

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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NATURAL GAS-FUELED EXPLOSION *

DURING ROUTINE MAINTENANCE, * Accident No.: PLD21FR002

FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS *

ON JUNE 28, 2021 *

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Interview of: MIKE SULLIVAN, Chief of Police
Farmersville Police Department

McKinney, Texas

Wednesday,
June 30, 2021

APPEARANCES:

RACHEL GUNARATNAM, Hazmat Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:56 p.m. CDT)

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2
3 MS. GUNARATNAM: Good afternoon, my name is Rachael
4 Gunaratnam; I'm a hazmat investigator with the National
5 Transportation Safety Board out of Washington, DC.

6 Today is June 30th, 2021, and the time is 1:56 p.m., Central
7 Daylight Time. We are currently at the Collin County Sherriff's
8 Office in McKinney, Texas. We are here in response to the natural
9 gas incident that occurred on June 28th, 2021, in Farmersville,
10 Texas. And today we are interviewing -- if you could please say
11 your name and --

12 CHIEF SULLIVAN: Police Chief Mike Sullivan, Farmersville
13 Police Department.

14 MS. GUNARATNAM: And if you don't mind, could you spell your
15 name for the transcriber?

16 CHIEF SULLIVAN: Mike is M-I-K-E, Sullivan, S-U-L-L-I-V-A-N.

17 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay, thank you. You're free to have a
18 representative to consult with during your interview, do you want
19 one?

20 CHIEF SULLIVAN: No.

21 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay, and the purpose of this investigation,
22 so you know, is just to improve safety, not to assign fault,
23 blame, or liability. Our sole mission is to improve
24 transportation safety and prevent these accidents from happening
25 again. However, we cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality

1 or immunity from any legal proceedings by other agencies, whether
2 local, state, or federal.

3 You will get a transcript of this interview, so you can
4 review and make any corrections if the transcriber made any, and
5 this transcript will be posted on the public docket. Okay?

6 CHIEF SULLIVAN: Okay.

7 INTERVIEW OF MIKE SULLIVAN

8 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

9 Q. All right, thank you. All right, Chief, if you just list
10 your title, explain to us your professional background, what
11 was -- you know, what have you done over your career?

12 A. Well, currently I'm the police chief and emergency manager
13 for the city of Farmersville. I've been there for 11 years, well,
14 August 2nd of this year will be 11 years. I retired from the
15 Desoto Police Department, I retired as a lieutenant; I worked
16 there for 20 years. Previous to that I was a deputy with Dallas
17 County; previous to that, I was a police officer in Heath, Texas.
18 So, I have a total of 35 years in law enforcement.

19 Q. Great --

20 A. I'm also a volunteer fireman on the Farmersville Fire
21 Department, as well.

22 Q. Okay. So, what kind of training have you had, generally
23 speaking?

24 A. In regards to this, I've had 300 and 400 NIMS training,
25 emergency management training. My education, I have a master's

1 degree --

2 Q. In?

3 A. In criminal justice leadership. I have a plethora of
4 training depending on --

5 Q. What I'm looking for?

6 A. What you're looking for.

7 Q. Do you have any natural gas training?

8 A. Just the bulletins that we get from -- we get a lot of
9 bulletins. We have, obviously, a lot of pipelines that go
10 through, so, majority of the training we have is really written
11 training that we get, and bulletins and stuff that we get from the
12 oil companies.

13 Specifically, you know, we were -- me and the fire chief were
14 talking about it being neat to go to Atmos' Gas City and train
15 with our fire guys. But there's only two full-time, you've got
16 the fire chief and you've got the assistant fire chief, and
17 everybody else is a volunteer. And so, coordinating all that, I
18 mean, it's doable, we could try to get everybody. So, we talked
19 about that last night on the way home from the meeting about --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You know about our training facility
21 in --

22 CHIEF SULLIVAN: Oh, yeah.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

24 CHIEF SULLIVAN: I know about it. And -- but, just doing it
25 and getting it together, but it would be neat to have that. You

1 know, we get a lot of calls too on -- especially summer going to
2 winter, everybody starts putting on their gas heaters and then
3 that smell. And, you know, we have these devices that we use to
4 go in and check the gas -- see how much gas, you know. But quite
5 honestly, unless that thing goes off, we don't know what we're
6 looking for. I'm being honest with you, we don't.

7 There's a meter on that thing, and yeah, it gives us a range,
8 but then you can adjust that meter, you know what I mean? And so,
9 I'm not -- I even talked to Kim about that. I said, you know, do
10 we even have the right, you know, meters to look for that kind of
11 stuff, and he says we do, and, you know, I believe him. He -- it
12 folds out, there's a little -- looks like a microphone thing, and
13 it's -- I guess it's looking for gas particles or whatever.

14 And -- but have we been trained on the use of that and all
15 that? No. But if it goes off, who do we call? We call Atmos.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

17 MS. GUNARATNAM: Right.

18 CHIEF SULLIVAN: You know, and then we back off and we wait
19 for Atmos.

20 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

21 Q. Yeah. So, do you have -- does the Police Department have a
22 gas meter?

23 A. Police Department doesn't, the Fire Department --

24 Q. Fire Department only, okay.

25 A. Yeah.

- 1 Q. You guys never --
- 2 A. No.
- 3 Q. Okay. How many in your department?
- 4 A. In my department currently, we have nine sworn --
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. -- and I have two civilian staff.
- 7 Q. Okay. Do you normally go out on gas incidents?
- 8 A. Generally, no. On this particular call it came out at
- 9 78 -- State Highway 78 in FM20-756. We had the roadway, but
- 10 everything else is county. It's kind of weird, our city limit is
- 11 five point something wide, but we have 24 to, I think, 26 miles of
- 12 roadway that belong to us.
- 13 Q. Yeah.
- 14 A. And it's within the EDJ, extra territorial jurisdiction.
- 15 Q. Oh, okay.
- 16 A. Which all that means is, is in the future, right, if we had
- 17 asked that comes into our city, then we already have the roadway.
- 18 So, when that call came out, we all went, police and fire, because
- 19 of the location, right. But, when Maberry got on the scene,
- 20 first, one of my guys -- the other officer had responding says
- 21 well, I'm going to go ahead and close off 78 and 2756. But we're
- 22 at 78 and 2756 and we don't see nothing. So, I told him to stand
- 23 down, I said let's figure out what we got first before we start
- 24 closing down roadways.
- 25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. And Maberry got on the radio and said hey -- first, I think
2 he said on the tape we're 300 yards west of 78, no, you're about a
3 quarter of a mile.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Right.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And Maberry is, again, just for the
7 record?

8 CHIEF SULLIVAN: Dale Maberry, is the county -- Collin County
9 fire marshal.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

11 CHIEF SULLIVAN: Okay. So, he was on scene and then
12 subsequently to that he says you can disregard fire, there's no
13 fire. And by the time he said that we were all kind of pulling
14 up.

15 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

16 Q. I see. So he wanted to shut down roads?

17 A. No. My officer --

18 Q. Your officer.

19 A. -- that also responded --

20 Q. Oh, okay. Yeah.

21 A. -- started to do that and I said no, let's find out
22 where -- what's going on before we start shutting down roads.

23 Q. Sure.

24 A. And then subsequently, we arrived on scene, but I had cleared
25 him to go handle another call.

1 Q. Okay. Right, okay. So, why don't we start with that, about
2 on June 28th when you first -- how your day started, and just walk
3 us through, you know, how you got the call. Or maybe start with,
4 like, your day -- how did you start your day and then lead us into
5 when you --

6 A. What that Monday?

7 Q. Yeah, Monday morning -- it was Monday afternoon when you
8 probably got the call, but.

9 A. Okay. I got into the office about 8:30, 9:00, just working
10 on some administrative stuff, some reports that I needed to get
11 out. Relatively normal, you know, just getting some stuff out.
12 Whenever the call came out, I guess -- was it around 4:00? I
13 heard the call and jumped up immediately and ran to my squad car
14 and pulled out, and as I was pulling out the Fire Department was
15 pulling out, so I was behind them. It was raining pretty hard,
16 actually, in route to the scene. But just a regular normal day,
17 just working on reports and stuff.

18 Q. Okay. So, you followed the Fire Department to the scene?

19 A. I did.

20 Q. Okay, and then what? You can walk me through the --

21 A. Okay. So, we pull up to the scene, Fire Department -- I
22 think I see AMR coming in behind me. AMR is our -- I'm sorry,
23 it's our ambulance service -- county contracted ambulance service.
24 And we started walking to the scene, and the fire chief -- or
25 somebody's yelling out scene safe. And there was an Atmos guy

1 there, and this is what I think I heard him say, we have it
2 capped, it's already bled off, pointing to that tower thing. It's
3 already capped, it's already bled off, scene safe.

4 So, we're relatively sure the scene is safe. I look down, I
5 see two deceased individuals immediately, it's obvious. I mean,
6 they're checked, I think the fire chief checks them and an AMR
7 guy. Kim, the fire chief, goes to check the -- I think he's a
8 black gentleman in a green jumpsuit next to a fence, and he's
9 checking him, and he gets back up, and when he got back up and he
10 faced me -- to walk back towards me I said -- I was fixing to ask
11 you got a pulse? But then I see the guy move.

12 Now he's moving, but he's not with us, you know what I mean?
13 He's not responsive, he's just kind of doing -- I mean, he's -- I
14 don't know if he's in shock, I don't know if he has internal
15 injuries, whatever. I said hey, man, we need to get -- needed to
16 load and go with him. We need to go. And so, the medic comes, he
17 evaluates him, he needs to go get a backboard so he's going to run
18 and get a backboard. He says that I'm going to go get a
19 backboard.

20 And then I see a Collin County deputy. Now when that Collin
21 County deputy got there, I don't know. But initially, walking
22 into the scene I didn't see him, but he was there. And then I see
23 Dale, and I said what do we got Dale? He goes well, apparently
24 there was an explosion and -- but there's no fire, there's no
25 nothing. I'm looking at one of the dead guys and you can see he

1 has black soot, or what appears to be black soot on his face. The
2 other guy, I don't recall really seeing his face. Although, there
3 looked like to be some brain matter about three to four feet away
4 from his head, so, that was obvious.

5 Oh, when I -- also, when I pulled up initially there was a
6 guy -- I think he's a Hispanic male, I don't know, or -- that or
7 he was really burned. But he was walking towards the ambulance,
8 and they got -- they were scooting him, you know, walking him up
9 into the ambulance at that point.

10 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

11 Q. Was he in a green jumpsuit as well?

12 A. No, it looked like he had, like, a t-shirt on and jeans.

13 Q. But the first gentleman that got up, he was in a green
14 jumpsuit?

15 A. He never got up.

16 Q. Oh.

17 A. He was moving.

18 Q. You could tell? Okay.

19 A. Yeah, he was like this, but he never -- and then he would
20 come and go out again, and then he would move like that, I mean,
21 he'd just kind of go in and out. He never would talk, he was
22 nonresponsive, but they collar on his neck, they got him on the
23 backboard and got him to the ambulance.

24 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay.

25 CHIEF SULLIVAN: And so, then I looked at Maberry again, I

1 said who you got coming? And he goes well, I'm notifying the
2 Sherriff's Office since we have two signal 27s, which is -- means
3 dead people, and I don't know their protocols. So -- and
4 obviously the Sherriff's thought they would handle it, but they
5 got called for assistance, so, that -- the rest of that you know.

6 But -- and that was pretty much it. The young
7 gentleman -- everything's going on, I noticed a young gentleman
8 kind of, like, leaning like this over -- and how I'm describing,
9 he's kind of leaned over with his hands on his knees and he's
10 obviously upset.

11 MS. GUNARATNAM: Uh-huh.

12 CHIEF SULLIVAN: I don't know if he's hurt, I don't know
13 what. But I walk over there, he was a Hispanic gentleman, I think
14 he had, like, a brown t-shirt, blue jeans, and he's obviously
15 upset. I said are you okay, are you injured? And he goes I'm
16 okay, how's Ryan? And he just kept repeating that. And I said
17 son, I don't know Ryan, I don't know anybody's name here, we do
18 have two dead folks here. We have -- and he just kind of cried a
19 little bit, and he goes we didn't do anything different. We did
20 the same thing we've always done; we didn't do anything different,
21 we done the same thing we always done, we didn't -- I mean, he
22 says it again and again.

23 And I said all right, Buddy. I said just kind of relax, take
24 some breaths, you know, and -- but I'm thinking in my head -- I'm
25 thinking oh, this cat probably needs to go to the hospital too,

1 and I think later on he was -- I was told he was taken to the
2 hospital.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And that's what the kid who was bent
4 over was saying?

5 CHIEF SULLIVAN: Yeah, and my understanding is -- I think he
6 was in the track hoe, and he says we were backing it out.
7 Whatever that orange plunger thing is what I understood him to be
8 talking about, and we were just backing it out and then boom, it
9 happened.

10 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay.

11 CHIEF SULLIVAN: Or he didn't say boom. It -- he said it
12 happened.

13 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

14 Q. Did you see him get out of the backhoe?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Or you just --

17 A. No.

18 Q. -- you believe that's what his job was?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. No, I did not see him get out of the backhoe.

22 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay.

23 CHIEF SULLIVAN: At that point, he was on the, like,
24 northside fence wall. So, that --

25 MS. GUNARATNAM: Northside fence wall.

1 CHIEF SULLIVAN: You know that area's a -- and here's the
2 tank and where the two bodies are, and the guy next to the fence,
3 he was up by the north wall and, you know, he was just upset.

4 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay.

5 CHIEF SULLIVAN: At that point, I looked at Dale and I said
6 you got it? Because really, this is a county scene. As I was
7 leaving, I called Nick and I said hey, we're already getting hit
8 with media. So, he goes yeah, we are too, he goes I'm heading out
9 there. And I said all right, I said I got -- I still got calls
10 holding my city, let me clear some of that out, I'm here until
11 midnight anyhow. I had to work for an officer that needed -- she
12 had emergency leave, she had to go check on a family member, so I
13 was there until midnight. I said let me get this squared away and
14 I'll come back, I'll see you later on out there, and he said all
15 right. And that's it, I left.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Nick?

17 MS. GUNARATNAM: What time --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sorry.

19 MS. GUNARATNAM: One second.

20 CHIEF SULLIVAN: Nick Bristow (ph.).

21 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

22 Q. Nick Bristow?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Oh, yeah, okay.

25 A. Chief Bristow.

1 Q. Chief Bristow, okay. So, you left around what time?

2 A. Oh, good lord. I can't tell you a specific time, though,
3 they should show my clear time --

4 Q. Right.

5 A. -- on the call sheet. I think I maybe was there 15 minutes,
6 maybe 20 minutes. I wasn't there long.

7 Q. Oh, okay. So, you arrived soon -- so, you arrived with the
8 Fire Department, and then you stayed, helped the injured for --

9 A. Really didn't help the injured, I'm just telling you what I
10 visually observed.

11 Q. Observed, okay. Well --

12 A. I'm standing there, I'm talking to Dale -- you know, I'm
13 there but there's really nothing for me to do. You know, if this
14 was in my -- if this was on my city or the county wanted me to, I
15 could set up incident command and start backing everybody out and
16 triaging what we can -- and they did that.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. This just really wasn't my scene. And so, you know,
19 Dale -- I'm thinking all right, you're the fire marshal dude, I'm
20 sure you got your people in route. And I said you got -- he goes
21 yeah, I'll notify the county, which I interpreted to mean all
22 right, you got your people in route --

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. -- because this is you all's incident. And so, at that point
25 -- now, if I talked to Nick and he goes hey, can you set up

1 command at -- then I would've. But, you know, the county
2 responded, and they eventually did that.

3 Q. Right. So, how -- approximately how long were you on scene?

4 A. I'm guess 15, 20 minutes, maybe.

5 Q. Okay. So, all -- everything you explained was all within
6 that timespan?

7 A. Yes, ma'am.

8 Q. Okay. And then you left because --

9 A. We still had calls holding in the city.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I think I cleared there and went on a call -- no, I didn't,
12 because by the time that I cleared and got back on the road, the
13 call was taken care of. It was -- then they dispatched my guy to
14 the county to cover the county on an accident call, that's what it
15 was. I went back to the office to do what I was doing because I
16 had a report that I had to get knocked out.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. And -- yeah, so, I went back to the station.

19 Q. Okay. So, okay, backing up. So, you -- when you were on
20 scene with the Fire Department, was the fire marshal already
21 there?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. So, then you knew he was to take the lead?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Yeah. When you saw the scene, what did you observe the

1 pipeline -- all the equipment?

2 A. Okay. As you walk into the fence, I see a track
3 hoe -- that's what I call it, I don't know what you all call it.
4 But there was a track hoe over there to the right, say on the
5 southwest corner of that fence, there's a brown pole-looking thing
6 that's in front of that track hoe. I noticed an orange -- or it
7 has orange ends -- like, I call it a plunger, I don't know what it
8 is. But -- pig line, whatever -- that's -- I learned that later,
9 but I guess that that they clean with it. And the pipeline, I
10 don't know how big it is -- wide or whatever, the door is closed
11 on it, I guess that's where that thing was fed through it. This
12 is all assumptions on -- this is what I'm just looking at.

13 Q. Uh-huh.

14 A. Like, the Atmos guy told us, you know, that it had already
15 burned off, there's, like, a tower thing, and, I guess, that's
16 where gas or pressure can escape, that's what I interpreted -- or
17 that's what I thought he meant. And there were other pipelines,
18 and I remember seeing two Atmos guys there, and, of course, the
19 victims, where they were laying, which was basically, like, at
20 that big tube thing that they were cleaning. They were basically
21 laying in front of that, but maybe -- I'm guess here, but maybe
22 ten feet away from it. So, it appears like something came out and
23 blew them is my assumption.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And then the black gentleman next to the fence in the green

1 jumpsuit, eventually the kid over there on the northside of the
2 fence that was upset. That's it.

3 Q. And the Atmos people, were you able to identify those that
4 were already on scene? Were they wearing Atmos --

5 A. They had Atmos shirts, yeah.

6 Q. Shirts? Okay, and were they the ones upset? Were -- did you
7 talk to them?

8 A. Did not.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Conceptually, you know, we're all upset because you're
11 walking into a scene, and then you can look at the Atmos guys and
12 they look -- you know, they look upset, they look, I mean they --
13 but they had their stuff together. I mean, you know, one of the
14 guys, I can't tell you who, did say -- I think I heard it's
15 capped, and it's already bled off to let us know that the scene
16 was safe. Because, obviously, that's a major concern for us as
17 we're walking in. But after that I didn't have any conversation
18 with any of those guys. The main people I talked to was Dale,
19 and, you know, basically asking him yeah, you got it, you know,
20 and you got your folks in route is kind of what I mean by that.
21 Yeah, that was it.

22 County -- I remember the county deputy -- there was that
23 county deputy, he did get on the radio and say we had two
24 confirmed 27s, which is dead folks. That's going to trigger
25 something here where they're going to have to call crime scene,

1 they're going to have to call everybody.

2 Q. Okay, great. Did you smell anything when you were on the
3 scene?

4 A. There was a slight hint of gas smell.

5 Q. Did you see anyone monitoring -- gas monitoring?

6 A. What would that look like?

7 Q. Like those little meters you were talking about earlier?

8 A. Doing that? Not that I noticed.

9 Q. Okay. So, after you left the scene, where did you go?

10 A. Went back to the office.

11 Q. Okay. Did you have to process anything related to this
12 incident?

13 A. Nuh-huh.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. No, it's not my scene.

16 Q. Right, okay. Oh, okay, right. So, it was transferred then
17 over to Collin County Sherriff's, okay.

18 A. Technically it was Dale Maberry and Collin County Fire
19 Marshal's Office.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. What I interpret from all that or maybe what you should
22 interpret from all that is that the Collin County Fire Marshal's
23 Office doesn't have all the resources that the Sherriff's Office
24 has. So, they're automatically -- I would too. I would simply
25 call their crime scene if I needed pictures and I needed people to

1 help secure that scene because I didn't have enough people, or I
2 didn't have the resources for crime scene. So, I would've done
3 the same.

4 Q. Okay, great. So, when you arrived on scene, when you
5 described earlier everything you'd seen, was that in chronological
6 order?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. Do you guys have any natural gas
9 procedures for the -- your department?

10 A. You'd have to ask the fire chief.

11 Q. Do they take the lead on gas incidents?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. So, when a call comes in for a gas incident, they --

14 A. Automatically it's the Fire Department.

15 Q. Okay. So, when you get the 911 calls, does it go straight to
16 the Fire Department or do you guys --

17 A. Fire Department.

18 Q. Fire Department, okay. And then they request you or --

19 A. Right.

20 Q. Yeah, okay. That's --

21 A. So, if they need help with keeping crowds back or traffic,
22 they'll call us.

23 Q. Oh, okay. So, dispatch for Farmersville is through the Fire
24 Department.

25 A. Dispatch for Farmersville for police and fire is through the

1 Sherriff's Office, they dispatch for both.

2 Q. Oh, okay. All right, and was -- do you know how many -- do
3 you, by chance, know how many 911 calls came in?

4 A. For this incident?

5 Q. For this incident.

6 A. I have not a clue.

7 MS. GUNARATNAM: Okay. So, that's how you guys function.

8 Do you want to go ahead with your follow ups?

9 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

10 Q. Just to clarify, when you walked on the scene, just recap for
11 us who you saw on scene when you got there? Not counting the Fire
12 Department that you came with or the ambulance --

13 A. I just -- I remember as I'm walking up there's two Atmos
14 guys.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Somebody is yelling scene safe; he makes that statement.

17 Q. One of the Atmos guys?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. The Atmos guys were declaring it safe?

20 A. Yeah, and you want to walk through the whole thing again?

21 Q. No, just recap of who all was there before you.

22 A. Who was there? Scene safe, and at that point I see

23 Dale Maberry --

24 Q. He was already there?

25 A. He was in there.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I see the county -- I look -- now, whether he walked up
3 behind me or he was already there, I can't tell you, but there was
4 a county deputy. I don't know who he was. And I said -- or no,
5 he just keyed up the mic, says yeah, we have two -- or he tells
6 me, he said we have two 27s, I go yup, and he then keyed up the
7 mic, told dispatch that we had two confirmed 27s. And --

8 Q. That happened before you recognized the gentleman who was
9 injured but still alive? The one you said was against the fence?

10 A. That happened before, yeah.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Yeah, that was on the tail end of everything. I looked over
13 there and I was thinking about who's that? You know, so, I walk
14 over there to see if he's okay, because they had just loaded up
15 the guy in the green jumpsuit, the black gentleman.

16 Q. Uh-huh.

17 A. And then I look over there and I see him, so, I walk over to
18 see. So, that was after, yeah.

19 Q. And then just -- do you remember any equipment running when
20 you got on scene? Was the backhoe running or the trucks running,
21 any equipment making noises?

22 A. Nuh-huh.

23 Q. The flare, was it -- do you remember the flare operating?

24 A. Was the -- is the flare the big tower?

25 Q. It's the tall -- Uh-huh -- that burns off natural gas --

1 A. No, it wasn't doing anything. I don't remember the track
2 hoe; I don't think it was on.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I don't remember hearing, really, anything.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

6 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

7 Q. Have you ever responded to any gas incidents?

8 A. Oh, certainly, on the fire side and the police side over my
9 career, yeah.

10 Q. What type?

11 A. Usually in a house.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. People smell it. Probably the second highest one would be
14 somebody broke a gas main.

15 Q. Have you seen anything like this?

16 A. No.

17 Q. No? Okay.

18 A. We work a lot of wrecks.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So, sometimes invariably with wrecks.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. You know, they'll hit a gas main or break a gas main. And
23 what we do is we just keep people out of the area, and we call
24 Atmos.

25 Q. Right, okay. That's your normal --

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 Q. Yeah. But any procedures will be with the Fire Department?
- 3 A. That's correct.
- 4 Q. Okay. I'll be requesting those. And when you do respond
- 5 with the Fire Department to a gas incident, is it usually a
- 6 single -- have you done multiple incidents at once like -- or
- 7 like more than one house? Have you ever had to
- 8 do -- respond -- or is it single houses that have had a release?
- 9 A. I think there's been a time or two in my career where it
- 10 involved a house where a gas main broke and we evacuated that
- 11 house --
- 12 Q. Okay.
- 13 A. -- and maybe a neighbor or two.
- 14 Q. Okay.
- 15 A. That's --
- 16 Q. And the police, do they deal with security or evacuations?
- 17 A. Usually, we deal with the parameter and keeping them off
- 18 Atmos and the fire guys.
- 19 Q. Right, okay.
- 20 A. And generally, when the Fire Department runs together -- runs
- 21 into them, they call Atmos, and they wait.
- 22 Q. Right.
- 23 A. And they really don't do anything with the leak or -- they
- 24 don't address the leak; they don't address any of that.
- 25 Q. Right. So, you don't -- okay, yeah. So, you work with the

1 Fire Department in that capacity. And so, over the span of your
2 career, have you had any training with Atmos at all?

3 A. Not that I can remember.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Not to say it's never happened, you know, sometimes we have
6 in-service training. There's been Oncor people, there's been
7 people that have presented, but nothing that I can specifically
8 tell you today, yeah. But I kind of vaguely remember that.

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. I've been doing this a minute.

11 Q. Okay. So, just going back to the incident, you said it was
12 raining on the way to --

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. How long had it been raining that hard?

15 A. It was off and on most of the day --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- from what I recall. But when we got there, it was
18 raining, it seemed like, initially, but it just stopped.

19 Q. When you arrived on scene?

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 MS. GUNARATNAM: Oh, okay. Did it start -- and it started
22 raining later on, I remember. Okay. So, yeah, I think --

23 Do you have any other questions?

24 BY MS. GUNARATNAM:

25 Q. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us, like, you may

1 have observed on scene when you came? You've told us so far where
2 all the equipment was laid out, and you said that the trap door
3 was shut when you came on scene. Did you notice anything else?

4 A. That plunger thing was next to the fence.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. The -- whatever, I don't know what it's called, but it was
7 next to the fence.

8 Q. Did you see anything next to the deceased -- any equipment
9 next to the deceased?

10 A. Nuh-huh.

11 Q. Okay. Did you -- you said you only -- did you actually go up
12 to them?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I saw them from a distance.

16 Q. Right, okay.

17 A. It was obvious. And I'm saying distance, maybe from me to
18 you, maybe me to that door.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. That's probably how far I was away.

21 Q. Okay, and did you notice where that steel bar was exactly in
22 comparison to the --

23 A. Like, here's the track hoe, and here's the tube or whatever.
24 It's like -- I can't recall if it was between the two guys on the
25 ground.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But it seemed like it was in, like, in front of
3 that -- between that.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. If that makes sense.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. I don't know if it was in between them, or it might've been,
8 like, here's the two guys and it might've been further down
9 towards the track hoe, I can't recall that. But I just remember
10 seeing some brown bar.

11 Q. Good, okay. I think that's -- were -- the bodies weren't
12 covered at that point, right?

13 A. Nuh-huh.

14 MS. GUNARATNAM: Oh, okay, so -- okay. All right, okay. I
15 think that's all I got.

16 You're good? Yeah.

17 Thank you for -- and we'll stop the interview now.

18 (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
 DURING ROUTINE MAINTENANCE,
 FARMERSVILLE, TEXAS
 ON JUNE 28, 2021
 Interview of Mike Sullivan

ACCIDENT NO.: PLD21FR002

PLACE: McKinney, Texas

DATE: June 30, 2021

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber