22 one that checked the sewer there with the CGI.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And it did show there to be gas in the sewer but it didn't  
25 hold.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So it'll -- which means it'll -- it went up to a percentage  
3 but then it dropped back down to zero.

4 Q. But it dropped. Do you know what the reading was there?

5 A. I do not know.

6 Q. Okay. All right. But there will be a gas reading and it  
7 will kind of die?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. Okay. So he's checking sewer and what you are doing?

10 A. Doing bar holes, like I said, on both directions of the  
11 alley.

12 Q. But not on your main or --

13 A. Above the main. Yes, above the main.

14 Q. Above the main. So you are taking your main --

15 A. Yeah. So where the meter's at we checked where the service  
16 connects to our main line. And then we proceeded to go every 5  
17 feet above the main all the way down to I think the end of the  
18 alley. If you're looking at the house 3515, all the way to the  
19 end of 30 -- to the left of it.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And then I don't know -- I know we went a long distance to  
22 the right of it.

23 Q. Okay. How did you identify your main in the alley?

24 A. We have a system in our computer that's called SmartView and  
25 it shows as pretty much a drawing like this.



1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And it gives us an idea of where the main is at.

3 Q. Where you are (indiscernible).

4 A. Also there was a pipeline marker, which is a yellow -- it's  
5 just not only us but maybe excavators that are in an area, it just  
6 alerts them that there is a pipe right there.

7 Q. But on the main you are seeing no reading at all under the  
8 bar hole?

9 A. To the left of it no.

10 Q. Now on 3515, if you look at your map, alley is in the back.

11 A. That's right.

12 Q. So if you are looking at the front of the house going right  
13 side and going left side, the gas reading -- no gas reading on  
14 either side? Or is there a gas reading on one direction compared  
15 to other?

16 A. No gas readings to the left side, which is 3509, 3503.

17 Q. Okay. No gas reading on that.

18 A. No.

19 Q. 3509, 3503, correct?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. No reading in that direction?

22 A. Yeah. So when I was bar holing, Josh Wallis was checking the  
23 sewer. I mean, it doesn't take long --

24 Q. Sure, yeah.

25 A. -- to check the sewer.

1 Q. Sure.

2 A. So while I was bar holing this side, Josh Wallis was bar  
3 holing this side.

4 Q. Other side, okay.

5 A. On the right side, yes.

6 Q. Uh-huh. Okay. And did he see any readings?

7 A. I believe -- I don't know.

8 Q. Okay. So Josh Wallis is doing the sewer and also going the  
9 direction of 3519, 23, in that direction, correct?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. So both of you guys checked. Then what happened?

12 A. By then our supervisors arrived and, I mean, we proceeded to  
13 -- I mean, we checked -- so Josh Wallis, while I was doing this  
14 side, he was checking this side and then I met up with him. Meet  
15 him, I met him there and then we proceeded -- I'm not sure how far  
16 we went, what house we checked, but I know we checked sewers and  
17 on both sides of the alleys. All visible sewers were checked in  
18 that alley.

19 Q. Okay, in that alley. And consistently do you see a reading  
20 and it will die?

21 A. Only at 3515.

22 Q. Only at 3515, okay. No other sewers you saw any gas. I'm  
23 sorry. I'm glad you clarified that. Okay.

24 Okay, and what did the supervisor start doing while you guys  
25 are doing this? Or you do not know? I mean, you --

1 A. I don't know. Yeah.

2 Q. -- may not know, yeah.

3 A. I don't know that.

4 Q. Right. I understand. Okay. So after all these readings are  
5 done, then what happened?

6 A. While we were in the alley, I'm not sure where this lady came  
7 from, but she was -- she spoke Spanish and --

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. -- I'm bilingual and she asked to speak to -- I mean, she  
10 asked does we speak Spanish, and obviously I speak Spanish. And  
11 she mentioned that she saw bubbles in her front yard and she  
12 walked me over to where the bubbles were at. I punched -- so  
13 I'm --

14 Q. Can you tell me --

15 A. -- doing this over here --

16 Q. Can you tell us what is the house number?

17 A. I don't know the house number.

18 Q. It's in the same alley or --

19 A. No, it's on this -- it was in this area right there. I just  
20 don't know which one it was.

21 Q. So okay, beyond 3531? Look at that where you are --

22 A. 3531 right here.

23 Q. Oh, it's other side. So now you're moving to Larga, right,  
24 on that --

25 A. On Larga. Yeah, it's on Larga.

1 Q. So it's opposite side of the Larga Drive --

2 A. Opposite side of Larga Drive, yes.

3 Q. -- where you went.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. That's where she says, she's complaining that there are  
6 bubbles?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And did she say where the bubbles were at?

9 A. Yeah, they were visible. They were in front of her house.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. On -- closer to the street. So near the sidewalk.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Near the sidewalk.

14 Q. And so you can see the bubbles on the sidewalk?

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. Okay. And then what happened? What did you do?

17 A. So I got my -- I went to go get my detector. I put it in  
18 tick mode, which is constantly checking for gas, because it was a  
19 puddle of water and you couldn't punch a bar hole in it. I waved  
20 my detector over where the water was at and it was picking up gas.

21 Q. So you don't know the percent. You only know there is gas?  
22 Or you knew the percent?

23 A. Percent, oh, well then -- so you have a puddle of water and  
24 then on this, like, a little bit facing the house to the left of  
25 it, I was able to punch a bar hole and put my CGI. I mean, this

1 still filled with water, but I was still able to --

2 Q. Get something.

3 A. -- detect for gas. I got 5 percent at that hole.

4 Q. Five percent LEL or 5 percent gas?

5 A. Natural.

6 Q. Five percent gas. Okay. And then what happened?

7 A. I notified my customer, the -- my supervisor.

8 Q. Okay, and that will be Sanchez?

9 A. Yeah. My supervisor was Juan Gomez.

10 Q. Okay, so you told Gomez, Mr. Gomez, okay. And what did he  
11 say?

12 A. I believe he -- the lady had already called in the leak.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I believe she -- that's what she -- was what she said, and  
15 another technician showed up for that address. I'm not sure --

16 Q. So he took over?

17 A. So he took over that investigation on this.

18 Q. Okay. But you did not go inside the house to see if there  
19 was any gas inside or no further action taken from you because  
20 somebody else took over?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. Okay, so then you went back to 3515 or 3509 or what  
23 happened after that?

24 A. Yeah, so we were still putting bar holes down along the main  
25 every 5 feet on this side to the right side of 3515.

1 Q. Okay. With this bubble on this house coming out, were you on  
2 the same main or the same main serving that house? Where you --  
3 like Larga Drive where you said you saw the bubbles on the ground,  
4 do you know is it the same main that is in the alley is serving  
5 that house also?

6 A. I don't know.

7 Q. You do not know. So no -- so you do not know if everything  
8 was checked, not checked, anything like that?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Okay. Okay. So now you go back to your original job, I  
11 guess, and what happened after that?

12 A. We keep, like I said, we keep putting bar holes down to check  
13 for underground leaks every 5 feet above the main. Josh was the  
14 one that was kind of noting everything, every percentage down per  
15 each bar hole. I think we put about between 8 to 12 bar holes per  
16 property line to property line. Like I said, I'm not too sure how  
17 far we went, but that's what we did.

18 Q. And what the readings were?

19 A. The readings? I don't know.

20 Q. So Josh --

21 A. He was the one that was --

22 Q. So you were just making the holes and he was taking the probe  
23 and --

24 A. I mean, I was telling him the percentages, but I don't  
25 remember.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. They're written down, but I don't --

3 Q. I understand. Yeah, sure. And that's -- yeah, that's not a  
4 problem. But you do remember seeing the gas, I guess? Maybe  
5 that's a better way of asking you. Because you are saying there  
6 are readings, that means there is gas.

7 A. Well, readings -- zero percent.

8 Q. Right.

9 A. I believe we -- there was a leak behind -- at the riser at  
10 3531.

11 Q. 3531, okay.

12 A. And we discovered that when we were putting bar holes down  
13 and giving the percentage just to Josh. I'm not too sure. I know  
14 he notified the supervisor, but I'm not too sure after that what  
15 happened.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. We went around to the front of the house. We -- well, we  
18 notified the customer and I told her that we were going to have to  
19 check her house line to make sure that there wasn't any leaks.  
20 There was someone in that alley and I was in the front of the  
21 house. He was pressure testing while I was inside. We went  
22 inside. She had a furnace in the attic. She had a range that had  
23 pilots on it and she had a water heater.

24 Q. Okay, furnace is in the attic?

25 A. Furnace in the attic.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So we pressure tested with all valves on. It was ~~falling~~ <sup>failing</sup>  
3 pressure.

4 Q. ~~Falling~~ <sup>Failing</sup> pressure, okay.

5 A. Yes. Proceeded to isolate -- I notified the customer that we  
6 were going to have to come inside and isolate appliances because  
7 there was a leak. There was a leak and we don't know where it's  
8 coming from. Isolated the range. This whole time I was on the  
9 phone with the person that was in the alley. So I'm like, hey,  
10 you can pressure test, this valve is off.

11 I turned off the range. I was talking to the person that was  
12 pressure testing in the alley. So turned off the range, told him  
13 to pressure test, still ~~falling~~ <sup>failing</sup> pressure. All right. Isolate the  
14 water heater, told him to pressure test, still ~~falling~~ <sup>failing</sup> pressure.  
15 Then we had to isolate the furnace, but it didn't have a dropdown,  
16 so we needed a ladder. So we went to -- I went to the guy's truck  
17 that was in the alley because he had a ladder and I don't have a  
18 ladder on my truck.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. I got a ladder, went back to the house. It's like a little  
21 square-type thing that you push up to get into the attic. I set  
22 my ladder up, went into the attic, turned off that valve, told him  
23 to pressure test. It's still failing pressure. So at that point  
24 I notified the customer, hey, we've already isolated all the  
25 appliances. Once all the appliances are off, at that point we're



1 only testing your customer piping, which is from where the meter's  
2 at to where it meets your -- to the appliance valve, pretty much.  
3 And she understood. I explained to her that it was for her safety  
4 and it was a company policy. We could only leave her gas off and  
5 that she had to contact -- contract plumber to come out and figure  
6 out where that leak was coming from. We gave her paperwork, which  
7 is what we call a red tag, just basically saying that pressure  
8 test failed, left gas off.

9 Q. So essentially her service line is failing after all the  
10 appliance valves are off?

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. And everything is failing when the appliances are turned on  
13 -- I mean, the valves are on. Okay.

14 And in the meantime did you discuss with this gentleman who  
15 was on the other side near the meter, that service is failing?  
16 Did he mention at that time, hey, I'm getting some reading on the  
17 main or I'm not getting a reading in the main? Did he mention  
18 anything at all about the reading on the main to you?

19 A. That was -- yeah, that --

20 Q. Well, I think you said --

21 A. But that was Josh. That was Josh though.

22 Q. Okay. Okay.

23 A. Josh was the one that got -- I mean, I was bar holing but I  
24 was telling him --

25 Q. Right, right.

1 A. But we got the readings at the -- not at the main, at the  
2 service, at the riser.

3 Q. For 3515?

4 A. 3531.

5 Q. 3531, oh, okay.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. But nowhere on the main -- you were telling Josh the reading  
8 but did Josh never said that, hey, I see a service line pressure  
9 not holding, but we also had a gas reading in hole number 15 or  
10 hole number 10? None of that conversation happened?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. So you guys red tag and then what happened?

13 A. We left the gas off.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And like I said, I told -- we let the customer know that  
16 she'll have to contract a plumber and that the leak had to be  
17 fixed --

18 Q. Sure.

19 A. -- before we came back out and pressure tested it.

20 Q. But during all this process, the supervisors, I guess,  
21 Salvador Sanchez and somebody else, they're all still all on the  
22 scene or they had left?

23 A. No, they're on the scene.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. They were actually parked behind us and I let them know, hey,

1 this house is failing; I'm going to have to leave them off.

2 Q. But only two of you are doing work. The supervisors --

3 A. Josh -- well, there's a third person, which is the one that  
4 was pressure testing.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Josh Wallis was the one that was taking down the readings.  
7 David Cruz is the one that was helping me pressure test.

8 Q. Okay. Okay.

9 A. Now he was the one that got the leak on the other side of  
10 Durango Street. He finished up that leak and he came back to help  
11 me.

12 Q. Okay, but -- okay. David Cruz is the one who took over from  
13 you where the bubbles were seen?

14 A. No, no, that's someone different.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I don't know who that was.

17 Q. Okay. Okay. Because you have so many people, I want to make  
18 sure I understand.

19 A. Yeah. You remember I told you the dispatcher called me for  
20 two leaks?

21 Q. Right.

22 A. She gave me the fire leak original 3515 and she gave David  
23 Cruz --

24 Q. David Cruz.

25 A. -- the one across the street.

1 Q. I got you.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. I'm okay. Okay. I got you.

4 So now after the meter is red-tagged, what happened? What  
5 are the next -- what is the next thing that happened?

6 A. We left the gas off. I then asked my supervisor what he  
7 wanted me to do. There were some survey guys out there. And he  
8 -- I tagged along with one of the survey guys, and we surveyed --  
9 I forgot which alley it was. We surveyed surrounding alleys.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So I'm not --

12 Q. With a (indiscernible) or what instrument was used?

13 A. I'm not sure.

14 Q. So the other guy is doing the survey?

15 A. The other guy is doing the survey and I'm tagging along with  
16 him.

17 Q. Tagging along with him, okay.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And did -- were there any readings in that alley?

20 A. Yes. So he found a leak on a meter and so I -- the meter was  
21 in the fence. It was a chain-link fence and I just kind of like  
22 leaned over to see if I could hear anything. I could smell it,  
23 but I wanted to see if you can hear it. You could hear it.

24 Q. You could hear it? You could hear the leak?

25 A. Yes. So like I got my spray bottle and sprayed it down and

1 it was coming from the stop valve from the ~~mete~~<sup>meter</sup>. And that was  
2 fixed. So it was just a loose nut that had to be tightened.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. So I tightened it down [and jumped up pressure] -- I Leak-  
5 seeked everything and it stopped leaking.

I am not sure what I said - this  
does not make sense.

6 Q. It wasn't leaking anymore, okay.

7 A. So we fixed that leak. I jumped back over the fence. Well,  
8 I had jumped over to fix it and I jumped back over and we  
9 continued our survey. And then we found a grade 1 leak. It was  
10 holding 100 percent in one hole. It was near a manhole, but it  
11 was 100 percent and it was migrating -- well, 100 percent, and  
12 then we zeroed out in all directions. The owner of the house,  
13 they had a gate near where our leak is at and it was locked. So I  
14 went around and I notified the customer, hey, we need to get  
15 inside your yard; we need to punch some bar holes to make sure  
16 that this leak isn't migrating towards your house.

17 So we got him to open the gate. It took him a while because  
18 they had like a garage -- like a guest home, I guess you can say,  
19 and they had people living in that.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And they were the ones that had the key, so it took him about  
22 5 minutes. But he never got the key, so -- I mean, we had to get  
23 in there to --

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. -- verify that there wasn't any leak migration. And we cut

1 the lock off with some bolt cutters and we opened the gate and we  
2 started putting bar holes down in the ground. We were -- we did  
3 find gas near the home, not sure the percentage. He was the one  
4 that was kind of taking over and he was the one making calls, I'm  
5 not sure, to supervisors or --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- I don't know who he was calling, but they sent us a crew  
8 out there to fix the leak.

9 Q. Okay. But you do not know what happened, where the leak was  
10 or --

11 A. I know -- well, no. I mean, I was picking up 100 percent,  
12 but I don't know --

13 Q. Leak location, okay.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Now before you went and tagged along with this leak survey,  
16 did you guys have any discussion with your supervisors or all  
17 these people who were there at 3509, I think -- no, 3515? Did you  
18 guys have a discussion as to what happened in that particular  
19 house with the fire?

20 A. I think -- I don't know. They weren't on-scene.

21 Q. No, I mean, I think Mr. Sanchez was there, you were there,  
22 then Mr. Cruz was there helping you. Four people were responding  
23 to that fire, right, 3515?

24 A. Sanchez and Juan Gomez, they were doing their, I mean,  
25 supervisory things (indiscernible).

1 Q. No, I understand. But I mean before you went and tagged  
2 along with this leak survey, did you -- those four --

3 A. Oh, yeah, we --

4 Q. -- guys, did you have any discussion at all?

5 A. Oh, yeah, I mean, we grouped together and tell them, hey, we  
6 found this so-and-so. I mean, we keep each other updated.

7 Q. Okay. So what was the supervisor's reaction? What did your  
8 supervisors say as a result of all this work you did at 3515?  
9 What did your supervisor tell you about it?

10 A. I think at that point is whenever they were -- I'm not sure.  
11 They expanded their investigation and called out the survey guys  
12 at that point.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Because there were no survey guys -- no ~~service~~ <sup>survey</sup> guys when we  
15 were back there.

16 Q. Okay. So did anything happen and -- where was the fire, by  
17 the way? Do you know where the fire was in the house? You do not  
18 know. But you had a call for the fire?

19 A. I had a call for the fire.

20 Q. The fire department was there when you arrived?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. But you never saw any flames, any fire?

23 A. The fire was put out when I got there.

24 Q. Right, I understand. Nobody told you where the fire was?

25 A. Fire chief I believe said it started at the range.

1 Q. At the range.

2 A. At the range.

3 Q. Okay. But they gave you a green light to go in the attic and  
4 do whatever you need to do?

5 A. I didn't go in the attic.

6 Q. Okay. Then who did?

7 A. Not at 3515. The whole house was burned. That was at --  
8 that was all at 3531 that we did.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. 3515 the whole house was burned. There was no way to get  
11 inside.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. We -- like I said, I mean, we did bar holes around that whole  
14 house. I know for sure at 3515 we were getting zero percent all  
15 around the house.

16 Q. Okay. I need to make sure that I am not getting confused  
17 between the two homes. Okay, I'm getting confused between the two  
18 homes. So your dispatch was for 3515 or 3531?

19 A. 3515.

20 Q. Okay. Okay. So on 3515 the house is burned down and you  
21 guys didn't do anything?

22 A. We -- I mean, 3515 we obviously turned -- made sure the gas  
23 was off. We checked the sewer. We put bar holes down around the  
24 house and along that service line that runs to the meter. What  
25 else did we do out there? We couldn't bar hole the riser, there



1 was a puddle of water.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But that's what we did.

4 Q. Okay. And did you guys see any readings near 3515?

5 A. Not around the house.

6 Q. Not around the house?

7 A. No.

8 Q. And you didn't survey the main at that time?

9 A. We did.

10 Q. We did? Okay.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. That is when the main survey started.

13 A. The main, yeah, that's when --

14 Q. And that is what lead you to 3531?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. Okay. All right. Give me one second.

17 I have one more question on the earlier statement here. At  
18 3515 did the fire department tell you guys anything? That there  
19 was a fire at the range; is that what they are saying?

20 A. That's what the fire chief said.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Did anybody say that there was an explosion, no explosion?

24 A. They told me there had been an explosion before that -- I  
25 don't know. They said 3 days before that Thursday that I

1 responded.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But it turned out to be that Wednesday.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. They just said, they just said it was gas related, 3515.

6 That's all they said.

7 Q. Okay. So after you do all this work, do you have to fill in  
8 some paperwork to kind of bring that matter to closure?

9 A. I had, I mean, I had the original work order on it.

10 Q. On 3515?

11 A. Well, after we did all our investigation, we got relieved at  
12 12 a.m. I mean, I got the leak call like, I'd say, about 11:30.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And so we stayed out there doing our investigation -- I  
15 stayed out there to 12 in the morning. I had the original leak  
16 order so I had to -- I mean, fire order, so I had to put all the  
17 information down.

18 MR. CHHATRE: All right. That's all I have. Thanks. Thank  
19 you so much. Your explained it very well. I was just a little  
20 confused on your numbers.

21 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

22 Q. So when you -- after you interacted with the fire chief who  
23 told you that there was a gas -- this was a gas incident and the  
24 fire started in the range, afterwards did you talk to the arson  
25 investigator?

1 A. No.

2 Q. You never saw them or?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I don' even know who the arson investigators are.

6 Q. Oh, okay. They're fire personnel.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. No, they weren't on-site.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. It was just the fire department that was on-site.

12 Q. Oh, okay. So that was all the -- so that was everything the  
13 chief told you?

14 A. The chief told me that -- when I arrived the chief told me  
15 that the fire was gas related and that there had been an incident  
16 that happened a day or -- he told me 3 days.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. But at that point I had already gone to the back and made  
19 sure that the gas was off. When he told me that there was an  
20 incident that happened -- I don't know what address it was at, I  
21 called, like I said, I called my distribution operator, which was  
22 Sergio Pedraza, and he didn't answer the phone. So I proceeded  
23 and I called my supervisor.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. And that's whenever he sent me help and he came on the scene.

1 Q. So when you went to check the gas was off, was it already  
2 off?

3 A. Yes. The fire department turned it off.

4 Q. The fire department, okay.

5 MS. GUNARATNAM: And -- yeah, that's all I got.  
6 Steve?

7 BY DR. JENNER:

8 Q. This is Steve Jenner with the NTSB. Thank you for your  
9 description. Did you have any idea when the fire department had  
10 left the scene that they had responded for?

11 A. I don't know.

12 Q. Okay. So you were there for about 12 hours, a little more  
13 than -- or what time did you arrive originally?

14 A. Like about 11:30 a.m.

15 Q. Okay. And you stayed for how long?

16 A. I think I clocked in 18 -- well, 18 hours. I got home at 2  
17 in the morning.

18 Q. Okay. Have you ever been a part of a response like this with  
19 other people being called and supervisors being called in?

20 A. First time.

21 Q. Okay. Were you surprised by all the number of positive  
22 readings that you were getting as you were surveying the  
23 neighborhood?

24 A. I mean, I can't -- I don't know. Like surprised, what do you  
25 mean by that?

1 Q. That you had so many -- you kept on doing bar holes and other  
2 measurements and you were getting positive readings from time to  
3 time? Did -- was that unexpected? Were you surprised by the  
4 number of positive readings that you were getting from different  
5 locations?

6 A. I mean, I don't get called to -- I mean, this is my first big  
7 incident that I've responded to. When I was doing my  
8 investigation with the other guy and we were getting positive  
9 readings -- I mean, we get positive readings all the time. I  
10 mean, not really all the time, but I mean, we marked it down. I  
11 mean, that's something that we grade accordingly based on our  
12 grading procedures: grade 1, grade 2, grade 3.

13 Q. Can you walk me through the grade process, grade 1, grade 2,  
14 grade 3?

15 A. Yeah, so a grade 1 is definitely, I mean, it's a hazardous  
16 leak, either blowing gas or a migration pattern shown. If it's a  
17 hazardous migration, it also depends on how far it is from, you  
18 know, buildings, houses, electrical boxes. That's a grade 1.  
19 It's something that has to be fixed immediately. That's harm to  
20 people.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Grade 2, so a grade 2 is like some -- if there is a leak and  
23 that leak is maintaining itself in one spot and there's no  
24 migration pattern and it's far away from buildings and it's not  
25 harmful to the people around it, that there are maybe -- that walk

1 by there or drive by there. That's a grade 2.

2 A. Grade 3 is usually an above-ground leak.

3 Q. Okay. Is that considered less severity than a grade 2?

4 A. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

5 Q. Okay. Who comes up with a final determination if it's grade  
6 1, grade 2, grade 3? Is that part of your report or are you told  
7 that?

8 A. It's -- yeah, I mean it's part of our -- it's what we think.  
9 I mean, it's what we think it is. Like we call in. So if it's a  
10 grade 1, we're the ones that -- we're the ones that grade it  
11 pretty much. The service technician grades the leak.

12 Q. Okay. Earlier we had talked to a senior service technician.  
13 How does -- what's the difference between the two?

14 A. I don't know. I mean, we do the same thing. I mean, I don't  
15 -- I mean, so I'm a service technician, too. I would say -- I  
16 don't know. I really don't know. It's something like a  
17 supervisor would know or something.

18 Q. Okay. Do you know if they take additional training to become  
19 a senior classification or they go to classes or anything like  
20 that?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. The CGI reading in the sewer, you said first there was  
23 a reading of a certain percentage and then it went down. Can you  
24 explain that to me why it would -- I mean, you'd first get a  
25 positive reading and then it --

1 A. It drops down, yeah.

2 Q. Yeah, can you explain why that happens?

3 A. I mean, our CGI Sensit, it doesn't only detect gas. It  
4 detects methane. It could be gas or --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So, I mean, we don't know what it -- we're not able to test  
7 there and then what it's detecting. Like I said, it could be  
8 methane, but I mean usually whenever it goes up to a certain  
9 percentage and back down, I mean, there's -- it's not holding the  
10 reading, so --

11 Q. So you -- so your conclusion is that this is the safe area  
12 once you see it go to zero?

13 A. Yes.

14 DR. JENNER: Okay. That's my questions. Thank you.

15 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. PHMSA?

16 BY MS. COLLETTI:

17 Q. I've gotten a little bit confused.

18 MR. CHHATRE: Identify yourself.

19 MS. COLLETTI: Oh, I'm sorry, Alex Colletti.

20 BY MS. COLLETTI:

21 Q. I've gotten a little confused on the timeline, so what I'd  
22 like to do is walk through the events of that day and then if I  
23 messed up, please interrupt me and correct me.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. If that's okay?

1 A. That's fine.

2 Q. So you started off that day, or at least before you were  
3 called out to this incident, you were at another site maybe like 2  
4 miles away. You're working on a leak call there. Then you were  
5 called by dispatch and they said we've got two incidents on  
6 Durango; one's a leak, one's a fire, which do you want? You said,  
7 I'll go to the fire.

8 A. They didn't say. They didn't -- I just --

9 Q. They didn't notify it as a fire?

10 A. They just put whatever -- well, they said -- dispatch told me  
11 there's two leaks on the same street. Do you want both of them?

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I said not both.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. She did say it was a fire and she did tell me it was a  
16 regular -- I don't know if it was an inside or an outside leak.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I said you can put one on me, but not both.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I didn't tell her which one.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Just when I checked my screen, she put the fire on.

23 Q. Okay. Okay, got you. So she didn't tell you at that time.

24 Okay. So then, so then you get sent to 3515, right?

25 A. Um-hum.



1 Q. And when you get there you check in. Well, you have a little  
2 bit of difficulty actually getting there and parking and all that,  
3 but when you get there you get escorted to the fire chief. And  
4 you go check and shut off the meter. Was it already shut off at  
5 that time?

6 A. The meter was shut off by the fire department.

7 Q. Okay, great. And so was it at that time that the fire chief  
8 told you that, hey, we had this other incident and it was probably  
9 gas related and this one's probably gas related?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Okay, and that's when you called, or you tried to call the  
12 distribution ops and didn't get him because he was off. And then  
13 you called your supe --

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. -- and then he called a couple other folks and all that.  
16 Okay. Then you went and did bar holing around the house.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Okay. Was Josh there yet at that time?

19 A. Josh? No, Josh -- I mean, Josh was taking care of some stuff  
20 in the alley.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So he told me to do bar holing.

23 Q. So you started -- but the first thing you did after you  
24 called the supe and all that was go to the bar holing around the  
25 house?

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. Okay. How -- what was the soil condition like? Was it  
3 really wet?

4 A. Really wet.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. We were only -- I mean, we were able to punch some bar holes  
7 and get some readings in, but a lot of holes were filling in with  
8 water.

9 Q. Okay. How do you test when a hole is full of water? How  
10 does that work?

11 A. We just usually test it above ground. We put our detector as  
12 close to the hole as we can without getting it wet.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And that's how we test.

15 Q. So that's almost like surveying more than a true bar hole  
16 test?

17 A. You could say that.

18 Q. Okay, okay. Is that your only other option for when your bar  
19 hole fills with water or is there another procedure for something  
20 else you could do?

21 A. Check for bubbles.

22 Q. Okay. Okay. Did you notice any bubbles?

23 A. No.

24 Q. No. Okay. So you finish bar holing around the house and  
25 meanwhile Josh is checking the sewers.

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. When I was out on the scene I didn't notice any drains along  
3 Durango. How did you test the sewers?

4 A. The sewers were in the alley.

5 Q. The sewers were in the alley, okay.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. What -- how does he access that? I mean, is that a bar hole  
8 test? Is there some kind of access point?

9 A. It's like a bar hole test. Yeah. So, I mean, there's a  
10 sewer lateral that comes up from the ground. It's a black box and  
11 it has two screws on it.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Sometimes the screws, we're not able to take the screws out  
14 so we just punch a hole into the sewer box and we put our detector  
15 down there.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So that's how we tested that one.

18 Q. That's how you test it. And I'm assuming those are filling  
19 up with water, too?

20 A. No.

21 Q. No, because of the way the sewer box is designed?

22 A. It's like a PVC pipe.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Like that, yeah.

25 Q. And then he got -- and is that using the same device, the --

1 I'm assuming -- sorry, I forgot to ask that one. A CGI, is it --

2 A. We use the Sensit device.

3 Q. Is it a Sensit Gold?

4 A. Sensit Gold, yes.

5 Q. It's a Sensit Gold? Okay. And that's what you used around  
6 the bar holes on the test --

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. -- and all that. Okay. And he's doing that. And then when  
9 you finish bar holing around you come to the back of the house.  
10 You couldn't bar hole at the riser itself because there was too  
11 much water?

12 A. Too much water. There was a puddle of water there.

13 Q. So it was like standing water around it?

14 A. It was just a couple inches of water.

15 Q. Okay. Did you survey above?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And there was also a -- there was visible bubbles at the  
19 riser.

20 Q. There were visible bubbles at the riser, okay.

21 A. But it wasn't tests -- it wasn't -- you couldn't put our bar  
22 hole down because of the water.

23 Q. Okay. Visible bubbles, but when you surveyed above did you  
24 get any readings?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. So there's visible bubbles there but you're not  
2 getting any readings off of your Sensit Gold?

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Okay. So do you now -- so Josh checked all of the sewer  
5 boxes in the alley or which ones did he check?

6 A. I couldn't tell you which ones.

7 Q. You don't know. So we have to ask him.

8 A. I mean, we kind of did --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. We kind of worked together as a group and we all checked the  
11 sewer boxes that were visible in that alley.

12 Q. Okay. So after you've bar holed around the house, Josh has  
13 checked some sewers, you checked some sewers, everybody's working  
14 on this, you start bar holing along the main every 5 feet --

15 A. Every 5.

16 Q. -- towards Larga, starting at 3515 and going towards Larga?

17 A. (Indiscernible).

18 Q. Okay. And you didn't get any readings in that?

19 A. No.

20 Q. And I'm assuming the same thing, these are filling up with  
21 water?

22 A. Some holes are. Yes, some of them.

23 Q. Some of them are filling up with water.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Okay. So it's kind of bar holing, kind of surveying along as

1 you can doing the most that you can.

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay. When -- and I got a little confused with the woman  
4 that approached you two with one of the houses on Larga talking  
5 about bubbling, when that happened. Was that after you finished  
6 here or had you started going the other direction or --

7 A. I don't remember.

8 Q. You don't remember. It was at some point during this  
9 process?

10 A. Yes, correct.

11 Q. Okay. And then meanwhile, while this is all going on,  
12 dispatch has called David Cruz out onto the other side of Durango  
13 to the second leak call.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. Right? Okay. So he's doing that.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. He meets up with you after you've finished 3515 and started  
18 back towards El Centro?

19 A. Correct. Yeah.

20 Q. He meets up with you somewhere along that way?

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. Okay. And as you're going, you and Josh and David are going  
23 and bar holing along this line. I'm assuming the same thing,  
24 filling up with water some, some not. You're doing every 5 feet  
25 doing the best you can with the bar holing? Okay. And are you

1 seeing any bubbles along? Do you remember?

2 A. No.

3 Q. No. Okay. And at some point you pick up a reading around  
4 3531 --

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. -- which is what caused you to start investigating there.

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Correct? Okay. So that it wasn't an existing call at 3531;  
9 it was just readings when you guys essentially started surveying?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. Okay. And then that's when you started doing the pressure  
12 testing and it essentially failed, the customer line failed.

13 A. Correct. And we proceeded to -- we put bar holes down every  
14 5 feet in that customer's backyard.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And we were picking up gas readings at that house.

17 Q. At the house, okay. Did you get readings at the -- so there  
18 it's the same setup as everywhere else in the alley, right?

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. So it's the main is right in the alley and then really close  
21 to or right inside the customer fence or right on the other side  
22 is the meter, maybe 5 feet or something?

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. And then another, like, 30 feet to the house.

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. You tested those 5 feet and the 30 feet, all along bar holed?

2 A. Yeah, bar --

3 Q. Whole way?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. The whole way?

6 A. The whole way.

7 Q. Did you get readings on your 5 feet as well or -- I mean, or  
8 was it just at the main? I'm just trying to get -- was it  
9 consistent? Do we know?

10 A. It wasn't on the -- well, I mean, there was gas detected at  
11 the riser on the --

12 Q. At the riser.

13 A. -- company side.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. But there was gas detected on the customer piping as well.

16 Q. As well. As well, okay. So you're getting readings all over  
17 the place --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- in that area? Okay. And that's what initiated -- and  
20 then David assisted you with the pressure testing of the customer  
21 line and all of that?

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. And then meanwhile Josh is continuing down the right-of-way?  
24 Is there anyone else -- your supervisors are doing their  
25 supervisory thing --



1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- which we all know is God knows what, right?

3 (Laughter.)

4 BY MS. COLLETTI:

5 Q. But is there anything else -- is there anyone else helping  
6 you guys or any area that I haven't mentioned?

7 A. There were -- I mean, at that time -- at the time, I don't  
8 know.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I don't, but there -- I mean, construction crews showed up,  
11 but I don't remember in which -- at what time or what we were  
12 doing.

13 Q. Okay. So there's also construction crews just like in the  
14 general area because of other needs, like the one on Larga, for  
15 example, that already had another callout?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Okay. Okay. But your team was just you three guys plus your  
18 two supes there?

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. Okay. Okay. And then I've got a couple -- so thank you for  
21 that. I really appreciate that. I know that was a lot and you've  
22 already gone through it, but it really helped me.

23 So we talked about the sewer a little bit and we've talked  
24 about alternate testing. I want to talk to you a little bit about  
25 explosions, gas explosions and what you know about that. So did

1 you see the house at 3527? Was that something that you looked at  
2 while you were there or was it obscured because of the fence or  
3 were you not paying attention because you had a thousand other  
4 things to do?

5 A. I mean, I saw the house when I was walking up to 3515.

6 Q. Yeah. Oh, I'm sorry --

7 A. Because when I was walking --

8 Q. So you saw it, okay.

9 A. When I was walking up I originally thought that this house  
10 fire was the one that I was getting called for.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And then that's when a fireman met me and he said the fire  
13 was over here.

14 Q. Okay, got you. Okay, because you didn't know about the 3527?

15 A. I did not, no.

16 Q. Because that had happened at night when another -- somebody  
17 else's shift?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay. Okay. And did that house -- so did that house look  
20 like it had had a gas explosion to you or some kind of other  
21 explosion?

22 A. I'm not familiar with gas explosions.

23 Q. Right.

24 A. Like I said, this is the first incident like this that I've  
25 responded to and I've witnessed.

1 Q. So that's not something like in your training school or with  
2 you guys on the scene, that's not something that they would go  
3 over like, hey, when you walk up on a scene, an explosion might  
4 look like this; it might have sagging walls or -- that's not  
5 something --

6 A. I mean, they'll -- I mean, they've showed us videos of -- I  
7 mean, while I was in training at the Charles K. Vaughan Center  
8 they'll show us, I mean, house explosions, some videos. Not of  
9 the actual house exploding but after it had happened.

10 Q. What it looks like.

11 A. Yeah, but I didn't really pay too much attention to the  
12 house.

13 Q. Okay. And let's say if you -- if you had been called to that  
14 house, would you feel like you were qualified enough to walk up  
15 and say this probably exploded or like, oh, I don't know because  
16 this isn't my thing? You know --

17 A. What do you mean? Like if I wasn't -- it would -- I mean,  
18 they would have to take an investigation.

19 Q. Okay. Okay, yeah. I'm just curious what kind of initial  
20 response you get on that.

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. Okay. I want to go back and just talk about some basics with  
23 you a little bit. When it comes to testing at the riser, so the  
24 gas is shut off at 3515 while they're fighting the fire. Did you  
25 test the regulator there?

1 A. No.

2 Q. No? Okay. So the reason I ask is we've essentially heard of  
3 another house that the technician that was there did test the  
4 regulator, and I was kind of trying to figure out, well, if the  
5 gas is off to the house, how could you test the regulator and make  
6 sure that it's working, right? If you've only got pressure on one  
7 side, how does that work?

8 A. Well, I mean, one -- the company side there's, I mean,  
9 there's gas coming to it.

10 Q. Right. Okay.

11 A. But unless the stop valve is off.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. The company side -- the regulator's on the company side.

14 Q. Is on the company side.

15 A. Yeah. When we test the customer piping, it's on the outlet  
16 side.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So, I mean, that customer piping wasn't testable because of  
19 fire, I mean, the fire --

20 Q. Right.

21 A. -- the fire -- I mean the whole house had caught fire and the  
22 firemen were in there, I mean, turned stuff down when I got there.  
23 And, I mean, the line wasn't testable.

24 Q. Okay. So if for some reason you were interested in testing  
25 the regulator at 3515, you could test it even while it was shut

1 off at the house?

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. Okay. What kind of connections are there for testing, you  
4 know, what equipment do you have?

5 A. It's a gauge.

6 Q. It's a gauge?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Pressure gauge?

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. Okay. And do you have like small taps that you're screwing  
11 it into? How are you doing that on that side?

12 A. Yeah, so it's like a -- I mean, you have a -- it's a swivel  
13 that, I mean, with the gauge. It screws on and that's like a pie,  
14 like, and it has a gauge up here and it has two handles on the  
15 side. On this hand is what you test the regulator with and, I  
16 mean, on this side is where your pump is at where you pump the air  
17 through.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I mean, once the air is pumped, you close that valve and  
20 that's how you -- I mean, but we don't test -- we don't pump air  
21 into the company side. It's just all flow, natural gas coming --  
22 that we're testing that's coming to the gauge.

23 Q. Okay. So if you had to test -- could I get you to draw that  
24 for me? Like if you were pressure testing like on -- like if you  
25 were pressure testing, if you were testing the regulator at a

1 site, like how -- and it was the valve was already shut off here  
2 in the customer line, what does that look like and where is the  
3 actual connections physically? I'm just having a hard time  
4 visualizing it. So if you wouldn't mind, I'd really appreciate  
5 it.

6 A. Okay, so this is your company riser.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. This is the service line that comes up from the ground.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. You have your stop valve right here.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And then you have your regulator right here.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And then you have a pipe, I guess, the custom built to where  
15 it can -- we can fit the meter to.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But this here is your swivel. This is what we hook up our  
18 gauge to and test it from there.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So when we test we have our gauge hooked up. Let me show  
21 you, like, what the gauge looks like.

22 Okay. So this is what hooks up to the swivel right here.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. We have valves pretty much right here and right here. And  
25 then this is what we pump. It's like an air pump that we --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- that's -- but we don't use that. So whenever we test a  
3 regulator we close this side, because if we were to open a valve  
4 there would be gas filling up into the air pump. We don't want  
5 that to happen.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So this is off and then we keep this on. That's how we test  
8 it, but we leave it off and then we turn the stop valve on. Like  
9 I said, first we check the delivery pressure to make sure the  
10 delivery pressure to the house is good. So we will proceed and we  
11 bring this down to open up the orifice on this side.

12 Q. Okay, yeah.

13 A. So once the gas is on, we turn this on, it'll show you here  
14 what the delivery pressure to the house is --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- which, like I said, is usually 4 ounces. And then with  
17 the gas still being on, we close this valve back up and then this  
18 is testing lockup. And if the valve -- the gauge is still  
19 pointing at 4 ounces, if it proceeds above 5.2 ounces, then you  
20 have a bad regulator and it has to be changed out.

21 Q. Okay. And is that -- is this the test that you're talking  
22 about when you say like a regulator lockout?

23 A. Yeah, locked up regulator.

24 Q. The -- lockout, okay. And so you're trying to lock it out to  
25 make sure that it stops before that 5.2.

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. Okay. Okay. And so this -- when you came to -- when you  
3 come to a site with a fire, this is the valve that you would turn  
4 in order to stop --

5 A. The flow of gas.

6 Q. -- delivery to the house?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. So this right here, is this normally -- if you're not  
9 pressure testing, is that where the meter is connected?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Okay. So really if this is shut off, you can't really test  
12 that other side, right? You have to have -- you have to have gas  
13 here.

14 A. To test --

15 Q. Or that's not true?

16 A. Are you talking about the customer side?

17 Q. Yeah, yeah.

18 A. The customer side could be tested with this being off.

19 Q. With that being off.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So what we do on the customer side is basically the same  
23 thing. We hook up this gauge to it.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. You open this valve up. You pump 4 ounces of air because



1 that's what the delivery pressure to the house is. We're testing  
2 with air. We're not testing with gas.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So once we pump 4 ounces of air in here, we turn this valve  
5 off. And if it maintains that 4 ounces, we'll -- we want it to  
6 maintain that 4 ounces.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. If it maintains that 4 ounces then there's no leak on the  
9 customer piping.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. Then you're good. But if there's a leak and it's dropping  
12 pressure -- it don't matter if it's a big drop, slow drop, doesn't  
13 matter, you have to go inside and investigate and find out where  
14 the leak is coming from.

15 Q. If it's an appliance or the line or whatever, which is  
16 exactly what you did at 3531?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Okay. Okay, great. Okay, I think that's what I've got.

19 Oh, I'm sorry. On the -- one more for you.

20 A. Yes, ma'am.

21 Q. At this point, I promise I'll be brief. The 3531, I think I  
22 heard something about 100 percent gas reading?

23 A. I don't know. I don't remember.

24 Q. Okay. You don't remember, okay.

25 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

1 BY MR. COLLINS:

2 Q. Jim Collins, Railroad Commission Texas. Did you fill out any  
3 paperwork for these, your leak response or anything like that?

4 A. For the original leak, I --

5 Q. For all of it. Anything that you did, did you fill out any  
6 official Atmos forms?

7 A. Atmos forms, yes.

8 Q. Okay. And you did that on your computer, right?

9 A. Went on the computer and went -- for 3531 it's a red tag was  
10 issued.

11 Q. Okay. Okay. And then the rest of your -- so your -- I guess  
12 what I'm referring to, do you fill out leak reports like these?

13 A. They -- Josh Wallis was the one that filled that one out.

14 Q. Okay. Did you fill out any of these?

15 A. Josh Wallis.

16 Q. Wallis?

17 A. Yes.

18 MR. COLLINS: Thank you, that's what I want to know.

19 Appreciate it. That's all the questions I had.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Before we go on follow-up, do you want to take  
21 a few minutes break? You have been sitting here for a long time.

22 Do you want a water break, coffee break, a restroom break?

23 MR. CRUZ: Yeah, I need --

24 MR. CHHATRE: You're okay?

25 MR. CRUZ: -- need (indiscernible).

1 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Anytime you need a break, please let us  
2 know. Okay?

3 Let's quickly go through follow-up questions. I guess a few  
4 questions I had.

5 MS. GUNARATNAM: Ravi, I think we were taking the break.

6 MR. CHHATRE: Oh, you are taking a break? Okay.

7 MR. CRUZ: Yeah, I wanted to --

8 (Simultaneous speaking)

9 MR. CRUZ: Yeah.

10 MR. CHHATRE: Off the record.

11 (Off the record.)

12 (On the record.)

13 MR. CHHATRE: Back on the record.

14 BY MR. CHHATRE:

15 Q. Just for clarification, when the lady called you claiming  
16 that she sees bubble in the yard and you went over there, and is  
17 that where you saw 100 percent gas? Then where did you see 100 --

18 A. I didn't see 100 percent.

19 Q. You did mention something about 100 percent gas. We all  
20 heard that, I think, but -- and we thought that is where you said  
21 you saw the 100 percent gas and she already had made the phone  
22 call, so --

23 A. Okay. 100 percent gas was on a different leak. That was 5  
24 percent gas at that house.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. 100 percent gas was -- I'm not too sure what alley it was,  
2 but there was a grade 1 called on it. Like I said, I didn't call  
3 in the crew; the survey guy did. I helped him drill it out and  
4 that's when we found that the leak was migrating toward the house.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And we notified the customers and we had a crew out there.

7 Q. And that's where you jump over the fence that you said and  
8 then you had to go out and take immediate action?

9 A. That's when we broke the lock to --

10 Q. Okay, that's what I'm saying, you do.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. The customer wanted -- took like 5 minutes to open the  
13 gate --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. -- and he couldn't get to open the gate and that's when --

16 A. Yeah, that --

17 Q. -- you broke the lock because it's emergency?

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. Okay. Now in your normal operating procedure do you guys  
20 ever do any kind of review of your call, emergency calls and see  
21 what what went right, what went wrong, kind of what happened in  
22 this scenario? I understand not on every call, but a big call,  
23 like you said this the first major incident. Were there either  
24 lessons learned or do you have -- do you summarize it or compare  
25 notes and see what happened in this case?

1 A. Can you repeat that?

2 Q. Sure can. On a major incident like this that you just said  
3 this was probably one of your first major event, after you guys  
4 are done, do you kind of huddle together and discuss what happened  
5 or was it in a serious nature, should we do any follow-up or any  
6 kind of talk amongst yourself as a group? Does that happen?

7 A. I mean --

8 Q. Or either -- before you disperse or even after that day  
9 sometime or some other day that, hey, that was an interesting,  
10 important, critical call and this is what we did; we did this  
11 right; we did that wrong, or --

12 A. I mean, I feel like everything that we did that day was -- I  
13 mean, I believe we went above and beyond to make that area safe,  
14 from calling in, you know, different people to come in and help to  
15 survey guys surveying not only this alley but surrounding alleys  
16 to make sure that this incident -- I mean, something like this  
17 doesn't happen again. But I feel like, I mean, we did everything  
18 that we could.

19 Q. No, I didn't mean the meeting because something went wrong.  
20 I'm just saying like meeting, like, hey, you know, we did really  
21 good on this one so maybe next time we can do the same thing.  
22 Particularly lessons learned, essentially really.

23 A. Yeah, I mean, you always learn a lesson.

24 Q. Okay. No, that's okay.

25 A. Yeah. I mean --

1 Q. Now tell me anything else you want to add that maybe we did  
2 not ask you but we should know on the call to 3515, 3531 that --  
3 the communication is not just questions and answers. If there is  
4 something we did not ask you or you believe in your expertise we  
5 should know, this is the time to tell us that, hey, you didn't ask  
6 me this, but this is what I did. I mean, think through before  
7 everybody -- everybody go through their second round, but please  
8 do tell us.

9 A. I mean, I don't know.

10 Q. That's fine. I mean, even if you -- not just this day, but  
11 if you think of something in the future, you can always get hold  
12 of us and let us know through your channels.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. But before I give my chance to ask questions away, in this  
15 neighborhood -- and again, I'm talking about this alley and these  
16 homes here, do you recall responding to any leak calls in this  
17 area in the past before the fire call?

18 A. No, no. And I usually don't work northwest Dallas. I  
19 usually stay down south for the most part.

20 Q. Okay. That's your major responsibility.

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. Have you seen in your few years with the company, have you  
23 seen the leak calls or odor calls number increasing, decreasing or  
24 stay the same?

25 A. I mean, it depends.

1 Q. But there's no single pattern that you see? Just last year I  
2 answered 50 calls and this year I'm answering 75 or something like  
3 -- you don't see a pattern there?

4 A. I mean, it's seasonal. Like I said -- I mean, during the  
5 summer you really don't see as many. Like I said, well, this is  
6 my first winter I'm working it, I mean, and it's more -- I mean,  
7 it's not usually what I'm used to from over the summer. You're  
8 not as busy as you are in the winter with, I mean, leak calls and  
9 it's cold outside, people turning on their central heat and stuff  
10 like that. So I feel like they're using more gas appliances in  
11 the winter, so, I mean, you do get more work in the winter.

12 Q. Right. No I'm not trying to talk about summer versus winter.  
13 I'm seeing from year to year overall.

14 A. Oh, from year to year?

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. I didn't -- like 2016, I started 2016. I went in class in  
17 2017 for leak training. So I wasn't out working on my own all of  
18 2017. 2018, I mean, I'm --

19 Q. You had just started. Okay.

20 A. -- February, so there's really not an answer for that.

21 Q. Okay. All right. Fair enough.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you much.

24 Rachael, anything?

25 MS. GUNARATNAM: I don't have any more.

1 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

2 DR. JENNER: I have no questions.

3 MR. CHHATRE: PHMSA?

4 MS. COLLETTI: Alex Colletti, sorry, I've got another one for  
5 you.

6 MR. CRUZ: No, that's fine.

7 BY MS. COLLETTI:

8 Q. During the whole afterwards where you guys are doing the  
9 whole big leak survey, you know, in the whole area, did you guys  
10 use -- I've heard them referred to as sniffer trucks, like the  
11 bells on the front. Did you use those?

12 A. I wasn't a survey guy --

13 Q. You didn't personally do that. Yeah, okay.

14 A. -- survey, but I know that they were using another sort of  
15 survey tool, but I'm not sure what it's called.

16 Q. Okay, cool.

17 A. I've never seen it.

18 Q. That wasn't your area?

19 A. No.

20 MS. COLLETTI: Okay, got it. Awesome. Thank you.

21 MR. CHHATRE: Okay?

22 BY MR. COLLINS:

23 Q. Jim Collins, Railroad Commission. Final question. The leak  
24 where the lady approached -- or not the lady. The leak where you  
25 assisted where you had to cut through the gate, was that perhaps



1 Joel Reyes that you assisted?

2 A. Gavin.

3 Q. Gavin Hornsby?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Thank you. I just wanted to narrow down the survey.

6 MR. CHHATRE: Sure, yeah.

7 MR. COLLINS: Thank you.

8 No more questions for me. Thank you.

9 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Great.

10 Well, if nobody has any questions, thank you very much for  
11 spending your time. We appreciate the information you've given  
12 us. And just to give you a head's up, in case we have to come  
13 back and digest more, we might call you again.

14 MR. CRUZ: Okay.

15 MR. CHHATRE: (Indiscernible) you're up, and we might  
16 (indiscernible).

17 MR. CRUZ: Okay.

18 MR. CHHATRE: Thanks again.

19 Off the record.

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

21

22

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION OF  
RESIDENCE, DALLAS, TEXAS  
FEBRUARY 23, 2018  
Interview of Juan Cruz

ACCIDENT NO.:                PLD18FR002

PLACE:                         Dallas, Texas

DATE:                         February 28, 2018

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.



---

Teresa Holevas  
Transcriber



**National Transportation Safety Board**  
Washington, D.C. 20594

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Name: Juan Cruz

Department Atmos Energy / Mid-Tex Operations

Title: Service Technician 2

Date of Interview: June 6, 2018

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

I have no comments to make.

My comments are submitted herewith.

My comments are marked on the attached copy.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION OF \*

RESIDENCE, DALLAS, TEXAS \* Accident No.: PLD18FR002

FEBRUARY 23, 2018 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: JUAN CRUZ

Atmos Energy Offices  
Dallas, Texas

Wednesday,  
June 6, 2018

## APPEARANCES:

ROGER EVANS, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

RACHAEL GUNARATNAM, Hazardous Materials Accident  
Investigator  
Emergency Response Group  
National Transportation Safety Board

DARREN LEMMERMAN, Accident Investigator  
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration  
(PHMSA)

MICHAEL PARKER, Engineering Specialist  
Railroad Commission of Texas

JIM COLLINS, Manager, Region 6  
Railroad Commission of Texas

THOMAS TOBIN, Attorney  
Wilson Elser  
(On behalf of Juan Cruz)

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:11 a.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. EVANS: This is Roger Evans of the NTSB. We're on the  
4 record with Juan Cruz of Atmos Energy.

5 Good morning. Today is June 6th. It is now 9:11 a.m. My  
6 name is Roger Evans. I'm investigator in charge with the National  
7 Transportation Safety Board out of Washington, D.C.

8 We are at the Atmos offices in Dallas, Texas. This interview  
9 is being conducted as part of an investigation into the Atmos  
10 fatality accident that occurred on February 23rd, 2018.

11 (Interruption.)

12 MR. EVANS: This case number is DCA -- excuse me. This case  
13 number is PLD18FR002. This interview is being recorded and may be  
14 transcribed at a later date. A copy of the transcript will be  
15 provided to the interviewee for review prior to being entered into  
16 the public docket.

17 Mr. Cruz, do we have permission to record?

18 MR. CRUZ: Yes, sir.

19 MR. EVANS: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Cruz, you're allowed to  
20 have one person in the interview. This is a person of your choice  
21 -- supervisor, friend, family member or nobody at all. Please  
22 state for the record who you have selected to have during this  
23 interview.

24 MR. CRUZ: I have selected Thomas Tobin.

25 MR. EVANS: Okay. Mr. Tobin, can you please introduce

1 yourself?

2 MR. TOBIN: My name is Thomas Tobin. I'm a partner in the  
3 Wilson Elser law firm in New York.

4 MR. EVANS: Okay. Thank you. I'd like to go around the room  
5 and introduce the people in the room, and start at my left.  
6 Please give us your name, spelling of your name, and your  
7 affiliation and your position.

8 MR. PARKER: This is Michael Parker. That's M-I-C-H-A-E-L;  
9 Parker, which is P-A-R-K-E-R. I work for the Railroad Commission  
10 of Texas.

11 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins, Railroad Commission of Texas,  
12 Manager, Region 6, Fort Worth/Dallas Region.

13 MR. EVANS: Okay. And those on the phone, if you could  
14 introduce yourself? Rachael first. Rachael?

15 MS. GUNARATNAM: Sorry. Sorry, I was on mute. This is  
16 Rachael Gunaratnam, NTSB hazmat investigator.

17 MR. EVANS: Okay. And Mr. Lemmerman?

18 MR. LEMMERMAN: Darren Lemmerman, D-A-R-R-E-N, Lemmerman,  
19 L-E-M-M-E-R-M-A-N, PHMSA investigator.

20 MR. EVANS: Okay. Thank you.

21 INTERVIEW OF JUAN CRUZ

22 BY MR. EVANS:

23 Q. So, Mr. Cruz, we'd like to start out with you spelling your  
24 name please for us, and giving us your title and who you work for,  
25 and then give us a -- some -- a brief background of your education



1 and your career at Atmos.

2 A. My name is Juan Cruz, J-U-A-N, last name C-R-U-Z. I'm a  
3 Service Technician II at Atmos Energy. I've been working for the  
4 company for about 2 years now.

5 Q. Okay. Good. Now what we'd like to do, since we have the  
6 previous interview that was conducted earlier, right, we'd like to  
7 go ahead and kind of get some of the basics of where you were, and  
8 if you can kind of like walk through the day, you know, when you  
9 arrived at the scene, just a recap of that, if we could.

10 MR. TOBIN: And let me just interrupt if I can. These  
11 questions were all asked and answered, and the transcript has not  
12 been available to the witness. We're now 3 months after the first  
13 interview.

14 MR. EVANS: Right.

15 MR. TOBIN: And so, just so that the record's clear to  
16 anybody reading it at a future time, the questions have been asked  
17 and answered right after the accident. Now we're 3 months later.  
18 The witness has not seen the transcript, nor have I.

19 MR. EVANS: Right.

20 MR. TOBIN: Feel free to answer, of course.

21 MR. EVANS: Yeah. We just -- we need to get an idea of,  
22 before we go further with our other questions, we'd just kind of  
23 like to get an idea of where you were that night on the -- at the  
24 -- when you arrived, and go forward from there.

25 MR. CRUZ: Do you mind if I take a look at the map?

1 MR. EVANS: No.

2 And what we have for the witness is a map that was produced  
3 by Atmos Energy that shows a yellow marking that's a color 11 x 17  
4 that shows the three homes. One was -- the one where the fatality  
5 occurred has been marked in yellow, and the other two homes are  
6 both marked in green. And I'm going to call it Juan Cruz  
7 Exhibit 1.

8 BY MR. EVANS:

9 Q. There you go.

10 A. Thank you.

11 Q. And as you're pointing to that, if you can tell us so the --  
12 so later on we don't need that photograph to see exactly where all  
13 this happened.

14 A. Okay. Sounds good. I <sup>don't</sup> remember the exact date that this  
15 incident occurred, but I was on a leak before I actually got this  
16 call. Dispatcher called me, letting me know that there was two  
17 leaks on the same street, and she wanted me to take both. I  
18 proceeded to tell her that I would take one of them and for her to  
19 give another, the other leak to another technician.

20 She then told me that one was a fire call and another was a  
21 inside leak, and she asked me which one I wanted. I said  
22 whichever one she wanted to put on me. So she dropped the fire  
23 that occurred at 3515.

24 I arrived at the scene -- what street is this right here? El  
25 Centro? I arrived at the scene at El Centro and Durango at the

1 intersection. The whole intersection was blocked off, so I had to  
2 park on the other side of El Centro, on Espanola -- on Durango.  
3 I'm sorry. And I had to walk to where the fire occurred.

4 When I got closer to the house, a firefighter came up to me,  
5 letting me know that -- well, he then escorted me to the fire  
6 chief. I talked to the fire chief. I asked the fire chief if the  
7 gas had been turned off by them. It was turned off. I asked him  
8 to escort me to the back of the house, just to double-check and  
9 verify that the meter was off. It was off at the gas valve.

10 We went back to the front. The fire chief told me that there  
11 had been a fire -- I'm not too sure, I'm not sure if he said 2 or  
12 3 days prior to that, which was at 3527, and that the fire that I  
13 got called to at 3515 was gas related, and the gas that had  
14 happened 3 days prior at 3527 had been gas related as well. He  
15 asked for me to get in contact with someone to come out here to  
16 investigate what was going on.

17 I then proceeded to call one of our distribution operators.  
18 His name is Sergio Pedraza, which I didn't know at the time that  
19 he had taken the day off. So I then proceeded to call my  
20 supervisor, which was Juan Gomez. Just let him know -- I let him  
21 know what was going on, and he told me that he was going to send  
22 some help out for me, which that help was Josh Wallis, which is a  
23 distribution operator under our group.

24 Josh Wallis got to the -- well, he got on-site and just, I  
25 explained to him what was going on. We then proceeded to check.

1 We went back to where the alley, to where the meter was at. We  
2 put some holes down in the ground where we could, because around  
3 that meter there was water so we couldn't -- we could put a hole  
4 down, but we couldn't really use our CGI.

5 MR. EVANS: And the witness is pointing to what address  
6 there?

7 MR. CRUZ: 3515.

8 BY MR. EVANS:

9 Q. Okay. Thank you.

10 A. 3515. We then proceeded to bar hole every 5 feet any alley  
11 above the main line towards Larga. I'm not too sure -- I don't  
12 remember what the percentages that we were picking up there were.  
13 At this point I'm taking commands from Josh Wallis, so he's  
14 telling me what to do, and David and I are putting the holes down.  
15 We were alternating. We'll switch turns. So he'll put holes down  
16 in the ground while the other checks with the CGI, and then we'll  
17 swap out.

18 And then we proceeded to put holes around the house every 5  
19 feet at 3515 to check if there was any gas there. There -- we  
20 didn't pick up any gas around that house. We then proceeded back  
21 in the alley, every 5 feet towards El Centro. I believe -- I'm  
22 not too sure how far down we went in the alley, but I know we  
23 didn't clear out that whole alley.

24 We put holes down around 3527 because there had been a fire  
25 there before and, according to Josh, no one called in that fire or

1 we didn't know that that fire had occurred. So we went, proceeded  
2 the investigation at that house. We put holes down around that  
3 house. Somewhere in between all this, there were supervisors on-  
4 site, construction workers on-site and survey specialists on-site.

5 There was a -- we found a gas leak at 3531, at the meter,  
6 when we put a hole down next to the riser, the company riser  
7 coming out from the ground. So we turned that -- we turned the  
8 gas off to that house. We did a pressure test on the house piping  
9 to make sure there wasn't a leak on the customer's side. And  
10 there was a leak -- the house at 3531 was failing pressure.

11 David Cruz stayed at the meter while I went around to the  
12 front to let the customer know that we were doing a leak  
13 investigation at her house. She let me in her house. I told her  
14 that I had to isolate one appliance at a time to make sure that  
15 the leak wasn't coming from any appliances.

16 The customer had a range -- or yeah, a range with electronic  
17 igniters on them, a water heater and a furnace. I'm not too sure  
18 what appliance I turned off first, maybe the range, I turned off  
19 at the valve. This whole time I was on the phone with David. So  
20 I'll turn off the range, I'll let David know that that valve was  
21 off for him to pressure test, and he would tell me if it was  
22 failing or not.

23 So it was failing -- it was still failing pressure with the  
24 valve off at the range. I proceeded to turn the water heater off.  
25 I let him know. He pressure tested. It was still failing

1 pressure. And then the customer didn't have a drop-down to get  
2 into the attic, so I had to leave the house to go get a ladder  
3 from someone else.

4 I came back to the house, and we got into the attic from this  
5 hole that she had in the ceiling, and I was able to turn off the  
6 valve at the central heat, at the furnace. At that point I let  
7 David know that all three appliances and all the appliances that  
8 were in the house were off. And David told me that the house was  
9 still failing pressure test.

10 So we left the gas off at the meter. I issued a red tag to  
11 the customer, just letting her know that the gas had been -- well,  
12 the gas was going to be left off per company policy, and for their  
13 safety at the house, that they would have to contract a plumber  
14 for them to figure out where that leak is coming from and fix the  
15 leak before we could turn the gas back on. She was fine with it.

16 At that point, I'm not too sure -- I then -- I know I rode  
17 out -- well, not rode out. I followed behind a survey specialist  
18 while he was using one of his gas detectors. If he would find any  
19 gas, if the machine would detect any gas, we would then proceed to  
20 do a leak investigation by putting holes in the ground and  
21 checking with our CGIs to see if we were getting gas percentages  
22 underground.

23 As far as what alleys we covered, I'm not too sure. I know  
24 we did find a Grade 1, which is -- which was a -- at a manhole. I  
25 don't remember the percentage, what the percentages there were,

1 but we did call in a Grade 1. And we had a -- I believe they sent  
2 out a contractor crew out there to fix the leak.

3 MR. TOBIN: If I can interrupt just a second, would it help  
4 you to look at a larger map of the area?

5 MR. CRUZ: No, I don't --

6 MR. TOBIN: If so, I'm happy to volunteer this, if --

7 MR. EVANS: Oh. We can use that later, yeah.

8 MR. CRUZ: Yeah. I'm not -- I don't remember where the leak  
9 was at.

10 MR. TOBIN: Okay.

11 MR. CRUZ: Yeah.

12 BY MR. EVANS:

13 Q. Okay. I think that's all I need.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. As far as -- just a couple of questions. Can you -- first  
16 off, the transcriber's going to drive me crazy because you  
17 mentioned names and didn't spell them. Can we go back and get  
18 those names on record? You named a person named Wallis and a  
19 Spanish name I couldn't pick up.

20 A. Yeah. Josh Wallis, real name -- or first real name, Joshua  
21 Wallis, J-O-S-H-U-A, last name W-A-L-L-I-S.

22 Q. Okay.

23 MR. TOBIN: He's our next witness, Roger.

24 MR. EVANS: Okay.

25 MR. CRUZ: Yeah. David Cruz, which responded to the inside

1 the leak, I believe, across the street from where the incident  
2 happened, at 3515 Durango Drive, his first name, D-A-V-I-D, last  
3 name C-R-U-Z.

4 So yeah. We found a Grade 1 at the manhole, called in -- or  
5 called out -- we let -- well, actually, Gavin was communicating  
6 with the supervisors the whole time, so I believe he was  
7 communicating with one of the supervisors, and the supervisors  
8 were the ones that sent out that contractor crew out to where the  
9 leak was at.

10 I believe we ran into two other leaks, one which was an  
11 aboveground leak that I was able to eliminate the leak to, which  
12 was -- the leak was at the valve. There's a nut on the other side  
13 of the valve that I just tightened down and it eliminated the  
14 leak.

15 We were able to identify the leak by spraying it with Leak  
16 Seek. It's a soapy water that bubbles up whenever there's a leak.  
17 It was bubbling up when we first got there, and after I fixed the  
18 leak, we soaped it back down to make sure it stopped leaking. And  
19 it was, it wasn't bubbling up anymore.

20 There was another leak. I'm not too sure which alley it was  
21 in. The alley was filled with water. I remember that. So we  
22 were just -- his detector was picking up gas. We were putting bar  
23 holes down wherever we could around the water. And I believe we  
24 wrote up a Grade 2-180 on it.

25 BY MR. EVANS:



1 Q. I think that's enough background for that night. Just some  
2 general questions I'd like to ask you. First off, the -- on that  
3 evening when you arrived, it was raining; is that correct?

4 A. I don't remember.

5 Q. You don't recall if it was raining? Okay. Do you recall if  
6 it rained at any time --

7 A. It had been raining. It had been raining. It was wet.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. It was pretty -- it was wet.

10 Q. But you don't recall if, during that entire visit, if it was  
11 raining at all?

12 A. Yeah. It was raining. I remember getting my rain jacket.  
13 Yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Okay. And then you mentioned that there were -- you  
15 had -- let's go over the technology that you were using that night  
16 to detect gas. What were the types of technology you were using?

17 A. So we were -- it's a probe bar, which allows us to put holes  
18 in the ground, I'd say about 3-foot deep --

19 Q. Right.

20 A. -- 3 or 4 feet deep. And then we were using a CGI that  
21 detects percentages of gas.

22 Q. Okay. And were you -- were there -- was there any other  
23 technology that was used by any other person that night around  
24 that area?

25 A. The survey specialist, I'm not too sure what the gas detector

1 is called, but it's like a gun. And it shoots a laser into the  
2 ground and it's able to detect gas somehow. I'm not too sure what  
3 that -- what he was using.

4 Q. Okay. And the person that was using that, was he coming up  
5 with any sort of readings? Do you recall?

6 A. That was the person I was riding out with, so he was -- he --  
7 I mean, we picked up the readings in that manhole, so --

8 Q. What about at the address, the 3515?

9 A. At this -- no, no. Right here, we were all using CGIs.

10 Q. Okay. Okay.

11 MR. EVANS: That's all the questions I have. Thank you.

12 MR. PARKER: Okay.

13 MR. EVANS: Please introduce yourself.

14 MR. PARKER: This is Michael Parker with the Railroad  
15 Commission.

16 BY MR. PARKER:

17 Q. So a question I have, to go and get into a little bit of what  
18 you were talking about earlier, you mentioned that you were going  
19 through and following the leak survey specialist. How exactly  
20 were you all going about doing that? Were you following him in  
21 the truck or were you all walking through the alleyways?

22 A. Well, we -- what he would do is, he'll drive into an alley  
23 and park at either the beginning of the alley, and then he'll walk  
24 the rest of the alley, and then he'll come back to his truck.

25 Q. Okay. So the equipment that he was using that you don't know

1 the name of, you all were using it while you all were walking  
2 through --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- everything?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And that would include the alleyway that you said was  
7 all full of water? He was still using the same piece of equipment  
8 for all the alleyways that you all went into?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. Okay. Do you have any kind of recollection as to how long  
11 you all were going through and actually following him while he was  
12 going through and using that piece of equipment? Just an  
13 estimate. Were you following him for 30 minutes, 45 minutes,  
14 something along those lines? If you recall.

15 A. I don't recall.

16 Q. Okay. And to go a little bit past all of that, once the  
17 second crew was called out, once the leak was found in the  
18 manhole, did you stay on-site until they went through and arrived?  
19 Or did you all go through and keep conducting your leak survey,  
20 when you all were going through and doing all that?

21 A. No. We stayed on-site until the construction crew showed up.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We had to go around the house to let the customer know  
24 that -- because she -- they had a gate in their house, and we  
25 wanted to make sure that that gas wasn't traveling towards the

1 house. So we had the customer come around and open the gate for  
2 us. The customer was aware that there was a gas leak back there.  
3 I'm not too sure we picked up readings anywhere near that house,  
4 but I -- well, I mean, we were there -- we were out there the  
5 whole time that they were working.

6 Q. Okay. So --

7 A. While the construction crew was working.

8 Q. Okay. So you all did stay once they got out there and  
9 started doing all that?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Did you all assist them in any way, or were you all just  
12 there on-site just to make sure everything was --

13 A. No. We were just on-site.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Once they were done repairing or determining whatever it was  
17 they needed to go through and determine at that particular spot  
18 that they'd gone through and found, did you all continue to go  
19 through and do the -- I don't want to go through any colleagues  
20 here, but did you continue to follow the leak survey specialist  
21 after the repair was done at the location that you all had found?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. So once they were done, you all just kept on, right on  
24 going?

25 A. Uh-huh.

1 Q. Okay. Do you happen to remember if the other two leaks that  
2 you all had found, the aboveground one and I believe you said it  
3 was the 2-180 was the other one that you all found?

4 A. Uh-huh.

5 Q. Was that before or after you found the one at the manhole?

6 A. I know the one that -- the 2-180 was after.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I'm not too sure about the aboveground leak, when it was.

9 Q. Okay. I think, if we're going through and doing that, I  
10 guess the one last question that I do have, for the other service  
11 technician that had gone through -- I believe it was Josh, right?

12 A. Uh-huh.

13 Q. Was the other service technician. Was he following you all  
14 during the actual survey or was he staying kind of sort of on-site  
15 where you all originally were going through and looking at?

16 A. Josh Wallis is a distribution operator, and I don't remember  
17 what he was doing. He might have riding out with another ~~service~~<sup>survey</sup>  
18 specialist. There was more than one ~~service~~<sup>survey</sup> specialist on-site,  
19 but I don't recall.

20 Q. Okay. So, but he wasn't going through? He wasn't following  
21 you all?

22 A. He wasn't with us, right.

23 Q. Okay. All right.

24 MR. PARKER: I think that goes through and answers everything  
25 that I needed.

1 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins, Railroad Commission of Texas.

2 BY MR. COLLINS:

3 Q. Juan, I have just one question. At any time were the mains  
4 located during this survey? Or your and Josh's bar holing in the  
5 alley, was the main located previously or did you all locate it at  
6 any time?

7 A. With like a -- I mean, there was a pipeline marker right  
8 above where the main, which showed it.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And then we just kind of verified that in our CM+ map. It  
11 was in -- or, I'm sorry, SmartView maps.

12 Q. Okay. Going back to -- I guess, second question. Going back  
13 to bar holing in wet conditions, if you do place a bar hole and  
14 it's wet, how do you do a reading in that location? Do you just  
15 move down farther, one way or the other? Is there anything else  
16 that you do to determine if there's gas in the -- underneath the  
17 ground?

18 A. You definitely try to put more bar holes around that general  
19 area to see if we can get a hole without any water in it. But if  
20 they just keep filling in with water, we'll just hover over with  
21 the CGI over that hole, and we'll put it in bar-hole mode, which  
22 runs for 45 seconds, and it detects gas, either that, or sense of  
23 smell.

24 MR. COLLINS: Okay. That's all the questions I have. Thank  
25 you.

1 MR. EVANS: Mr. Lemmerman, have questions?

2 MR. LEMMERMAN: I have no questions. Thanks.

3 MR. EVANS: Okay. Rachael?

4 MS. GUNARATNAM: I just have one question.

5 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

6 Q. Regarding -- you said you were responding to 3515 and then  
7 you came and another -- was it -- did you say -- I'm sorry,  
8 because I had a hard time hearing through the phone, but was there  
9 a woman that asked you to come check her house as well?

10 A. That's right. Well --

11 Q. Okay. So how many houses did you end up checking? Was it  
12 just those two?

13 A. I checked -- which -- I mean, the original call, which was  
14 3515, we checked that for sure. 3527, which was when the fire  
15 chief told me that there had been a fire there and it was gas  
16 related 3 days prior, we did a leak investigation there. When we  
17 were bar holing the alley, we found gas at 3531, near the meter,  
18 so we turned that -- the gas off at the valve there, and we did a  
19 leak investigation to the house.

20 And I think those -- yeah, those were, for sure, the only  
21 houses that -- other than the hole -- all the bar holes that we  
22 put in the alley, those were the houses that we checked.

23 MS. GUNARATNAM: Sure. Okay, thanks. I just wanted a  
24 clarification. Thank you.

25 MR. EVANS: Yeah. This is Roger Evans. I would like to ask

1 just a couple more questions.

2 BY MR. EVANS:

3 Q. The training that you have with the CGI, is there any  
4 instruction whatsoever about wet soil, rain, what have you, you  
5 know, weather conditions for when and if a test could be reliable  
6 or not?

7 A. While doing training at the Charles K. Vaughan Center in  
8 Plano, if it's raining and we have to conduct a leak investigation  
9 outside, to avoid from water getting into the CGI and the flow  
10 being blocked, we'll put a cone over the CGI to avoid from water  
11 getting into the sensor.

12 Q. Okay. And on that night, did you put a cone on the CGI? Did  
13 you do that on that evening? Or on the days you did these tests?

14 A. I did not. And the reason why was because we use another  
15 tool that -- it's an adapter that hooks up to the CGI that we're  
16 able to put into the bar hole. And that's the way that we were  
17 doing, or checking for gas in those bar holes. Other -- I mean,  
18 that I recall putting a cone over that, over a CGI, no. We were  
19 just kind of hovering in the holes that did have water in them.  
20 We were hovering that CGI over it to see if we're picking up any  
21 gas readings.

22 Q. Okay. So the second -- the latter explanation of put this  
23 device in there, is that in your training? Is that something that  
24 is, they give you instruction about? I mean, can you maybe  
25 elaborate on what you said? You put an adapter of some sort?



1 A. Yeah. It's what some -- we -- I call it a wand. So there's  
2 metal and there's plastic ones. It's sort of like a long, about  
3 3-foot --

4 Q. Right.

5 A. -- stick. There's holes at the bottom of that stick. So  
6 whenever we put that stick down in that hole, it's able to pick up  
7 any readings. The sniff --

8 Q. Right.

9 A. That sniffer is able to pick up any gas. But yeah, it's  
10 pretty much, it's an adapter that hooks up to the CGI.

11 Q. But was the adapter specifically to address moisture?

12 A. To -- what do you mean by that?

13 Q. I mean, do you use the adapter when you start bar holing and  
14 the hole's filling up with water? Is that when you would use the  
15 adapter?

16 A. No. We use that adapter -- in any bar hole that we put, we  
17 use that adapter.

18 Q. So that adapter you put on there had nothing to do with  
19 water?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay. And you didn't put the cone on that night?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Or that day, whatever?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay. And were you there daylight hours or dark?

1 A. I got -- I believe -- I was there around noon, when I got  
2 this, the original order at 3515 Durango. And I was out there  
3 doing all kind -- well, riding out with the survey and just doing  
4 leak investigations in general in the area. I believe I left  
5 there like about 2 a.m.

6 Q. From noon till 2 a.m.? Okay. So -- and just for the  
7 records, because I don't think I have it, you know, this -- the  
8 yellow accent, where we have the yellow building there, that's  
9 where the fatality occurred. That was on the 23rd.

10 A. Uh-huh.

11 Q. The 3527 was on the 22nd, and 3515 was on the 21st?

12 A. No --

13 Q. Excuse me. Backwards. 3527 was the 21st; 3515 the 22nd.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So what was the day that -- what was the date of the day you  
16 were there?

17 A. The 22nd.

18 Q. 22nd?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. February 22nd. Okay. Okay, good. And as far as this other  
21 device that is used to measure gas, you have no training  
22 whatsoever with that device?

23 A. No. That -- a survey -- I believe the survey specialists are  
24 the only ones that have the device.

25 Q. Okay. But you haven't -- you don't have any OQ training for

1 that device?

2 A. No.

3 MR. EVANS: Okay. Yeah, that's all I have.

4 And other questions?

5 MR. PARKER: I think the only other question I had, to expand  
6 on one of the questions --

7 MR. EVANS: Introduce yourself.

8 MR. PARKER: Oh, I'm sorry. This is Michael Parker again.

9 BY MR. PARKER:

10 Q. To expand on a question that was mentioned earlier, when you  
11 were going through and looking at SmartView to determine where  
12 exactly the main was, does SmartView go through and tell you all  
13 an approximation as to how deep the main is when you all are going  
14 through and looking at a particular section?

15 A. That I know of, no.

16 MR. PARKER: Okay. That was all that I had.

17 MR. EVANS: This is Roger Evans.

18 BY MR. EVANS:

19 Q. Just one -- can you explain SmartView for us, please, for the  
20 record?

21 A. SmartView is a tool that you can go in and it'll show you  
22 where all the pipeline is as far as gas mains and gas services,  
23 and kind of gives you or tells you where the leak -- where that  
24 pipeline is located.

25 Q. And this is a graphics terminal inside a truck?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. Thank you.

3 MR. EVANS: Any other ones?

4 MR. COLLINS: Jim Collins. No questions. Thank you.

5 MR. EVANS: Mr. Lemmerman, any questions?

6 MR. LEMMERMAN: None. No.

7 MR. EVANS: Okay. And Rachael?

8 MS. GUNARATNAM: None.

9 MR. EVANS: Okay. Thank you.

10 This concludes the interview. Thank you so much for allowing  
11 us to talk to you today.

12 MR. CRUZ: Oh, yeah. No problem.

13 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

14 Off the record.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION OF  
                                  RESIDENCE, DALLAS, TEXAS  
                                  FEBRUARY 23, 2018  
                                  Interview of Juan Cruz

ACCIDENT NO.:                PLD18FR002

PLACE:                         Dallas, Texas

DATE:                         June 6, 2018

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.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Pamela Jacobson  
Transcriber