Interview of Thomas Morgan – 4/5/01
BEFORE THE
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

FIELD INTERVIEWS

EL PASO NATURAL GAS COMPANY

NO. DCA00-MP009

Kayser Center I
1st Floor Conference Room
100 N. Stanton
El Paso, Texas

Thursday,
April 5, 2001

The interview began at 2:40 p.m.

Interview of:

THOMAS P. MORGAN

APPEARANCES:

On behalf of the Witness:

SANFORD M. SAUNDERS, JR., ESQ.
Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, L.L.P.
1333 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 887-4574

BENNIE BARNES
Manager, West Pipeline Corrosion Services
El Paso Corp.
5151 E. 9th Street, Suite 1680
Tucson, Arizona 85711
(520) 663-4249

Executive Court Reporters, Inc.
(301) 565-0064
APPEARANCES: (cont.)

On behalf of the NTSB:

RAVINDA M. CHHATRE
CLIFF ZIMMERMAN
Accident Investigators
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20594
(202) 314-6644

On behalf of the U.S. DOT:

RICHARD J. LOPEZ, Sr. Engineer
AGUSTIN LOPEZ, Engineer
U.S. Department of Transportation
Office of Pipeline Safety
Research and Special Programs Administration
2320 LaBranch, Suite 2100
Houston, Texas 77004
(713) 718-3956

Executive Court Reporters, Inc.
(301) 565-0064
INDEX

WITNESSES: THOMAS P. MORGAN

EXAMINATION 4
MR. ZIMMERMAN: I am Cliff Zimmerman with the NTSB. I am the investigator in charge of the accident that occurred on August the 19th, 2000, on the El Paso Natural Gas line south of Carlsbad. We are here today to gather some information related to the accident that will help these accidents be prevented in the future. And the witness that we are going to talk with right now is Tom Morgan.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. ZIMMERMAN:

Q Tom, would you state your full name?

A It's Thomas Phillip Morgan.

Q Okay. And the business address where we can reach you at this time?

A P.O. Box 1492, El Paso, Texas 79978.

Q Okay. Street address where you might be working at this time? Okay.

A I don't --

MR. R. LOPEZ: 100 North Stanton.

THE WITNESS: Yeah, 100 North Stanton.

BY MR. ZIMMERMAN:

Q Okay. Your position with the company, Tom?

A Vice President of Operations.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: I'd like to take this opportunity now and let the other people at the table introduce

Executive Court Reporters, Inc.
(301) 565-0064
themselves so you know who is going to be questioning today.

MR. CHHATRE: Ravi Chattre, NTSB.


MR. A. LOPEZ: Agustin Lopez, Office of Pipeline Safety.

MR. BARNES: Bennie Barnes, El Paso Corporation.

MR. SAUNDERS: Sandy Saunders from Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld as the personal representative for the interviewee.

BY MR. ZIMMERMAN:

Q Tom, can you give us some background on your positions with El Paso Gas?

A Sure. I started with El Paso in 1975 as a PROCEED \textit{qM fmm} Engineer which was an introductory level engineer right out of college. This was an intensive training program. I was in that for 12 months. Came in here as a Process Engineer in the Gas Conditioning Section. And stayed in Gas Conditioning up until 1985. I was promoted to Senior Engineer during that time.

1985 I moved to Farmington as the Technical Training Coordinator. And then in '87 I was moved to Chaco Cost Center as the Chaco Cost Center Manager.

'88 I was moved to Amarillo as the Amarillo Area Manager. '91 I was moved to El Paso as the Manager of Field

Executive Court Reporters, Inc.
(301) 565-0064
Services. Then I was made director of that in that position. And then in 1998 I was moved to Midland as the Director of Midland Division. And stayed there until 1999 when I became the Vice President of Transmission Operations. Q Okay. Could you give us a little background then on your education and training?

A Okay. I have a B.S. Degree from New Mexico State University in Chemical Engineering and also a Master's Degree in Chemical Engineering.

Q Okay. And training that you've had, some highlights of training that you've had with El Paso Natural Gas Company?

A Attended various management courses and some of the technical training aspects that they've put out. I can't remember any specific courses. They covered pipeline operations, compressor operations, things of that nature.

Q In your current position would you give us some background the responsibilities that you've having in your position?

A Basically responsible for the operations and maintenance of the pipeline system.

Q Okay. Well, let's start out with --

A I mean I have a level of people that report to me that I depend on to do that work. I don't specifically do
Q Give us a little more detail on what some of those maintenance and operations responsibilities are?

(Witness and counsel confer.)

A We maintain the integrity, we maintain the compliance with all federal and state regulations. As to the operations, and that covers both environmental, you know DOT regulations and state regulations. Some of the states have their own Department of Transportation that we also maintain compliance with. We make sure we confirm, you know, maintain those regs. And then making sure that all of the operations are handled in a safe manner.

Q Okay. Does the group that reports to you have any responsibilities for corrosion control?

A Yes, as part of the integrity program.

Q Okay. How is that responsibility carried out? What level do your people carry that out?

A Well, I mean it starts from the technician all the way up to the director and then to me.

Q Okay.

A You have a technician who answers to a manager. Then the manager answers to a director and the director answers to me. Do you know where the responsibility lies for carrying out the DOT regulations?
A All of those same individuals.
Q Part 195 of the Federal Code of Regulations, Part 453, states the following, so I might as well read it then that will make it a lot easier to answer this question. 
"The corrosion control procedures required by Part 192.605(b)(2) include those of design, installation, operations and maintenance of Cathodic protection systems. They must be carried out by or under the direction of a person qualified in pipeline corrosion control methods."

And I'm wondering how El Paso complies with that rule as far as a person qualified in pipeline corrosion control methods?

A Well, that's going to be your people. Bob Babnick is one of them. But some of the technicians have similar qualifications and work directly for the Area Managers. They are qualified in pipeline corrosion control methods. Yet they answer to an individual like Bob. Or go to that individual for consultation on individual issues.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Okay. I'm going to pass the questioning to Ravi at this time.

BY MR. CHHATRE:
Q Okay. Tom, I want to start with the Roswell incident, 1996 circa, the pipeline internal corrosion rupture, fire, accident. Are you familiar with that incident?
Yes, I've heard about it.

Are you familiar with the report that was issued as a result of that accident?

I've seen it. It was quite a while ago, yes.

What were your responsibilities at that time when the accident happened?

I think at that time I was the Director of the Midland Division.

As a result of that accident what changes, if any, did you make to your operations, maintenance of testing procedures?

With respect to in the Midland Division?

In the Midland Division because that's what you were responsible for.

Right. I think we became a little more sensitive to operations similar to what we had in Roswell, and that was where we had production coming in, you know, directly into the main line, as far as watching those spots, connections. There were no connections. That can't happen. But as far as any monumental changes, I don't think there were any.

And how many producers or suppliers were feeding to line 1103, 1110 and 1100 at that time?

You know, you'd asked me to gather that information and I've got it upstairs. I don't have it with me right now.
Okay, so you can provide that.

Five or six or something like that.

Okay.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Can we go off the record just for a minute?

(Discussion off the record.)

MR. CHHATRE: Okay, back on the record.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q Tom, to clarify my earlier question, the producers or suppliers for lines 1103, 1110 and 1100 do you have or do you know the producers or supplies that fed into these lines between Keystone Station and valve six just prior to the river?

A Yes. I have a list of those that I can provide you.

Q Okay. Do you recall if any one of those producers you guys classified as the sweet gas or sour gas?

A They were always sweet gas producers.

Q Okay. Between Roswell and you leaving the Midland area do you have an analysis that would show the moisture content for those producers and suppliers?

A I'm going to have to -- You confused me. Are you back on the 1300 line? When you said Roswell.

Q I'm referring to 13 -- No, post-Roswell incidence and before you left the Midland was it Region or Division.
Okay.

Q During your tenure only in the Midland Division do you have the analysis that will show the moisture content of the various producers that fed to line 1300 -- I'm sorry, line 1103, 1100 and 1110?

A Okay. Can we go off just a second?

MR. CHHATRE: Off the record, please.

(Discussion off the record.)

MR. CHHATRE: Back on the record.

THE WITNESS: In answer to your question on the moisture contents of the lines for 1103 and 1110, we may have some historic records for some of the producers but not all of them.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q Okay. During your tenure in the Midland Division post-Roswell incidence and before you left Midland for line 1103, 1110 and 1100 were you having any internal corrosion problems on any of those three lines that you are aware of?

A Not that I am aware of.

Q And what kind of internal corrosion monitoring you guys are doing at that time, again during the same time frame?

A During that time frame we, any time we had a bell hole inspection or any time that we cut into the pipe we would examine the internal surface for any indications of internal corrosion.
corrosion. All of the gas was monitored as far as quality
for water content, H₂S, CO₂, you know. So it's similar to
what we were doing everywhere else.

(Witness and counsel confer.)

A That's right. Thank you. He reminded me that we
did also run cleaning pigs from time to time. And we did
blow the drip down there in that area.

Q Okay. Between Keystone and valve six just --

A East.

Q -- east of Pecos River, that segment of line, and
again I said east of Pecos River, really the valve number
six, that segment of 1103 and 1110 were those lines piggable
during your tenure?

A They were piggable from about 11 miles west of
Keystone to valve six.

Q And were they piggable both for cleaning pig and
smart pig or just for cleaning pig?

A Just for cleaning pig.

Q On various transmission lines under your new
responsibility as the vice president how do you assure the
quality of gas that's going through these various
transmission lines?

A We have chromatographs to monitor hydrocarbon and CO₂
content.

Q Then we have various equipment to monitor the water content.

We have added additional gas quality monitoring equipment
Executive Court Reporters, Inc.
(301) 565-0064
and upgraded existing monitoring equipment.
Q And where it is done, what I'm saying where that is done is it a certain distance that you monitor each, so many feet, so many miles or is it --
A Most of these are picked up at the point of receipt, okay. And then because we have receipt points, that are smaller ones we do have some locations throughout the division that we would get gross samples, okay, or an average sample, whatever you want to call it.
Q So when you say receipt point are these the producers feeding your lines?
A Right. Places that we received gas --
Q Okay.
A -- are the receipt points. So it would be a producer or another pipeline company or potentially a well.
Q Now, is that analysis done on the gas that is feeding your lines or is that analysis done on the gas that is going to your lines?
A On the gas at the receipt points it's gas that's going through the meter to our lines.
Q To your lines, okay.
A On the other points it's gas that's in the line going through a compressor station.
Q And I guess the gas that's going through your line now how often the gas is analyzed, again for H₂S, CO₂, water?
A The H₂S I think is continuous as you know, as
Water is monitored on a continuous basis. 

Where is there a chromatograph, except that in the water. It's just depending on the various cycle times for the equipment.

Q So H2S and water are done continuously pretty much?

A Right.

Q And what about CO2?

A Well, the chromatographs, you know, they have to catch the sample and then there's a six minute period that they have to analyze it.

Q So every six minutes there's a cycle for that?

A Or whatever the cycle is, to determine hydrocarbon content and that the gas is within tariff specifications.

Q Right. And how often, not how often, how far apart the sample points are typically on lines, or they vary from line to line?

A Right. They vary from where, you know, where the central point is that we decided to try the sampling.

Q And on line 1103, 1110 only, those two lines, between Keystone Compressor Stations and this time east of Pecos River do you have any sampling points on that segment of these two lines?

A I'm not sure. But I think there is a sampling point at Keystone and at the NGPL interconnect point.

Q That's Keystone, before the gas enters the Keystone Compressor Station or after it leaves?

A On its way out I think is where the sampling is...
1 done.
2 Q Okay. Is there a sampling station before the gas enters the Pecos River Compression Station?
3 A I don't think there is. There is a sampling point on the station or one of the receipt points between there but there's nothing as far as on the pipeline itself.
4 Q What is the next sampling station then if not the Pecos River? Again on line 1103 and 1110?
5 A I think there is one at Pecos River Station.
6 Q Oh, there is one?
7 A Yeah. But you said east of Pecos River.
8 Q Right, right.
9 A So, yeah. I think there is a station at Pecos River that does — it's either Pecos River or Old Station Number 1. It's one of those two places.
10 Q And would that segment fall in Midland Division?
11 A Yes.
12 Q So during your tenure in Midland Division did you see any difference in the gas quality or do you remember any difference?
13 A I mean the Btu varies from day to day.
14 Q Okay.
15 A But I don't remember any large CO₂ or H₂O variations. Or H — well, the H₂S stays very low all the time.
MR. CHHATRE: Okay. No more questions. Thanks.

BY MR. R. LOPEZ:

Q Tom, refresh my memory. I sketched this out but I don't recall where the interconnect to the 1110 line is. Is it upstream or downstream, major point, is it still made there?

A Yeah, the interconnect to 1110?

Q No, no. The 1110 I think I've got that pretty well. The 1100.

(Referring to whiteboard drawing.)

A This would be the 1110.

Q Yeah.

A 1103. And then the 1100 comes in about here.

Q Are they interconnected though?

A Well, there was --

Q At one time was there a tie-in?

A This is the river?

Q Yeah. That's a rough sketch.

A No, no, no, I'm just trying to make sure I understand.

Q Yeah.

A (Witness draws.) Something like that I think. There was a crossover.

Q And when was this -- Would the failure spot be in here?
A With the failure spot being here.

Q Okay. And that was like that at the time of the accident?

A Yes. And it has been removed since.

MR. R. LOPEZ: Okay.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: And exactly what has been removed?

MR. R. LOPEZ: The interconnect.

MR. CHHATRE: The tie-in.

THE WITNESS: The tie-in or the crossover.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Okay.

BY MR. R. LOPEZ:

Q So that the liquids to the 1103 could have also come from the 1100 line conceivably?

A Possibly, yeah. Depending on whether that was opened or closed.

Q I mean if there's no connect there's no way that would?

A Right.

Q This way opens a possibility, we don't know that it did or did not. Okay.

MR. R. LOPEZ: I don't think I have any other questions, Tom. That pretty well covered it.

MR. A. LOPEZ: I don't have any questions.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Bennie?

MR. BARNES: No questions.
MR. ZIMMERMAN: I've got one more.

BY MR. ZIMMERMAN:

Q How does El Paso ensure that recommendations made as a result of an accident investigation get implemented in the company?

A You want currently or in the past?

Q Well, let's start with the past and then come up to the present.

A Okay.

Q Yeah.

A I just wanted to be sure.

Q Yeah.

A I mean in the past those recommendations were generally made, you know, after an investigation was made that information came back up to the officers and directors. And then they would make a decision on how the operations would be changed and then they would go back and implement it, you know, through the managers down to the technicians.

Now it's done now, it's still very similar except that we will probably well, we now put out e-mail alerts to let everybody know, okay. Rather than having it word of mouth and down, go directly, once it's agreed upon the action that we're going to take then we send out an alert to ensure that it's changed. This is much faster than a location meeting.

Q Okay. And --
And depending on what that is, if it needs to be a modification of the O&M Manual that it's changed in the O&M Manual, and it's changed in the Corrosion Manual or whatever manual it pertains to.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Thank you. Any more questions, Ravi?

MR. CHHATRE: I have none.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Anyone else?

(No response.)

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Okay, thank you very much, Tom. Appreciate your time today.

This interview is concluded.

(Whereupon, at 3:06 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

CASE TITLE: Field Interviews: El Paso Natural Gas Company;
Witness: Thomas P. Morgan
DOCKET NO: No. DCA00-MP009
HEARING DATE: April 5, 2001
LOCATION: El Paso, Texas

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately on the tapes and notes reported by me at the interviews in the above case before the National Transportation Safety Board, and that this is a complete and accurate transcript of the testimony included herein as prepared by me.

Date: April 9, 2001

Raymond M. Vetter
Official Reporter on behalf of Executive Court Reporters

Executive Court Reporters, Inc.
(301) 565-0064