

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

* * * * *

Investigation of:

CARMICHAEL, MISSISSIPPI ACCIDENT

*
*
*
* Docket No.: DCA-08-MP-001
*
*
*

* * * * *

Interview of: JIM GONYEAU

Enterprise Pipeline
Liquid Control Center
Houston, TX

Friday,
November 2, 2007

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to Notice,
at 3:35 p.m.

BEFORE: STEPHEN M. JENNER
National Transportation Safety Board

APPEARANCES:

STEPHEN M. JENNER
National Transportation Safety Board

JEFF MYERS
Regional Manager
Liquid Control
EPCO, Inc.

GREG CHAPMAN
Manager, Liquid Control

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Jim Gonyeau: By Mr. Jenner	4

I N T E R V I E W

(3:35 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. JENNER: Okay, it's 3:35, and we're continuing with
4 interviews. And if we can go around the room again, I'm Steve
5 Jenner with the NTSB.

6 MR. GONYEAU: Jim Gonyeau, Dixie Pipeline.

7 MR. MYERS: Jeff Myers, EPCO Incorporated.

8 MR. CHAPMAN: Greg Chapman, EPCO Incorporated.

9 MR. JENNER: Okay.

10 BY MR. JENNER:

11 Q. Okay, I'd like to find out about your philosophy and
12 your program of training pipeline controllers, so let me just
13 start with you, and how do you approach training new pipeline
14 people to become pipeline controllers?

15 A. Stephen, it helps when the person you're training has
16 field experience. A lot of your nomenclature and everything else
17 comes into play. You don't have to start from square one.
18 Specifically for Bryan, he came with a little bit -- a year of
19 field experience, so that helped a lot.

20 What we'll normally do is start them off with the
21 necessary manuals, the procedures, the rules and regulations
22 governing the safe operation of the pipeline, and as we continue
23 along, they'll do that in conjunction with on-the-job observations
24 of the individual who's training them at the time. They'll sit
25 with a senior dispatcher and receive the majority of their

1 training. In Bryan's instance, I sat with him as well. I did
2 that as a scheduler/OQ officer from Dixie at that time, and my
3 boss's name was Gary Bryant (ph.). Gary also was part of the OQ
4 process with Bryan. We'll do a mixture of the manuals, which I've
5 mentioned, the on-the-job training. We have a Stoner (ph.)
6 software application. What the Stoner software application is a
7 physical pipeline that's brought up on a computer screen. He'll
8 have rates, pressures, flows. He'll have vessels, he'll have
9 different scenarios that you can actually set up in the
10 application, and you can create leaks with alarms. You can create
11 leaks without alarms. And it's the tester's responsibility to be
12 able to have an understanding, first of all, such as discharge
13 pressures, flow rates, and once they have a feel for that, you sit
14 them in the simulator and see how they respond. In Bryan's case,
15 he was put on a simulator probably six weeks after he walked into
16 the control center. In that first six weeks, he was with senior
17 dispatchers and myself and Gary, and just more or less rounding
18 off the rough edges, if you will, on his training. When he took
19 the OQ, Bryan did well. He passed, but that was -- that occurred
20 in March. It was another three months before we actually let
21 Bryan off on his own. So even though he passed the simulation, we
22 continued with the on-the-job training, and also with the --
23 anything we could throw at him. We just tried to -- one of our
24 philosophies is that we teach them to err on the side of caution.
25 It's easier to shut down a pipeline in error than leave it running

1 and try to explain why you didn't do something. And Bryan, like
2 the other ones that we've trained in the past, that's foremost in
3 their thinking, "Yeah, I spotted something. Now what do I do?"
4 And they're all trained to go ahead and act accordingly. Imagine
5 the worst, shut it down. A lot of the training, we would sit
6 there and pick a section of the line and say, "All right, all of a
7 sudden, this has happened. What would you do?" and see how they
8 respond. We would have knock (ph.) drills, come out in the field
9 unannounced to the controller, where -- Bryan had several this
10 year. Earlier in his taped conversations, he said he was lucky
11 enough to get them. Some of the guys prefer not to be bothered
12 with them, but a knock drill is where they'll bring in the local
13 911, the local fire departments, and they'll actually have a
14 scenario. I believe Bryan's this year was one with elementary
15 schools; there was an explosion, they had to evacuate the school.
16 And Bryan went through all of the necessary steps of shutting down
17 the pipeline, communicating with 911 and field personnel, and
18 that's one of the training tools that we use regularly. I'd say
19 Bryan had at least two this year, but all the controllers are
20 continually being, I would say, pushed. But, you know, trained
21 and having different scenarios thrown their way, just to keep them
22 sharp.

23 Q. Have you been involved in training other pipeline
24 controllers at this company?

25 A. Yes. I trained, I believe, nine controllers for Dixie.

1 Q. I'm sorry. What is your current position? What is your
2 title?

3 A. Well, I trained as the rover on the system, and that
4 pretty much keeps me out of trouble. My first boss that I had
5 when I came over, I said, "What's a rover do?" And he said,
6 "Whatever I tell you." But I support the controllers. I work as
7 a liaison between them and the engineering department, between
8 them and management, between them and other pipelines. I try to
9 help out when I can, where I can. I'll spell them on the line if
10 I'm working day shift and they're having a rough one, I'll say,
11 "Why don't you go get some fresh air?" and I'll log in and
12 actually take over. I'll let them go get lunch, things like that.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. But mostly it's a training liaison.

15 Q. You're obviously qualified to control this stuff?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. When did you first become qualified?

18 A. My first OQ was back in '95.

19 Q. Okay. Had you been working as a controller in some
20 capacity since '95?

21 A. In 2000, I was on the 12-hour shift rotation, and in
22 2000, I became a scheduler/relief position, and I was still
23 actively pulling shifts. The Dixie system, having been located in
24 downtown Atlanta, was awfully hard to get controllers in. And we
25 very seldom had a full staff, so I stayed pretty active running

1 the pipeline for the last 12 years.

2 Q. What are your duties as a scheduler?

3 A. As a scheduler on the pipeline, you work with the
4 maintenance groups. If they want to take pieces of equipment or
5 sections of the line down to hydro-test, or repair pumps, or lower
6 lines, you work with them, and also with the injectors to adjust
7 your rates, make sure you can accommodate the work being done.

8 You work with all the shifters -- those are the
9 customers of Dixie that put in a tender each month, what part they
10 want to bring in and take out, and you accommodate those requests
11 as best you can. You work with the power companies on rates, and
12 when's the optimal running time, when it isn't, that sort of
13 thing, try to save a little power there. And the job has changed
14 so much; in Atlanta, you did all of the shipping, balancing,
15 invoicing, you did a whole lot of different -- you wore a lot of
16 hats. And with the enterprise transition over to Houston, it's
17 broken up a lot, I think a much better setup. They have
18 professional accountants instead of people like me trying to do a
19 job. And it frees you up to be real specific with running the
20 board. You can focus on just one thing, and I think that's a
21 great advantage.

22 Q. Okay. What is -- what do you think is the most
23 difficult part that a pipeline controller has to do during his
24 shift?

25 A. Stay attentive, stay focused. They're all trained to

1 spot the obvious; it's the little ones that get by that you really
2 want to catch.

3 Q. Okay. How do you train for the little ones, how do you
4 prepare for that?

5 A. We start with -- the way the Skada (ph.) system is
6 broken down, one of the screens they keep up is an alarm center
7 screen, and then another screen is the normal summary. And
8 between those two screens, every seven seconds you get an update
9 on your system, and if you train yourself to monitor that, you
10 will see the colors come in. When it's red, it's catching your
11 attention, something serious has occurred. And you just kind of
12 focus on certain things. In a Dixie system, when I train the
13 fellows, I break it down in sections. There's some key locations,
14 Bellevue, Hattiesburg, Vilnor (ph.), Apex (ph.). When you section
15 a line up that way, you have time to focus on a lot more -- if you
16 look at the big picture, you might get lost. If you break it down
17 by sections, within a matter of seconds you can tell pretty much
18 where your pipeline is at any given moment. And I think just
19 getting back to your original question, Steve, that any day-to-day
20 operation, to be able to just stay focused and be able to keep up
21 with the guys in the field that are out there helping, helping
22 ESTs (ph.) and all the other different things that happen in the
23 field, responding to it. That came up earlier in the discussion.
24 Bryan's (indiscernible) was so obvious, from 1,411 down to a
25 hundred-something. We've had seepers throughout the industry,

1 where you lose 20, 30 pounds and you've really got to be on your
2 toes to catch it.

3 Moving forward, one thing that we're working on with
4 Jeff and engineering is an (indiscernible) -- currently he doesn't
5 do it by the hour, but we're in the process of setting that up,
6 and that will be very beneficial for the smaller leaks.

7 Q. Have you supervised other controllers who may not have
8 handed an incident as well as you think -- as well as Bryan
9 handled it?

10 A. Given the number of controllers I've worked with, yes,
11 there have been times when I'll come in after the fact and I'll
12 start piecing together what took place. Not necessarily a
13 dangerous condition, and not a leak scenario, but just a line
14 condition that would make me wonder why they did it that way. And
15 I've never -- I'm not a shy person. When I spot something like
16 that, I'll sit down with them, and I'll explain what I viewed, and
17 I'll get a response. What was taking place at that time? And
18 I'll hear from them how they perceived it. Hopefully, they spot
19 it and move forward from there, but it's always an ongoing
20 process. We have some fellows that run the line right now that
21 are very good at running a pipeline, but occasionally, if I'll sit
22 back and watch a line, I'll spot a pump running that we don't need
23 running. It's not a dangerous situation, but it's not a very
24 efficient operation, and you're always working with them on that
25 sort of thing.

1 Q. Did you have a role in the incident yesterday?

2 A. No, I sure didn't. I was home on medical leave.

3 Q. Okay. From your assessment of how things went, I know
4 you alluded to this previously, but is there anything you would
5 have liked to have seen differently in terms of how the pipeline
6 controller handled it, in terms of resources available,
7 information flow, communications?

8 A. I know it was brought up that -- the cross-training
9 reference, and I'm not going over that, because we're currently
10 unable to do that, but one thing that I think would have benefited
11 Bryan would have been to have someone assist with this current
12 timeline, when the call came in, that sort of thing. When you're
13 in the middle of the crisis like that, and his main focus, like he
14 had mentioned, is the screen in front of him, not behind him, not
15 anything else, I think if someone else could have sat there, and
16 Bryan's on the phone, shutting it down, make some notes on some of
17 these sorts of things. He got an emergency call from someone;
18 when did that come in? Talking to Bryan afterward, he said he
19 wished that he had wrote down more times, and I explained him,
20 "Well, your first priority is to safely shut down the pipeline."
21 When you're in the middle of that process, you don't "Oh, wait a
22 minute" and take your time to write down at exactly what moment
23 that took place. Possibly, if someone in the room had come over,
24 he could have signaled -- something we can work on down the road,
25 maybe. I know he had plenty of support from Gary Nabors (ph.).

1 Gary is one of the managers. He has several systems next to
2 Bryan, and he came over and helped with the maps. I know that
3 Greg was assisting. The fellow that works the offshore desk,
4 Jeffrey, behind him, he was helping with the phones, but I think
5 if you could free his hands up more, where he's not doing the
6 mundane-type things. Now, in the past, we've called someone else
7 in. In the Atlanta office, we had an engineer staff right down
8 the hall, and they'd all flock in. That wasn't always good, you
9 had some distraction there, but unfortunately for Bryan, I wasn't
10 available yesterday to sit there with him and help him field
11 calls, or help with the line.

12 And it's hard to bring somebody in that doesn't know
13 your system. I don't know how beneficial that would actually be,
14 but looking at the whole picture and the way everything occurred
15 and took place, I can't really see any one thing that's, "Well, we
16 should have done this different." I think it was handled well.

17 Q. How many people who work here are qualified on that
18 line?

19 A. Five.

20 Q. Including you?

21 A. Including me.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We have four in the shift rotation, and then I'm on
24 Monday through Friday, Monday through Thursday.

25 Q. There's never more than one person working on it at any

1 time?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Unless I'm in the office, and I'm not working on it at
5 the same time, but I am in the same area in the event that
6 something were to occur.

7 Q. I think you made mention of this before, but how many
8 qualified pipeline controllers do you have?

9 A. Dixie only has five. What might be confusing, Steve,
10 the room we sit in has 13 desks, and each desk, fully staffed, I
11 believe it's five per desk. But Dixie's just one desk, and we're
12 not cross-trained to other desks, and they're not cross-trained to
13 our systems. So we've only got the five on Dixie.

14 Q. So are some of the lines just not being operated at any
15 given time?

16 A. No, they're different companies. Dixie's real unique in
17 the respect that we're not owned by Enterprise. They're part
18 owners. We're operated by Enterprise, and they're in a
19 partnership with BP, and there's some contractual obligations that
20 say we can do this, we can't do that, and that's where we are
21 caught right now, this cross-training.

22 Q. Is that something that may get resolved one way or the
23 other?

24 A. I believe they're looking into that -- in everyone's
25 best interests, going forward, that we have the ability to do

1 that, especially given a day like yesterday. It would have been
2 so beneficial to have someone with pipeline knowledge be able to
3 step in and help.

4 Q. Maybe I'm not following as well as I should. Can you
5 define cross-train for me?

6 A. For example, the desk right behind us is called off-
7 shore. And what they do is, they have several different gathering
8 systems that come out of the Gulf and come into the mainland. And
9 they have a controller that sits at that desk and operates that
10 system. Dixie, we have 1,300 miles of pipe from Bellevue, Texas,
11 Apex, North Carolina, that's our system. If we were to cross-
12 train, that means that I'd be able to leave the Dixie desk, go
13 behind me to the off-shore desk, and I'd have a working knowledge
14 of that system and vice-versa. They could come from their desk,
15 that they are trained on, and also have a working knowledge of the
16 Dixie section. There's a cross-training there.

17 Q. So the five qualified people who you mentioned are
18 qualified on just --

19 A. Just Dixie.

20 Q. All right. And you could see perhaps some benefit from
21 having them qualified on other systems?

22 A. And vice-versa.

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. And other territories like this.

25 Q. Okay, thanks for that. Anything -- well, let's go

1 around the room and see if there are any questions.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't think we have any.

3 MR. JENNER: Okay.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Obviously, I'm (indiscernible)
5 training process (indiscernible), are there any future, you know,
6 (indiscernible) there would be a different set of training, or --
7 for Dixie?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: In the future, it will all be the
9 same, and we will resolve all the issues of cross-training, and
10 (indiscernible) Dixie would become -- it will become seamless.

11 THE WITNESS: And there's a training room they're
12 setting up, yeah? That should fall into place down the road,
13 also, with this training.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, with the simulator?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, there's a simulator being
16 developed currently for this -- for everyone in this room. The
17 simulator, I think, that Dixie had was -- (indiscernible) user
18 interface, right?

19 THE WITNESS: Correct.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This simulator will use -- we
21 have four Skada systems. The Skada system is essentially the
22 computer hardware and software that was being used. But for this
23 control center, seven desks, including Dixie, use a product called
24 Telnet VNA (ph.), five desks use a product called Telnet 5.208
25 (ph.), and one desk uses a product called TIM (ph.), and that's

1 only three, but the reason I say four Skada systems is, Dixie's
2 VNA system is slightly different than the other six that we have,
3 it's slightly different. The simulator that we're developing
4 mocks the user interface of the VNA system so that the difference
5 between the one Dixie had and this one is, it'll have the same
6 buttons, it'll have the same feel as the pipeline they're actually
7 on, and then for those who aren't on that Skada system yet, it
8 would be a learning experience to be learning how that new user
9 interface worked. And they will all be transitioning to that over
10 the next couple of years anyway.

11 So, that training will be ongoing. Right now they have
12 computer-based training courses they have to complete. As Bryan
13 said, "They just send me an email, and I take the course." That's
14 really how it works. They periodically do (indiscernible) and
15 they take them on their computers. Some of them they can take
16 while they're working; others we recommend they come in they're
17 not working and take them. They can take them from home. But our
18 records (indiscernible). We're beefing up training all the time,
19 trying to improve -- you asked "Will Dixie's training be the
20 same?" The training manual that EPCO has is -- it's about this
21 thick, and it contains a lot of information that applies to
22 pipeline operation in general, and then it contain sections that
23 are pipeline-specific procedures, and maps, and things that are
24 specific to the Skada system, just the usage and so forth. But
25 yeah, our goal is to, in time, make everyone's operation as much

1 alike as possible, using the same standards, the same training
2 procedures, the same everything.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible) topics that are
4 related to (indiscernible) trying to give them tips on how to
5 prepare for (indiscernible), stuff like that. I think that's
6 pretty much it.

7 BY MR. JENNER:

8 Q. Anything you'd like to add?

9 A. This is my first (indiscernible), hopefully my last.
10 But I've always wondered how this process worked, and I think it's
11 great. It's a learning experience. It's unfortunate that there's
12 loss of life involved, but going forward I can see where it's very
13 beneficial.

14 Q. Perfect, thank you.

15 MR. JENNER: 4:00, and we'll end this interview.

16 (Whereupon, at 4:00 p.m., the interview in the above-
17 entitled matter concluded.)

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Carmichael, Mississippi Accident

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-08-MP-001

PLACE: Houston, TX

DATE: November 2, 2007

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to
the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Matt Dycus
Transcriber