



National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C. 20594

Name: Luis Ramos

Department Atmos Energy / Mid-Tex Operations

Title: Crew Leader

Date of Interview: March 8, 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

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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: LUIS RAMOS

Hampton Inn and Suites
Dallas, Texas

Thursday,
March 8, 2018

APPEARANCES:

ROGER EVANS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

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

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

JIM COLLINS, Regional Manager
Railroad Commission of Texas

JOHN McDILL, Vice President of Pipeline Safety
Atmos Energy

THOMAS W. TOBIN, Attorney
Wilson Elser Law Firm
(On behalf of Mr. Ramos)

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:25 p.m.)

1 MR. EVANS: Okay. On the record with Luis -- Luis? Luis?

2 MR. RAMOS: Either way. I answer to both.

3 MR. EVANS: Ramos. Good afternoon. Today is March 8, 2018.
4 It is now 3:25 p.m. Central Time. My name is Roger Evans. I'm
5 the investigator in charge with the National Transportation Safety
6 Board out of Washington, D.C. We're at the Hampton Inn in Dallas,
7 Texas.

8 This interview is being conducted as part of the
9 investigation into the Espanola -- E-S-P-A-N-O-L-A -- Drive
10 accident that occurred in Dallas, Texas on February 23, 2018 at
11 approximately 6:45 a.m. The case number for this is DCA -- excuse
12 me -- case number for this is PLD18FR002.

13 This interview is being recorded and may be transcribed at a
14 later date. A copy of the transcript will be provided to the
15 interviewee for review prior to being entered into the public
16 docket.

17 Mr. Ramos, we know that you have representation today. If
18 you can go ahead and give us the spelling of your name and your
19 job title and who you work for, and also who you have representing
20 you?

21 MR. RAMOS: My name is Luis Ramos, and it's spelled L-U-I-S,
22 R-A-M-O-S. And I'm a crew lead at Dallas service center.

23 MR. EVANS: Okay. And you work for Atmos --

1 MR. RAMOS: I work for Atmos Energy.

2 MR. EVANS: And who you have representing you today is?

3 MR. RAMOS: Mr. Tobin here is representing.

4 MR. EVANS: Okay. And, Mr. Tobin, can you introduce
5 yourself?

6 MR. TOBIN: Yes. My name is Tom Tobin. I'm an attorney with
7 the Wilson Elser Law Firm, 1133 Westchester Avenue in White
8 Plains, New York.

9 MR. EVANS: Okay. I'd like to go around the room now and
10 make introductions. Just so you -- your name, job title, who you
11 represent.

12 MR. McDILL: I'm John McDill, M-C-D-I-L-L, vice president of
13 pipeline safety for Atmos Energy. My business address is [REDACTED]
14 [REDACTED].

15 MR. COLLINS: I'm Jim Collins, J-I-M, C-O-L-L-I-N-S, regional
16 manager for the Railroad Commission of Texas. [REDACTED]
17 [REDACTED].

18 MR. JONES: Michael Jones, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, J-O-N-E-S, accident
19 investigator with PHMSA. Located in the Oklahoma City office at
20 [REDACTED].

21 DR. JENNER: And I'm Stephen Jenner, J-E-N-N-E-R, a human
22 performance investigator with the NTSB.

23 MR. EVANS: Well, thank you, Mr. Ramos. How would you rather
24 we say your name? Luis or --

25 MR. RAMOS: Luis is fine. Yeah.

1 MR. EVANS: Luis is fine?

2 MR. RAMOS: Yeah.

3 MR. EVANS: Okay, great. Okay.

4 INTERVIEW OF LUIS RAMOS

5 BY MR. EVANS:

6 Q. So let's first get some background information on you. If
7 you can tell us, you know, kind of like your -- summary of your
8 experience at Atmos: how long you've been there, the different
9 jobs you've held, how long you've held those jobs, particularly
10 how long you've held your current job. And we'll start there,
11 so --

12 A. Okay. So I've been with the company 15 years. I started out
13 as a meter reader. I did that for a year and a half. And the
14 rest of the years I was in the construction here at the Dallas
15 service center.

16 Q. And along the way have you had other positions that brought
17 you up to crew lead?

18 A. Yes. Just like the promotional from going through all the
19 trainings that we go through, from going from a construction
20 operator to the senior construction operator with more
21 responsibilities, and being able to fill in for a crew lead at the
22 moment. And then now a crew lead, which I've been about 8 years
23 now.

24 Q. And are you OQ'd for like, you know, backhoe and --

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. -- back -- and all the equipment that you would use in this
2 type of work?

3 A. Yes, sir. Yeah, we'll have OQs that each position has to
4 acquire in order to do these tasks.

5 Q. Okay. And prior to your 15 -- I know you're not that old,
6 but just curious. Was that right out of high school or something?

7 A. Pretty much, yes.

8 Q. Okay. Great. Okay, so let's talk about the training that
9 you've had as -- you know, in your crew lead position. Have you
10 had like -- is there computer-based training, plus there's
11 training inside some classroom and then someone teaches you?

12 A. Yeah, we have the learning center where we go and we
13 periodically go over all our OSHA requirements. And then we also
14 have our OQ test that we have to keep up-to-date. And we have to
15 do those every often with us, before they expire, so that we're
16 able to continue with those tasks. And then we also have at
17 training facility that have offered different trainings for these
18 positions.

19 Q. In the last year how much time do you think you've spent in
20 the training center?

21 A. Training center? It's been a long time.

22 Q. No, I mean, is it more than 10 hours or is it --

23 A. Oh, yeah, yeah. Sometimes you go over there for weeks at a
24 time. Just depend on what they're actually going over and what
25 they're teaching you.

1 Q. Is most of the training where the instructor watches what you
2 do and then he says, okay, you did a good job with that, I
3 understand; we're going to sign you off?

4 A. Yes, yes. Or like we have, like, some classroom training,
5 and then we have some where we actually go out into the field and
6 put those together. So you're actually getting some hands-on as
7 well.

8 Q. Okay. What about things like the OSHA safety things, like
9 lockout/tagout, confined space entry, shoring? Do you have all
10 that?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. ~~Foul~~ Fall protection?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay. So you cover the gamut. All the OQ plus all of the
15 OSHA stuff. And all of that -- OSHA's out of the training center
16 as well?

17 A. Yes, that is -- actually we do that -- we actually have our
18 safety meetings, we go over all our OSHA topics as well. And then
19 we go on the learning center also to do all the lockout/tagout,
20 emergency response, things like that.

21 Q. And are you fit test for SCBA and all that as well?

22 A. Yes, sir. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. Okay, great. Let's go from the night of -- or the
24 morning or whenever it was when you entered this neighborhood and
25 talk about everything that happened: the dates and the times, who

1 you were working with, and if you spell -- if you mention names,
2 can you please spell them for us, at least one time?

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. And a timestamp would be great too if you have that, so --

5 A. Okay. I got a call at 9:30 p.m. I don't know the exact date
6 that was. It was that Thursday night. I got called from home. I
7 was out to relieve a crew. So I got -- I had to call my guys, and
8 I had Jesus -- can't think of his last name. Yes, Jesus Enriquez,
9 and it's -- his last name is E-N-R-I-Q-U-E-Z. And I also had Jose
10 Cabrera; that's C-A-B-R-E-R-A.

11 And I showed up to the jobsite area around 10:30. And there
12 was Juan Gomez; that's G-O-M-E-Z. He was a supervisor there at
13 that moment until Mike Rose showed up to take over for him. And
14 at that time, we got -- we all got together. There was a few
15 crews out there, and we had to see what tasks we were told to
16 handle.

17 Q. And the address, the specific address that you were called
18 out to address, what was that? What address was that?

19 A. That would be -- I'm actually not too sure of the actual
20 address. I just kind of was in the alley most of the time.

21 Q. Would it be better if you looked at this, perhaps?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No -- this way (indiscernible).

23 MR. RAMOS: Yeah. No, it's -- this one I can't tell, can't
24 really tell those numbers there. That's 35 -- is it -- I think
25 that's 3531. Yeah, that's where I was at, 3531 Durango.

1 BY MR. EVANS:

2 Q. And what was the nature of the, you know, of the call that
3 made you go to 3531 Durango?

4 A. The call I received was just to relieve a crew. I actually
5 didn't know of any other incidents at that moment.

6 Q. And when you arrived on scene, what did you see?

7 A. I just seen the few crews working right there on Larga. And
8 I didn't know exactly at the moment where I was assigned at the
9 moment.

10 Q. Did you find it unusual that there would be so many people
11 and -- that was 10:30 p.m., right?

12 A. Yes, sir. Yeah, there -- the whole area was barricaded, so I
13 really didn't know what I was going into at the moment until I got
14 there and got information from everyone.

15 Q. But had you done this in the past where you had -- you got
16 called and there was barricades and people all around and -- was
17 this a routine kind of thing for you in your career at Atmos?

18 A. It was a routine thing, but I guess just at that point in
19 time I wasn't aware of everything that had happened before. So I
20 was just kind of -- you know, I didn't know what was going on at
21 the moment.

22 Q. And when you relieved the crew, what -- whose place did you
23 take and what were your tasks at hand?

24 A. I took over for Ricky Rodriguez, and I was to replace the
25 service at 3531 Durango.

1 Q. And the 3531 Durango, the reason you knew that the service
2 had to be replaced was why?

3 A. I got the task from Mike Rose.

4 Q. On the screen?

5 A. No, he was actually just -- I had everything -- we had
6 everything written down. Whenever I got there with him, I met
7 with him.

8 Q. So you weren't looking at any sort of a computer generated or
9 anything like that?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. So this is -- you got called out and you show up to
12 relieve this crew. And then did you smell gas?

13 A. No, I did not. Not at all.

14 Q. Did you have anyone in your group that smelled -- did you
15 recall that anyone said, hey, I smell some strong gas? Anything
16 like that?

17 A. No. Not at all.

18 Q. Okay. Now are you aware of mercaptan and how they use
19 mercaptan to odorize gas?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And do you know that mercaptan can wear ~~aware~~^{away} from --
22 it can be polished off of gas and it no longer stinks? Are you
23 aware of that?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay. Just curious. So what equipment did you have there

1 that night to replace this service line?

2 A. I had a backhoe. That was what the crew brought out at that
3 time.

4 Q. So the equipment was already there, I guess?

5 A. Yeah, there was some equipment there, already there that the
6 previous crew had. And then whenever we get called, we have to
7 take our own equipment and we go from there, whether to keep using
8 the same equipment or switch out. Just because everybody has
9 their own vehicle assigned to them and their group.

10 Q. And their own backhoes, you mean?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Oh, okay.

13 A. So we have multiple crews.

14 Q. Right. So then did you switch out backhoes?

15 A. No. That day we just ended up just staying with the same
16 one.

17 Q. Okay. And how long did it take you to do that task?

18 A. I didn't get to finish that task.

19 Q. And that was because of the --

20 A. Because of the weather.

21 Q. Oh, the weather.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. And then did you come back on later on to finish, or
24 did someone else do it?

25 A. No. Actually that's whenever that happened --

1 Q. Oh, okay.

2 A. -- so we weren't able to proceed.

3 Q. Okay. Did you happen to know that neighborhood because you'd
4 been in there doing work in the past and it just kind of popped in
5 your head as far as, you know, that this is someplace you'd done
6 work a lot?

7 A. Yeah, I had done some work in the past. So that comes a lot
8 with different -- like just as far as, as long as I've been there.
9 So there's some areas where it seemed familiar.

10 Q. Do you know how many times you've been in this neighborhood,
11 by chance?

12 A. No.

13 Q. No? Okay. But you definitely had been in this neighborhood
14 before?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Do you recall the nature of the work when -- the last time
17 you were in there?

18 A. I think it was a service line replacement.

19 Q. And how long ago was that?

20 A. I couldn't tell you exactly the --

21 Q. Okay. But you think you did a service line replacement?

22 A. Yes.

23 MR. EVANS: And if we were to ask for records for the service
24 line replacements for this, would it get down to the detail of the
25 crew that worked on it? Would we have that?

1 MR. TOBIN: We should have all the repair orders for that.

2 MR. EVANS: Okay.

3 BY MR. EVANS:

4 Q. Tell us about your experience. Did you get any input from
5 anybody about bar hole tests or CGI tests or anything like that?

6 A. The techs were doing the bar hole testing.

7 Q. As you were doing -- as you arrived or --

8 A. As I arrived, yes.

9 Q. And then --

10 A. They were writing everything down.

11 Q. And then were they -- I mean, did they basically say to you,
12 hey, the -- now, what did they say to you as far as going forward
13 with doing this work?

14 A. They were barring and they were checking -- taking down the
15 readings. And they were getting a few readings. Not a lot of --
16 not a lot of percentage. And Mike Rose was there also. So that's
17 the service that they had me to replace.

18 Q. Was there anything peculiar about the fact that you were
19 replacing a service when the readings weren't that high?

20 A. No, even -- if we were getting readings, we'd still replace a
21 line.

22 Q. Okay. So there's no threshold for you to -- if you're
23 getting readings, you're getting a leak, so you're going to
24 replace the line?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. That's logic. Okay.

2 MR. EVANS: I think that's all I have for right now.

3 DR. JENNER: This is Steve Jenner.

4 BY DR. JENNER:

5 Q. When you took over for Ricky Rodriguez, was there any type of
6 handoff? Did you get an update of what work was being done, had
7 been done already?

8 A. Yes. Got with Ricky and Mike Rose, and they let me know the
9 services that Ricky had already replaced. And then mine was the
10 next one, at 3531 Durango.

11 Q. Okay. And what -- you said the weather prevented you from
12 completing your task?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. When was -- when did you have to stop working on it?

15 A. Well, that was -- it was early in the morning. I don't know
16 what -- exactly what time whenever it started. Because we were
17 just back there working and then just -- it started thundering and
18 lightning. And it had already been bad in that alley as well from
19 all the rain from previous and there was big puddles of water
20 everywhere, so it was kind of tough.

21 Q. So what were you doing from the moment you had to stop work?

22 A. We were in front of 3531 Durango. We were parked in front.
23 But we went into the pickup and as -- we were just there. The
24 techs were still checking readings during that time.

25 Q. Had you been aware of what the techs were finding?

1 A. No. I wasn't.

2 Q. Okay. Did you -- who were you in communication with in terms
3 of supervisors that evening?

4 A. Just Mike Rose. He was the one on-site.

5 DR. JENNER: Okay. Okay, that's all. Thank you.

6 MR. JONES: Nothing for me.

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

8 Thank you for being here with us, Luis.

9 BY MR. COLLINS:

10 Q. Were you made aware that Ricky Rodriguez had dug up the top
11 of a sewer cleanout?

12 A. No.

13 Q. No? Okay. So I kind of want to touch on this situation
14 specifically. So when you're excavating -- and you kind of had to
15 stop in the middle, right, because of the rain. But before then,
16 were you testing the excavation for gas, and what equipment were
17 you using to do that?

18 A. The techs were actually checking.

19 Q. Do you remember the techs' names?

20 A. That would be Michael Glasenapp, and the last name G-L-A-S-E-
21 N-A-P-P. And Keith Patrick.

22 Q. And Keith. Okay. Patrick. Thank you.

23 A. There was one more after --

24 Q. And then --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That would be Michael Robinson?

1 MR. RAMOS: Michael Robinson. Yes, sir.

2 BY MR. COLLINS:

3 Q. And were they using -- all three of them, were they using the
4 CGI? Did they have --

5 A. The Sensit Gold.

6 Q. The Sensit Gold?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. And they were all using the same equipment? Did they have
9 three of them there or were they just using one? Do you remember?

10 A. I only remember one.

11 Q. Okay. Thank you, sir. Let's see here.

12 MR. COLLINS: That's all the questions I have. Thank you,
13 sir.

14 MR. McDILL: John McDill with Atmos Energy.

15 BY MR. McDILL:

16 Q. Luis, good afternoon. I placed before you a leak order. You
17 may not know some of the information on there, but if you can
18 share with us what information you know from that leak order? I
19 don't have the Bates number reference before me, but it's --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's at the top.

21 MR. TOBIN: 285.

22 BY MR. McDILL:

23 Q. 285. And so that -- is that the address that you were sent
24 to replace the service line?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And do you know -- you mentioned that there was a reading
2 found at the service tie-in?

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Do you know if they found any other readings during their --

5 A. I was not aware of any other readings.

6 Q. Okay. All right. Now did you have to reconfirm any of the
7 readings, or the technician had provided the readings to you?

8 A. The technician had provided the readings.

9 MR. McDILL: Okay. Okay, I think that's all the questions I
10 have. Thank you.

11 MR. EVANS: This is Roger Evans.

12 BY MR. EVANS:

13 Q. Luis, can you give us your timing as far as -- this has
14 helped me out a lot, by the way. The timing as far as when the
15 two events occurred and the third event with the -- and the third
16 one being the accident where the fatality occurred. So were you
17 present during any of this?

18 A. No, sir.

19 Q. You were completely off-scene, off-site when that --

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. -- all that occurred? Okay.

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

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't have anything else.

24 MR. EVANS: Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Great.

1 MR. RAMOS: Thank you.

2 MR. EVANS: Thank you. Off the record.

3 (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 Luis Ramos

ACCIDENT NO.: PLD18FR002

PLACE: Dallas, Texas

DATE: March 8, 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