



## National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

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Name: Kyle Slaughter

Department Atmos Energy / Mid-Tex Operations

Title: Director of Operations

Date of Interview: March 3, 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: \*

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NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION OF \*

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

FEBRUARY 23, 2018 \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: KYLE SLAUGHTER

Hampton Inn and Suites  
Dallas, Texas

Saturday,  
~~March 7, 2018~~ **March 3, 2018**

## APPEARANCES:

RACHAEL GUNARATNAM, Hazardous Materials Accident  
Investigator  
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National Transportation Safety Board

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Atmos Energy

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:14 p.m.)

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2  
3 MS. GUNARATNAM: Good afternoon. My name is Rachael  
4 Gunaratnam and I am an investigator with the National  
5 Transportation Safety Board. Today is March 3, 2018 and the time  
6 is 2:14 p.m. We are currently at the Hampton Inn in Dallas,  
7 Texas. We are -- I'm sorry, investigating the house explosion at  
8 3534 Espanola Drive, in Dallas on Friday, February 23, 2018.

9 In this interview we will be talking to Kyle Slaughter. I  
10 would like to first go around the room and please introduce  
11 yourself, spell your name and title. So I am Rachael Gunaratnam,  
12 R-A-C-H-A-E-L, G-U-N-A-R-A-T-N-A-M, HAZMAT Investigator with the  
13 NTSB.

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

16 MR. SLAUGHTER: Kyle Slaughter, Director of Operations with  
17 Atmos Energy, K-Y-L-E, S-L-A-U-G-H-T-E-R.

18 MR. TOBIN: My name is Thomas Tobin, T-O-B-I-N. I'm with the  
19 Wilson Elser, E-L-S-E-R, law firm in New York.

20 MR. MURDOCK: Phillip ~~Murdoch~~ <sup>Murdock</sup>, P-H-I-L-L-I-P, M-U-R-D-O-C-K.  
21 I'm Director of Engineering and Compliance with Atmos Energy.

22 MR. JONES: I'm Michael Jones, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, J-O-N-E-S. I  
23 am an accident investigator with PHMSA based out of Oklahoma City.

24 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay, great.

25 INTERVIEW OF KYLE SLAUGHTER

1 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

2 Q. So if you could just -- we'll start first with your  
3 background and how long you've been working with the company and  
4 your positions there.

5 A. Okay. I've been with the company 27, almost 28 years. I've  
6 held various positions. I'll try to get them all. I started as a  
7 construction operator and I worked as a service technician. I was  
8 -- went back to construction watching cathodic protection crews.  
9 I've been a supervisor, a manager, a director of ~~operation~~ <sup>operations</sup> support  
10 and director of operations.

11 Q. And how long were you a service technician for?

12 A. About a year.

13 Q. Okay. And you were a supervisor and manager of what exactly?

14 A. Operations.

15 Q. Oh, operations, okay.

16 A. I was in construction about 5 years.

17 Q. Okay, great. Okay. So let's go back to when you first got  
18 notice of the February 23rd incident, and just start from there  
19 and lay out the timing and what you did, who you spoke to, that  
20 kind of thing.

21 A. Okay. I believe it was around 6:45 I got a call from the  
22 operations manager, Benny Rosenberg, notifying me of a potential  
23 incident in the area of Espanola Drive. Then a few minutes later,  
24 probably a couple of minutes later, I called -- immediately called  
25 the supervisor on-site, who was Michael Rose, Jr. and to get more

1 information from Michael. And at that time I also asked him to  
2 evacuate the 3500 block of Espanola Drive and Durango Drive,  
3 basically on both sides of the alley.

4 Q. Okay. And what time did you say that was around?

5 A. It was around 6:48.

6 Q. 6:48, okay.

7 A. You know, probably, you know, probably within a couple of  
8 minutes of being notified.

9 Q. So you told --

10 A. I didn't --

11 Q. -- the supervisor. I'm sorry, go ahead.

12 A. Um-hum. I then notified the VP of operations and Marlo  
13 Sutton, who is our director of compliance, so that she could make  
14 the appropriate regulatory notifications.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I then headed to our service center to look at maps and  
17 assess the situation and determine next steps. Soon after that, I  
18 asked Benny -- I instructed Benny to have the valves closed at  
19 Larga Drive on the east and Marsh Lane on the west to shut down  
20 the 3500 blocks and 3600 blocks of Durango and Espanola in that  
21 alley.

22 Q. Okay. Oh.

23 A. Can I look?

24 Q. Give it -- so there's a map that he's viewing, yeah.

25 A. Um-hum.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Here I come bringing gifts.

2 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yeah, so I asked -- I instructed them to shut  
3 this valve and this valve basically shutting the line down in  
4 between those two segments.

5 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

6 Q. Of the main line?

7 A. Right.

8 Q. Okay. And where is the incident house here? This is --

9 A. It's right -- I can't see addresses on this map, but it's  
10 3534 Espanola, somewhere right in here I believe.

11 Q. So you're shutting -- you're asking -- you're saying shut  
12 down that main line behind in that alley?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And that involves what exactly?

15 A. Shutting a valve on each end of the alley.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. So which is in a manhole, a valve box.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I believe that was completed around 8:30 and so after getting  
20 to the shop and assessing the situation a little bit further, I  
21 decided to go ahead and shut off the 2 blocks south, basically the  
22 two alleys south and the one alley north of Espanola. And then  
23 the main running down Larga Drive in that same area from just  
24 north of Espanola and just south of Cortez.

25 Q. Espanola and one block south. And sorry, that last one was



1 Larga?

2 A. Yeah, Larga from the alley south of Cortez to the alley north  
3 of Espanola.

4 Q. Okay. Okay? All right.

5 A. I was, at that time I was also -- I was also feeding the  
6 information to my management team to decide, you know, what steps  
7 to take next and kind of supervising and keeping in touch with the  
8 shutdown of these streets. Soon after that, the decision was made  
9 to evacuate these 8 blocks, practically 8 blocks from in those  
10 boundaries where we had shut in our -- we were shutting in our  
11 system.

12 Q. So when you say you -- soon after a decision was made to  
13 evacuate, was that -- who made that decision?

14 A. I made that decision. You know, we were -- there was several  
15 of us probably in the room discussing the situation and the best  
16 option, the best next step. And so we decided to shut down those  
17 blocks out of precaution. We, you know, we had had a couple of  
18 house fires, as far as we knew unrelated to our system. We had  
19 now had an incident, a potential explosion. We had had, you know,  
20 a considerable amount of rain over the last few days, and with all  
21 those factors taken into consideration we thought that was the  
22 prudent thing to do as an operator.

23 Q. Okay. And you were where exactly when you were making this  
24 decision? Was it the command post?

25 A. I was at our service center.

1 Q. Which was where?

2 A. It's at 2601 Logan Street in Dallas, Texas.

3 Q. Okay. And were you discussing this with Atmos only or also  
4 the fire department?

5 A. At that time we were discussing it with -- I was discussing  
6 it there at the service center with Atmos only. We also -- I had  
7 talked to the fire department earlier that morning, but we also  
8 had people on the scene that were talking to the fire department.  
9 The fire department got there very quickly after the incident and  
10 we were in communication with them from then on basically.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. You know, at some point after that, soon after that, we did a  
13 couple of things. As we were shutting in the system we decided to  
14 do another survey, kind of an expanded survey and also we were  
15 discussing next steps for this area and what steps we wanted to  
16 take in this area to reinstate the system once we got it  
17 completely down, which -- so there was a few things going on  
18 simultaneously, but my number one --

19 MR. TOBIN: Go ahead. I was just going to suggest you could  
20 wait for a question.

21 MR. SLAUGHTER: Oh, okay.

22 MS. GUNARATNAM: Oh, no, no, no.

23 MR. TOBIN: That's okay also.

24 MR. SLAUGHTER: I'm sorry.

25 MS. GUNARATNAM: Yeah.

1 MR. SLAUGHTER: I'm sorry.

2 MR. TOBIN: And I'm -- pardon me.

3 MR. SLAUGHTER: Well, I was just --

4 MR. TOBIN: I didn't mean to interrupt.

5 MR. SLAUGHTER: -- going to say, you know, our number one  
6 priority was life and property. That was my main focus was  
7 protecting life and property. So as I was making decisions that  
8 was my -- that was my train of thought was what do I need to do to  
9 protect life and property.

10 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

11 Q Right. So just to go back, you were saying you were  
12 expanding the survey. How far did you go back, like, when you  
13 expand? Would -- how far did you go with the expansion?

14 A. I believe -- without looking at a map, I can't recall the  
15 exact streets.

16 Q. Okay. I wonder if I have one.

17 A. I don't know if you have a map.

18 Q. This is a different map, but I mean, it's -- here's Cortez,  
19 Durango. Let's see. I'm trying to find Espanola -- is around  
20 this --

21 A. We expanded the survey a couple of times.

22 Q. Um-hum. It was in this area.

23 A. And I would really be guessing to give you the boundaries of  
24 which one we expanded at the first time we expanded it.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It would be a little bit of a guess without looking at,  
2 looking at the map.

3 Q. That's fine. We can follow up with -- go ahead. Sorry. A.  
4 Yeah. It would be a guess. I don't want to guess.

5 MS. GUNARATNAM: So maybe Atmos could provide for us a  
6 specific area of where they made those decisions on a map, and say  
7 this was the first one, here is the second one, here's -- you  
8 know?

9 MR. SLAUGHTER: Right.

10 MR. TOBIN: We can certainly do that.

11 MS. GUNARATNAM: Until the point of lifting the evacuation.

12 MR. SLAUGHTER: Okay.

13 MS. GUNARATNAM: Yeah.

14 MR. TOBIN: Are you talking the survey or the --

15 MS. GUNARATNAM: Survey. Survey and evacuation. Those are  
16 two separate things, right?

17 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

18 Q. So you surveyed first and then you made decisions based off  
19 of that survey?

20 A. That's correct.

21 Q. Okay. So if you could show us how you surveyed, what you  
22 surveyed first and then second and, like, your evacuation --

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. -- streets. Okay. So you expanded the survey in this case  
25 and you said there were next steps in the survey. What does that

1 mean?

2 A. Well, we expanded the survey and as we, as we identified  
3 leaks we got crews to respond to those leaks if they were  
4 emergency leaks.

5 Q. Okay. Were those crews grading those leaks?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah. They, they would survey, evaluate each indication and  
9 grade the leak appropriately.

10 Q. Okay. Okay, so after that?

11 A. I'm trying to think here of the timeline. There's been a lot  
12 that's gone on over the last 5 days. You know, at, at some point  
13 that afternoon, early afternoon, we actually decided to do a pipe  
14 replacement on mains and services in that area. And, you know,  
15 I'm not sure of the exact time that, that we made that decision.  
16 I was certainly involved in giving input, but I had moved back --  
17 I had moved on-site to focus on what was going on on-site at that  
18 point.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. You know, and I guess after that we continued -- we continued  
21 to survey and to repair leaks, once again, out of an abundance of  
22 caution to make sure that the area was safe.

23 Q. And how long did you continue to do that?

24 A. We're still doing that today.

25 Q. Okay, so that never stopped since February 23rd?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah, we continue to survey.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. So that order to go continue to survey and  
5 identify leaks and repair them, that was going on?

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. So then what was -- what did you continue to do after that?

8 A. We just, we -- that was our main focus was surveying, making  
9 sure the area was safe, repairing any leaks that needed to be  
10 addressed. That was really our main focus over the -- you know,  
11 once we had this area safe, then that was our main focus, to make  
12 sure that, you know, the areas surrounding this area were also  
13 safe.

14 Q. Do you remember where the -- you said the decision was made  
15 to do pipe replacement. Where did that -- do you know in that  
16 location where that started?

17 A. It was this general area, the general shutdown area, but  
18 there was -- it was expanded slightly. I think it went one alley  
19 to the north and then there were some areas down south of Cortez  
20 that were also picked up in that replacement area, but in that  
21 general area. We went to the alley north of Fontana in between  
22 Fontana and Gaspar.

23 Q. All right. Okay.

24 A. And down south to Bolivar and then a couple of the streets  
25 south of ~~Boll-liver~~ <sup>Bolivar</sup> were also included in the replacement.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And then we also went -- at some point we included the alley  
3 in the 3700 block of Cortez in that. We had located a couple of  
4 leaks. We shut in that alley and decided to include that in the,  
5 again, out of caution to include that in the replacement.

6 Q. Okay. So were you monitoring this from the service center or  
7 were you already on-site? Were you on-site? Did you go back?

8 A. I was on-site at that point.

9 Q. Okay, so after the survey --

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. -- okay. So where did you go on-site?

12 A. We had a command center that we moved out that first day  
13 around Webb Chapel and Larga, in that, in that general area.

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. And I went to the command center and that's where I was for  
16 the majority of the time.

17 Q. Was that in the same area as the fire department?

18 A. Yeah. Matter of fact, the fire department was probably 20  
19 feet away.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. It was right there beside our command center.

22 Q. Okay. So what was your role in, like, did you -- I know  
23 you're Director of Operations, but were you part of the incident  
24 command structure or what role did you play with that?

25 A. I was the person in charge on the incident.

1 Q. Okay, for Atmos.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. Okay. Okay, so you went to the command center and then you  
4 started monitoring the survey leaks and such?

5 A. That's correct.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And I was, I was also, like I said, the fire department  
8 command post was probably 20 feet away from ours so they were  
9 communicating with us. I was communicating with them so we were  
10 working closely together as we, as we moved through the process.

11 Q. Who were you communicating with in the other side?

12 A. There were, there were several, I believe, assistant chiefs.  
13 I would communicate with whoever the person was and they changed  
14 out over time. There was a Lauren Thompson, I believe that I  
15 spoke with.

16 Q. Johnson by any chance?

17 A. Johnson.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Yes, I'm sorry. I'm -- and there was another gentleman that  
20 I can't recall his name at this time, but he was before Lauren.  
21 He was the person in charge --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- on-site at least.

24 Q. Was it Chief Coombs or Captain Coombs?

25 A. I can't recall.



1 Q. That's all right. All right. I just wanted to -- okay. So  
2 you were communicating with the fire department ongoing when you  
3 arrived to the command post?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I was.

7 Q. And what were you sharing with the fire department?

8 A. Just kind of sharing our plan and they were, they were  
9 sharing and we were, we were sharing with them. So it was kind of  
10 a -- it was two-way communication, but we were sharing and getting  
11 their opinion and buy-in on our plan as we moved along. And they  
12 certainly helped with evacuations so we were sharing that plan  
13 with them and sharing our leak survey plan and how we were moving  
14 forward and what our plans were moving forward.

15 Q. Okay. So how did the word get out about the first  
16 evacuation, which was at approximately what time? That was at  
17 6:48.

18 A. Well, the first evacuation, so you're talking about the alley  
19 in between Espanola and Durango?

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. I simply -- I was trying to get that alley evacuated as soon  
22 as possible, you know, and for safety reasons and I communicated  
23 that with the supervisor on-site. And I think he was in  
24 communication with the fire department and they assisted in that  
25 evacuation also, I believe.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I wasn't on-site at the time, but --

3 Q. Got it. Okay. So when was the -- after that decision, when  
4 was the next decision to evacuate?

5 A. I believe it was mid-morning we made the decision to evacuate  
6 those, those other blocks. Like I said, there's been a lot going  
7 on since then and I'm not, I'm not sure, but I believe it was mid-  
8 morning.

9 Q. Okay, yeah.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. I mean, naturally you've had a lot of information to deal  
12 with. So whatever you can recollect would help us.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Yeah. So mid-morning you called for a second --

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. -- (indiscernible) evacuation?

17 A. Yeah, I had gotten to the service center and --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- was able to evaluate a little more of what was going on in  
20 that area and --

21 Q. Right.

22 A. -- make that decision.

23 Q. Okay. Was there another evacuation? Go ahead and outline  
24 all the evacuations if you can.

25 A. Well, at some point during expanded leak survey we had gotten

1 -- I think I said earlier, several leaks in the alley, I believe,  
2 between Cortez and Durango in the 3700 block of Cortez. It was  
3 either the north alleyway or the south, south alley. I can't  
4 recall at this time, but so we decided to shut that alley in and  
5 evacuate that block also. And then, you know, after that when we  
6 would find additional emergency leaks we were evacuating. So the  
7 next, you know, the next big evacuation I believe was the decision  
8 made earlier this week was the next major evacuation. We had some  
9 isolated evacuations due to the leak survey.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. But --

12 Q. So would you say there were -- how many would you say  
13 happened between February 23rd and February 24th?

14 A. That would be a guess.

15 Q. Okay. So when was the final -- when was the evacuation  
16 lifted?

17 A. I believe the evacuation was lifted -- if I'm not mistaken it  
18 was Sunday when we lifted the evacuation. But, but I'm not sure  
19 about that. It could have been Saturday. I apologize. I don't,  
20 I don't remember. All the days are kind of running together now,  
21 but, you know, we got the system shut off, made sure the area was  
22 safe. And at that point, working with the fire department -- I  
23 take that back. I believe it was Saturday afternoon. We were  
24 working with the fire department and discussed, we had discussion  
25 with them. I had a discussion with them about the area being cut

1 off, isolated. We performed another leak survey even though the  
2 area was off and then we -- and I met with the fire department and  
3 said, you know, if, if you all agree, we think the area's safe  
4 now. We would like for you to lift the evacuation if you're in  
5 agreement with the evacuation. So that was a joint decision  
6 between Atmos and the fire department.

7 Q. Okay. Were you -- where -- when were you at the command,  
8 like, on February you said you were -- February 23rd you were at  
9 the command post speaking with the fire department, just going  
10 back to that point. And you were talking with both the incident  
11 commander and Chief Johnson.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. After that, where did you go?

14 A. And I don't know exact time, but sometime early Saturday  
15 morning I left the command center. I left a manager in charge and  
16 then came back again early Saturday morning. I don't know the  
17 exact times, but at some point after midnight we had, we had the  
18 area safe. I left and then came back again early Saturday  
19 morning, and I was at the command center all day Saturday --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- until probably late Saturday night.

22 Q. Okay. So if you tell me what the plans were between you and  
23 the fire department on when you first touched base with them?

24 A. When I, when I first got on-site, you know, like I said, they  
25 were there very quickly and our field folks were communicating

1 with them. Our supervisors were communicating with them,  
2 determining, you know, evacuations, next step, but then when I got  
3 to the command center my first communications with them were  
4 probably just to kind of update them on what we were doing at the  
5 time, you know, our, our system shutdown, our evacuations, our  
6 leak survey.

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. Just communicating all of that with them.

9 Q. Okay. And then what after?

10 A. What after with the fire department or?

11 Q. Yeah, with the fire department. I'm sorry.

12 A. Yeah. After that it was, it was more if anything changed,  
13 and like I said, they were 20 foot away, so they would come if  
14 they needed information they would certainly walk next door and  
15 get it from us. And I if thought there was something significant  
16 that I needed to update them on, I would go next door and update,  
17 update them on that. So it was just really the exchange of  
18 information back and forth between us and the fire department  
19 after that. After that time, if anything major changed I would go  
20 have a discussion with them.

21 Q. Okay. What kind of information did the fire department  
22 collect from you guys?

23 A. You know, I don't, I don't know that they collected anything.

24 Q. Or asked you questions?

25 A. I think it was just general information about the area of the

1 shutdown, some questions maybe about how we were going to take  
2 care of those customers and where those customers were going to  
3 go, those types of questions. You know, they were certainly  
4 interested in the area of the shutdown and what our next steps  
5 were. I mean, those were really the -- that was really the  
6 information that they were --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- looking for.

9 Q. So they were getting updates from you?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. So where were residents going?

14 A. Our public affairs group was working on that part of the plan  
15 and they were lining up hotels. There were a lot of people coming  
16 directly to our command center and our public -- we had several  
17 members of our public affairs team there at the command center  
18 that would address any needs that they had when they came to the  
19 command center and was setting ~~the~~<sup>them</sup> up with hotels, making --  
20 reserving -- they pretty quickly had several hotels that they had  
21 secured rooms for for the residents in this area.

22 Q. So residents didn't come to the command center. Were there  
23 other places they could go to or?

24 A. We, we set up a phone line that they could call into in our  
25 dispatch office.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- with a Spanish-speaking representative there. We also had  
3 a Spanish-speaking representative on-site. And they ~~ha~~<sup>had</sup> the list  
4 of hotels so they could -- the residents could go directly to the  
5 hotels, not, you know, I don't know -- like I said, our public  
6 affairs was kind of handling that end of it --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- so I don't know all the details. But I know they printed  
9 up some flyers that they were handing out of hotels that they  
10 could go to and what they needed to do, vouchers and other things  
11 that they were giving to the residents of the area.

12 Q. Yeah. Was there any kind of press conference or anything?

13 A. I believe that the first press conference that I was aware  
14 of, I believe it was Saturday when we were working in conjunction  
15 with the fire department to lift the evacuation.

16 Q. Okay. Do you know if any word was sent out on Friday to,  
17 like, radio stations or television regarding what's --

18 A. I do not.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yeah, the -- like I said, our public affairs was handling  
21 that end of it.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I was focused on the, on the scene.

24 Q. Okay. So going back to when you were at the command center,  
25 how is information out in the site being communicated to you?

1 A. So we had, we had a manager in the command center and we had  
2 two to three supervisors at, you know, at all times. And so they  
3 were getting information from the field. Like I said, we had a  
4 construction supervisor handling construction. We had a service  
5 supervisor that was coordinating our service technicians, and then  
6 we had a compliance supervisor who was coordinating our survey  
7 technicians. So the information was coming back in from those  
8 supervisors.

9 Q. Okay. Okay. All right. And then that would help inform you  
10 of your decisions?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. Yeah. And how often would you get updates?

13 A. Well, any, anytime, you know, anytime there was a milestone,  
14 like, if we completed a leak survey I would, I would get an update  
15 on the results of the leak survey. If there were any significant  
16 leaks that my team felt like I needed to know about I would get  
17 updates. Now, I will say we were right there together in the  
18 command center, so I was really getting updated real-time --

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. -- in many cases because we were all right there together in  
21 our command center.

22 Q. Next to the managers -- supervisors, sorry?

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. Okay. Okay. All right. That's -- I'll stop there. Just  
25 we'll talk about other stuff, but specifically with this incident



1 does anybody -- well, I'll go around the room now --

2 MR. SLAUGHTER: Okay.

3 MS. GUNARATNAM: -- and talk about what happened on that.

4 BY DR. JENNER:

5 Q. Just a couple of questions. This is Steve Jenner.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. Your first meeting with a fire department official in that  
8 morning do you remember who it was or what information you  
9 exchanged?

10 A. Well, that morning I had, I had a discussion, a short  
11 discussion on the phone with Captain Baker from the Dallas HAZMAT  
12 Team. And he was not on-site yet, so and neither was I, so we  
13 were just kind of exchanging information and finding out what each  
14 other knew. And then, and then my employees on-site were having  
15 conversations, like I said earlier, with the fire department on-  
16 site. I didn't have another conversation with the fire department  
17 that I can recall until I got on-site and then we started talking  
18 back and forth in the command center. And I don't recall who the  
19 gentleman in charge was at that time. But yeah, I just don't -- I  
20 can't recall his name. It's just there was too many things that  
21 happened since then.

22 Q. Sure. Okay. At what point did you become familiar with the  
23 two other house incidents that occurred in that neighborhood?

24 A. Well, I don't know about familiar, I became aware of those  
25 prior to the, prior to the incident on the morning of the 23rd.

1 Q. Okay, so before you --

2 A. The evening prior.

3 Q. The evening prior, okay. Were you involved at all with --

4 A. I mean --

5 Q. Go on.

6 A. Yeah. It was, it was probably more I was aware of them that  
7 evening, but it was, it was actually even earlier in the evening  
8 and I don't remember the exact time. I probably better than the  
9 evening. It was sometime in the afternoon.

10 Q. So just to clarify, there were three incidents so after the  
11 second incident the afternoon is what you're referring to?

12 A. Thursday afternoon.

13 Q. Thursday afternoon, right.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. What, what did you know about that?

16 A. Well, I'll say this. I'll say that, that was -- both of  
17 those were fire calls so they weren't -- we didn't consider those  
18 incidents and we treated them as such. So I didn't have near as  
19 much information as I would in the incident. I don't know if we  
20 want to get into the details of what I knew about those because  
21 they were fire calls. They were not -- they were not an incident  
22 response for us. It was a typical fire call we get. We get many  
23 of those in the Dallas area, I would say almost daily. Maybe not  
24 daily, but we get a lot of fire calls in Dallas. So we, we get  
25 called on every one.

1 Q. So what makes something a -- something an incident or require  
2 as an incident response?

3 A. Well, I would say, you know, for example, the 3534 Espanola a  
4 potential explosion, those type of things in, in our -- if in our  
5 judgment they're significant they become an incident. Those two  
6 fire calls were not in our judgment an incident because they were  
7 really -- the calls were typical fire calls that we get on a  
8 regular basis.

9 Q. Um-hum. Are you familiar with the response as a result of  
10 the 22nd fire that more resources were called on the scene during  
11 the day?

12 A. Yeah. I mean, I am familiar with parts of the response.  
13 Which ones specifically do you want me to talk about?

14 Q. Well, the second house on the 22nd.

15 A. Okay, the second house.

16 Q. That was -- yeah, but I'm -- I have a question --

17 A. Okay.

18 Q. -- about that. So additional resources were people and, I  
19 think, equipment were arriving on scene, so is that type of  
20 response consistent with an incident or is that still not an  
21 incident response, if that makes sense?

22 A. No. I would say that is, that's still not an incident  
23 response. At the point of the second fire, at some point that  
24 afternoon I became aware of the first fire. And so again, out of  
25 caution, although neither one of those fires were reported,

1 reported to us or discovered to be related to our system, we  
2 probably put a little more urgency on that just because of all the  
3 factors, you know, that large amounts of rain we've had and just  
4 out of caution we put a little more -- we probably put a little  
5 more emphasis in that area on leak repair and, you know, the leak  
6 discovered because of the second fire that was not related to the  
7 second fire.

8 Q. What, what factor does a large amount of rain have on your  
9 decision-making?

10 A. Well, I think rain, rain affects a lot of different things.  
11 Rain, the soil conditions can affect leaks and I'm certainly not  
12 -- I'm not a geological expert, but I know that rain affects  
13 migration of leaks and how leaks, you know, come to the surface.  
14 So, you know, it always -- it's always a factor. It's just one  
15 factor in the, in the puzzle.

16 Q. Okay. So am I to understand that the response to the second  
17 house fire was a little higher than typical because of the  
18 weather?

19 A. Well, I think that -- I think we took the weather into  
20 consideration but there was a -- there was a leak discovered. So  
21 we had crews out there to repair the leak. We didn't -- go ahead.

22 Q. I was just going to say we, you know, we had our crews out there  
23 A. to repair those leaks and because there had been two house fires,  
24 I mean, even though they were unrelated we wanted, we wanted a  
25 supervisor on scene. So that's why we have a supervisor, but it

1 was still a fire call and the reason we had a crew was because of,  
2 because of the leak.

3 Q. Okay. Now, if it were called -- if the second one were  
4 called an incident at the time, if you believed it was an  
5 incident, what -- is there additional response in terms of people  
6 and resources?

7 A. Yes. Yes.

8 Q. What, what different would have happened?

9 A. Well, I'll -- you know, we surveyed that area. We decided to  
10 do a survey out of caution anyway. You know, I don't know. It  
11 would have depended, I hate to speculate on what we would have  
12 done differently if it was an incident because it wasn't. It was  
13 just a fire call. You know, we do a lot of different things on  
14 incidents depending on what type of incident it is.

15 Q. And is -- and so you were commenting moments ago that you  
16 recognize it was a leak or it --

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. -- was recognized but it's still not classified an incident.

19 MR. TOBIN: Excuse me. I don't think that was the testimony.

20 DR. JENNER: Okay.

21 MR. TOBIN: Did you say you recognized that there was a leak  
22 in the second fire?

23 DR. JENNER: Yeah, that's what I wrote down.

24 MR. TOBIN: Well, let me --

25 DR. JENNER: Oh, okay, sure. Let's clarify.

1 MR. TOBIN: Maybe we could just clarify. Was there a leak in  
2 the second fire?

3 MR. SLAUGHTER: No, not at, not at that location.

4 BY DR. JENNER:

5 Q. I'm sorry.

6 A. There was, there was a leak down the alley from that location  
7 that was discovered as part of the investigation.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- from the second fire.

10 Q. So fair enough. So with that in mind, that doesn't elevate  
11 it to the level of an incident?

12 A. No, not at all. I mean, what it, what it does is we get a  
13 crew out there to repair a leak depending on grade. We did decide  
14 to repair that leak in that alley.

15 Q. Okay. So an incident, now, is something that's pretty rare?  
16 It's an incident response?

17 A. Yes, I would say so.

18 Q. Okay. And how often, if you have an estimate, how often does  
19 the company respond?

20 A. No, I really don't.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. That's -- that would be a guess on my part --

23 Q. Right.

24 A. -- to --

25 Q. Is it more than once a week or more than once a --

1 A. No.

2 Q. -- month? It is not more than once a week?

3 A. Yeah, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know about -- I  
4 can't answer that. I don't know about every incident --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- at our company because it -- yeah. I don't know. I  
7 couldn't answer that. I don't know about every incident.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. There's so many -- there's different levels of incidents and  
10 so it just depends.

11 Q. Is that, is that defined anywhere, the different levels of  
12 incidents in your procedures and policy?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Where could I find that?

15 A. Well, in fact, Pipeline Safety Rules identifies an incident  
16 and we go by our Pipeline Safety Rules.

17 Q. Okay. Okay.

18 A. Is that something put out by Texas Railroad Commission or  
19 PHMSA or --

20 A. It's Code of Federal Regulations.

21 Q. So CFR? Yeah, okay. Okay. So you just follow the CFR's  
22 definition as to that?

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. Okay, that certainly helps. One other area real quick, I've  
25 heard you distinguish between managers and supervisors.

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. Can you just sort of distinguish for me the difference in  
3 your company of a manager versus a supervisor in terms of roles  
4 and responsibilities?

5 A. Well, so the first line supervisor is responsible for  
6 directing the work of our field employees. And, you know, that's  
7 their responsibility. And I would say that the manager is  
8 responsible for directing those supervisors. It's just a little  
9 higher view and their responsibilities are a little different than  
10 supervisors. They're just at a little higher level. They're  
11 responsible for managing those supervisors, ensuring that the  
12 supervisors are doing what they need to do as they supervise our  
13 field employees.

14 Q. Okay. So in the organizational chart the managers will be  
15 over the supervisors?

16 A. That's correct.

17 DR. JENNER: Got it. Terrific. Thank you.

18 MS. GUNARATNAM: Did you --

19 BY MR. JONES:

20 Q Yeah, just one quick --

21 MS. GUNARATNAM: Can you introduce yourself?

22 MR. JONES: What?

23 MS. GUNARATNAM: Say your name.

24 BY MR. JONES:

25 Q Oh, yes. This is Michael Jones with PHMSA. Earlier you



1 described that crews would identify emergency leaks. Is that  
2 defined by chance in any of you all's --

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. -- O&M stuff?

5 A. It is.

6 Q. It is? Okay.

7 A. There are different grades of leaks --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- that are defined.

10 Q. So that would be the class 1, class 2, class 3?

11 A. Right.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, okay.

15 A. Absolutely.

16 Q. I was just making sure, just clarifying that.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. And that's all I had.

19 MS. GUNARATNAM: Phillip?

20 BY MR. MURDOCK:

21 Q. Phillip Murdock, Atmos Energy. You mentioned that fire calls  
22 happens every day on the system in Dallas. And if a fire does  
23 occur, is Atmos always responsible for that, what caused that  
24 fire?

25 A. No, there's many different causes of fire and they call us

1 whether we're responsible. They don't know many times even. They  
2 haven't even got on-site many times and they go ahead and call us  
3 to respond.

4 Q. So what's your understanding of how that responsibility of,  
5 of responsibility in terms of when Atmos might be responsible and  
6 when Atmos is not responsible?

7 MR. TOBIN: For the investigation?

8 MR. MURDOCK: For a fire or for a leak?

9 MR. SLAUGHTER: I'm not sure I understand the question.

10 BY MR. MURDOCK:

11 Q. Okay. There's a jurisdictional part of a system and then  
12 there's a --

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. -- and then there's another part of the system that Atmos  
15 does not own or operate.

16 A. Right. We're responsible up to the point of measurement.

17 Q. Okay. And then downstream from the point of measurement?

18 A. Then downstream is the customer's piping. The customer is  
19 responsible for all the piping past the point of measurement. So  
20 --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- right.

23 Q. So on these fire calls you could have either one of those.  
24 It could be something on the Atmos system or it could be something  
25 on the customer piping or downstream from that.

1 A. Or electric or yeah, there could be many causes.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. But other than the Atmos system.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you.

5 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. We'll just start a second round. All  
6 right.

7 MR. TOBIN: Would it be a good time to take a break? It's  
8 been an hour or so.

9 DR. JENNER: We've got time.

10 MS. GUNARATNAM: Yeah.

11 MR. SLAUGHTER: Thank you.

12 (Off the record.)

13 (On the record.)

14 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay, back on the record with Kyle  
15 Slaughter. So --

16 MR. SLAUGHTER: I'm interrupting. I'm sorry. Before we get  
17 started can I clarify something? I just wanted to say I think  
18 there was some misunderstanding on the question about incidents.

19 DR. JENNER: Okay.

20 MR. SLAUGHTER: In my 27, almost 28 years at the company I've  
21 probably responded to four or five incidents.

22 BY DR. JENNER:

23 Q. Okay. What didn't you understand about my question the first  
24 time around?

25 A. Well, I think the definition of incident.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah. I -- four or five of these types of incidents is what  
3 I've responded to in my career. They're not, they're not a common  
4 thing.

5 Q. I expected to hear that.

6 A. Yeah, yeah. I misunderstood what you were asking, the  
7 definition of it and the definition of incident is a little bit  
8 different in -- difference in the jargon.

9 Q. Great. So right now you are responding according to the CFR  
10 definition of incidents?

11 A. Yes. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. Great, thanks for qualifying.

13 A. And I believe the commission has some definitions of  
14 incidents. We have definition in our procedures of what an  
15 incident is.

16 Q. Right. Okay. Thank you.

17 A. So I just wanted to clarify that. I apologize.

18 Q. No, great.

19 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay.

20 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

21 Q. So I wanted to go back to February 23rd when we were making  
22 these evacuation decisions, and you said you were speaking with  
23 supervisors, getting real-time information and everything. So  
24 what, what kind of information did you need to help make that  
25 evacuation decision?

1 A. Well, I think there was several data points. One of the data  
2 points for the evacuation was leaks that were found on surveys.  
3 And I think, you know, also the data points I had with the two  
4 house fires, the incident at 3534, all of that kind of went into  
5 play on my decision to evacuate that area.

6 MR. TOBIN: You mean the 6:48 evacuation, right?

7 MR. SLAUGHTER: That's correct.

8 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

9 Q. 6:48, yeah. Yeah. But then --

10 A. Does that --

11 Q. -- progression further to the other evacuations, what -- was  
12 it specifically, what information did you need to make those  
13 evacuations?

14 A. You know, I think just, just out of an abundance of caution.  
15 You know, we had had -- there had been -- there were several data  
16 points. There had been a couple of house fires unrelated. There  
17 had been the incident. There had been the large amounts of rain.  
18 And, you know, out of an abundance of caution I just -- I thought  
19 it would be a prudent thing to do to go, you know, both directions  
20 and evacuate a larger area.

21 Q. Right. So you were making -- you were expanding it though,  
22 right, like, further at some points between on February 23rd?

23 A. Right.

24 Q. So what --

25 A. Those decisions were based on leaks surveys and the results

1 of those leak surveys.

2 Q. Okay, so identifying leaks was your main -- okay. Was there  
3 a certain number you were looking for or just any?

4 A. Well, one example, on -- in the 3700 block of Cortez --

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. -- we found three leaks in that alley and we just thought the  
7 prudent thing to do would be to go ahead and shut that alley down  
8 and evacuate.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. We really were just operating out of an abundance of caution,  
11 so if we, if we saw things like leaks or other things that  
12 concerned us, we would, we would shut that system in and evacuate.

13 Q. Great. So you said other things besides leaks. Was there  
14 anything else?

15 A. Well, maybe the grade of the leak would also come into play.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Because it was underground versus above ground.

18 Q. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay, great. So that -- would that  
19 information get communicated to the fire department, that kind of  
20 level of information?

21 A. Right, yes.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. If we, if we decide to evacuate a block, like, for example, I  
24 keep referring back to the 3700 block of Cortez.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. We would communicate that with the fire department.

2 Q. Okay. That you found a certain number of leaks in this  
3 grade?

4 A. Well, not necessarily the grade of the leaks.

5 Q. Oh.

6 A. Just that we, we've seen information. We've got data --

7 Q. Right.

8 A. -- that caused us to choose to evacuate that block.

9 Q. Okay. Okay. So just generally speaking, I was just curious  
10 because you said you get -- you guys get a lot of fire calls and  
11 so you get called out on those and that is distinguished from  
12 incidents response. So how do you guys go about figuring out fire  
13 calls that need further attention? What information, data points  
14 you need?

15 A. Well, we figure out -- we respond and then our service  
16 technician on-site does an investigation.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And so based on their investigation that determines what we,  
19 what we may do next.

20 Q. Great, okay. So great. So the service technician does an  
21 investigation. What exactly are they doing in that investigation?

22 A. Well, it depends on the situation. They're going to --  
23 they're going to determine -- they're going to -- first what  
24 they're going to do is go to the fire department. They're going  
25 to get information from the fire department, get the fire

1 department's opinion on what's occurred. They're going to test  
2 our system. They're going to do a leak test of our system and  
3 then they're going to -- then they're going to determine what to  
4 do based on what that investigation results in.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. They'll pressure test the customer's line also if they are  
7 able to do that, if the customer's line is still in a condition it  
8 can be tested.

9 Q. Do they do any air monitoring?

10 A. Yes. They -- that's part of the test that they do of our --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- system. Now, it depends, you know, they depend a lot when  
13 they investigate those on what the fire department is telling  
14 them. And, you know, sometimes we have access to different points  
15 based on the fire. But yes, they'll do, they'll do testing above  
16 our service line and above our main.

17 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. Can you close the door real quick?  
18 Thanks.

19 Okay. Okay, so I'm going to open it up. Steve?

20 BY DR. JENNER:

21 Q. It's Steve Jenner. We'll talk to you the second time a  
22 little more, but just curious. I didn't realize your involvement  
23 in any degree with the second incident, the second house. I don't  
24 want to call it an incident. Sorry.

25 (Laughter.)



1 I casually call it that. So feel to correct me if I use that  
2 term.

3 A. Right.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's the main reason I don't talk.

5 MR. SLAUGHTER: That's second fire call.

6 DR. JENNER: Okay. The second house --

7 MS. GUNARATNAM: Fire.

8 BY DR. JENNER:

9 Q. Fire.

10 A. The second fire call?

11 Q. Yes. So you had a level of involvement in that is what we  
12 learned a little while ago.

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. How high up the corporate chain did it go in terms of  
15 communications and who was involved?

16 A. I communicated at some point during the afternoon and evening  
17 I communicated to the vice president of operations.

18 Q. And about what time was that, if you can give a rough guess?  
19 Just about --

20 A. Early evening.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Early evening.

23 Q. And what did you communicate to him?

24 A. That we had had a fire call and in that fire call we  
25 discovered that we had had an earlier fire call the day before and

1 that we had -- I communicated to him that we were, we were  
2 performing a survey and that we had two leaks in the alley that we  
3 were repairing.

4 Q. We talked to a couple of service technicians who responded to  
5 that --

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. -- and they -- I think they worked until just after midnight,  
8 about 12, 12:30 and they got relieved. So we haven't talked to  
9 anyone after the relief people. Do you happen to know -- can you  
10 fill us in on any details like after 12:30 how long people were  
11 out there, what was being done?

12 A. Well, I can tell you that there, you know, we had I don't  
13 know the exact count, but we had several service technicians on-  
14 site. We had crews on-site. And they had repaired the leak, one  
15 of the leaks, and they were working on the, on the second leak.  
16 And that was, that was the last communication I had with that  
17 supervisor that night was a status update I'm going to guess  
18 around 11:00 p.m.

19 Q. Okay. Did after your last communication at 11:00 p.m., did  
20 things seem to be going, oh, according to plan?

21 A. Yes, I think so. We had performed a leak survey so we knew  
22 what we had at that time. And we had a few other leaks that we  
23 had crews on responding to, and yeah, I felt like that we had been  
24 prudent as an operator. We had gone really the extra mile and  
25 done the leak survey and that we had a good handle on what was

1 going on.

2 Q. Terrific, thanks very much.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 MS. GUNARATNAM: Sorry, can I just continue that line of what  
5 you were saying?

6 MR. SLAUGHTER: Um-hum.

7 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

8 Q. So you got the last update at 11:00 p.m.?

9 A. Approximately.

10 Q. Right. Did you get any updates in the morning on Friday  
11 about that leak?

12 A. The first call I got in the morning was at around, I believe  
13 it was around 6:45 when the incident occurred.

14 Q. Okay, all right. I just wanted to see if that incident  
15 closed, that the -- I'm sorry, the fire.

16 DR. JENNER: Right. Be careful.

17 MS. GUNARATNAM: The fire.

18 MR. SLAUGHTER: Right. Yeah, I --

19 MS. GUNARATNAM: The Thursday.

20 MR. SLAUGHTER: We had supervisors out on-site and this  
21 situation seemed to be under control so that was the next, you  
22 know -- there was no reason for further updates for me.

23 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay, thanks. Michael?

24 BY MR. JONES:

25 Q. Yeah, this is Michael Jones with PHMSA. So I just had a

1 question regarding your general process for reporting reportable  
2 events via NRC.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. So I know this is sort of a process that is left up to  
5 operator discretion most of the time. Can you give me a general  
6 overview on how you decide to report to the NRC and any, any  
7 criteria you generally look for?

8 A. Well, so we have a director of compliance.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. And we talk many times and collaborate about whether an  
11 incident is reportable. So normally if there's any question  
12 we're, we're talking and we're discussing whether or not that's a  
13 reportable incident. And really the first criteria is our  
14 involvement, and so on the fire calls as far as we know, and as we  
15 know today we had no involvement. So that's why the decision was  
16 made that those weren't reportable.

17 Q. Okay. So sometimes it takes quite a while to determine how  
18 the operator is involved with an event.

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. When is that call made? When is that involvement  
21 determination generally made in an event such as this, a house  
22 fire?

23 A. Right.

24 Q. Typically.

25 A. Well, I would say typically if we can't, if we can't

1 determine that within the first hour then the Director of  
2 Compliance and I are on the phone, you know, trying to make the  
3 decisions do we need to make notification or not because we  
4 haven't determined whether it's a reportable incident.

5 Q. Because there's that hour --

6 A. Right, exactly.

7 Q. -- that we mandate.

8 A. Exactly.

9 Q. Okay. So just to clarify, that's a determination made  
10 between you and compliance?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Are there any -- is there a checklist of some kind or any  
15 criteria on your end or is it strictly just case by case, you and  
16 the compliance guy hashing it out?

17 A. If we don't know whether or not we're involved?

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. No, I wouldn't say at that point there's, there's really a  
20 checklist. It's just --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- whether or not we think the incident is significant and we  
23 haven't determined our involvement yet, and so we're going to get  
24 on the phone and talk about it and, you know, what do we need to  
25 do because we do have that hour.

1 Q. Yeah. Great.

2 MS. GUNARATNAM: Phillip?

3 MR. MURDOCK: Phillip Murdock, no questions.

4 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

5 Q. I just have one follow-up for when he was saying, when you  
6 say involvement, what do you mean by involvement of Atmos, like,  
7 as criteria?

8 A. Atmos facilities.

9 Q. Oh, okay, so jurisdiction basically?

10 A. Right.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Right.

13 Q. All right.

14 A. Anything unmeasured.

15 Q. Okay. And you rely on that information from -- where do you  
16 - how do you figure that part out?

17 A. We're getting information from the field --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- based on their evaluation, their investigation in the  
20 field.

21 Q. Right. Okay.

22 MS. GUNARATNAM: That's all I have. Anything else?

23 Okay. All right. Thank you so much.

24 MR. SLAUGHTER: Thank you.

25 MS. GUNARATNAM: We really appreciate you coming in.

1 MR. SLAUGHTER: Thank you.

2 MR. TOBIN: Thank you very much.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you still want (indiscernible) or  
4 are you good without it?

5 (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 Kyle Slaughter

ACCIDENT NO.:               PLD18FR002

PLACE:                       Dallas, Texas

DATE:                       ~~March 7, 2018~~   **March 3, 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: Kyle Slaughter

Department Atmos Energy / Mid-Tex Operations

Title: Director of Operations

Date of Interview: March 7, 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 \*  
FEBRUARY 23, 2018 \*

\* Accident No.: PLD18FR002

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: KYLE SLAUGHTER

Hampton Inn and Suites  
Dallas, Texas

Wednesday,  
March 7, 2018

## APPEARANCES:

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

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

MICHAEL JONES, Accident Investigator  
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration  
(PHMSA)

JOSE CHEVEREZ, Pipeline Inspector  
Railroad Commission of Texas

BOBBY BAKER, Captain  
Hazmat Materials Division  
Dallas Fire Rescue

JOHN McDILL, Vice President, Pipeline Safety  
Atmos Energy

THOMAS TOBIN, Attorney  
Wilson Elser  
(On behalf of Atmos Energy)

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I N T E R V I E W

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

8 My name is Ravi Chhatre. I am with the National  
9 Transportation Safety Board located in Washington, DC, 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  
14 it 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. Kyle Slaughter that you are  
18 permitted to have one other person present with you during your  
19 interview. This is a person of your choice: your supervisor,  
20 friend, family member or, if you 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, email; or whom you have  
24 chosen to be present with you during your interview.

25 MR. SLAUGHTER: My name is Kyle Slaughter, K-Y-L-E, S-L-A-U-

1 G-H-T-E-R. I'm with Atmos Energy. My title is director of  
2 operations. My address is [REDACTED].

3 I'm sorry, Ravi, what else?

4 MR. CHHATRE: And well, whom you have chosen to be with you  
5 during the interview.

6 MR. SLAUGHTER: Thomas W. Tobin.

7 MR. CHHATRE: And your mailing address, you just gave?

8 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yes, [REDACTED].

9 MR. CHHATRE: Email? Business email, if you have one.

10 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yes. [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED]

12 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you very much.

13 Now I would like to go around and have each person introduce  
14 themselves. Please state your name, spelling of your name, your  
15 title and the organization that you represent, and your business  
16 contact information. Starting from my right.

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

19 MR. JONES: Michael Jones, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, J-O-N-E-S. I'm an  
20 accident investigator in the PHMSA accident investigation division  
21 located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

22 MR. CHEVEREZ: Jose Cheverez, J-O-S-E, C-H-E-V-E-R-E-Z. I'm  
23 a pipeline inspector for the Railroad Commission of Texas in the  
24 Fort Worth Office.

25 MR. BAKER: Bobby Baker, B-O-B-B-Y, B-A-K-E-R. I'm a

1 captain, head of the hazmat materials division, Dallas Fire  
2 Rescue.

3 MR. TOBIN: My name is Tom Tobin. I'm an attorney with the  
4 Wilson Elser Law Firm at [REDACTED],  
5 [REDACTED].

6 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you very much. Oh I'm sorry.

7 MR. McDILL: John McDill, M-C-D-I-L-L, vice president of  
8 pipeline safety for Atmos Energy. My business address is [REDACTED]  
9 [REDACTED]. My office number is [REDACTED]  
10 [REDACTED].

11 MR. CHHATRE: Thank you.

12 INTERVIEW OF KYLE SLAUGHTER

13 BY MR. CHHATRE:

14 Q. Mr. Slaughter, for the record, just give us your education --  
15 formal, informal, training -- your background with the company,  
16 how long you have been with the company, when did you start.  
17 General information.

18 A. Okay. Started with the company in 1990, August of 1990. So  
19 I've been with the company almost 28 years. Held many jobs with  
20 the company in operations and in our tech services group. My  
21 education. I have a bachelor's from Texas A&M Commerce in  
22 organizational leadership.

23 Q. Okay. And your current title is director of --

24 A. Director of operations.

25 Q. Okay. And how long you have been in that position?

1 A. I believe approximately 9 years.

2 Q. Okay. And your normal working hours?

3 A. Normal. I guess 8 to 5, I would say, normal.

4 Q. Okay. Monday through Friday?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Okay. And tell us, with the title director, what are your  
7 responsibilities, typical duties?

8 A. I'm responsible for the operations of the system in this  
9 area. Responsible for the operations group, operations manager,  
10 operations supervisors and all the technicians in that area.  
11 Responsible for operating the system.

12 Q. And there's a gas distribution and main?

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. Okay. And what is your area? You said this area. Which  
15 area you are responsible for?

16 A. The majority of Dallas. Highland Park. The cities of  
17 Highland Park, University Park, ~~Copper~~ <sup>Cockrell</sup> Hill.

18 Q. Okay. Majority of Dallas city, not the county?

19 A. That's correct. City of Dallas. Majority of the city of  
20 Dallas.

21 Q. Do you know roughly how many customers? If you know. If you  
22 don't --

23 A. No, I would be guessing.

24 Q. Okay. And the area, how much area? How many square miles or  
25 feet of pipeline or miles of pipeline?



1 A. I would be guessing.

2 Q. Okay. So tell me, I mean, you mentioned a lot of  
3 supervisors. Just walk me through, especially the people who  
4 respond to gas emergencies. I just need a slice of organizational  
5 structure, not the entire --

6 A. Okay. So obviously the operations manager, the  
7 supervisors --

8 Q. Yes. Moving down towards the --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- lowest common denominators, if you would.

11 A. Yeah. So meter readers, survey technicians. Is that what  
12 you're looking for?

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. Yeah. Okay.

15 Q. Starting from survey technicians and maybe the operations  
16 technicians, is it? The people who would --

17 A. The construction --

18 Q. -- the people who would actively respond to gas, shut the gas  
19 off, start the gas --

20 A. Right. Meter readers, survey technicians, construction --  
21 the construction group, crew leads, construction operators. The  
22 service group, which is our customer service group, which as you  
23 said, turn on and off gas, respond to leak investigations. Meter  
24 reading, surveying --

25 Q. So how does the structure work? Starting from service

1 technicians, you know, just walk -- just give me the chain of  
2 command, if you would.

3 A. So in the service department, all of the service technicians  
4 would report to the supervisor, who reports to the manager, who  
5 would report to me. In our construction group, the crews are led  
6 by a crew lead. But they all report to the supervisor who reports  
7 to the manager who reports to me. In the survey group, survey  
8 technicians report to the compliance supervisor, who reports  
9 directly to me.

10 Q. Okay. So I'm going to focus on the three events: February  
11 21, 22 and 23. And 21st was, and correct me if I'm wrong, the  
12 fire and explosion, explosion and fire. The second one was fire,  
13 or that was described as fire in the kitchen. And third is  
14 explosion with a fatality. So starting from February 21, tell me  
15 what did you know about that, how long did you know, when did you  
16 know --

17 A. And you're talking about the fire at 3527?

18 Q. I don't remember the number, but -- is that correct? 3527?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think that's correct.

20 BY MR. CHHATRE:

21 Q. And that was explosion and fire, correct?

22 A. I understood it as a fire.

23 Q. Initially, yes. I never -- I'm just trying to -- okay. So  
24 it's fire in 3527 on 2/21.

25 A. And what do you want to know?

1 Q. I just need to know what -- I just need to know, you know,  
2 what was your involvement in that, and if any at all. When did  
3 you hear about that, if you did, and what did you do, if any, in  
4 terms of directing the actions? Or afterward, did you learn  
5 anything? Just tell me anything that you know about that  
6 particular event.

7 A. Yeah. I did not learn about it that day. I learned about it  
8 the next day, on the 22nd.

9 Q. Okay. And how did you learn on 22nd?

10 A. We got the call of a fire -- we got a fire call at the second  
11 address, 3515. And our technician arrived and mentioned that  
12 there was another location where it appeared there had been a  
13 fire. And so we looked in our system and talked to one of the  
14 local supervisors and discovered there had been a fire the morning  
15 of the 21st at 3527.

16 Q. Who that, who that will be?

17 A. Well, the supervisor was Salvador Sanchez.

18 Q. Sanchez. Okay. And who was the technician?

19 A. Michael Robinson.

20 Q. Okay. And how did you learn about it? You said you learned  
21 on 22nd. How did you find out? Did Mr. Sanchez, through his  
22 chain of command, tell you?

23 A. Yeah, Mr. Rosenberg actually told me.

24 Q. And Rosenberg is Mr. Sanchez' supervisor?

25 A. That's correct.

1 Q. Okay. And do you recall when on 22nd?

2 A. It was early afternoon, you know, right after lunch. I would  
3 -- approximately.

4 Q. Okay. It was like a phone call or personal meeting?

5 A. It was, it was phone -- well I was with Benny, so Benny told  
6 me face-to-face.

7 Q. Benny?

8 A. Benny Rosenberg.

9 Q. Benny Rosenberg. Okay. Okay. And what did he tell you?

10 A. That we, that we had a fire call, and that when we got on-  
11 site, we discovered that there had been another fire call the  
12 morning of the 21st.

13 Q. Okay. And did you pursue -- I just want to find out what did  
14 you do.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. Just keep telling me whatever you know.

17 A. Right. So the fire call at 3527, we discovered that -- the  
18 technician was told that there had been a potential leak on the  
19 house line, and there had been a fire in the back room. The  
20 technician did his investigation and tested our lines and -- which  
21 turned out to be negative.

22 Q. Okay. So your line, meaning from the meter riser to the  
23 main, or --

24 A. That's correct. From the, from the point of measurement.  
25 From the meter back to the main --

1 Q. To the main.

2 A. -- including the service line.

3 Q. Okay. And did Mr. Benny tell you what he did? Or did you  
4 ask him what did he do, or it was just left at that?

5 A. On 3527?

6 Q. Yes. I thought you said, you know, you learned about that --  
7 the technician went and he did his testing.

8 A. Right.

9 Q. And the conclusion was it was not leak, or not on your side.  
10 Am I correct on that?

11 A. Correct. That's correct.

12 Q. So I'm just, I -- so did you ask for any details, or you are  
13 happy with the information you got?

14 A. I was, I was satisfied with that information. But remember,  
15 we were -- I discovered that while we were on-site at 3515.

16 Q. Okay, so you went --

17 A. The next day.

18 Q. You went to the site at 3515?

19 A. No, I did not.

20 Q. Okay. Okay. So you heard about that and this subject came  
21 up.

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. So did you query any further on 3527?

24 A. On 3515?

25 Q. No, no. I mean, you learned about it on 3515.

1 A. Right.

2 Q. But I said with the -- when it was mentioned to you, did you  
3 dig any further as to what was done, what the technician did? Any  
4 further digging as to what happened or --

5 A. Right. Right, like I said, I mean, we discovered and we  
6 talked about the technician, went on-site and what he was told by  
7 the fire department.

8 Q. So you went on-site on 3527?

9 A. No.

10 Q. I'm sorry. When you said "went on-site" --

11 A. But that's what I discovered.

12 Q. -- I just thought you went. So okay.

13 A. No, the technician was on-site. I'm sorry. Technician was  
14 on-site, did his test. Was unable to test the house line, but did  
15 the test on our lines and got negative results. And that was the  
16 --

17 Q. But I mean, did you go any further? Did you ask for the  
18 details, what tests he did? Did he test the main, for example?  
19 Did you ask any details, now that you are saying -- I'm just  
20 trying to find out what you did. I don't know.

21 A. Right. Right. Okay, I'm sorry. I was, I was  
22 misunderstanding. Yes, he bar tested the service and also  
23 surveyed part of the main with his equipment.

24 Q. Okay. Do you remember how the reader was? Do you know what  
25 the reader was like when he did that work?  
*weather*  
*weather*

1 A. No, not at the exact time that he did the work. I knew it  
2 had been raining over the past several days, but I -- no, not at  
3 the time.

4 Q. But did you have any concern because of bad weather that the  
5 readings may or may not be accurate, or that he was able, that he  
6 was able to do all his work which normally would be done?

7 A. No, I did not.

8 Q. Did Mr. Benny told you that he did all the work or --

9 A. Right. Yeah.

10 Q. Mr. Benny said that he did everything that you normally do.

11 A. Right. Right. Yeah, what I, what I learned about 3527 I  
12 learned from Benny.

13 Q. Okay. But you didn't talk to the technician directly either?

14 A. No, I did not.

15 Q. Do you ever do that in your job at your position? Find out  
16 if the work is being done right?

17 A. I would say I normally go through the supervisor, Benny. I  
18 won't, I won't say I never talk to a technician, but in this case,  
19 I did not.

20 Q. Standard operating practice, you learn only from supervisors.

21 A. Right, or Benny.

22 Q. Okay. So on 3515, what did you learn?

23 A. Okay, I learned there had been another fire call at 3515, and  
24 that the technician had arrived. And learned from the fire  
25 department that there was an accident while the person was

1 cooking, which started the fire. And then that the technician had  
2 done, had done his checks. We also sent a couple of supervisors  
3 to the site.

4 Q. And who the technician was? Do you remember?

5 A. 3515. I'm trying to think. I can't remember.

6 Q. Okay, that's fine. So you said -- and this time, who told  
7 you the technicians did his checks? Who was the supervisor?

8 A. Again --

9 Q. Benny again?

10 A. -- Benny.

11 Q. Okay. And to you, what do his checks mean? I mean, I do not  
12 know what his checks means, so --

13 A. Right. To bar test, survey, with the, with the equipment,  
14 with --

15 Q. Did he do a survey with migration surveys?

16 A. Right, right. Check for migration, check around the  
17 structures. Yeah. Everything you would do on a fire call, which  
18 is check around the structures, check for migration, check the  
19 service, check the main.

20 Q. For the migration, typically how many bar hole tests you do  
21 in what area?

22 A. It depends. It depends on what kind of readings -- you bar  
23 test to zero to determine migration. So it depends on what kind  
24 of readings as to how far you would go.

25 Q. But in this case -- okay. Walk me through. In this case,



1 you know, he said he went, tested the meter. Is that correct or  
2 not correct?

3 A. No. He wasn't --

4 Q. So what did -- tell me what he did.

5 A. He wasn't able to, he wasn't able to test the house line at  
6 3519.

7 Q. On 3527, you mean?

8 A. I mean 15.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Fifteen.

10 MR. SLAUGHTER: I'm talking about 15 now.

11 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Now okay. 3515.

12 MR. SLAUGHTER: I'm sorry. At 3515. He was able to test the  
13 main and service line, and as a result --

14 BY MR. CHHATRE:

15 Q. Service line up to?

16 A. Service line up to the meter.

17 Q. Meter. Okay. And do you know what he found?

18 A. Yeah. As a result of his investigation, he found two grade 2  
19 30-day leaks.

20 Q. Where?

21 A. One at -- one on the service line at 3519 Durango, and the  
22 second one at 3531 Durango. He also found a leak in the  
23 customer's line at 3531 Durango.

24 Q. Okay. And did he find anything -- so he could not -- you  
25 said he could not go to 3515 customer side. Is it because of --

1 what? Because of --

2 A. Because there had been a fire, and so he wasn't, he wasn't  
3 able to test the customer's --

4 Q. It was safety concerns.

5 A. Right.

6 Q. Concerns. Okay. So by this time, you know that there was a  
7 fire call on 3557 [sic.] the day before. 3515 had a fire call.

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. And then in the process of investigation, he found two other  
10 leaks on the service lines of two different addresses.

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. Okay. Is that kind of -- what is your impression after  
13 getting this information? Were you concerned? Were you alarmed?  
14 You thought it was normal, abnormal for the area? I just want to  
15 find out, as a person at your level, what was your reaction to  
16 your system?

17 A. Right. I wouldn't, I wouldn't use the word "alarmed."

18 Q. You were not alarmed.

19 A. I was, I was not alarmed. But they had done their  
20 investigation. They had those two leaks. I was comfortable that  
21 they had done what they needed to do. But there was one  
22 additional leak found at that time, or right around that time.

23 Q. Was it on main or service?

24 A. I believe it was on the service at 9583 Larga.

25 Q. 9583 Larga. Okay. By same technician or other technician?

1 A. That one was actually called in by a customer.

2 Q. Concerning?

3 A. I believe the customer had seen bubbles in the street and  
4 called. And so we -- so a technician responded and found a grade  
5 1 leak at that address.

6 Q. Are you aware that the technician was responding to 3515 also  
7 has seen that bubbling leak?

8 A. And I may be mistaken. It may not have -- the customer may  
9 have just smelled an odor. I'm trying to remember. I'm not sure  
10 if the customer saw bubbles. But I am aware, yes, the technician  
11 that responded at 9583 Larga did see bubbles.

12 Q. Okay. And that was in the same -- on the same day, right?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Now did that -- what are you feeling then about your system?  
15 Or you still were not concerned?

16 A. I wasn't necessarily concerned about my system. But knowing  
17 that, as a precaution, I did decide to do a leak survey of the  
18 system.

19 Q. And how many crews were initiated at your request? I mean,  
20 your --

21 A. Two survey technicians.

22 Q. It was at your request, right?

23 A. Two survey -- yes. Two survey technicians.

24 Q. Two people?

25 A. Right, to do the survey.

1 Q. Okay. In the entire area.

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. And how long it took them to do that?

4 A. I believe they finished around the 1:00 a.m. hour, and I  
5 believe they started somewhere between maybe 5:00 and 6:00. Not  
6 sure of the exact time. In the, in the afternoon. But they --

7 Q. And how often you will see one, two, three, four leaks in  
8 close proximity and one leak nearby grade 1? How common it is in  
9 your system?

10 A. That's hard to answer. I'm not sure how to, how to answer  
11 that question.

12 Q. Well, I mean, it's like this. Obviously you said you are not  
13 concerned, so I'm thinking it probably happens more frequently.  
14 If it's not, then you would be concerned that there are too many  
15 leaks. So I'm just trying to find out what your, what your  
16 feeling is, if you would. Are you, are you alarmed that there are  
17 four, five leaks? Or you are not alarmed?

18 A. No, I would not use the word "alarmed" at all. I felt out of  
19 precaution we needed to do a leak survey, which we did, but I  
20 would not say "alarmed."

21 Q. But why would you do the entire neighborhood if you are not  
22 alarmed, concerned? Is concerned a better word? I'm just trying  
23 to find out --

24 A. No, I just --

25 Q. -- what is the logic for --

1 A. Right.

2 Q. -- suddenly doing the entire neighborhood, going after  
3 midnight pretty much.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. And I consider that on an emergency basis. It's not like you  
6 waited for the next day, during the dayshift.

7 A. But it's not uncommon for us to do a special survey like  
8 this. That's fairly common.

9 Q. But planned survey or -- so you do an emergency survey. It  
10 was a planned survey? I mean, I'm sorry. I don't --

11 A. This is a special survey, what we would call a special  
12 survey. And that's not uncommon at all for us to do a special  
13 survey.

14 Q. And when, typically, a special survey is initiated? Under  
15 what circumstances?

16 A. It could be a, it could be a circumstance where we're having  
17 a difficult time locating an odor in the air. So we might, you  
18 know -- and pinpointing a leak. So we ask for a survey. It's  
19 just, it's really not that uncommon to have a special survey.

20 Q. And did you hear about the results of the survey that night,  
21 or you did not?

22 A. What I knew is about the two grade 2 30s, which obviously  
23 were not on the survey; the grade 1 at 9583, which was not part of  
24 the survey; a grade 1 at 3551 Larga; a grade 1 at 3502 Cortez; and  
25 a grade 1 at 3655 Durango.

1 Q. Okay. So does three grade 1 leaks in that special survey,  
2 right?

3 A. I mean, yes, that's correct.

4 Q. And any other? Grade 2, grade 3 leaks?

5 A. No. That's all I was -- no. I didn't, I didn't get the  
6 final results of the survey that night, but I was aware of those  
7 leaks that night.

8 Q. But other leaks, other leaks are not conveyed to you. You  
9 are not at the scene, so -- you are not at the scene, so somebody  
10 has to tell you that, right?

11 A. Right. Right.

12 Q. So nobody told you about other leaks to you.

13 A. No, not that night.

14 Q. Okay. And how much -- how big the area was? Is it like 2  
15 blocks, 1 block from the accident scene?

16 A. I believe it was, it was like an 8-block area. It's the area  
17 in pink that was surveyed.

18 Q. Okay. And with those three grade 1 leaks -- and by the way,  
19 did you, did you ask for somebody that -- are there any other  
20 leaks of a lower level? Or did you -- yes. You are not told, but  
21 did you make a query that, hey, are there any other leaks?

22 A. No, at the time I got the -- my last update, the survey, the  
23 survey wasn't complete.

24 Q. I understand, but --

25 A. But I knew I had two supervisors on-site at that time, and

1 they would, they would alert me, they would alert Benny, who would  
2 alert me if there was something that concerned them that they  
3 thought I needed to know about.

4 Q. Only if they think you need to know about you -- about it,  
5 right?

6 A. Or Benny, yes.

7 Q. Right, okay. So now that you know there are few leaks at the  
8 accident scene, one grade 1 leak across the street from the  
9 accident scene -- roughly. Roughly across the street. That first  
10 grade 1 leak that -- the technician who responded to 3515 is the  
11 one who saw that grade 1 leak also. And he kind of described it  
12 to us roughly across the street, maybe a little bit diagonal. And  
13 then you learned three more grade 1 leaks. Did that change your  
14 perception?

15 A. No, I would -- respectfully, I don't agree that it's across  
16 the street, but --

17 Q. Well, (indiscernible). Forget about terminology. But near  
18 -- how about nearby? How's that?

19 A. It was nearby.

20 Q. Okay. Yeah. I mean, I'm just trying to get the --

21 A. Right.

22 Q. -- message across. I'm not trying to --

23 A. No, it didn't concern me because we had a survey, we had the  
24 leaks identified, we had crews on the leaks. The situation was  
25 under control. We had, we had the known leaks. We had our crews

1 on them, on the ones that needed to be addressed right away. In  
2 fact, we had a couple of crews on the grade 2 30s that actually we  
3 have 30 days to fix, so I felt, I felt good about where we were  
4 and that they had the situation under control.

5 Q. Is it common to see that many grade 1 leaks? Almost four  
6 grade 1 leaks? Is it common?

7 A. Well, I don't know common or not, but I know, you know, the  
8 grade 1's were pretty spread out. They weren't all bunched up  
9 right together. I mean, they were spread out among those 8  
10 blocks. So I don't, I don't know how to answer common or not.  
11 But again, we had surveyed. We had crews on the leaks addressing  
12 the leaks.

13 Q. So you -- learning about all these, you didn't feel it was  
14 necessary to shut the, shut the system off, turn the mains off and  
15 do further investigation? Well, you wouldn't have found these  
16 other 3-grade leaks if you wouldn't initiate the survey.

17 A. Right, but -- yeah, but we had surveyed, so we had the leaks  
18 identified and had crews on them.

19 Q. But did you feel that, okay, I found these leaks because I  
20 initiated a survey here. What about the other neighborhoods?  
21 What about the other 8 blocks moving east or west? Did you think  
22 about that? Or did you think, well okay, let me shut the line off  
23 and look at this more detail or -- I'm just trying to find out,  
24 when you found something in the special survey which you wouldn't  
25 have found.



1 A. Right. Right.

2 Q. Now did that entail exploring the special surveys more or you  
3 are kind of happy that, okay, I got everything under control?

4 A. I think with what I knew that night, I felt like we had  
5 everything under control. We had surveyed that block and then 2  
6 blocks north, 2 blocks south. And --

7 Q. But your surveys, from what I, from what I hear, those grade  
8 1 leaks were kind of spread. They are not --

9 A. Right. Right.

10 Q. -- at one location. So what is the kind of mental assurance  
11 that the other areas would not have any grade 1 leaks? I'm just  
12 trying to find out what is the comfort zone there? Why wouldn't  
13 you think that, or why would you feel that you did everything you  
14 need to do at your level? And I'm not saying it is right or  
15 wrong. I'm just trying to find out --

16 A. Right. Right.

17 Q. -- the thinking process, is what I'm doing.

18 A. Well, I mean, I don't know where -- we did expand the survey  
19 the next day when we saw the totality of the situation.

20 Q. I'm sorry. Say it again?

21 A. Well, the next day when we, when we saw the totality of the  
22 situation, we did make a decision --

23 Q. But that was after the accident, was it not? That would be  
24 after the accident. Correct?

25 A. Right. Right. But again, I mean -- no. We surveyed -- I

1 was not concerned because we had surveyed the area. We had crews  
2 on the leaks. We had the leaks identified in that area and were  
3 addressing them.

4 Q. So if the lines need to be shut, who makes that decision?  
5 You or somebody above you or --

6 A. No, I -- a technician on the scene can make that decision.

7 Q. To shut the whole area off?

8 A. Yes. I would say so. I mean, they have the authority to  
9 evacuate, they have the authority to shut systems in if they need  
10 to do that.

11 Q. And can that --

12 A. I would say I would certainly be contacted if that was going  
13 to be done --

14 Q. But your approval is not needed?

15 A. -- after the fact.

16 Q. Your approval is not needed?

17 A. My approval is not needed.

18 Q. Have you ever shut systems down anywhere in your territory?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And why?

21 A. Cut lines. A line blowing. An emergency that -- where we  
22 needed the quickest way to stop the blowing gas was to, was to  
23 shut off the system.

24 Q. But not because of any leaks. You never shut off the system  
25 or, you know, several mains on several-block area because of leaks

1 in the past?

2 A. Not that I can recall.

3 Q. So what, based on leaks -- and I can appreciate blowing gas.  
4 But too many leaks or some concern leak, whatever, for any leak  
5 reasons have you ever shut the system down? And you said, and the  
6 answer is not -- no I guess?

7 A. Not that I recall.

8 Q. And I guess the next question, my question is what would it  
9 take for you to shut the system in a few blocks? How many leaks  
10 would it take or what kind of severity, I guess, may be a better  
11 word. Would it take -- like blowing gas is one severity.

12 A. Right.

13 Q. What kind of severity of the customers' leaks will it take  
14 for you to shut the system down?

15 A. It depends on a lot of different, a lot of different  
16 scenarios. I don't know how to answer that question.

17 Q. okay. But do you --

18 A. I mean, I think there's a lot of different factors that would  
19 go into that.

20 Q. I understand. I understand. Fair enough, but in this case,  
21 did you think that, maybe I should shut the system down? Did you  
22 ever think about that? Forget about doing it, but did you think  
23 about that? Or that thought never came to your mind?

24 A. Well, I felt like, I felt like that we had surveyed it. So  
25 we knew what we had. We knew the leaks we had, and we were

1 addressing those leaks. I mean I --

2 Q. Oh no, that -- I mean, I understand that.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. But what I'm saying is, along with that line, did you think,  
5 maybe I should shut the system down? You may not have made the  
6 decision to do it, but did you ever think about that?

7 A. I mean I know that, I know that's always an option. But I  
8 didn't, I didn't think about doing that that night because I felt  
9 like that we had the situation under control.

10 Q. Then moving forward, I guess, I understand now that Atmos is  
11 doing a major survey -- service and main, right? Replacement  
12 program --

13 A. Correct. Right.

14 Q. -- based on -- are you involved in that program in any way?

15 A. I have been a little bit. There's a lot of different people  
16 involved in this big of, this big of a replacement.

17 Q. What's your role in that, in that major overhaul? I mean I'm  
18 using the word -- it may not be an "overhaul."

19 A. Right. Right. Really, my role up to this point in this --  
20 and you're just talking about in the pipe replacement.

21 Q. Yeah, that's right.

22 A. Has been minimal. I've been mainly focusing on the  
23 operations and not the replacement area.

24 Q. Okay. But did anybody in Atmos ask any data from you  
25 concerning providers' data on the leaks, locations of the leaks in  
providing

1 this area?

2 A. Right. I would, I would say the first replacement area, yes.

3 Q. They asked for the number of leaks? And who did?

4 A. I don't remember who specifically. I remember, I remember we  
5 talked about the leaks in that, in that first area. I don't  
6 remember one person specifically asking me. There was a group of  
7 us that discussed the situation.

8 Q. Do you, do you know the department? Which department asked  
9 you? Somebody had to ask you.

10 A. Right. We talked about it as a leadership team. I discussed  
11 it with my leadership.

12 Q. And who that will be?

13 A. You know, there were several members of our leadership in the  
14 room. Our president is John Paris.

15 Q. Okay. And okay, he was in that meeting when this data was  
16 discussed.

17 A. That's correct.

18 Q. Okay. And who else?

19 A. I really don't -- I would be guessing if I tried to name  
20 everyone in the room.

21 Q. Can you give me a few? I mean, you are in a meeting.

22 A. Right. I believe our director of compliance was in the room.  
23 I want to -- I believe one of our VPs of ops was in the room.

24 Q. And do you know what was being discussed there concerning  
25 your leaks or data? What you told them?

1 A. I think we were just looking at the, at the totality of the  
2 situation, the results of the survey. And we discussed the best  
3 steps moving forward. You know, we were -- we had made the  
4 decision to shut, to shut the system in, to shut the valve, close  
5 the valve, shut the system in. And we were discussing best steps  
6 forward. We talked about replacing, like you said, the mains and  
7 services.

8 Q. But did anybody ask you to identify the area within your  
9 jurisdiction as to where more leaks are to make that decision easy  
10 for them?

11 A. Well, at that point we were talking about the original area  
12 that was evacuated. That was the point of our focus at that  
13 moment in time. This was still the day of the incident.

14 Q. Oh, so this 3,000 home replacement program was being  
15 discussed next day?

16 A. No, no. There was approximately -- I believe approximately  
17 -- yeah, this area.

18 Q. Okay. No, I'm referring -- I'm maybe not making myself  
19 clear. I'm talking about the program that we here are  
20 understanding that Atmos is doing to replace roughly 3,000  
21 families.

22 A. Right.

23 Q. That area, the service main, you know, the whole 10 yards.

24 A. Right, I --

25 Q. My question was, when that decision was being made or

1 concerning that decision, were you ever asked to provide data  
2 about where more leaks exist in your system?

3 A. Not me specifically.

4 Q. But then --

5 A. But they, but they were getting the data.

6 Q. From whom?

7 A. We have, we have systems that collect the data --

8 Q. Can you tell me --

9 A. I don't know who specifically they got the data from.

10 Q. What is the system? What is the system called?

11 A. We have a leak inventory system.

12 Q. Okay. And who maintains that?

13 A. And they were getting survey results from the field.

14 Q. But who maintains that or who is leader for that? Under  
15 whose jurisdiction it comes?

16 A. The system itself?

17 Q. No, the leak inventory system. Who's in charge of that?

18 A. I'm not sure.

19 Q. You do not know in the company. Okay.

20 A. I have no -- it probably falls -- I would guess it falls in  
21 our compliance area.

22 MR. CHHATRE: Can you maybe find out? Because I would like  
23 to find that out.

24 MR. TOBIN: We will. We will.

25 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. The information request.

1 BY MR. CHHATRE:

2 Q. So who maintains this leak inventory system for your area?  
3 Who does that? Do you do that on your -- you pretty much control  
4 the whole data, right?

5 A. Right. These leak reports go into that system. There's  
6 nobody in my -- we don't maintain the system. We enter data in  
7 the system.

8 Q. So tell me, so when -- so what data you enter and who does  
9 that?

10 A. Anyone who finds a leak on our system.

11 Q. Okay, so a technician is dispatched, a technician fills in.  
12 It goes into this leak inventory system.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Correct?

15 A. It's these.

16 Q. Right, right. Okay.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. And who looks at these when technicians fill that thing? And  
19 you look at it?

20 A. I don't look at each one.

21 Q. No, not each one. But I mean, do you at least look at the  
22 inventory system? So do you look at the system to see how your  
23 system is doing, the integrity of your system?

24 A. We also have a distribution integrity management group that  
25 looks at the entire system.



1 Q. Okay. And do you interact with them to find out how your  
2 system is doing, or there is no interaction?

3 A. We do interact.

4 Q. So when was the last time you talked to them about your --  
5 about the integrity of your system?

6 A. Well, we have, we have a scheduled annual meeting.

7 Q. Okay, so annual to annual. Nothing in between.

8 A. Yes. We talk -- I don't remember, I don't recall the last  
9 time I talked to them, but we talk on a regular basis.

10 Q. Okay. But I mean the regular is annual basis, right? That's  
11 what -- yeah.

12 A. There's an annual review.

13 Q. Okay. And what do you do discuss in that annual review?

14 A. A formal review.

15 Q. What do you discuss in that annual review?

16 A. Well, they get, they get subject matter experts. And I'm --  
17 you know, I'm probably not the best person to talk about our DIM  
18 program. It'd be better to talk to --

19 Q. No, no, I'm not talking about DIM program. I'm just  
20 wondering with the --

21 A. But they get our input on what they're seeing. So if they  
22 see an area that they think we could replace, they'll get the,  
23 they'll get the subject matter experts' input on that area.

24 Q. Okay. So are you responsible for maintaining the whole  
25 system in the Dallas area, distribution and main, as a director or

1 -- I'm just trying to understand the system. Are you responsible  
2 for that or who else is responsible besides you?

3 A. Well, it depends on how you define operating system.

4 Q. Okay. Let me give a specific example then.

5 A. I'm responsible for the maintenance -- yeah.

6 Q. I know, I know. I understand. Give an example.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Pick any district, any region, point A to point B. Let's say  
9 there's 3 miles of distribution main you want to replace. Who  
10 makes that decision that, okay, from A to B, the line needs to be  
11 replaced for these reasons, and I'm going to replace this? Who is  
12 the person who makes that recommendation, and who is the person  
13 that makes the decision that, okay, go ahead and replace?

14 A. I think it depends. It depends on -- I mean, that  
15 recommendation could come from -- it could come from operations.  
16 It could come from our engineering department. It could come from  
17 several different areas. We are one of the, we are one of the  
18 inputs into that decision and into that request.

19 Q. Okay, so let's suppose you decided that you want to replace 2  
20 miles --

21 A. Right.

22 Q. -- along main and associative services. And it could, it  
23 could come from any of your underlings, any of the people who feel  
24 we should replace it. You make that decision.

25 A. Right.

1 Q. Then you have authority to go ahead and replace that, or you  
2 have to go to somebody and request that and they approve that?  
3 And how does that process work?

4 A. Yeah. We have to, we have to get approval, formal approval,  
5 from funding. I will say, I will say that, if operations decides  
6 that a section of main needs to be replaced, it gets replaced.

7 Q. But that operations meaning you, right? You are the --

8 A. Yeah, if I decide, if I decide a section of main needs to get  
9 replaced, it gets replaced. The corporation is very good about  
10 listening to operations and funding the projects that need to be  
11 funded.

12 Q. So you make that decision. How often you replace mains in  
13 your territory?

14 A. Every day. I mean, we have many -- we have multiple main  
15 replacement projects in my area going every day.

16 Q. I'm not, I'm not counting those 3,000 homes.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Just routine.

19 A. Routine. Multiple replacement projects in my area every day.

20 Q. And how that decision is made, which main to replace and  
21 which services to replace?

22 A. Like I said, it could come from many different inputs. It  
23 could come from our distribution integrity management group. It  
24 could come from operations. A piece of main that operations  
25 thinks needs to be replaced. It could be a city relocation. I

1 mean, it could come from many different places.

2 Q. To your recollection, has it ever come because of the number  
3 of leaks are increasing?

4 A. That's a piece of the data that we make those decisions on.

5 Q. Okay. Have you ever done that -- have you ever made that  
6 decision because of leaks?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Can you identify which area was it?

9 A. No. I mean, we -- that's not -- I would say that's not  
10 uncommon, where we have crews that identify a piece of main that  
11 needs to be replaced because of leaks and because of the condition  
12 of the main. We make the request. We replace the line.

13 Q. Sure. No, what I'm trying to really understand is how many  
14 leaks it takes for your crew to make that recommendation. That's  
15 what I'm trying to find out.

16 A. I think --

17 Q. Before you make the decision --

18 A. Right, it's --

19 Q. -- do you look at the data as to what needs to be, what it  
20 needs --

21 A. We do look at the data, but it's not --

22 Q. So what is the reason? Okay.

23 A. Yeah, it's not just leaks. It's condition of pipe. It's  
24 many different factors. It's not just leaks. I mean, we don't --  
25 I wouldn't say, we have this many leaks so we're going to replace

1 this pipe. What is the condition of the pipe? Many other  
2 datapoints.

3 Q. Okay. So it's not -- just number of leaks in a block is not  
4 the defining factor. Correct?

5 A. It's not, it's not the only factor.

6 Q. Okay. But it is a factor.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Now can you tell me how many leaks after the 23rd  
9 event have you discovered with all this activity that you  
10 described in your system, and -- that you found? Just a number.  
11 Not the, not the --

12 MR. TOBIN: In this area defined by the pink?

13 MR. CHHATRE: Yes. And then we'll expand, but I just want to  
14 get that -- and I'm not talking about grade 1, grade 2. Just  
15 overall to (indiscernible) a leak.

16 BY MR. CHHATRE:

17 Q. So how many leaks?

18 A. Off the top of my head, I do not know. I know, I know how  
19 many leaks were discovered on the initial survey. But the  
20 subsequent -- off the top of my head, I can't tell you how many  
21 leaks.

22 Q. Would it be in hundreds or tens?

23 A. No.

24 Q. No. Like --

25 A. No.

1 Q. -- under 20? Over 200? I'm just trying to figure -- give us  
2 a ballpark number that I can relate to.

3 A. Yeah, not -- I know, I know on that initial survey -- and so  
4 you've got to remember, after the incident, we quickly shut the  
5 main down. So I know on the initial survey we found seven grade  
6 2's, the three grade 1's and then a couple of aboveground grade  
7 3's. Right.

8 Q. But I mean, that wasn't unusual for you. I mean, you didn't  
9 -- you were not really concerned with those, that number. I'm  
10 just trying to find out --

11 A. Well, I mean the leaks -- again, the leaks were spread out.  
12 And we had just surveyed the line.

13 Q. Okay.

14 MR. CHHATRE: And that's all I have. Thank you very much.  
15 And let Steve go.

16 DR. JENNER: Just a few questions. Steve Jenner.

17 BY DR. JENNER:

18 Q. This was a significant event for you guys. In previous  
19 events, maybe not this significant, do you have internal  
20 discussions afterwards to evaluate your response and see if there  
21 are any lessons learned?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Can you walk me through that process, please?

24 A. Well, I mean, I would say, after any significant event, we  
25 would do a lessons learned. I don't understand what you're

1 asking, but --

2 Q. Yeah. If you could walk me through that process. Who's  
3 involved in that process, and how do you gather information? And  
4 do recommendations come out of there? And anything of that  
5 nature.

6 A. Yeah, I can't discuss any kind of formal process. But I  
7 would say, after any incident, we would certainly -- there would  
8 -- it would be, it would be a group of tech services, operations.  
9 There would be many involved in looking at the event and learning  
10 lessons from it.

11 Q. Okay. Have you been involved in this type of assessment  
12 before?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. If you can think about one or two of them, can you reflect on  
15 any lessons learned from the past and how were they -- they were  
16 implemented?

17 A. It's been, it's been quite a while, and you know, I was in  
18 tech services for several years. So you know, I can't recall, I  
19 can't recall any lessons learned out of those discussions right  
20 now. I would be guessing.

21 Q. Okay. Your involvement with the event on the 22nd, when were  
22 you relieved? You worked late that night into -- on the 22nd.

23 A. Okay. When was I --

24 Q. When did you go off duty? When did you go home?

25 A. I don't remember. I was involved even after I got home. I

1 don't remember what time I got home. It was late in the evening.  
2 I wouldn't say I was ever relieved. I'm always available by  
3 phone. So I don't know how to set a time that I went off duty  
4 because I went home late in the evening. I was talking with Benny  
5 on the phone. I don't -- it was probably -- I would even be  
6 guessing to give you a time of the last time I was -- I talked to  
7 Benny, but it was late in the evening. I would be guessing.

8 I would say, I would say between 10 and midnight was the last  
9 time I probably talked to Benny that night. But it's not uncommon  
10 for him to call throughout the night if he needs to talk to me  
11 about something.

12 Q. Okay. So after that period of roughly 10 to midnight, did  
13 you receive calls from anyone else besides --

14 A. No.

15 Q. Well, anyone else? Okay.

16 A. I did not.

17 Q. And your -- so was Benny the last person you had conversation  
18 with that evening?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And how did things end that evening? Where were you guys in  
21 terms of comfort level of how operations were running?

22 A. Like I said, we had the grade 1's that we were aware of, and  
23 we had crews on. We had the two grade 2 30-days that we had a  
24 crew working on. And the survey was still ongoing. So we were  
25 comfortable that we, again, that we had the issues addressed, the



1 grade 1's addressed and were, like I said, working the grade 2 30s  
2 in that alley.

3 DR. JENNER: Okay, that's all I have. Thank you.

4 MR. JONES: Just have a follow-up on some of Steve's  
5 questioning regarding the lessons learned process. This is  
6 Michael Jones from PHMSA, accident investigation.

7 BY MR. JONES:

8 Q. So this process for pulling lessons learned out of, out of  
9 previous events, is this something that is in your SOP or anything  
10 like that where it's sort of -- you may not recall any of the  
11 formal processes --

12 A. Right.

13 Q. -- but is that a formal process in itself that you know of?

14 A. I'm not sure.

15 Q. You're not sure. So if there's findings, are they  
16 documented?

17 A. I'm not sure. I would, I would think so, yes.

18 Q. And any idea how they might be communicated out?

19 A. No.

20 Q. No?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Do you know who would run that process, who would run the  
23 assessment?

24 A. No, I do not.

25 Q. Okay.

1 MR. JONES: That's all I have for now.

2 MR. CHEVEREZ: Jose Cheverez, Railroad Commission of Texas.  
3 So I have three or four questions.

4 BY MR. CHEVEREZ:

5 Q. So the leak survey techs that were on there Thursday night  
6 from around 5:00 to 8:00 -- 5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., they don't  
7 normally work a nightshift. Leak survey is only a dayshift,  
8 correct?

9 A. That's correct.

10 Q. Okay. So they're already working after hours, because I  
11 believe -- correct me if I'm wrong, but they work 7:00 to 3:00?

12 A. Yeah, they work different shifts, but that's -- they were,  
13 they were working a -- they were on overtime.

14 Q. Okay. So the special surveys, like you said, they're not  
15 uncommon. We've seen them before. I just wanted you to clarify.  
16 There isn't anything in the O&M as far as what specifically will  
17 prompt it. It's just at the manager's or director's discretion?

18 A. Yes. I would clarify and say even at a supervisor's  
19 discretion or a technician's discretion.

20 Q. Okay. So you mentioned that, to your recollection, you  
21 couldn't remember where you had shut in a segment based solely on  
22 leaks. It's hypothetical because you never got to that point, but  
23 had you made it to the morning after at around 8:00 a.m. and seen  
24 nine additional leaks found the night before, Thursday night, what  
25 would have -- your decision would have been?

1 A. You know, that's hard to say. Because again, I had  
2 confidence in the survey. It had been surveyed. I really hate to  
3 deal in hypotheticals, because that didn't happen. I will say we  
4 had surveyed it. We had leaks that were spread out among the map  
5 sheet. So I don't know if I would have known about the other  
6 seven grade 2's and the two grade 3's.

7 But you're asking what I would have done?

8 Q. Yes. Entirely hypothetical.

9 A. It's hard to say.

10 Q. So you said that, in the original shut-in in the original 8  
11 blocks, you were consulted in that decision. Were you consulted  
12 in the following decision for the 3,000 customers, approximately?

13 A. I don't think I was involved in that decision. Again, I was  
14 focusing more on the local operations. We had a lot of people  
15 involved at that point in looking at that and making decisions.

16 MR. CHEVEREZ: Okay. That's all I have. Thank you.

17 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

18 MR. BAKER: Captain Baker, Dallas hazmat.

19 BY MR. BAKER:

20 Q. Mr. Slaughter, I have a couple of questions. It's going to  
21 be towards the public safety standpoint, while I'm here. And you  
22 said throughout the conversation in the interview today that the  
23 lowest level techs can recommend a shutdown and they'd be listened  
24 to. Can you tell me a time that that's ever happened, and do you  
25 have documentation of that?

1 A. I can, I can tell you -- you know, I can think of examples  
2 where we might have a cut line, a third-party damage, where a  
3 technician has made a decision to shut in a piece of main. What  
4 was the second part of that question?

5 Q. Just if you have -- do you keep up with documentation of when  
6 that shutdown has taken place by the technician? Or is it -- does  
7 it have to be approved through you?

8 A. No, it does not have to be approved through me, and I don't  
9 know of any documentation that we do that says, the line was shut  
10 down from this point to this point. We have a leak report that  
11 documents that leak report. But they do not have to come through  
12 me to get approval to do that.

13 Q. The next question I have, at any point during the night did  
14 you ever think about calling the fire department, with all the  
15 grade 1 leaks that you had, to do survey interior of those homes  
16 in that area? Was that ever considered?

17 A. You know, I -- not that I'm aware of. We have, you know --  
18 it's not, it's not our policy to call the fire department with  
19 every grade 1, I guess, is what I would say.

20 Q. Is there a policy that you know of, a decision matrix, of  
21 when that is to call? How is that process made about when to call  
22 us?

23 A. There's not a matrix that I'm aware of that we use, but I  
24 would say it's in the judgement of a supervisor or even a  
25 technician if they think they need the fire department. If they

1 were evacuating a larger area, they would probably ask for  
2 assistance from the fire department. If they have a customer who  
3 we're trying to evacuate who does not want to evacuate, they call  
4 the fire department. But there's no matrix.

5 Q. The last question I have. Going forward into the after-  
6 action review process as we move forward, do you think we should  
7 establish better communication with that as far as grade 1 leaks?

8 A. You know, I thought our communication was good. In this  
9 incident and, I think, on a day-to-day basis, our communication  
10 with the fire department is really good. As far as whether or not  
11 you want to be contacted on every grade 1 we have in our system,  
12 my opinion is that you don't. But I mean, we can --

13 Q. Can you elaborate? Can you elaborate a little on that?

14 A. Well, I just -- we can certainly call you on every grade 1,  
15 but --

16 Q. Maybe not call, but maybe a notification of some sort.

17 A. Right.

18 Q. And I do agree with you that the communication is good. I'm  
19 just saying we can always get better. And I'm looking at how do  
20 we get better on the grade 1's, especially learning what I know  
21 now. At the 80 percent LEL point, that we probably should do a  
22 better job of communicating that.

23 A. Yeah. Yeah, I think, I think that would need a lot more  
24 discussion, I guess.

25 Q. Okay.

1 MR. BAKER: That's all I have. Thank you.

2 MR. McDILL: John McDill, Atmos Energy.

3 BY MR. McDILL:

4 Q. Kyle, we kind of heard a lot of terminology over the last  
5 number of days of interviews, and we talked about this leak  
6 inventory system. We've heard others refer to it as CM+. Is that  
7 the same kind of system?

8 A. It's one and the same.

9 Q. Okay. So can you explain -- like, for example, their leak  
10 indication is that a technician may go out on that could be  
11 related to a customer side. That data goes to one system. But if  
12 there's a leak on the operational system, meaning, you know, the  
13 jurisdictional pieces of pipes, meter, whatever else, that goes to  
14 a different system of record.

15 A. That's correct. So on the leak investigation, if the  
16 technician finds a leak on the customer piping, they will either  
17 isolate or turn off the gas. And that information will go in our  
18 customer information system. It stores all our information about  
19 our customers. If they find a leak on -- that's in our  
20 jurisdiction, that will be documented in CM+ on a leak report like  
21 the ones you have in front of you.

22 Q. Okay. You mentioned there's a regular meeting at least  
23 annually. But I thought I also heard you say there was other  
24 routine discussions you have related to evaluation of the data or  
25 sharing of information that happens outside of that regular

1 meeting? Or did I hear that correctly?

2 A. Yeah. We visit, we visit with ~~our distribution integrity~~ <sup>a team within our technical services</sup>  
3 ~~management~~ group, I would say, on a regular basis. We have  
4 monthly meetings where we talk about projects and the need for  
5 additional projects. Our supervisors are aware of areas where we  
6 get leak reports, and so we discuss it in those meetings. Our  
7 planners are a part of that group also. So I would say we  
8 communicate on a regular basis.

9 Q. Okay. Let me just see if I had any other questions. And you  
10 mentioned earlier, but throughout the city of Dallas, there are a  
11 number of ongoing pipe replacement projects that just continue  
12 throughout the year?

13 A. Many projects, yes.

14 Q. Okay. Thank you.

15 A. At any one time, we probably have 40 to 50 contract crews in  
16 the city of Dallas working on projects.

17 MR. McDILL: Okay.

18 MR. CHHATRE: Okay?

19 MR. McDILL: Thank you.

20 MR. CHHATRE: You need a break? I have a couple of follow-up  
21 questions. Do you need a break for a few minutes?

22 MR. SLAUGHTER: Yeah. Could we, could we take a short break?

23 MR. CHHATRE: Sure. It's your interview. You dictate --

24 MR. SLAUGHTER: Okay.

25 MR. CHHATRE: Off the record.

1 (Off the record.)

2 (On the record.)

3 MR. CHHATRE: Back on the record. Ravi Chhatre, NTSB. Back  
4 on the record. Ravi Chhatre, NTSB. Just a few follow-up  
5 questions.

6 BY MR. CHHATRE:

7 Q. This area that -- this block that we are talking about this  
8 afternoon, do you remember when that, do you remember when that  
9 area was last surveyed?

10 A. I believe it was in March of 2017.

11 Q. And do you remember seeing any leaks at that time? Or what  
12 happened?

13 A. I don't know the results of that survey. I just know that it  
14 was surveyed in March of 2017. We could certainly get the  
15 results.

16 Q. So roughly a year ago. Roughly a year ago. Eleven months.

17 A. That's correct.

18 Q. Okay. Now if there are any grade 1 leaks, would you not have  
19 been informed during that survey?

20 A. Not necessarily.

21 Q. Not necessarily.

22 A. Right.

23 Q. Okay. And you said you general have -- normal work hours are  
24 8 hours. So tell me -- I'm a little confused because I -- you  
25 know, I'm a little frustrated. I'm asking a lot of questions, but



1 I'm not really getting the information I want.

2 A. I'm sorry.

3 Q. No, that's okay. So I'm just having -- in the 8 hours, what  
4 do you do? I mean, how do you keep track of what your people are  
5 doing? If you're not getting reports of grade 1 leaks, if you are  
6 not getting direct information about the fire calls, you do not  
7 get information about the bar hole digs -- so I'm trying to  
8 understand. In that section, how do you control what is happening  
9 every day?

10 A. Well, we have --

11 Q. And I realize you are at a high level.

12 A. Right. We have --

13 Q. I fully, I fully recognize that. I'm not -- no insult was  
14 intended or meant.

15 A. No, none taken.

16 Q. I'm just trying to find out, how do you spend 8 hours in the  
17 office?

18 A. Well, we -- there's many things, and it changes from day to  
19 day. And I do --

20 Q. Just walk me through it.

21 A. -- I do get informed of issues when the manager thinks  
22 they're big enough that I may need to know about them, which is --  
23 but I wouldn't know about -- so say a major cut line. We've got a  
24 major road blocked. Now that's something that would be brought to  
25 my attention. I may spend part of my day looking at financial

1 reports, getting updates on projects, replacement projects that we  
2 have and where we're at in our replacement -- with the replacement  
3 of our lines. Big picture --

4 Q. Big picture. Big, economic picture.

5 A. And then anything that -- you know, it could be, it could be  
6 an upset customer that comes to my attention that they think I  
7 need to know about. It could be, like I said, a major cut line  
8 with a road shut down, or a fire department -- the fire department  
9 on-site.

10 Q. So for most of these questions we are asking, Benny is the  
11 last stop for the authorization?

12 A. For a lot of them, he is. I mean, he -- and Benny's a very  
13 experienced manager. And he knows when he needs to get me in the  
14 loop. And I office right next to him, so many of those things I'm  
15 aware of because we're right next door to each other.

16 Q. Do you see what I'm saying? It looks like Benny decides what  
17 you should or should not know. So Benny pretty much is  
18 controlling what you know in your organization, from what I  
19 understand during this conversation; is that correct?

20 A. Well, I would say, on normal day-to-day operational issues,  
21 yes, he uses his judgement on what I need to know about. But  
22 we're very collaborative. I mean, we talk -- like I say, we sit  
23 right next to each other. So I know -- many grade 1's, I do know  
24 about. But I -- there's not -- I don't have a policy set in place  
25 that I've got to know about any grade 1 --

1 Q. So that was going to be my next question. So have you, have  
2 you made Benny or all your underlings know what you need to know?  
3 I mean, otherwise, if I'm -- you know, Benny might be thinking  
4 that you do not need to know, but you might want to know. Has  
5 that ever happened, and you had told him -- you are giving  
6 instructions or some sort of verbal instructions, these items I  
7 need to know; no imagination involved?

8 A. I would say it was more verbal. I hadn't given him a written  
9 list, but it's more verbal. And again, Benny is a very  
10 experienced manager, so he knows.

11 Q. No reflection on Benny. I'm not --

12 A. Right.

13 Q. I need to hear the process, right? I'm looking --

14 A. Right.

15 Q. So some grade 1 leaks you know, but all these grade 1 leaks  
16 that happened maybe last one year, as far as I know. Because last  
17 survey was done eleven months ago.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. Right? And if those grade 1 leaks existed then, they would  
20 have been repaired.

21 A. That's correct. They would have been repaired.

22 Q. So all these grade 1 leaks happened in one-year period. And  
23 apparently, that does not ring any bell with Mr. Benny that you  
24 might want to know. So I'm a little concerned as to --

25 A. Well, I don't know that any grade 1's were found on that

1 survey.

2 Q. That night that we saw, we --

3 A. No, I'm talking about the -- I thought you were talking about  
4 the March 2017 survey.

5 Q. Correct. That's what I'm saying. So all these grade 1's  
6 happened between last 11 months. These occurred. Whatever the  
7 reason for those grade 1 leaks is, those were ~~develed up~~<sup>developed</sup> if you  
8 would, in last 11 months. Correct? Last time, there are no grade  
9 1 leaks. I have grade 1 leaks now. So whatever caused these  
10 grade 1 leaks to ~~devel up~~<sup>develop</sup>, if that is the correct word, occurred -  
11 - whatever happened happened in last 11 months. Or my logic is  
12 failing here?

13 A. No, I understand what you're saying. The leaks -- 11 months  
14 ago, the March survey, all the leaks were identified. And so --

15 Q. These leaks did not exist then.

16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. Now we are seeing three grade leaks that ~~devel up~~<sup>develop</sup> -- forget  
18 about the others. Others you do not know.

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. But ~~devel up~~<sup>develop</sup> in 11 months.

21 A. Right.

22 Q. Now should not that be a concern to you as a director, that  
23 you should at least know? Then whether you are concerned or not,  
24 that's your judgement, but --

25 A. And I did know. About these three grade 1 leaks. I just

1 said I didn't know about every grade 1 leak that comes in on our  
2 system. I did know about these three grade 1 --

3 Q. Right. But what is so special about these three that you  
4 should know and not the others? I thought you wanted to know all  
5 the grade 1 leaks? Earlier you said, you know, grade 1 leaks is  
6 something you would like to know.

7 A. No.

8 Q. No. Okay.

9 A. No. What I've asked Benny to let me know about is any major  
10 leak, like a major cut line, where we've got roads shut down or  
11 fire department on-site. But I have not asked Benny to let me  
12 know of any grade 1 leak that we find on our system.

13 Q. And why would that be? I mean, it's your system, your  
14 safety. That is, I think it's impacting safety of people and  
15 property, right? Grade 1 leak. Potentially. Not impacting.

16 A. Right. But we've got, we've got supervisors. We've got  
17 crews that are addressing those grade 1 leaks. I mean, I'm not,  
18 I'm not going to -- they're going to address those, and they're  
19 going to make sure that our customers are safe and they're going  
20 to --

21 Q. But wouldn't they be equally capable of handling line break  
22 or road, you know, whatever where the major revenue issue is also?  
23 Wouldn't they be capable of doing that too?

24 A. Right, but -- okay, there's a couple of reasons. One, those  
25 may get more attention that I need to know about. Those could get

1 media attention. Those could get the attention of the fire  
2 department. Those could get the attention of the city. And so I  
3 need to know about those leaks. And, you know, to know about  
4 every leak or even every grade 1 leak on our system, I don't think  
5 that's my role to know about it at the time. That's my opinion.  
6 Because they're being addressed.

7 Q. But are there too many, that is taking too much of your time?  
8 Or they'll -- I'm just trying to understand. To me, I mean --  
9 don't get me wrong.

10 A. Right.

11 Q. Everybody's perception is different. To me, grade 1 leak is  
12 quite significant because it's going to -- potentially going to  
13 impact either a building, say, or wherever it happens, people,  
14 property, any -- if there are too many, I fully understand that  
15 you don't want to be bombarded by 50 calls, 50 information every  
16 day. But if they are that frequent, then yes, you are absolutely  
17 correct, I --

18 A. Well, I'm just saying that I believe our crews, our  
19 supervisors are capable of handling those situations and  
20 addressing those situations.

21 Q. So with grade 1 leaks now, does your protocol say, okay, you  
22 are a grade 1 leak outside. Go inside and find out are there  
23 people, evacuate them or go inside and find out if the gas exists  
24 inside? Is that a protocol?

25 A. No, it depends on the grade 1. And it depends on the

1 situation that they have on scene.

2 Q. Like? When they would not -- I mean, I am still trying to  
3 understand. If it's a grade 1 leak, that's a pretty serious  
4 matter, right? Because you have to fix it right away, from your  
5 procedure. You can -- the person who finds a grade 1 leak, if I  
6 understand your procedure correctly, that person cannot leave that  
7 place unless the crew or somebody else arrives and relieves him,  
8 or the process starts.

9 A. Right.

10 Q. That's pretty -- I mean, I think that is a pretty serious  
11 matter. It can be 2:00 in the morning --

12 A. Right. Immediate -- right, immediate and continuous action.

13 Q. Correct. So in that case, that's a pretty serious matter,  
14 you can (indiscernible). Shouldn't the people, if there are any  
15 inside, be informed that hey, it's a pretty serious matter going  
16 outside? So either your procedure requires to knock on the door  
17 and tell the people, hey, something serious is happening. We are  
18 working outside; let's come inside and check if the gas exists.

19 A. Again, I think, I think it depends.

20 Q. No, I'm talking about procedure. A known procedure.

21 A. No.

22 Q. Does the procedure require that or not?

23 A. For instance, a cut line could be a grade 1. And it could be  
24 out in the middle of an ~~interaction~~ <sup>intersection</sup> not even near a home, and  
25 those homes may not, may not need to be evacuated.

1 Q. Fair enough.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Fair enough. But then again, near a house. Does your  
4 procedure say that, hey, if it's near a building, inform. Go  
5 inside. Either inform the fire department to evacuate people or  
6 go inside and take the readings. Does it -- does your procedure  
7 require that on grade 1?

8 A. I don't, I don't know that our procedure specifically spells  
9 out on -- no, it does not on any grade 1 that you check in a  
10 house. I think it depends on the situation. It depends on -- if  
11 they're getting gas up next to a building, yes.

12 Q. I mean, that is one part of the grade 1 leak, yes?

13 A. They're going to notify -- yes. Yes. If they're getting gas  
14 up next to a building, if the situation requires them to notify or  
15 it affects that residence, they are going to notify --

16 Q. I get that.

17 A. -- and check inside that house.

18 Q. Last question, then. So do you feel comfortable leaving that  
19 decision to your technicians who are going in there, to make that  
20 life-and-death situation decision for the resident with your  
21 lowest level employees?

22 A. Yes, I do.

23 Q. Okay.

24 MR. CHHATRE: No more questions.

25 MR. SLAUGHTER: Our employees are trained --



1 MR. CHHATRE: No more questions.

2 MR. SLAUGHTER: Okay.

3 DR. JENNER: I have no questions.

4 MR. BAKER: I have one follow-up question, Mr. Slaughter.

5 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

6 BY MR. BAKER:

7 Q. On what you just said as far as the grade 1 leaks near the  
8 occupancy, on these three grade 1 leaks the other night, did  
9 anybody go to the occupancies near these and notify the occupants  
10 that they were working and monitor inside?

11 A. I don't know the answer to that. I know at 9583, obviously  
12 that customer called the leak in, so they were aware. On the  
13 other -- I know --

14 Q. Well, they were aware, but they didn't get monitored inside,  
15 is what I'm asking?

16 A. I don't know on each one of them. I know on 3655, they did,  
17 and they evacuated that home.

18 Q. 3655 Espanola?

19 A. I believe that's the right -- let me verify.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. No, 3655 Durango.

22 Q. What time was that at? Do we know?

23 A. 8:30.

24 Q. P.M. on the 23rd?

25 A. That's correct. Oh no, the 22nd. 22nd.

1 Q. And what was the findings -- why were they evacuated? Do you  
2 know the specific reasons that night?

3 A. I believe they, I believe they got gas migrating to the  
4 building. And so they evacuated the building, and they actually  
5 cut the lock on the gate to do additional bar testing to make sure  
6 that the building was safe.

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

8 MR. CHHATRE: You have a question?

9 MR. McDILL: John McDill, Atmos Energy.

10 BY MR. McDILL:

11 Q. So Kyle, this scenario you described where the technician was  
12 taking the actions to evacuate based on their findings?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. Just, if he was unable to do that, is -- would he -- what  
15 would be his next course of action?

16 A. If he was unable to evacuate the house?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. Get a hold of the fire department, 911. Yeah, if they, if  
19 they could not -- if the people would not leave or he couldn't get  
20 the people to come to the door, then he would call for the fire  
21 department to assist in the evacuation of the home.

22 Q. Okay. And so, just assuming the other leaks that were  
23 identified on Larga and Cortez, maybe, was the other three grade 1  
24 leaks in the area with -- I think all the leaks were there. Did  
25 those appear from the evaluation that evacuation was not needed

1 because of the migration?

2 A. Right. Right, they determined on the migration on these  
3 other leaks there was no migration leading to the house. No  
4 reason to evacuate the house.

5 Q. Okay.

6 MR. McDILL: Okay, thank you for verifying. Thank you.

7 MR. CHEVEREZ: I had two follow-up questions. Jose Cheverez,  
8 Railroad Commission.

9 BY MR. CHEVEREZ:

10 Q. You said earlier to Captain Baker that shut-ins themselves  
11 are not tracked. So on an isolation valve or a maintenance valve,  
12 that would, that would be typical. What about squeeze-offs? Are  
13 those kept track of indirectly or monitored or --

14 A. Well, they're -- yes, they're kept track of on the leak  
15 report.

16 Q. So the location of the squeeze-off, if you were going to  
17 squeeze off a main, those -- how are those tracked? Or are they  
18 tracked?

19 A. Well, I would say that the general location is marked on the  
20 -- the exact location of the squeeze-off point is not tracked. It  
21 is marked, so that if somebody exposes that again, they will know  
22 that it was squeezed off at that location.

23 Q. So if you dug that location, you would know it was squeezed  
24 off at that location. But if we looked at a map to track your  
25 shut-in -- or your squeeze-off shut-ins, we wouldn't have any way

1 of tracking that?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. Okay. The leak survey from March 2017, there were no grade  
4 1's found during that leak survey.

5 A. I don't, I don't know of any grade 1's found during that, but  
6 I don't know the results of that leak survey.

7 Q. So you wouldn't know if there were any 2's or 3's found  
8 during that leak survey either.

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. Is there any way to figure that out based on --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- the leak survey reports?

13 A. Yes. We can, we can get the results of that survey.

14 MR. JONES: I think it's been entered into the site, but  
15 we'll verify.

16 MR. CHEVEREZ: Okay. That's it for me, thank you.

17 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Thank you so much for spending your time  
18 with us, helping us out.

19 MR. SLAUGHTER: Thank you.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. SLAUGHTER: Thank you.

22 MR. CHHATRE: Off the record.

23 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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 Kyle Slaughter

ACCIDENT NO.:               PLD18FR002

PLACE:                       Dallas, Texas

DATE:                         March 7, 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.

  
Eileen Gonzalez  
Transcriber