

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

SAN FRANCISCO GAS RELEASE AND FIRE * Accident No.: PLD19MR001
FEBRUARY 6, 2019 *

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Interview of: RUSTY HENDERSON

San Francisco Police Department
San Francisco, California

Saturday,
February 9, 2019

APPEARANCES:

ALEX COLLETTI, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

NATHAN SARINA, Utilities Engineer
California Public Utilities Commission

TERENCE ENG, Senior Utilities Engineer Supervisor
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Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
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Pacific Gas & Electric Company

LISE JORDAN, Attorney
Pacific Gas & Electric Company
(On behalf of Mr. Henderson)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Rusty Henderson:		
By Ms. Colletti		5
By Ms. West		19
By Mr. Cochrane		22
By Mr. Souza		23
By Ms. Colletti		24
By Mr. Sarina		27

I N T E R V I E W

(9:36 a.m.)

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2
3 MS. COLLETTI: We are on the record for the Rusty Henderson
4 interview.

5 Good morning, today is February 9th, 2019. It is now 9:36
6 a.m. Pacific Time. My name is Alex Colletti, the investigator in
7 charge for this accident for the National Transportation Safety
8 Board in Washington, D.C.

9 We are at the Richmond Station Police Department Community
10 Center, San Francisco, California. This interview is being
11 conducted as part of the investigation into the Pacific Gas and
12 Electric natural gas release and fire that occurred on February
13 6th, 2019, in San Francisco, California. The NTSB case number for
14 this incident is PLD19MR001.

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

19 You are permitted to have one person with you present during
20 this interview. This person is of your choice, it can be an
21 attorney, a supervisor, a friend, a family member or no one at
22 all.

23 Rusty, state for the record the spelling of your full name,
24 your job title, and who you've selected to be with you today.

25 MR. HENDERSON: Rusty Henderson, R-U-S-T-Y, H-E-N-D-E-R-S-O-

1 N, I am the gas pipeline operations maintenance supervisor for San
2 Francisco, and Lise Jordan is my representative today.

3 MS. COLLETTI: Excellent. Now we're going to go around the
4 room introducing ourselves. Please spell your name and say your
5 organization.

6 MR. SARINA: Nathan Sarina, N-A-T-H-A-N, S-A-R-I-N-A, I'm
7 with the California Public Utilities Commission.

8 MR. ENG: Terence Eng, T-E-R-E-N-C-E, E-N-G, also from the
9 California Public Utilities Commission.

10 MS. WEST: Kim West with the U.S. Department of
11 Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety
12 Administration.

13 MR. COCHRANE: Michael Cochrane, M-I-C-H-A-E-L, C-O-C-H-R-A-
14 N-E, Assistant Deputy Chief, Homeland Security, San Francisco Fire
15 Department.

16 MS. COWSERT: Christine Cowsert, C-H-R-I-S-T-I-N-E, C-O-W-S-
17 E-R-T, Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

18 MR. SOUZA: Kevin Souza, K-E-V-I-N, S-O-U-Z-A, PG&E.

19 MS. JORDAN: Lise Jordan, L-I-S-E, J-O-R-D-A-N, PG&E.

20 MS. COLLETTI: Excellent. Okay.

21 INTERVIEW OF RUSTY HENDERSON

22 BY MS. COLLETTI:

23 Q. Now, that you've been introduced to everyone, I'm going to
24 have you of sorts introduce us to you. I'd like you to start off
25 by telling me a little bit about your history working in gas

1 distribution.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. Maybe how long you've worked for PG&E, what different roles
4 that you've had, if you worked for any other gas operators in the
5 past prior to PG&E and then we'll go from there?

6 A. Okay. Well, this was my first job in gas with a utility,
7 period. Prior time was with the Air Force 20 years, compliance,
8 aircraft maintenance, you know, that type of thing but 5 years
9 with the company. This is my first and only position with the
10 company was in the present one so that's kind of a short history,
11 and no prior gas experience, natural gas experience.

12 Q. Great. And for lack of a better word, the GPOM Group is your
13 group?

14 A. Yes, it is.

15 Q. Can you explain a little bit about it --

16 A. I will.

17 Q. -- and go through the acronym one more time for me a little
18 slower?

19 A. Sure. Yes, we just changed our name probably a year ago to
20 gas pipe and operations maintenance. To break it down further,
21 I'm the gas instrumentation and regulation supervisor, which
22 simply means my crews operate about 80 district reg stations in
23 the city, you know, at varying pressures, about 3,000 valves
24 underneath the city.

25 All of the measuring equipment, the calibrations ERX, SCADA,

1 that all falls under my purview and limited commercial rotary
2 meters, installations and maintenance as well.

3 Q. Okay, great, that is excellent.

4 A. Oh, thank you.

5 Q. That's more useful than the acronym.

6 A. It is. It's a broad term to say GPOM.

7 Q. So what I'd like for you to do now, this is the part where
8 I'm going to be quiet for a while. Is I'd like for you to walk me
9 through the events of the day when you first got called,
10 everything that you did, everyone that you spoke to. No detail is
11 too small and the more details you provide the less we're going to
12 pester you.

13 A. Understand.

14 Q. And until you were relieved off scene so --

15 A. Okay. It began, I believe, around 1:30. I was actually off,
16 away from my office at an appointment in San Rafael and an ePage
17 had hit my email box. I didn't see it and that was at 1:13. Bill
18 Russo, the construction supervisor, called me at 1:30 and said,
19 did you see the ePage? And I said, no; let me peek at it real
20 fast, so I did. And I said, oh, nice.

21 So Bill just briefly described, you know, a 4-inch pipeline
22 had been hit, there's an explosion, and at that point that's all I
23 had to go on. He said, we're probably going to be valving down
24 the scene.

25 So we hung up. I called distribution engineering, Yalice

1 Valencia, and said, listen, we've got to get working on an
2 isolation plan. And she asked if Bill had contacted gas control.
3 He had. At that point engineering and gas control engineering
4 had, you know, behind the scenes, were developing an isolation
5 plan so that my crew could then go out and execute that plan.
6 So that's where that got started.

7 Well, I immediately headed back to the city and, of course,
8 you know, at 2:00 in the afternoon you can imagine what traffic is
9 like and with our phone restrictions while driving, it was
10 difficult to coordinate, so I did the best I could.

11 After that call to Yalice, I believe, my superintendent, Matt
12 McLaughlin, called me en route saying that Kevin Souza had sent
13 out the isolation plan to my email. So once I got stopped I did
14 find that email from Kevin and that was at 2:05 when Kevin had
15 sent that one out.

16 It looks like the attachment didn't come through so, again,
17 continuing to drive back I asked for a retake on that one, and
18 then Christina Rogers did get that back out to me. So, at that
19 point, I pushed it out to my crews, Dan Spencer and Gerald Greer
20 were the two journeymen out in the field already doing other work.

21 So I scrambled those guys said, listen, I don't have any
22 details at this point but get moving toward Geary and Parker. And
23 Dan Spencer was the first guy to get on scene just a couple of
24 blocks away and he got as far as he could and he just stopped and
25 waited for further instructions.

1 So Gerald had wrapped up a job he was doing and they all met
2 in the Geary and Masonic, you know, vicinity. And at that point
3 they just stood by until, you know, the scene was safe enough to
4 get into and we actually had a valve plan.

5 So the initial valve plan looked like about 12 valves but it
6 included so many customers -- nearly 1,000 customers would have
7 been without gas service at that point. So the plan began to
8 refine down to a lower quantity of gas customers basically.

9 So, at that point, Bill and I got back on the phone, maybe
10 2:15, 2:30, and Bill said, listen, just close these six valves and
11 we're good. So I fired a text to my guys and said, listen, this
12 is the new, revised list of six valves and as soon as it's safe
13 execute.

14 Now, at that point, I do have the times, if you want to get
15 that -- get to that point, as to when which valves were closed,
16 okay. So the first valve we shut was Valve 3486 and that was
17 closed by Dan Spencer at 3:05 p.m., 1505. Second Valve 3489
18 closed at 1515 hours, third valve was 315, also closed by Dan at
19 1520. Valve 190 was closed by Gerald Greer, 1531. Valve 367
20 closed by Gerald Greer at 1536. And a final Valve 3406 was closed
21 by Dan at 1536.

22 And that was our timeline and at that point that almost
23 concluded our involvement until we were needed for the restoration
24 piece of the operation. And I think that's where I can stop
25 talking.

1 At that point, I came back to my office and kind of assumed
2 by OEC role as the operations liaison. I was sick so I did not
3 join Kevin and the group at 2180 but I was just across the street
4 in my office in complete contact with Bill and the OEC so --

5 Q. Okay, that's excellent first off.

6 A. Well, thank you.

7 Q. I'm going to back up a little bit to some things that I
8 didn't quite understand the first time around.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. And then after we clear that up I'll ask you to step forward
11 again in time.

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. So I want to go back to the valve isolation plan and the
14 timing of that. So from I understand at 2:05, that was attempted
15 to be sent, it didn't attach?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. So you didn't receive it?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. When was it -- when did you successfully receive it?

20 A. It looks like 2:36.

21 Q. 2:36, okay. Did you receive any information -- how soon did
22 you say after 2:05, hey, guys, it's not there? Were you driving,
23 where there other obstacles?

24 A. I was driving. The email I sent was at it looks like 2:43
25 actually. I sent that back to Christina Rogers and Ed Corona

1 saying, would you mind resending the isolation plan, it didn't
2 make it over?

3 Q. Okay. So that was at 2:43?

4 A. 2:43.

5 Q. Which was actually after they sent it?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. I'm sure you had a few emails in your inbox at that
8 time.

9 A. And texts, texts, calls.

10 Q. Yep.

11 A. It was interesting.

12 Q. Okay. So between 2:05 and 2:43 you were in transit?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Coming up Lombard and Van Ness, it's pretty crazy at those
16 hours.

17 Q. I will believe it. I think your traffic might even beat D.C.

18 A. It might.

19 Q. So you mentioned that after you received the plan that you
20 sent crews that way, do you know around what time that was at?

21 A. What time I pushed crews?

22 Q. Yes.

23 A. Yeah, I've got the text messages here. It looks like my
24 initial -- after I got the ePage I sent the ePage to my guys at
25 1:35 p.m. and letting them know that, I'm reaching out to

1 engineering for possible isolation, just want to alert you guys
2 that we're going to be valving in the near future. And that's
3 when response from Danny immediately was, okay, headed that way.

4 And then Gerald Greer responded with, okay. I said, thanks,
5 I'll keep you posted, things are unfolding. And that's all I had
6 at that time, so the guys began to move around 1:35 to 1:40 p.m.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. They were moving toward that area.

9 Q. Okay. When did you get confirmation that they were onsite?

10 A. Let me see if I have that. I think the next thing would have
11 been a call from Dan Spencer so let me track that because I know
12 he called me from Geary and Masonic, which was as close as he
13 could get to it. Okay, I do have an incoming at 2:04 p.m. from
14 Dan so I'm going to say that was most likely when he called me
15 letting me know he was posted up nearby.

16 Q. And when did your guys start executing on that valve plan?

17 A. Like, and like I mentioned, the first valve was closed at
18 3:05 p.m.

19 Q. 3:05. I'm --

20 A. Just prior to that they would have been moving into position.
21 I don't know if we -- we took someone out to the valve route
22 yesterday. I don't know if you were part of that too?

23 Q. Yep, I was there, yep.

24 A. Okay. So you can kind of see the complexity.

25 Q. Yes, yes, absolutely, yeah.

1 A. There are no road signs, it's here I am.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. Here's Valve 190. No, it's not like that.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. You fight for it, you find it, it's in the middle of the
6 street sometimes so --

7 Q. Right, right.

8 A. Just prior to 3:05. I'm sure they were either parked and
9 walking toward the valve with a valve wrench or he was able to get
10 up to it with his vehicle.

11 Q. Okay. Yeah, I'm just trying to get a sense of, you know, did
12 it take from, let's say, 2:36 to 3:05, did it take from 2:45 to
13 3:05?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Kind of how long that takes generally?

16 A. Yeah, I don't have those details.

17 Q. Okay, okay. That's fine. So you had crews and I'm just --
18 sorry to ask this again, I'm just clarifying in my mind -- you had
19 crews headed on the way to the site before the valve isolation
20 plan was received because you knew?

21 A. Yes. We were going to be doing it --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- so let's position ourselves and be ready for the plan.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Then we have to move on it.

1 Q. Your main communication, who was that with, was that with
2 Kevin, was that with Bill?

3 A. It was with Bill in the OEC.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. In the emergency center. Because Bill's the OEC commander,
6 he's reaching out to me and all the others to coordinate activity,
7 so he was my primary communication loop, other than my team below,
8 you know, below me, of course.

9 Q. Did your team report to you any difficulties accessing any of
10 the valves, you know, parked vans, anything of that nature?

11 A. Just the usual traffic, streets blocked. Yeah, nothing else
12 other than that.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But those are routine problems we have even in a non-
15 emergency situation.

16 Q. So just the normal day-to-day that happens?

17 A. The normal day-to-day stuff, yeah.

18 Q. Okay, okay. I just wanted to make sure we didn't have to
19 clear any vehicles; you had any kind of obstructions?

20 A. No, in fact, I would say we were lucky because, I mean, we
21 get a lot of paved over valves in the city so none of these were,
22 they weren't obstructed in any way, they weren't, they weren't
23 filled with debris and trash. We were -- I think we were lucky in
24 this one.

25 Q. Okay. When you talk about paved over valves in the city, is

1 that when the city accidentally paves over, when they're repaving a
2 road?

3 A. Yeah, I mean, there's paving projects obviously that go
4 throughout the city and they just rip up a street and repave it
5 and sometimes utilities get paved over in that process.

6 Q. How do you notice that that's happened?

7 A. We don't know until it's our annual maintenance date or month
8 and when we go out to do the valve we discover it paved over, and
9 I think Kevin has crews that actually circulate through the system
10 at times and they find valves also paved.

11 Q. Okay. When you're doing that annual inspection and you
12 realize that it's paved over, what are your actions then?

13 A. It's pretty clear, I mean, we have regulations that talk to
14 it, we have 14 days to get it uncovered or mitigated otherwise I
15 create an alternate means of control for our engineering group and
16 they'll actually re-accomplish shutdown zones, merge others and
17 bring valves within a different shutdown zone in the event we had
18 to do like we just did and activate a shutdown zone. So that's
19 what happens.

20 Q. Okay. Did you --

21 A. I mean, was that clear enough?

22 Q. That's very clear.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. That's excellent. Yep, thank you.

25 A. And when I understand it it doesn't mean that others will.

1 Q. No, that's okay.

2 A. We do it so often it's almost second nature.

3 Q. Yeah, yeah, understood, understood. No, completely
4 understood that's why I'll interrupt you with questions on
5 acronyms and all that good stuff.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. Yeah. Well, I think I've got what I need up to there. Walk
8 me through after the fire is out what your team's activities --
9 what your and your team's activities are for the rest of the
10 evening.

11 A. It's pretty slow for us. At that point, we're waiting for
12 the restoration piece to begin. I know Kevin's crews were
13 attempting to get water out of the main, the 12th inch main, and
14 we were on standby essentially doing nothing else.

15 I didn't let my two guys leave the scene. We were there in
16 support of Kevin and his team because the goal was to get those
17 customers back in gas service. Unfortunately it didn't work out
18 the way we thought it would. Shortly after midnight we were
19 anticipating having to open the valves back for the restoration
20 but it didn't happen that way so --

21 Q. And that was just the delay in purging?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I mean, there were some complications. Kevin can probably
25 speak to that but, yeah.

1 Q. He did earlier today so --

2 A. Okay, good.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. It didn't work out the way we expected which isn't uncommon.

5 Q. So when were you able -- I'm sorry, if you mentioned this,
6 sorry, when were you actually able to go ahead and start opening
7 those valves to --

8 A. It wasn't until Thursday.

9 Q. Until Thursday?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Okay. Was it afternoon, morning, do you have a --

12 A. I do, I do.

13 Q. -- any kind of --

14 A. We have a clearance that we executed. So the first valve
15 would have been opened -- I'm sorry, I didn't bring my glasses
16 here. It looks like the time annotated by the control center was
17 1752 hours, it was Valve 190. That was the first valve opening.

18 It looks like the time sequence followed 1752 hours, yeah.

19 So 1752 --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- was when we began the reopening of valves.

22 Q. Excellent, excellent. Did you feel that you had all the
23 communication you needed to know when you were supposed to be
24 opening valves -- that was all clearly --

25 A. Well, absolutely.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah. There was never any question.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And during the clearance process, we don't open valves
5 without direction and it's -- you don't go out there on your own
6 and just start doing things, that's not the way it works.

7 Q. Can you explain the way it works?

8 A. Well, the way it works is you follow the clearance process
9 and that's what we did. And, again, that was through coordination
10 with Bill and his team because we don't reintroduce gas until
11 they're ready for it and they know that it's coming. They
12 request, we deliver, it's kind of the way it works.

13 Q. Okay. Well, that's great. I want to talk a little bit -- I
14 feel like, at least from my perspective, I've got a good view of
15 what your teams did that evening -- a perspective of what kind of
16 training and preparation you've had for events like this, anything
17 that you've done training wise that you feel prepared you for this
18 or didn't?

19 A. Yeah, yeah. No, I mean, it's -- this is a routine exercise
20 event that we do annually during our OEC exercises. I mean,
21 honestly this was pretty tame compared to what we train for, you
22 know, usually bridges collapse, a rec station's been caved in, and
23 there's more gas blowing, so this was, this was well within scope
24 of what we train, we train to do.

25 Q. Excellent.

1 A. So no one, no one, no one was overwhelmed at any point that I
2 saw.

3 MS. COLLETTI: Okay. That's all I have for now. We're going
4 to pass around so -- well, wait a second.

5 MR. SARINA: I think I'll -- this is Nathan Sarina, CPUC,
6 I'll pass for now.

7 MR. HENDERSON: Okay.

8 BY MS. WEST:

9 Q. I'm Kim West.

10 A. Hi, Kim.

11 Q. I just have a couple questions. I still don't quite
12 understand what you meant by the clearing process.

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. Just kind of walk me through, do you go backwards with the
15 valves or how do you go through that clearance process?

16 A. The clearance process is -- it's kind of -- it's a step by
17 step with operations -- you know, construction will squeeze this
18 particular -- in this case, they'll squeeze, you know, line,
19 whatever. But from where I come in there are specific entries for
20 a valve number, you know, open Valve 314, close valve, you know,
21 654, whatever it is.

22 And there's a sequence of operations and it's annotated
23 daytime person who accomplished the task and that's what we were
24 following during the restoration piece of the event.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. There was an actual clearance document we were all following,
2 yeah.

3 Q. Okay. So do they tend to go from the outside in, inside out?
4 Is there some sort of method for doing that process and I assume
5 that it goes back to training of some sort but --

6 A. Every member who is qualified to either execute or write a
7 clearance has that training, yes.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And this one originated from the gas control center so it's -
10 - it was at our highest levels this came back down to us.

11 Q. I see.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Makes a lot more sense.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. You talked a little bit about some of your exercises are
16 pretty substantial.

17 A. I know, I know.

18 Q. So I was just kind of getting an understanding about, do you
19 have any kind of drills, do you work with the fire department and
20 emergency services? How does -- and I don't know if this is the
21 right answer or question for you, but I would assume that at your
22 level you probably get into all of this, do you have normal
23 coordination and how often does it occur, and is every member at
24 some point reaching out and meeting people in their district that
25 they cover?

1 A. I can't say that I do that at my level.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. I'm a subset of a larger, you know.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And other parts of the company would be doing that, of
6 course.

7 Q. Okay. But you have directly worked with -- prior to an
8 incident worked with the fire department, emergency services or
9 police?

10 A. I wouldn't, I wouldn't be directly involved --

11 Q. Oh, okay.

12 A. -- not at my level.

13 Q. All right.

14 A. No.

15 Q. Any of your crews as well or --

16 A. They really wouldn't be either.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I mean, we're not first responders.

19 Q. That's a good, that's a good point.

20 A. Okay, good. We're not the first responders.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. It's either a gas service representative or a member of
23 Kevin's team.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. They would be the interaction, if anyone --

1 Q. All right.

2 A. -- with the fire and police first responders. They kind of
3 feed the details back to me.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Here's what the situation is, here's what's going on, here's
6 what I need.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And then, you know, I deliver the force necessary to mitigate
9 the emergency --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- which is what happened in this case.

12 Q. Right. That gives me a better perspective.

13 A. Oh, good.

14 Q. I didn't quite know where you were.

15 A. Thank you.

16 MS. WEST: Okay. And that's it for me. Thanks.

17 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you.

18 MR. COCHRANE: Mike Cochrane, San Francisco Fire. Rusty,
19 thank you, number one, for getting those valves off. And I'm just
20 trying to get my timelines together. So you get your marching
21 orders from the command post and then assembled the team?

22 MR. HENDERSON: Correct.

23 MR. COCHRANE: I don't have any more questions. If the PG&E
24 rep is already at the command post he assembles the team, I
25 understand.

1 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you.

2 BY MR. SOUZA:

3 Q. Kevin Souza, PG&E. Rusty, you mentioned your crews or your
4 employees got as close as they could.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. What was the barrier there -- what do you -- can you just
7 explain more what that is?

8 A. It was just, it was just personal knowledge of the fire, the
9 smoke, you know, fire department, streets blocked.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. It was just a matter of personal safety. Dan felt he was as
12 close as he needed to be in the situation.

13 Q. As far as improvements and best practices, would have a
14 police escort with your employees to each valve, would that have
15 made this event run smoother for you or your employees?

16 A. You know, that feedback wasn't given in our debrief.
17 Honestly, the guys felt that it went as smooth as it possibly
18 could because they even asked. I said, listen, guys, from the
19 time I alerted you what could I have done better? And they
20 honestly spoke out and said, I don't know that we could have done
21 anything better.

22 Q. So they may not have been thinking about that?

23 A. I don't think so, Kevin. But their access to the valves was
24 not impeded.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. So I can't say that a police escort would have made any
2 difference.

3 MR. SOUZA: Okay. Thank you. I have no further questions.

4 MS. COLLETTI: Okay.

5 BY MS. COLLETTI:

6 Q. I want to go back to a couple of things. When your guys
7 first came onsite were they instructed to go check in with the --
8 your incident command like Kevin or anyone else on that?

9 A. No, I did not instruct them to do that. I think I did let
10 Kevin know that I had crews responding. Well, I know I did in the
11 email and I'm sure Kevin's busy collecting hundreds of emails, but
12 I did say, you know, crew response was in work --

13 Q. Right, right.

14 A. -- about 1:35.

15 Q. I'm just thinking from a sense of with an ongoing fire event,
16 safety where -- knowing where your folks are --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- having them checked in.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. You know, if we have something, you know, how you were able
21 to verify or how anyone on scene -- how the IC would know that
22 they were there?

23 A. That's a great point and that's good feedback for me
24 honestly.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I did not have them checked in with the IC.

2 Q. Okay. Yeah. I can understand specifically with the IC being
3 overwhelmed but maybe with the mobile command center or some kind
4 of other check in. Another thing I want to talk about and I --
5 one of your guys mentioned this yesterday when we were doing our
6 rainy adventure.

7 A. That must be Greg.

8 Q. We were talking about all the different kinds of options
9 there are to just opening and closing a valve, different keys --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- all the different parts. Can you talk about how much
12 decision making these guys have to have when they're going into
13 it, how much prep, how much equipment they need to have, if it's
14 all stuff they have standard? How that whole process works when
15 they get to the valve and they pop that lid off how that process
16 goes?

17 A. Yeah. Well, during the valve operator qualification
18 training, I mean, the guys know the minute they open up a valve
19 lid they can peek in and automatically know it's a plug valve,
20 it's a gate valve, it's a ball valve, and just by memory and by
21 training they know which key would -- valve key would accommodate
22 each valve, and on their trucks they do have all of the valve keys
23 they need to operate that valve.

24 Now, I mean, honestly there are some circumstances when a
25 valve could be a 1960's vintage with an odd key that, you know,

1 maybe one of our welders have actually manufactured a key for us
2 that will fit just that valve and they know that. It's on --
3 again, it's on their vehicles so we're very familiar with the
4 valves and the city and the nuances of some of them.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And I imagine over time there's a few vintages?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. More than a few options, okay. And that, knowing immediately
10 what they're going to need to use, that's almost instinctual at a
11 certain point, that's going to --

12 A. I think, I think it is --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- at least for my team. And, again, we have, we have
15 probably two-thirds of the valves in the entire PG&E gas system so
16 they reside here in the city, so we have probably the most
17 experienced operating valves of many other parts of the company.

18 Q. Okay. Did you --

19 A. I don't mean to brag but that's reality. We do have the bulk
20 of the valves in our system.

21 Q. It's a good supervisor who brags on his team.

22 A. Thank you.

23 Q. Did they encounter any kind of issues -- any, for example,
24 anything unusual that they had to deal with?

25 A. Not in this emergency.

1 Q. Okay. So the actual closing of the valves for them was very
2 straight forward as soon as they received --

3 A. Absolutely.

4 MS. COLLETTI: -- (Inaudible)? Okay. That's all I have.

5 MR. SARINA: Nathan Sarina, California Public Utilities
6 Commission. I'll get it eventually.

7 MS. COLLETTI: You're funny.

8 BY MR. SARINA:

9 Q. Did you have -- could we -- did you have any interaction at
10 all with the excavator when you arrived on scene or --

11 A. No. The closest I got to the incident scene was just at the
12 top of Geary Boulevard looking down into the smoke and I didn't
13 pursue it any closer than that so, no.

14 Q. And then, I guess, so you're saying you arrived at the top of
15 the Geary Boulevard, was that the -- I guess, where was that with
16 respect to maybe the incident command center or --

17 A. On my transit back to the office to join the OEC Team, that's
18 when I pulled over there to stop, communicate on my phone, be able
19 to stop and talk, and it was in that timeframe, probably 1405,
20 1410. Again, as I was coming back to the office it was in that
21 timeline --

22 Q. Okay. So you weren't heading --

23 A. -- that I pulled up there.

24 Q. Okay. So you weren't heading to the incident scene?

25 A. I wasn't going to the scene per se; I was headed back to the

1 office to be part of the OEC Group.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah. And then, just so I'm clear on the communication, so
4 Bill was -- the way the valve operations for the isolation was
5 communicated, it was pushed out to you and then you pushed it out
6 to Dan and Gerald?

7 A. Gerald initially. They were the two guys, the two journeymen
8 I had onsite that day.

9 Q. Okay. So Bill wasn't pushing out to them because everything
10 was running through you and being communicated to Dan and
11 Gerald --

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. -- for the valving?

14 A. Uh-huh.

15 MR. SARINA: I have no further questions.

16 MS. WEST: This is Kim West, I have no questions.

17 MR. HENDERSON: Thank you.

18 MR. COCHRANE: Mike Cochrane, no further questions.

19 MR. SOUZA: Kevin Souza, no further questions.

20 MS. COLLETTI: Well, on that note, that concludes the
21 interview.

22 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: SAN FRANCISCO GAS RELEASE AND FIRE
 FEBRUARY 6, 2019
 Interview of Rusty Henderson

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA19MR001

PLACE: San Francisco, California

DATE: February 9, 2019

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.


C

Transcriber



National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C. 20594

April 22, 2019

Mr. Rusty Henderson:

Reference: Interview Regarding the February 6, 2019, San Francisco, CA Natural Gas Release and Fire - NTSB case number PLD19MR001

Attached is a transcript of your interview on February 9, 2019 as a part of the on-going investigation of the above referenced accident. Please review the transcript for accuracy and make any necessary editorial changes.

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

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

Please submit replies to me via email no later than **May 27, 2019**.

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



I have no comments to make.



My comments are submitted herewith.



My comments are marked on the attached copy.

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

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation,

Alex C. Colletti

Pipeline Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Railroad, Pipeline, and Hazardous Materials Investigations

