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Transcript of the Testimony of William Craddock

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STATEMENT UNDER OATH

OF

WILLIAM CRADDOCK

taken pursuant to Notice by Alison Salyards, a Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of West Virginia, at The National Mine Health & Safety Academy, 1301 Airport Road, Room C-137, Beaver, West Virginia, on Thursday, June 10, 2010.

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S

2

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 -----
3 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

4 My name is Polly Hampton. Today is June
5 10th, 2010. I am with the Office of the Solicitor,
6 U.S. Department of Labor. With me is John Godsey, an
7 accident investigator with the Mine Safety and Health
8 Administration, MSHA, an agency of the United States
9 Department of Labor. Also present are several people
10 from the State of West Virginia. I ask that they
11 state their appearance for the record.

12 MR. FARLEY:

13 I'm Terry Farley, with the West Virginia
14 Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training.

15 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

16 And by several I mean one. There are
17 actually several members of the investigation team
18 also present in the room today, and Mr. Godsey will be
19 conducting the initial part of the questioning today.
20 All members of the Mine Safety and Health
21 Accident Investigation Team and all members of the
22 State of West Virginia Accident Investigation Team
23 participating in the investigation of the Upper Big
24 Branch Mine explosion shall keep confidential all
25 information that is gathered from each witness who

1 voluntarily provides a statement until the witness
2 statements are officially released. MSHA and the
3 State of West Virginia shall keep this information
4 confidential so that other ongoing enforcement
5 activities are not prejudiced or jeopardized by a
6 premature release of information. This
7 confidentiality requirement shall not preclude
8 investigation team members from sharing information
9 with each other or with other law enforcement
10 officials. Your participation in this interview
11 constitutes your agreement to keep this information
12 confidential.

13 Government investigators and specialists

14 have been assigned to investigate the conditions,
15 events and circumstances surrounding the fatalities
16 that occurred at the Upper Big Branch Mine-South on
17 April 5th, 2010. The investigation is being conducted
18 by MSHA under Section 103(a) of the Federal Mine
19 Safety and Health Act and the West Virginia Office of
20 Miners' Health, Safety and Training. We appreciate
21 your assistance in the investigation. You may have a
22 personal attorney present during the taking of the
23 statement or another personal representative, if MSHA
24 has permitted it, and may consult with your attorney
25 or the representative at that time. Your statement is

1 completely voluntary. You may refuse to answer any
2 question and you may terminate your interview at any
3 time or request a break at any time. Since this is
4 not an adversarial proceeding, formal Cross
5 Examination will not be permitted. However, if you
6 had a personal legal representative, that person could
7 ask clarifying questions. Just for the record, do you
8 have a personal representative here today?

9 MR. CRADDOCK:

10 No, I do not.

11 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

12 Your identity and the content of this
13 conversation will be made public at the conclusion of
14 the interview process and may be included in the
15 public report of the accident, unless you request that
16 your identify remain confidential or your information
17 will otherwise jeopardize a potential criminal
18 investigation. If you request us to keep your
19 identity confidential, we will do so to the extent
20 permitted by law. That means that if a Judge orders
21 us to reveal your name or if another law requires us
22 to reveal your name or if we need to reveal your name
23 for other law enforcement purposes, we may do so.
24 Also, there may be a need to use the information you
25 provide to us or other information we may ask you to

1 provide in the future, in other investigations into
2 hearings about the explosion. Do you understand or
3 have any questions?

4 MR. CRADDOCK:

5 No, no questions, and I understand.

6 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

7 After the investigation is complete, MSHA
8 will issue a public report detailing the nature and
9 causes of the fatalities in the hope that greater
10 awareness about the causes of accidents can reduce
11 their occurrence in the future. Information obtained
12 through witness interviews is frequently included in
13 these reports. Since we will be interviewing other
14 individuals, we request that you not discuss your
15 testimony with any person aside from a personal
16 representative or counsel.

17 A court reporter will record your
18 interview. Please speak loudly and clearly. If you
19 do not understand a question, please ask the
20 questioner to rephrase it. Please answer each
21 question as fully as you can, including any
22 information you have learned from someone else. I
23 would like to thank you in advance for your appearance
24 here. We appreciate your assistance in this
25 investigation. Your cooperation is critical in making

1 the nation's mines safer.
2 After we have finished asking questions,
3 you will have an opportunity to make a statement and
4 provide us with any other information that you believe
5 to be important. If at any time after the interview
6 you recall any additional information that you believe
7 might be useful, please contact or have a
8 representative contact, as the case may be, Norman
9 Page at the telephone number or e-mail address
10 provided to you in the letter that I gave you earlier.

11 Any statements given by miner witnesses
12 to MSHA are considered to be an exercise of statutory
13 rights and protected activity under Section 105(c) of
14 the Mine Act. If you believe any discharge,
15 discrimination or other adverse action is taken
16 against you as a result of your cooperation with this
17 investigation, you are encouraged to immediately
18 contact MSHA and file a complaint under Section 105(c)
19 of the Act. You may swear in the witness.

20 -----
21 WILLIAM CRADDOCK, HAVING FIRST BEEN DULY SWORN,
22 TESTIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

23 -----

24 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

25 Mr. Godsey?

1 EXAMINATION

2 BY MR. GODSEY:

3 Q. Mr. Craddock, state your full name ---

4 A. William ---.

5 Q. --- and spell your last name.

6 A. William G. Craddock, C-R-A-D-D-O-C-K.

7 Q. Your home address?

8 A. [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED]

10 Q. Okay. Your telephone number?

11 A. [REDACTED].

12 Q. Are you appearing here today voluntarily?

13 A. Yes, I am.

14 Q. Has anyone made any promises to you for giving
15 this interview or offered you any rewards in
16 exchanging for making your statement? Has anyone
17 threatened you or warned you not to provide this
18 statement?

19 A. No, sir.

20 Q. How many years of mining experience do you have?

21 A. About six-and-a-half, seven, but they're --- I
22 don't know if I'm supposed to clarify. They've been
23 separated. I worked from '75, December, to June of
24 '79. And because of the striking, I got out of the
25 mining industry and I did not get back into it until

1 August of 2008. August 26th is when I was hired on by
2 Performance Coal Company until the present day,
3 so ---.

4 Q. Who did you work for? You said ---.

5 A. Westmoreland Coal Company.

6 Q. Westmoreland Coal Company?

7 A. Yes, during the '70s.

8 Q. Was that in Eccles or ---?

9 A. Winding Gulf, down that way, sir.

10 Q. Do you have any mining certification for
11 specialized training?

12 A. I'm a certified electrician underground.

13 Q. Did you go through the Massey training program?

14 A. Yes, I did, sir.

15 Q. When did you do that?

16 A. From October of 2008 until October of 2009.

17 Q. Did you have to sign a contract?

18 A. Yes, I did.

19 Q. How long was that for?

20 A. Three years.

21 Q. What was the stipulation?

22 A. Just stating that I would agree to work for Massey
23 because they're paying for my schooling and everything
24 else and the expense that they've put out, that I
25 would continue to work for them for three years.

1 Q. What if you quit?

2 A. If I understand it, then we would have to pay back
3 the schooling fees. That's the way I understood it.

4 Q. Are you presently employed?

5 A. Yes, I am.

6 Q. Where are you?

7 A. Performance Coal Company, UBB.

8 Q. And you told us you started --- when did you start
9 at UBB? You told me once.

10 A. August --- I believe it's August 26th of 2008,
11 sir.

12 Q. And what is your present job title?

13 A. Outby electrician.

14 Q. And outby, do you mean by ---?

15 A. I work in the motor barn, taking care of mantrips,
16 Jeeps, that type of equipment, the chargers that
17 charge them. And during the --- that's where I'm at
18 now, sir, and that was the same title. But during the
19 and prior to the explosion, Mondays, Wednesdays and
20 Fridays I would go to the Ellis side and spend my day
21 there to take care of the mantrips and the Jeeps and
22 the motors, anything that was on that side.

23 Q. How often would you go underground?

24 A. That --- on the Ellis side, I would have to go
25 under like four or five breaks, and once a week I

1 would go about 15 breaks to look at the chargers up at
2 Ellis Five Head.

3 Q. How long did it tae you to perform these duties?

4 A. Well, because of the nature of the mantrips and
5 the way they come out, I would spend my day there on
6 the Ellis side, in and out.

7 Q. What were the most --- what were all the problems
8 that you had with them?

9 A. Well, it was maintenance service, greasing,
10 oiling, minor stuff. We had no facilities to take
11 care of major, so we would transfer to the other side
12 in the event of something --- you know, a major
13 failure.

14 Q. On the UBB side, how far --- did you ever travel
15 underground?

16 A. Ninety-nine (99) percent of the time, no, sir.
17 Twice I had to go up towards Three section to get a
18 mantrip that would not run.

19 Q. And what is Three section?

20 A. That's on the south side of the mines, the other
21 side of the mountain. There's two portals.

22 Q. Are you talking about the barrier section?

23 A. No, barrier's --- yes, I think they --- didn't
24 they call it --- they changed the name. It confused
25 me, sir. I believe it ---.

1 Q. Who is your immediate supervisor?

2 A. I would have to say --- well, that's a good
3 question because I pretty much work for Wayne, but
4 Paul Thompson I would say would be my immediate
5 supervisor.

6 Q. And who is he, Paul?

7 A. Paul's like over all the electricians at our
8 mines, so I would have to say him. But normally I
9 never see Paul. Wayne ---.

10 Q. Wayne?

11 A. Persinger or, you know, they usually --- I pretty
12 much work by myself. I have very little intervention
13 with anybody.

14 Q. Pretty good worker.

15 A. Well, you know, he'll come to me if he needs help
16 and I don't have anything to do. Like right now I
17 have a lot of intervention with Wayne. But most of
18 the time when we're running coal I got nobody --- I do
19 my own thing. I'm sorry. That's probably not the
20 correct word, but ---.

21 Q. That's all right. What was your work schedule for
22 the week of the accident? What shift were you
23 working?

24 A. I was always dayshift, and most of the time we
25 would start at 3:00 in the morning, 3:00 to 1:00, 3:00

1 to 2:00. It depends on what was going on. We'd
2 typically start at 3:00, 3:30, to let's just say 1:30,
3 2:30.

4 Q. Okay. And how many days a week did you do that?

5 A. Five to six.

6 Q. And usually about what time did you leave the
7 property?

8 A. If I was on the Ellis side, I would pretty much
9 leave the property around --- between 2:15, 2:25, in
10 that range. Sometimes I'd get out ---.

11 Q. Yes, sir.

12 A. Sometimes I'd get out of there by 2:05.

13 Q. What was the last day you worked before the
14 explosion?

15 A. The day of the explosion, sir.

16 Q. Do you know if they ran the longwall during that
17 weekend?

18 A. I was off Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I do not
19 know for sure. I really couldn't answer honestly.

20 Q. Do they ever shut the longwall down, like holidays
21 and ---?

22 A. Most of the time the wall ran, most of the time.
23 I didn't know a whole lot about it. You'd hear
24 intervention with people, but I know that they ran it
25 two shifts and maintenance on the third shift. They

1 would run weekends when they could. But that's ---
2 you know, that's what I hear just passing with
3 somebody.

4 Q. Have you ever heard of the longwall being down?
5 The foreman shut the section down for something and
6 they called outside and management tells them to go
7 back and run coal, they're down for a short hour or
8 something like that, any of the sections?

9 A. No, I never heard that, sir.

10 Q. Have you performed any other jobs at the mine
11 other than electrical work?

12 A. Basically I was hired on as an electrician,
13 mechanical/electrical. The few times while I was a
14 trainee or something, if I --- I'd help somebody do
15 something, but --- you know, if I happened to be near
16 and there was nothing for me to do, I'd help them
17 stack block or something. But I was hired on as an
18 electrician. That's mainly what I did.

19 Q. Outside or whenever you had --- you all would get
20 with your fellow miners, did you all ever talk about
21 conditions in the mine? Anybody ever say that they
22 was concerned about working in a certain place or a
23 certain area of the mine?

24 A. Just at the top was as little unstable, up in the
25 area of the sections that were driving for the wall.

1 You'd hear that all the time. They were watching it,
2 but you know, I never really heard anybody say
3 anything other than that. But that's pretty much
4 mining. But up there it was a little bit worse. And
5 sometimes you'd hear them say that the bottom would
6 buckle a little bit or something.

7 Q. Well, talking about bottom heaving, did you ever
8 hear any --- ever have a floor outburst or anything
9 while you were there?

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. What about the pumps behind the longwall? They
12 had quite a bit of water I understand. Who maintained
13 the pumps behind there? Did you ever go back there?

14 A. No, sir. I don't know a lot about the pumps or
15 even what they --- I know they had some air pumps back
16 there, and Jeremy Burdoff was basically maintaining
17 those, him and two trainees. I'd talk to Jeremy when
18 he'd go by me like Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays.
19 We'd talk a little bit, but basically he --- he's the
20 only one that I know about the air pumps. Any other
21 pumps that was up in there would be took care of by
22 the electricians in that area.

23 Q. Did he ever talk to you about water --- working on
24 water that was chest deep or something?

25 A. Yeah. He said the water is pretty deep up there.

1 Q. Do you know anybody getting injured up there
2 or ---?

3 A. No, not that I could recall. I mean, there's
4 always injuries in a mine. You know, to recall one
5 specifically because of that water, no.

6 Q. Talking about injuries, did you have a lot of
7 people that was on light duty or several miners on
8 light duty?

9 A. No, not that I --- while I was there, there was a
10 couple put on light duty. And the names --- I really
11 can't recall the names right there. But there was a
12 couple, but I wouldn't say an extraordinary lot of
13 them, no, sir.

14 Q. Okay. Have you ever been injured?

15 A. No, sir.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Injured, meaning? I'm an electrician. An
18 occasional little cut or nick or something.

19 Q. Did you ever have to go to the hospital?

20 A. No, sir. No, sir.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I just want to make sure I'm trying to answer
23 truthfully.

24 Q. Have you ever heard any of the men talking about
25 any of the ventilation problems they've had at any of

1 the sections?

2 A. Off and on you'd hear ---.

3 Q. I mean low air.

4 A. Yeah, off and on you'd hear bath house rumors
5 where they were trying to get the air right and that
6 they couldn't run because they didn't have enough air.
7 They were working on it. And that's something that
8 had been an ongoing thing, taking --- trying to get
9 the air change up in the area.

10 Q. Are you aware of any time that they made any
11 unplanned or unapproved ventilation changes for people
12 underground?

13 A. No, sir. Like I say, I wasn't involved in that
14 part of it. You'd just hear them where they're
15 working on the air or they're having trouble and MSHA
16 would have them --- pull them out if the air wasn't
17 right or something like that. But in my job, you
18 know, you hear a little bit of bath house rumors that
19 go on. But if I listened to everything, I'd never get
20 my job done, so ---.

21 Q. What is the extent or what areas have you visited
22 in UBB?

23 A. Well, I've been, at one point or another, down the
24 mainline all the way through to the Glory Hole, a
25 little bit past it, where the longwall first started

1 mining. And I'm not an expert on the map, but where
2 they first started, I took in the last little bit of
3 my training. It just so happened they needed me, and
4 I was helping up in that area a little bit with
5 miscellaneous stuff, like getting a miner, working on
6 a miner, doing this and that. And when they were
7 setting up the new One section, the wall had already
8 started running, and we were setting up the new One
9 section to start driving for the next wall, I helped
10 put in the tailpiece, the belt head, stuff like that.

11 Mainly I helped put in the fire suppression, the
12 pipes down the belt. Again, I was a trainee and I
13 helped put in the rock box. And it was shortly after
14 that I tested out, and then I was immediately moved
15 outside, which is where they were planning to put me.

16 Q. How many times or can you imagine how close was
17 you up there at the longwall?

18 A. Never been on the wall.

19 Q. I mean, setting up, traveling up there, how many
20 times have you traveled up to the track entry?

21 A. Before the wall ever ran I've probably been up
22 there six times.

23 Q. Do you remember any water problems they had up
24 there?

25 A. Basically the last time I was up on the wall they

1 were --- and I didn't even walk over to it, they
2 were --- it was wet up there in that area. Everything
3 was wet, damp, wet. There was no dust that I can
4 remember in my mind in that area. When they first set
5 up --- were setting up the wall, it hadn't ran yet,
6 they were still doing the borehole for the fan, for
7 the Bundytown (sic) fan I think is the correct ---. I
8 was close enough to hear the borehole running, but I
9 never walked over to it. Again, we were working on a
10 miner or shuttle cars or something like that. We were
11 just helping out. I was just like an extra loaned
12 out.

13 Q. What about roof conditions up there, on the track?

14 A. Again, --- I'm trying to --- I don't want to get
15 the old Two section mixed up because that come around
16 for the tailgate. You could see occasionally where
17 the metal --- the metal supports along the belt, you
18 could see where they had bowed them a little bit and
19 they were replacing them as necessary. I've seen that
20 a couple times. But that's mining. You see it off
21 and on.

22 Q. About the floor, did you see any floor heaving up
23 there?

24 A. When --- the longwall had already been running and
25 --- I'm trying to think now. We went up there --- I

1 wasn't working, so I'm trying to be careful. We went
2 up there to get a --- what was it? They sent us up
3 there to get something, and I'm trying to think of
4 what it was. That's when I was working on the new One
5 section. We weren't working up there. We were sent
6 up there to find a cable or pull a cable. They needed
7 a cable on a cathead or something, and the wall was on
8 the side. We were there, and when we were getting the
9 cable, you could see where they were --- the bottom
10 had cracked a little bit and they had an area walled
11 off where they didn't want no men to go. But I can't
12 --- I was only there once. Again, I wasn't working up
13 there, so --- other than they had sent us to try to
14 get a cable, pull a cable out.

15 Q. Do you know about when that was?

16 A. The wall hadn't been running very long at all.
17 They were still on their first panel, I believe.

18 Q. Was in maybe September of last year, '09, or
19 something?

20 A. Well, it would have had to have been the last ---
21 about the last month, like I say, I was floating. I
22 wasn't on Three. It would have been in that range of
23 --- around September, because October 6th I was no
24 longer underground. I was outside.

25 Q. Have you been to the Glory Hole?

1 A. I've been to the Glory Hole off and on a few
2 times. December of '08 --- Thanksgiving of '08, these
3 dates are hard to remember, we worked on the actual
4 feeder that the Glory Hole drops down into when it was
5 still running.

6 Q. Do you remember any methane readings or oxygen?

7 A. No. I had a detector. I can tell you it was hot,
8 very warm, but we did have a detector.

9 Q. Why was it warm? I mean, ---.

10 A. Well, the equipment running there and just not a
11 lot of air ventilation at that time. They hadn't put
12 the Bundytown fan online.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. It was very warm up there, if I had to guess, 85
15 or --- it was warm. You shed your shirt. You worked
16 in a T-shirt and put your coveralls with your stripes
17 back on. It was hot.

18 Q. Have you been to Eight North?

19 A. Eight North?

20 Q. Up there inby the Glory Hole?

21 A. I can't say yes or no. I know this sounds ---I
22 went up twice to where they were setting up One in
23 that area because in behind the power center where the
24 track used to be they had cut across. I had to
25 service a motor and I walked up and around, but I

1 couldn't tell you if it was Eight North.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. It was a little bit past the Glory Hole, just a
4 little bit, not much, in that area, if I recollect. I
5 only went up there to --- there was a motor trapped in
6 there because they had cut the track out and they were
7 using it to fire boss the area behind it, and they ---
8 I had to go up there. I was available, so I went up
9 there twice, I believe, to take a look at it, sir.

10 Q. How has the rock dusting been in those areas?

11 A. I didn't pay a lot of attention, but I know that
12 they were pretty religious about --- I don't know
13 about the back areas. I really didn't pay a lot of
14 attention. I didn't get into that that much, sir, but
15 I know they ran the track duster all the time.

16 Q. Have you been to 22 Headgate section?

17 A. See, these numbers --- to me, after they were up
18 and operating, no, I don't think so.

19 Q. Do you remember when you traveled up there about
20 when you got to 78 Crosscut, did you ever go through
21 any equipment doors where you went from neutral into
22 the intake back into the neutral?

23 A. Oh, those four doors?

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. Oh, yeah, went through them all.

1 Q. Did you ever find any of them open, any of them
2 left open?

3 A. Probably about eight months ago, when one was
4 damaged, one was open, but all the others were okay.
5 And it was fixed. I want to say Billy Graham come ---
6 I believe it was Billy Graham come back and fixed it.
7 But to come through them open, I've never seen them
8 open myself. And I got to say that I religiously ---
9 I hated it when I was sent by myself because you got
10 to get off, open, close, get off, open and close. But
11 it's very serious, so I definitely did --- you know, I
12 would open and close them. But I've never come
13 through there where they were open, sir.

14 Q. Have you ever seen a motor crew go through there?

15 A. No, because, again, I'm not up there that often.
16 They would --- the few times I was up there, they had
17 already come through or would be coming through after
18 us.

19 Q. Are you aware of any conditions which required all
20 or portions of the mine to be evacuated?

21 A. While I was there --- one time when I was there we
22 had a fan go down. They pulled everybody out. The
23 motor went out on the north fan, UBB North fan, and
24 they pulled everybody out of the mines.

25 Q. Any time for methane or air direction, air going

1 in the wrong direction?

2 A. Well, when they were doing their air changes, they
3 wouldn't let nobody go in. But to pull people out,
4 the only time I actually was at the mines when they
5 did it was when that fan went down. And you know
6 what, there was another time that we couldn't go in
7 around --- when all that big snowstorm hit, the
8 Bundytown fan went down. It kept going offline. They
9 wouldn't let nobody go in. So I remember those two
10 times. And then I heard --- back up a couple years.
11 I can't tell you exactly, before my time. When the
12 wall was running before --- not this time they're
13 here, when it was running before I heard they hit a
14 gas well or a gas pocket, and they pulled everybody
15 out of the mines for a minimum of three days. The
16 company immediately shut it down and said, get out
17 now. That's what I heard the last time the longwall
18 was here.

19 Q. Do you remember when that was?

20 A. No, sir. I wasn't --- I didn't work at the mines.
21 I only heard my friend telling me, John Cooper, he's
22 no longer at this mines. He's --- he works for
23 Massey. But he told me that they said --- bath house
24 rumor, said it sounded like a jet engine when it was
25 going off. He said they immediately pulled everybody

1 out of the whole mines, and it was down for three days
2 or more because of it.

3 Q. Are you aware any time that oncoming shifts were
4 delayed or cancelled because of safety issues?

5 A. Well, again the Bundytown fan was offline. MSHA
6 wouldn't let them go in or the State wouldn't let them
7 go in because of something. That would happen off and
8 on. Not that often, but it did happen.

9 Q. What about any concern --- I may have asked you
10 this, but maybe I haven't. Any concerns anybody had
11 with the ventilation system? I mean, ---.

12 A. Well, a couple times --- I don't know if it was
13 the State or the Federal, they weren't happy with the
14 way the ventilation was in an area or --- I don't know
15 if it was the area or whatever. I can't remember the
16 actual areas, but it's happened probably while I was
17 there two or three times.

18 Q. Did anybody ever discuss with you or say anything
19 to you about being scared of going underground?

20 A. Not to me personally, no, sir.

21 Q. Did you ever work on the carbon monoxide system,
22 monitoring system?

23 A. The CO system?

24 Q. Yes.

25 A. One night I was helping Billy Graham. We were

1 trying --- this was back when I was a trainee. I was
2 helping him. I was walking, looking for cuts in the
3 cable. We had a CO system that --- I was walking the
4 UBB --- Lower Big Branch, LBB area, along the belt in
5 that range, down the mainline. I'd go in and out, and
6 I was just trying to look for a cut in the cable. It
7 ended up being on the other side of the mountain, Tree
8 section. Somebody had ran across it with a scoop and
9 had cut the cable, and Virgil fixed it when he came
10 in. But that's the only time I had ever touched it.

11 Q. Who maintains the system?

12 A. Virgil Bowman, and I think Tom Sheet helps him,
13 but I know Virgil Bowman.

14 Q. Do you ever look at the monitor outside on the CO
15 system?

16 A. I glanced at it. The one downstairs, the big one,
17 I built the brackets and raised it up, but I didn't
18 actually install it.

19 Q. What are the spacing of the CO monitors
20 underground?

21 A. I couldn't recall that, sir. I know on a section
22 we got one at the belt head and we would put one at
23 the tailpiece. I don't know the actual spacing
24 between them.

25 Q. Did you ever have to take a piece of equipment out

1 of service?

2 A. As a trainee, I wouldn't --- that wasn't my
3 responsibility. As an outby electrician, several
4 times we took rides out of service because we felt
5 they were unsafe.

6 Q. Did anybody say anything to you for that?

7 A. Oh, no. You'd get the section bosses, grumbling
8 and griping a little bit. You know what I mean? Oh,
9 that ain't going to hurt nothing. So you know what,
10 then you sign the book. But no, no upper management
11 has ever said anything to me ever about that, sir.

12 Q. You're on the surface a lot. When an inspector
13 pulls up at the guardhouse, do they --- either a State
14 or Federal, does the guard --- do they notify the mine
15 office that he's on his way up?

16 A. I'm not aware of it, sir. I'm not --- I can't say
17 it doesn't happen, but I'm not aware of it. Most of
18 the time, being outby, Roger Cantley was the man that
19 used to have my position, and he's more or less ---
20 because of his [REDACTED] after all this [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED]. He had his office downstairs. And most of
22 your inspectors that would come through, they'd talk
23 to us every day, all the time.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. It was just like very friendly with them because,

1 you know --- and if they wanted us to do something, I
2 never had a problem doing it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. But they --- you know, I can't say it didn't
5 happen, but I'm not aware of it.

6 Q. Okay.

7 MR. FARLEY:

8 I don't think I have any questions for
9 Mr. Craddock.

10 BY MR. GODSEY:

11 Q. Was mine ventilation adequate at all times when
12 you were underground?

13 A. The section I worked on, Three, as a trainee, it
14 was above adequate. I like froze to death, it had so
15 much air. They actually cut it back some. I'll tell
16 you what, December of '08, and it --- and I hope it's
17 okay to tell it, it was so cold and so much air coming
18 across, I was welding on a miner back --- a couple
19 breaks back, like you're supposed to be and
20 everything. They had sent me welding the bits and I'm
21 underground, and it was so cold, with my welding
22 gloves, I'd take them off and I'd put my fingers like
23 this about every 15 minutes. When I made my first
24 pass --- and I'm a good welder. When I made my first
25 pass, I started the second pass, the ripper head was

1 so cold that the first pass cracked. I never have
2 welds cracked. And so I had to take the torch and
3 warm it up. On that side of the mountain they had no
4 air problems at all. On the other side, as a trainee,
5 like I said, the Glory Hole didn't have a lot of air
6 moving there, but I had a gas detector and never did
7 see no gas. It was hot. That side of the mountain,
8 before they put the Bundytown fan on, did not have a
9 lot of --- what I would consider a lot of air. But
10 I'm not an expert now.

11 Q. Do you presently do any welding underground?

12 A. Not right now, no, sir. I'm an outby electrician.

13 Q. Were any major ventilation changes made while
14 miners were underground, are you aware of?

15 A. I have heard rumor a couple times they did it and
16 MSHA slapped --- or the State, either one, I can't
17 remember which, slapped their hand real good and made
18 them pull everybody out. I heard the rumor of that,
19 and I know that something went on there. I didn't
20 know a whole lot, but I heard that they were making
21 something one time, twice. I couldn't tell you days,
22 but --- again, Roger and I kind of stayed to ourself.
23 We had so much to do. Two men --- think about it. A
24 section guy's got a few pieces of equipment, and it's
25 a lot. We had 27 Jeeps, rides and motors for two of

1 us to take care of.

2 Q. When you were on the section, did you ever see
3 anybody take a miner cut without using curtain?

4 A. I was only in production probably --- I'd help
5 them out maybe --- the whole time I was an
6 electrician, after I was an electrician and they sent
7 me up there, I was --- probably no more than six, half
8 a dozen times. And the times that I was up in the
9 face, sir, they had their curtain there, I helped them
10 hang it. But most of the time, again, that wasn't my
11 job.

12 Q. When you were up there, did you ever see a methane
13 monitor bridged on a miner or plastic ---?

14 A. No, sir. I've heard that. I've heard people say
15 that --- again, our people are talking between
16 themselves. Did you ever see anybody ---? No, sir.
17 I have never seen anybody. The company has never told
18 us to do it. In fact, Massey I think has --- I've
19 been to different places. Massey has --- I mean, and
20 I've been around the classes, electrical training
21 classes, national technical schools, I took their week
22 class. I've never seen a better school for training.
23 And they tell you right then and there, if you're ever
24 caught bridging something out, you're fired. On the
25 spot you're fired. They're real strict. And I'll be

1 --- myself, if I'm going to take a chance of losing my
2 license for doing it and to hear anybody, no, sir.

3 Q. Were miners ever reprimanded for reporting a
4 safety issue or other concerns? Would they be
5 reprimanded by the --- if they had a problem and they
6 talked to management about it, would they have any
7 reprimands for doing that?

8 A. No, not that I'm aware of, sir. And I'd never
9 feel uncomfortable about going to talk to them. It
10 wouldn't bother at all to go tell them about --- if I
11 thought something was unsafe.

12 Q. Did this explosion surprise you?

13 A. Yes, it did, sir. This is --- compared to Eccles,
14 this is not a gassy mine. Yes, all coal mines has a
15 little bit. Compared to Eccles, this is not a gassy
16 mine. It did surprise me, sir.

17 Q. Where were you at the time of the accident?

18 A. I was at my house. I had been away from the mines
19 about 45 minutes, and I had been home about 15 to 20.

20 Q. Who notified you or how did you find out?

21 A. Roger Cantley called me, the guy that I work with
22 outby.

23 Q. What did he tell you?

24 A. He said, Bill, they've had an explosion at the
25 mines. He said there's men trapped or injured or

1 dead. He said, we don't know yet. And he said, I'll
2 try to keep you posted.

3 Q. Do you remember when you were notified
4 approximately?

5 A. I want to say Roger called me, sir, about 5:30,
6 6:00, in that range. It could have been a little
7 earlier. I can't really, a hundred percent ---. I
8 know that I left the mines at 2:25 that day, in that
9 range, and it takes a half-hour to get home. And I
10 had probably been home for an hour-and-a-half at
11 least, maybe two, and he caught me off guard.

12 Q. What time did the company notify you to come to
13 work or --- did they notify --- call you that day or
14 that night to come up to work on the equipment, the
15 mantrips?

16 A. Do you mean the day after the explosion?

17 Q. Well, even that night, after the explosion.

18 A. That night --- I can't recall. I know that I was
19 told sometime --- oh, God. I want to say 9:30,
20 10:00-ish at night I was asked --- or did I call them?
21 I'm trying to remember if I called them, whether I was
22 supposed to go to work or not. I think, sir, I called
23 them and I got ahold of Paul Thompson, I think it was
24 Paul, and he said, wait a minute. And then he come
25 back and he said, yeah, Crash, we need you to come on

1 in. That's my nickname. I'm sorry. That's what he
2 called me. And he goes --- I'm trying to get it as
3 close as I can for you. I said, do you want me to
4 report at my normal time of 3:00, 3:30? He goes, wait
5 a minute. I don't know who he was talking to. He
6 said, no. He said, Crash, come in at 6:00 or 7:00,
7 probably 7:00. And then ---.

8 Q. The next morning?

9 A. The next morning. He said, we will need you.
10 Roger was already there. They had called --- if I
11 understood, they had called Roger in that night. Late
12 at night he came down. And then from that point on
13 Roger and I were --- until he couldn't handle it no
14 more the second week, I worked like 11, 12 days
15 straight, 12, 13, 14 hours a day, where everybody else
16 was on a four-day rotating shift 12 hours. And they
17 said --- they did not make me. They said, if you
18 would, yes, we need you and Roger, if you would. But
19 I was not, at any time, ordered to work, but I did.
20 It was a long 11 days of my life.

21 Q. What was your job you did?

22 A. Maintaining the rides and trying to get them set
23 up, get them ready, if something went wrong help them
24 load the water, help them load sand, help them load
25 supplies. Whatever they needed us to do, we did it,

1 including empty trash, clean up, throw the food out
2 where they was bringing so much food in. Can you help
3 over here hook power up for the state and hook power
4 up for federal. It was just an ongoing --- it was
5 like this, it never stopped.

6 Q. Are you satisfied working at UBB?

7 A. I love it there. I've loved it since I've been
8 there. No matter where you work there's going to be a
9 little bit of griping. There's going to be little
10 things you're not going to like. It always is. And I
11 know that because I've worked from Illinois to West
12 Virginia, different mines, had my own business for a
13 while, and it's just --- there's going to always be
14 something. But no, it's --- they've been very good to
15 me, and I've got to say that I've never had an
16 unpleasant experience with them. In fact, I don't
17 think I've ever been scolded by them.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. You know, some of the stuff --- the only people
20 I've ever known that got, you know, let go there were
21 these people that were basically really messing up,
22 falling asleep at work or something like that.

23 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

24 Off the record, please.

25 SHORT BREAK TAKEN

1 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

2 Back on the record.

3 BY MR. GODSEY:

4 Q. Has anyone from Massey interviewed you concerning
5 your talk today?

6 A. Interviewed me concerning this talk?

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. No, sir.

9 Q. You know, you said after the explosion that you
10 worked quite often for a long period of time. Did you
11 ever feel overwhelmed at how much work you had to do?

12 A. No, because I could say no at any time and
13 they --- basically they've --- anybody that --- the
14 whole time after this accident, anybody that needed
15 time off, they'd let them, without any hesitation.
16 I've never seen them say no to anybody. I got to say
17 Wayne Persinger is a fabulous vice-president, and he
18 kind of like runs UBB. And he'll come up and say, can
19 you do this or do this? Crash, I need you to do this
20 or this. He calls me Bill or Crash. You never know
21 what day it's going to be. But no, sir, I --- the
22 work I put on myself, I do it myself.

23 Q. Do you feel the maintenance department was
24 understaffed where you worked?

25 A. Well, you're talking about the mines as a whole?

1 At UBB?

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. You know, not really because they were always
4 putting on people, more electricians, more trainees.
5 No, not really.

6 Q. What training did you receive before you first
7 went underground at UBB?

8 A. Before I first went underground with them?

9 Q. Uh-huh (yes).

10 A. I was showed the maps. I was showed the
11 facilities. I was showed --- given my rescuer. I was
12 showed the --- well, basically everything, even
13 including where their --- up on the mountain, their
14 water towers. They pointed all them out. Homer did
15 my talk with him.

16 Q. Who is that, Homer ---?

17 A. What the heck's his last name? I just know him as
18 Homer, sir. He was there a short time. And then ---
19 I guess I'm getting ahead of myself. I received a
20 one-day orientation with Massey over safety, over
21 hazards and stuff like that at the mine, stuff like
22 that. The first thing we did is I had to show up for
23 paperwork. Once the paperwork --- I think it was 7:00
24 a.m. And then we went --- two hours, a couple hours
25 there, and then we had to go to the safety building at

1 Marfork and we had to watch films and other stuff.

2 There was like four or five of us, and safety this and
3 that. And then Homer --- at that point I went to the
4 mines and reported there. And then he more or less
5 showed me, then told me to come back the next day.

6 Q. Where did you go in the mine the first time?

7 Where did you tour in the mine?

8 A. He didn't take me under. He just --- I went to
9 the mine site. That first day I didn't go under. The
10 second day he put me with John Henline, outby
11 electrician, who went --- he more or less runs second
12 shift. And I worked for about three months with John
13 Henline. And that day he --- me and him went together
14 through the mines and we went the north side. We did
15 not go on --- they had not opened the south side back
16 up other than just fire bossing. It hadn't been
17 opened up for coal. John and I would support the
18 sections if they needed parts, if a problem happened
19 to a belt head, if something here --- a waterline,
20 this or that, they needed this. If they lost power,
21 we would restore power. For the first three months
22 that's what I did, just travel back and forth to the
23 mine.

24 Q. Did you ever make a --- walk a primary escapeway?

25 A. Oh, yes. Several times we had to do that.

1 Basically they had us do that when I was on the south
2 side. Sometimes they --- we'd work over. And rather
3 than wait on a ride, we'd walk it out anyway. But I
4 probably --- when I was on the south side from
5 December of '08 until about August, late August of
6 '09, I worked the south side, third shift, as a
7 trainee electrician, and I'll bet you the company made
8 us walk the escapeway at least four or five times
9 during that time, at least four or five. But we
10 probably walked it another dozen walking out the
11 primary or the secondary because we didn't want to
12 wait on a ride. It was just a common thing.

13 Q. Okay. Who was the supply motorman at the mine on
14 your shift?

15 A. When I first started on second shift, it was
16 Pappy --- I don't know his --- I'm sorry. You just
17 know these guys' nickname. Droopy and Pappy. I don't
18 know their real names. I couldn't tell you, I swear.

19 Q. Did they use one or two motors to supply the rock
20 dust?

21 A. Two. You throwed rock dust in on me. They had
22 two motors when they were supplying. Droopy drove one
23 and Pappy drove one. The rock dust had a separate
24 motor. And the rock dust crew was Rodney and --- I
25 can't think of the other one. I'm trying to think of

1 who was with him. He was the guy that [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED]. It will come to me. I can't think of
3 his name right now. But Rodney was the main guy.
4 When I was on second shift with John during that time
5 and for a little while after, Rodney would rock dust,
6 and then he ended up going bolting.

7 Q. When you were underground there on your days you
8 went, did you ever see a pre-shift examiner go through
9 the area doing pre-shifting?

10 A. Pre-shift examiner?

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. You meant he fire boss?

13 Q. Yeah, fire boss.

14 A. They were always doing it. Did I actually pay
15 attention to them? A couple times when I was working
16 three section, we'd have to wait until Jeremy fire
17 bossed, Jeremy Burdoff. Most of the other places had
18 already been done.

19 Q. How about when you were outby, though? Did you
20 ever see them ---?

21 A. Come by?

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. Oh, yeah.

24 Q. Are they always in a hurry?

25 A. No, not always.

1 Q. In other words, did they ever say they didn't have
2 enough time to ---?

3 A. Oh, they always said that. They always said that.

4 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

5 On behalf of MSHA and the Office of
6 Miners' Health, Safety and Training, I want to thank
7 you for appearing and answering questions today. Your
8 cooperation is very important to the investigation as
9 we work to determine the cause of the accident. We
10 request that you not discuss your testimony with any
11 person aside from a personal representative, if you
12 had one.

13 After questioning other witnesses, we may
14 call you if we have any follow-up questions. If at
15 any time you have additional information regarding the
16 accident that you would like to provide to us, please
17 contact us at the contact information that we provided
18 to you in the letter. If you wish, you may now go
19 back over any answer you have given during the
20 interview and you may also make any statement that you
21 would like to. Is there anything else that you would
22 like to say?

23 A. No. I mean, we've covered most of it that I can
24 be aware of. I can't think of anything.

25 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

1 Okay. Then again, we would like to thank
2 you for your cooperation.

3 A. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call
4 me. I mean, call the house, whatever. If I can help
5 you --- if there's something you forgot to ask me, if
6 I can help you I will, ---

7 ATTORNEY HAMPTON:

8 Okay.

9 A. --- because, you know, I want to know just as much
10 as anybody.

11

12

* * * * *

13

STATEMENT UNDER OATH CONCLUDED

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CERTIFICATE

I, Alison Salyards, a Notary Public in and
for the State of West Virginia, do hereby certify:
That the witness whose testimony appears in
the foregoing deposition, was duly sworn by me on said
date and that the transcribed deposition of said
witness is a true record of the testimony given by
said witness;
That the proceeding is herein recorded fully
and accurately;
That I am neither attorney nor counsel for,
nor related to any of the parties to the action in
which these depositions were taken, and further that I
am not a relative of any attorney or counsel employed
by the parties hereto, or financially interested in
this action.



Alison Salyards