

1 **WEST VIRGINIA MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION**

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5 **IN THE MATTER OF:**

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7 **THE INVESTIGATION OF THE
8 APRIL 5, 2010 MINE EXPLOSION
9 AT UPPER BIG BRANCH MINE.**

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15 The interview of GREG MEADOWS, taken upon oral
16 examination, before James D. Nielsen, Court
17 Reporter, and Notary Public in and for the State of
18 West Virginia, Wednesday, February 23, 2011, at
19 9:05 a.m., at the Mine Academy, 1301 Airport Road,
20 Beaver, West Virginia.

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34 **GOVERNOR'S INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION PANEL**
35 **James Beck**

Also Present :

36
37 **Dean Cripps, MSHA**
38 **Jasey Maggard, MSHA**
39 **Leland Hess, MSHA**
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PROCEEDING

1
2 MR. KOERBER: Let's go on the record. My
3 name is Barry Koerber, I'm an assistant attorney
4 general. I'm assigned to the Office of Miners'
5 Health Safety and Training. I'm a member of the
6 state accident investigation team for the UBB mine
7 explosion.

8 Today is Wednesday, February 23rd, 2011.
9 I'm going to ask the people on the backside of the
10 table beginning at my left to identify who they are
11 and who they're with.

12 MR. SCOTT: I'm John Scott, I'm with
13 Miners' Health, Safety and Training.

14 MR. TUCKER: Bill Tucker, Miners' Health,
15 Safety and Training.

16 MR. BABINGTON: Matt Babington, I'm an
17 attorney with the Department of Labor.

18 MR. CRIPPS: Dean Cripps with MSHA.

19 MR. MAGGARD: Jasey Maggard with MSHA.

20 MR. BECK: Jim Beck with the Governor's
21 independent team.

22 MR. KOERBER: We also have a court
23 reporter sitting here at the table, he will be
24 transcribing everything that's said today.

1 Just a little procedural note, please say
2 yes or no and not uh-huh, uh-uh, or don't shake
3 your head. And if we're utilizing the map, please
4 kind of describe what you're pointing to as opposed
5 to just pointing to it and saying I was there.

6 Also, the court reporter is with a court
7 reporter firm called Johnny Jackson & Associates,
8 it's located in Charleston, West Virginia. They're
9 working under a three day turnaround as far as
10 getting the transcripts done. In the event you
11 desire to read your transcript and with a separate
12 document called an errata sheet make any
13 corrections that you find him to have made, you may
14 do so three business days -- one day past three
15 business days from here.

16 So today being Wednesday, three business
17 days would take us through Monday, come Tuesday
18 morning if you desire to read your transcript you
19 can call Johnny Jackson & Associates, the number is
20 on this card I'm going to give you, set up an
21 appointment where you go into their office, they'll
22 put you in a conference room privately, if you want
23 to have a representative with you that's fine too,
24 where you can read your transcript, make any

1 corrections that you deem necessary. You would not
2 be permitted to take a copy of the transcript home
3 with you, but you'll be permitted to read it there
4 for as long as you want to read it.

5 You do not have to call Tuesday, you can
6 call any time after Tuesday, within like a week or
7 two, and set something up. Don't wait until
8 December and want to read the transcript, try to do
9 it within a week or two of when the three days are
10 up.

11 Like I mentioned to you outside, if for
12 any reason whatsoever you want to take a break, any
13 reason whatsoever, just say so and we'll take a
14 break. We would ask that you not discuss your
15 interview with people outside of this interview
16 room after you leave here today, and that's just to
17 protect the integrity of the investigation.

18 Matt Babington may want to speak here to
19 you for just a moment, if he would I would like him
20 to do so now.

21 MR. BABINGTON: Mr. Meadows, thanks for
22 coming in and talking with us again. Here's a
23 letter basically describing the background of the
24 interview, you received a letter when you came in

1 initially as well, basically describing some of the
2 same protocols. If you have any questions on that
3 feel free to let me know.

4 MR. KOERBER: Would you administer the
5 oath to the witness please.

6 GREG MEADOWS, WITNESS, SWORN

7 EXAMINATION

8 BY MR. KOERBER:

9 Q. Sir, would you please state your full name
10 for the record and spell your last.

11 A. Gregory Allen Meadows, Sr., M-E-A-D-O-W-S.

12 Q. And would you please give us your address
13 and telephone number?

14 A. [REDACTED],

15 [REDACTED].

16 Q. And as of April 5th, 2010, what was your
17 job title at UBB?

18 A. Before or?

19 Q. April 5th, on that day.

20 A. Oh, I was an electrician.

21 Q. And as an electrician did you do any type
22 of electrical examination?

23 A. I just had started doing examinations on
24 the head drive motor, head drive one and two.

1 Q. And that would be near the longwall?

2 A. Yeah, it's on the longwall.

3 Q. And as part of your electrical examination
4 did you find or fill out or complete electrical
5 examination books?

6 A. Yes.

7 MR. KOERBER: We also have another person
8 sitting at the table, at this point in time I would
9 ask him to identify himself, his firm and his
10 clients.

11 MR. SILKWOOD: Eric Silkwood, I'm with
12 Allen, Guthrie & Thomas, and I represent
13 Performance Coal Company.

14 MR. KOERBER: We have one gentleman in the
15 back, I'd ask that he identify himself and who he's
16 with.

17 MR. HESS: I'm Leland Hess with MSHA.

18 Q. (By Mr. Koerber) Mr. Meadows, are you
19 appearing here today as a result of receiving a
20 subpoena?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. I showed you a copy of the subpoena before
23 we went on the record, I'm going to have that as
24 Meadows Exhibit No. 1. And then I also showed you

1 the affidavit of service showing that [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED] was served on the 17th day of February,
3 2011. And she is -- I take it that's your wife?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. I would like that to be Meadows Exhibit 2.
6 (Meadows Exhibits 1 and 2 marked for
7 identification.)

8 Q. Sir, do you have an attorney here today or
9 are you expecting an attorney to be with you here
10 today?

11 A. No.

12 Q. One other thing I want to go over with you
13 is West Virginia Code 22A-1-22, it protects coal
14 miners from being discriminated against for
15 participating in an interview such as this. I'm
16 going to give you a memorandum that contains the
17 Board of Appeals address.

18 Should you find that you have been
19 discriminated against this is the body that you
20 file your complaint with. It is nothing formal,
21 you just do it by a letter. I would caution you
22 that under the code you only have 30 days from the
23 day of the discriminatory event to file your
24 complaint.

1 I'm also going to give you the Johnny
2 Jackson business card that I spoke about earlier,
3 and I'm going to give you Bill Tucker's business
4 card as well. Bill Tucker is our lead accident
5 investigator for the state, and in the event
6 anything pops up after this interview is over that
7 you think would be beneficial to the investigation
8 that you didn't say here today, you may contact
9 Mr. Tucker and he would be happy to help you. So
10 let me give you this stuff here.

11 With that I am going to pass the interview
12 over to Mr. Tucker and Mr. Scott to begin the
13 questions, or to Mr. Cripps.

14 EXAMINATION

15 BY MR. CRIPPS:

16 Q. Greg, once again, thanks for coming back
17 in to talk to us. I read through your first
18 transcript so I'm not going to try to rehash the
19 stuff you talked about the first time. There is
20 some clarifications though that I want to talk to
21 you about.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. I would like to go back first of all and
24 talk about your mining history, your experience.

1 Can you explain to me just when you started in
2 mining and where?

3 A. I started down at Logans Fork, it was in
4 2007, I started as a red hat and I started on
5 longwall. And then in December of 2009 I become an
6 electrician.

7 Q. That's when you got your electrical card?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Or you got put in the job?

10 A. That's when I got certified.

11 Q. Had you been doing electrical work prior
12 to that?

13 A. Yeah, I had been going to class down there
14 through the training course.

15 Q. So you actually started at Logan's Fork,
16 that was your first mining experience?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. In 2007?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And you went directly to the longwall when
21 you started there?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. What did you do on the wall there?

24 A. I started out as maintenance, and that's

1 pretty much where I stayed at.

2 Q. Were you on a running shift or an idle
3 shift?

4 A. Idle shift.

5 Q. So that was the third shift?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Midnight shift?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. When did you leave Logan's Fork and go to
10 UBB?

11 A. I'm trying to think when they started. I
12 was one of the last to leave from up there. We was
13 pulling all the equipment out.

14 Q. So you stayed at Logan's Fork to help pull
15 the equipment?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. We know the longwall at UBB actually
18 started production around the first of September of
19 '09.

20 A. I'm thinking maybe two months before it
21 started or something, that I got there.

22 Q. What did you do when you come back, or
23 come to UBB?

24 A. We checked all the oils and everything in

1 the shearer, then we come back and that's when we
2 started setting the shields on-line before they got
3 it running.

4 Q. So your first day at UBB you went
5 underground?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And helped to set up the longwall?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And so you think that would have been
10 approximately July of '09?

11 A. I'm not really for sure.

12 Q. But it had to be prior to the longwall
13 starting up if you --

14 A. Oh, yes, I had to set the shields.

15 Q. What shift did you work when you come to
16 UBB?

17 A. Hoot owl.

18 Q. I keep saying come back to UBB because
19 I've talked to so many guys that left UBB and went
20 to Logan's Fork and come back, but you don't fall
21 in that category?

22 A. No.

23 Q. As I understand you worked third shift at
24 UBB --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- on the maintenance? Worked for
3 Shannon?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And then what did you do as part of your
6 job or what your job entails?

7 A. Well, when we first go in we check the
8 shearer, check all the oils, check the bits and
9 everything on it. We get everything caught up
10 there then we either help the shield tech guys or
11 whatever, or if they have something down then we
12 fix it.

13 Q. Do you normally set bits on your shift?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Describe that process to me?

16 A. You just go through and check each drum
17 and change all the bits on them.

18 Q. Do you have to move the shearer or move
19 the pan line any at all to set the bits?

20 A. You may have to adjust or get it set up
21 somewhere before you can line the shield and pull
22 the shield in and set the bits.

23 Q. Do you have to pull the pan back from the
24 facing any at all?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Why is that?

3 A. In order to get the drum out of the face
4 where you can roll the drum.

5 Q. When you rolled the drum to set the bits
6 do you generally do that by hand or do you have to
7 energize the shield?

8 A. No, do it by hand.

9 Q. Just physically step on the drum?

10 A. Yes, just pull it.

11 Q. Tell me about checking water sprays.
12 What's involved with that?

13 A. As each bit you set, each bit has an
14 individual spray, you go through, if you see
15 anything missing or anything you put them in, or we
16 turn the water on, you see them stopped up then
17 we'll clean them out, change all the sprays out,
18 whichever one ain't spraying.

19 Q. You say you clean them out, what's
20 involved in cleaning them out?

21 A. You usually take like a torch tip cleaner
22 or something, clean the ports out.

23 Q. Does that generally work?

24 A. Yeah. And if not most of the time when

1 them drums come in where they weld them up from the
2 factory, they get all that welding stuff in there,
3 when they get worked it eventually stops the ports
4 up and you have to take the spray completely out
5 and clean the port.

6 Q. By cleaning the port, you're talking about
7 the --

8 A. Yes, it's metal slag that won't fit out.

9 Q. There is like, what, a three-eighths inch
10 hole behind that spray in the drum?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Is that the port you're talking about you
13 clean out?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. How do you clean them out?

16 A. The only thing you can do is just take
17 something and knock it back into the drum. When
18 they weld them up it's made it won't come out.

19 Q. Well, sometimes there's pieces of slag
20 that's bigger than the --

21 A. Yeah, bigger than the hole.

22 Q. -- the hole?

23 A. Sometimes you can work with them and get a
24 magnet and bring some of them out, but other than

1 that they just stop up.

2 Q. Do you ever take the sprays out and just
3 run the water in the drum?

4 A. Yeah, we will flush them, just turn it on
5 and flush the drums.

6 Q. But that's just on your shift you do
7 that?

8 A. Yeah, just on maintenance crew.

9 MR. BABINGTON: I'm sorry to interrupt
10 you. If you could, if you would wait for
11 Mr. Cripps to complete asking his question before
12 you answer so that we don't have the two of you
13 talking over each other, it makes for a cleaner
14 transcript.

15 Q. I'll try to do better if you do.

16 When you're checking your sprays do you
17 ever find any of the sprays completely missing?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. How often?

20 A. It just depends. You may go over there
21 and have four drums and have one or two missing,
22 and we go through and put them in.

23 Q. What's the most number you can recall ever
24 missing at one time?

1 A. I'd say probably maybe four, somewhere
2 right in that vicinity.

3 Q. That would be four on one drum?

4 A. Yeah, or both.

5 Q. The sprays that you replace them with,
6 where do you get those sprays from?

7 A. I have no idea where they order them
8 from. We had our own parts cars down there with
9 all the parts on them.

10 Q. So there are spare sprays on the section?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Do you ever notice the holes or the
13 orifice in the sprays themselves? I guess, do you
14 pay attention to the size if there is difference in
15 the sprays?

16 A. Oh, yes.

17 Q. Have you ever noticed any difference in
18 the sprays?

19 A. Yeah, I noticed some was bigger, bigger
20 holes when we change them out.

21 Q. Is there any specific area that you put
22 the bigger -- the sprays with the bigger holes as
23 opposed --

24 A. No, if we got new ones we'll just change

1 them and put the new ones in.

2 Q. Even if they have the bigger holes?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Have you ever seen anybody clean the
5 sprays with other things besides torch tip
6 cleaners?

7 A. I don't know, that's just what I done,
8 pull them out and clean them or whatever.

9 Q. Ever seen anybody drive a nail in them to
10 enlarge the hole?

11 A. No. Nobody is going to go through that
12 much work.

13 Q. Have you ever seen up at the headgate
14 controller, the 480 box, do you know the box I'm
15 talking about?

16 A. The gate box?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Do you guys ever check the E-Stop switch
20 on that gate box?

21 A. Yes, we had two of them on there.

22 Q. Have you ever seen those tested?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Do you recall prior to the explosion when

1 the last time you saw them tested?

2 A. No. We done the gate box -- I'm trying to
3 think, it was probably about three months or so,
4 then they split it up on the crews where we had two
5 different crews, and we didn't mess with the gate
6 box anymore. I don't know who picked it up after
7 that. But they was trying to teach me for my
8 permissibility on the wall.

9 Q. So in the course of teaching you somebody
10 actually hit that E-Stop?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Who was that, do you recall?

13 A. I'm wanting to say maybe Kelton. He went
14 through and checked the gate box and everything,
15 showed me what all I needed to check.

16 Q. Let's talk about the red E-Stop button,
17 when he hit that what actually happened on the
18 face?

19 A. When they hit the big one everything shut
20 down.

21 Q. When he hit it was the face conveyer
22 running at the time?

23 A. I can't remember.

24 Q. Did the lights go off?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Now, you say there's another E-Stop on
3 there?

4 A. Each individual one has got the E-Stop,
5 for each, like the conveyer change and all that.
6 Like I say, I was just learning, I don't know
7 exactly what he was doing. I was trying to figure
8 it out. I never messed with electrical work my
9 whole life, they finally talked me into going
10 through it.

11 Q. You went from never doing electrical and
12 you was a longwall electrician huh?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Was you a PLC expert?

15 A. No.

16 Q. When he hit the E-Stop do you remember the
17 PLC inside the gate box, did it still have power on
18 it?

19 A. No, I don't believe.

20 Q. The reason I'm asking, we found a diode in
21 the 480 ground monitor circuit for that E-Stop.
22 Was you aware of that or have you talked to anybody
23 about that?

24 A. No.

1 Q. Do you recall anybody being inside that
2 gate box?

3 A. No.

4 Q. You don't know when that diode may have
5 been put in there then?

6 A. No, I have no idea.

7 Q. Do you ever test the E-Stop switch on the
8 shearer?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. When you test that E-Stop switch on the
11 shearer what actually happens?

12 A. It shuts it down.

13 Q. It shuts the shearer down?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Does the power stay on the janna?

16 A. No, it shuts it all down. You have to go
17 back to the gate box to reset it.

18 Q. So it de-energizes the power on the cable?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. What about when you hit the E-Stop on the
21 Pac-Man and shut the shearer off, what does that
22 shut off, do you know?

23 A. It shuts off all the, I guess, working
24 components. I think the janna still stays powered

1 up.

2 Q. So you still have power on the cable?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Who was the foreman on your shift, I'll
5 call him the face boss, section foreman?

6 A. I had Larry Brown and Shannon Dickens, my
7 two bosses.

8 Q. What about Keith Stanley? Who's Keith
9 Stanley?

10 A. Yeah, Keith Stanley, he was another boss.
11 Like I say, we worked all them different schedules,
12 like two different crews, we had different -- them
13 two, him and Larry was the two, I guess, main
14 bosses.

15 Q. Who would actually do the pre-shift exam
16 for the oncoming shift?

17 A. That would have to be probably Larry or
18 Keith.

19 Q. Do you ever see them do the pre-shift
20 exam?

21 A. I see them go down through the face or
22 whatever, but I don't know what they do.

23 Q. Do you see them take air readings?

24 A. Yeah, I seen them take them before.

1 Q. Have you seen them take them on the face?

2 A. Yeah, started there, we start on the face,
3 then they go down through and I don't know where
4 they go from there.

5 Q. Before you start on the face, you mean out
6 in the last open crosscut?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Do you ever see them do it on the belt
9 line?

10 A. I don't know. I ain't never seen them up
11 through there. Because I'm usually somewhere about
12 mid face or so, just depending.

13 Q. Are you familiar with the requirements of
14 the ventilation plan as far as the longwall goes?

15 A. What do you mean?

16 Q. The vent plan requires a specific quantity
17 of air in the last open and then specific
18 velocities on the face.

19 A. Yeah, they had it, I think it was -- I
20 can't remember the full amount of air they had to
21 have. I was wanting to say 40 some plus. Like I
22 say, that was out of my league, I never messed with
23 no air.

24 Q. Did you ever do air readings on the face?

1 A. No.

2 Q. What time did your shift start and end?

3 A. We started 11:00, it was 11:30, I think it
4 started at 11:00 in the last couple months, because
5 they put us on a five and three schedule.

6 Q. By start at 11:00, does that mean that's
7 what time you went underground?

8 A. Yeah, or start getting our parts if we had
9 to get parts. We was usually underground by 11:30.

10 Q. What time did you quit every morning?

11 A. We usually got outside around 8:00, 8:30,
12 somewhere right in that time.

13 Q. When you went into the mine would the
14 evening shift still be loading coal when you got
15 there?

16 A. Most of the time we'd pass them somewhere
17 on the line.

18 Q. By on the line, you mean on the face?

19 A. The main line. No, on the main line.

20 Q. On the main line track?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. So they would already be off the section
23 when you got there?

24 A. Sometimes, and sometimes they'd still be

1 up there.

2 Q. What about at the end of your shift when
3 day shift was coming in, where would you meet the
4 day shift?

5 A. We'd meet them at the mantrip, at the
6 starting section. We'd wait for their ride and
7 take their ride.

8 Q. So they'd bring the mantrip in and you
9 guys would get on it and take it back out?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. When you was checking the sprays did you
12 ever check the water pressure on the shield?

13 A. Now, we have before, there was an
14 inspector up there and we checked the sprays. If I
15 ain't mistaken I think it was like 90 psi, as far
16 as spray out, and we put a gauge on it and we
17 pressurized it.

18 Q. Do you remember where the spray was that
19 they took out?

20 A. I'm wanting to say the ranging arm. We
21 took one out of it and maybe one out of the drum.

22 Q. Do you know, again, what your vent plan
23 required as far as the number of sprays and the
24 pressure?

1 A. I don't know exactly how many sprays that
2 it required on that shearer. Each drum had, if I
3 ain't mistaken, 52 sprays. It just depended on
4 which drum you had on there, you had a coal drum or
5 you had a rock drum.

6 Q. Do you know which drum was on this shield?

7 A. I think the coal drum. The rock drum I
8 think they're down to 30 some sprays, 30 some bits.

9 Q. So did you normally check sprays and water
10 pressure for the oncoming shift or did they do it
11 themselves?

12 A. No, we would go through and check the
13 sprays or whatever. If they had a problem with
14 some of the sprays stopped up or something then
15 they'd leave us a note and we'd go through and
16 check them all.

17 Q. So if second shift had been operating and
18 had a problem with sprays they would leave you a
19 note?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. So was it fairly common to come in and
22 find sprays stopped up?

23 A. Not really. Most of the time it actually
24 worked pretty good. Like I say, whenever they had

1 a problem or something then we'd go through and
2 check everything.

3 Q. Do you recall, did they ever leave a note
4 and say they had missing sprays that needed
5 replaced?

6 A. I don't know. I never seen the notes.

7 Q. Who got the notes?

8 A. I think Shannon, my foreman.

9 Q. Shannon was your boss?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And so your work orders you received from
12 Shannon?

13 A. Yes.

14 MR. KOERBER: When you speak of Shannon,
15 what's Shannon's last name?

16 A. Dickens.

17 Q. (By Mr. Cripps) So I guess the way the
18 crews rotated you seen all three of the crews
19 either when you arrived on the section or --

20 A. Or when I was leaving.

21 Q. -- or when you was leaving.

22 Did you ever notice if any of the crews
23 used the air stream helmets?

24 A. Yes.

1 Q. Do you know which crews and whom on those
2 crews?

3 A. Well, I seen both crews have them, carry
4 them up through there.

5 Q. Which crews? You say both?

6 A. Well, actually, all three of them. The
7 shearer operators I know would carry theirs.

8 Q. Did they carry them in from outside with
9 them?

10 A. They kept them in their box and they
11 changed their filters or whatever every -- when
12 they started their shift when they started.

13 Q. They kept them in their box?

14 A. Yeah. Some of them -- I don't know what
15 they would do with all of them, but I seen some of
16 them they pull out of their toolboxes.

17 Q. So every crew had a toolbox on the
18 section?

19 A. Most all the toolboxes -- well, everybody
20 had boxes but the maintenance crew had the most.

21 Q. What about the batteries to operate those
22 air stream helmets?

23 A. They kept them on the mule train.

24 Q. Was there a charger there for them?

1 A. Yeah, for the batteries.

2 Q. Also I understand that they kept extra
3 Pac-Men on the mule train?

4 A. Yeah, there was a charger there for them.

5 Q. Was the Pac-Man and the air stream
6 batteries in the same vicinity?

7 A. Yeah, they was right there, within so many
8 feet I guess.

9 Q. Were they actually on top of the starter
10 on top of the power center?

11 A. They was on top of the power center.

12 Q. Did you ever notice, when all the crews
13 come in, who carried multi-gas detectors?

14 A. I don't know.

15 Q. Specifically Gary Corals was the tailgate
16 shearer operator on the B turn, do you know if Gary
17 carried one?

18 A. I'm not for sure. I don't know.

19 Q. That's fine. Do you recall the shearer
20 cable being changed?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Did you participate in changing that out?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. When did that happen?

1 A. I'm wanting to say maybe three, four weeks
2 before the explosion. I'm not for sure. I do
3 remember.

4 Q. What was your participation in that
5 project?

6 A. Taking all the Brickley caps off, that's
7 all the caps that feed the cable through there.

8 Q. Was the cable replaced all the way from
9 the headgate to the shearer?

10 A. It was replaced down the line, what we
11 replaced, from mid face back to the shearer.

12 Q. So the new piece of cable was spliced into
13 the old cable at mid face?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And then the new cable was entered into
16 the junction box on the shearer?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Did you help with either of those
19 projects, the splicing or the entering in the
20 junction box?

21 A. Yeah, I helped with the entering on the
22 junction box.

23 Q. When you helped enter it into the junction
24 box, do you recall, was there a diode inside that

1 box?

2 A. I'm not for sure.

3 Q. Do you know what I'm talking about, the
4 diode?

5 A. Yeah, I know what you're talking about, a
6 diode.

7 Q. Have you seen those diodes before?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Do you know what the function of the
10 diodes are?

11 A. You got current going one way and it
12 blocks it going in the other.

13 Q. And it's part of the ground monitor
14 circuit for that cable?

15 A. Right.

16 Q. But you don't recall the diode being
17 installed when the cable was replaced?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Because there was a diode inside the box
20 when we opened it up as part of this
21 investigation.

22 A. Right.

23 Q. You don't know when that would have been
24 put in there?

1 kind of thing where you had to wait at the mantrip
2 for each section to get off, before we had to meet
3 them there, at the start of the section there,
4 because they didn't have enough transportation or
5 something to transfer both crews out. They had a
6 ride up there.

7 Q. So you was never down the jack line while
8 the evening shift was running, say in the last
9 month prior to the explosion?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Did the midnight shift ever run the
12 longwall?

13 A. We did to start up there a little bit, but
14 we wouldn't run much.

15 Q. They had it closed within a month of the
16 time --

17 A. No.

18 Q. -- of the explosion.

19 So you was never down the jack line while
20 it was running up within a month of the explosion?

21 A. No.

22 MR. TUCKER: That's all I have.

23 EXAMINATION

24 BY MR. BECK:

1 Q. Greg, how is a spray fastened to the drum?

2 A. It has little staples, staple locks fits
3 in a groove on the backside of the spray.

4 Q. And what would cause the spray to be
5 missing, what would happen?

6 A. A rock or anything can beat them out.

7 Q. And if you change the spray you have to
8 remove that staple manually?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Do you recall how many bits are on a drum,
11 a coal drum for example?

12 A. I'm wanting to say 52.

13 Q. If you had to change out a whole drum of
14 bits approximately how long would that take?

15 A. Probably 30 minutes.

16 Q. Would that be one man or two men?

17 A. Two men.

18 Q. Two men, 30 minutes, okay. Where would
19 the shearer normally be left for day shift?

20 A. They usually try to keep it on the head
21 for us.

22 Q. You mentioned that you met day shift at
23 the mantrip, and then you would take their mantrip
24 to go outside; is that right?

EXAMINATION

1
2 BY MR. MAGGARD:

3 Q. I've got a few, Gary. On your guys' crew
4 who was the guys that done DT&I, put the date, the
5 time and their initials down on the exam?

6 A. That would have to be either Larry or
7 Keith.

8 Q. So as far as that goes none of you
9 maintenance guys, you or Shannon, done any kind of
10 date, times and initials for anything?

11 A. I don't know if Shannon did or not. He
12 may have if one of them guys wasn't there. But
13 other than that...

14 Q. I think Bill already said this, but was
15 there any times that something else might have
16 occurred that you guys didn't set bits, didn't get
17 to work on the shearer and had to do something else
18 and you had to leave that for day shift to do?

19 A. No. Now, they had come in maybe a time or
20 two and helped us finish to get started, if we had
21 a big job or something. But he would usually send
22 two guys anyway to service the shearer if we had a
23 big job.

24 Q. Did you ever have to do any work on the

1 mule train?

2 A. They run that -- I'm trying to think of
3 that line they run. I can't think of it. It's
4 that blue line, I can't think of what it is, but I
5 help them run it --

6 Q. Leaky feeder?

7 A. No, it wasn't a leaky feeder, it's one
8 that was going on the mule train, one of the
9 monitors.

10 Q. Control cable?

11 A. Maybe.

12 Q. I'm just trying to help you. Is that the
13 cable going to the gate box?

14 A. No, no. It's just a cable on a mule
15 train. Like I say, I think it --

16 Q. Data highway cable?

17 A. It might have been the data. I'm not for
18 sure.

19 Q. Had you ever done any work on the water
20 pumps or anything of that nature?

21 A. Change filters.

22 Q. Was that something you guys normally
23 done?

24 A. Yeah, somebody, we did or the other crew.

1 Q. How did you know when to change filters?
2 Or did you change them or did you just clean them
3 out?

4 A. No, we changed them and put new ones in.

5 Q. And when you put new ones in what was you
6 putting in, baskets, socks?

7 A. Socks.

8 Q. When was the last time you recall having
9 to change a sock on the water shield?

10 A. The last time that I done it I believe was
11 when they was switching over to fresh water. I
12 don't know. We had to change them -- somebody had
13 to stay there. I know one guy had to stay there,
14 about every 20 minutes he would change them until
15 they got it all out of the system.

16 Q. And which filters, which sock filters did
17 you change?

18 A. They was -- I think there was three on the
19 outside, three or four he was changing right there.

20 Q. Was that on the -- facing inby was that on
21 the left side?

22 A. That would be on the left.

23 Q. So when do you recall that they swapped
24 over to fresh water?

1 A. I have no idea. I know we had to put a
2 couple clamps on and fix a couple leaks when they
3 first fired it up. But I don't know when they
4 fired it up.

5 Q. I know you talked about unclogging the
6 sprays on the shearer drum and that stuff, did you
7 ever notice that certain times of the week,
8 different days or certain weather conditions or
9 there was sometimes that the sprays got clogged
10 more than usual?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Normally about the same all the way every
13 day?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Say you come in on -- I guess let me ask
16 it this way. A Monday wasn't as bad as a Friday?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Had you noticed when you were trying to
19 unclog a spray, I guess, help me out here, you took
20 the spray out; is that correct?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. And you used a torch tip cleaner?

23 A. Uh-huh.

24 Q. Did you ever notice when you took some out

1 that the plastic inserts were missing?

2 A. Yeah, on the back.

3 Q. And if that plastic insert is missing what
4 would you do? Would you normally keep that spray?

5 A. We'd throw it in a bucket and get a new
6 spray that had the little inserts in them.

7 Q. How often would that happen?

8 A. Like I say, it just depends on the sprays.

9 Q. Have you ever pulled one out and was
10 cleaning it out and the plastic piece come out
11 while you were cleaning it?

12 A. Yeah. A lot of times if you couldn't get
13 it cleaned you'd have to pull the plastic piece off
14 and get in there with a piece of pipe and clean it
15 out and put everything back.

16 Q. So you'd put the plastic piece --

17 A. Yeah, there's an air pocket in between
18 them.

19 Q. So you put the plastic piece, it will snap
20 back in?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Is it still as tight as it was when it
23 came?

24 A. Yeah, I mean, I use my baby locks and just

1 tap them in.

2 MR. MAGGARD: Thank you.

3 EXAMINATION

4 BY MR. CRIPPS:

5 Q. Baby locks, that'd be a small pair of
6 channel locks?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Have you ever noticed, while you were
9 working on the face, have you ever noticed a large
10 amount of rock dust coming in on you?

11 A. Maybe a time or two.

12 Q. Who took care of the rock dust on the
13 longwall belt, do you know?

14 A. I don't know.

15 Q. Did you ever see anybody rock dusting with
16 a machine duster on the longwall belt?

17 A. I don't know. Like I say, once I get on
18 there doing the face, I don't know what everybody
19 else does.

20 Q. Have you ever had rock dust so thick that
21 you just had to leave the face to let it clear?

22 A. Yeah, we've had to leave before. Like I
23 say, I can't recall when.

24 Q. Was it on this panel or was it Logan's

1 Fork?

2 A. I can't remember.

3 Q. Have you ever worked on the ranging arm
4 pins on the shearer?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. As we understand on the day of the
7 explosion the wall was down for a pretty good
8 while, they was working on the tailgate ranging arm
9 pin, have you talked to anybody about that?

10 A. That's just what I heard they was working
11 on when it went down.

12 Q. Have you talked to Jack Roles at all about
13 that?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Since the day of the explosion?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Have you worked on that pin yourself
18 before?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Tell me what's involved in replacing that
21 pin?

22 A. Most of the time you had like a vacuum
23 plate you put on it to keep it from backing out, if
24 it backed out you had to get over there and drive

1 it back in and put your plate back over it.

2 Q. I heard a lot --

3 A. You got a set of B locks in there.

4 Q. That was my next question. I've heard
5 about the ranging arm pin and I've also heard about
6 B locks, were they the same thing?

7 A. No, you got your pin is your main pin,
8 then you got your B locks, and you tighten them
9 down and clamp the under panel, it's supposed to
10 hold it in there. Now, there's eight of them on
11 each panel.

12 Q. There's eight?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Eight what?

15 A. Eight B locks.

16 Q. On each pin?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Or eight total on the shearer?

19 A. No, eight on each pin. You've got inners
20 and outers.

21 Q. Oh, okay. As far as the pins they worked
22 on on day shift was the tailgate ranging arm pin on
23 the face side of the shear. Where exactly
24 physically would you have to be located to work on

1 that pin?

2 A. Pretty much anywhere.

3 Q. Would you have to pull shields in to do
4 that?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Say for instance if they had to work on
7 the B lock pin at the same time they wanted to set
8 bits, how many shields would you expect that they
9 would pull?

10 A. Possibly maybe two, three at the most.

11 Q. When you guys set bits on third shift, did
12 you have to pull shields in?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. How many would you pull in to be able to
15 set bits?

16 A. One.

17 Q. One over each drum?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Or one total?

20 A. No, one over each drum, whichever side you
21 was working on.

22 Q. When you was finished did you ever push
23 the shields back?

24 A. Yes.

1 Q. Why do you push them back?

2 A. Clear the walkway, and I guess when they
3 start it up to keep it from hitting the cutter into
4 the shield and tearing into the shafts and breaking
5 them.

6 Q. When you push the shields back did they go
7 back all the way?

8 A. Yeah, most of the time, it would depend on
9 how far it fell back. If it fell up to the shield
10 then you had to work and you couldn't get them all
11 the way back.

12 Q. Was it pretty common to push the shields
13 back after you pulled them in to do work on the
14 shields?

15 A. Yes.

16 MR. CRIPPS: That's all I have.

17 MR. BECK: I have two or so.

18 EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. BECK:

20 Q. Greg, were there sprays on the ranging
21 arms?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Were those normally checked at the same
24 time the drum sprays were checked?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Were there sprays on the shields?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Were they checked?

5 A. Yeah, they was -- that's what the shield
6 techs, they had to go through and I guess do that
7 in their exams or whatever, or check them.

8 Q. Or they used during operations?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Did all the shields have sprays or just
11 certain ones?

12 A. No, they just had -- I forget how many
13 separated, but they had some kind of plan where
14 they run so many -- ever so many shields.

15 Q. Do you know, was the face you had to move,
16 was it set up where you had to move one shield at a
17 time or did it have what's sometimes referred to as
18 batch push where five or ten or so can be moved at
19 the same time?

20 A. No, you had to, I think, move individually
21 each one, pull it in.

22 Q. The last thing I just want to clarify, can
23 people be working on the B lock, if there was a
24 problem with a ranging arm pin, and the B lock like

1 Dean was referring to, can that be worked on at the
2 same time as sprays or bits are being worked on?
3 Can those two jobs be done at the same time or is
4 it such that only one could be done at a time?

5 A. No, they both could be done at the same
6 time.

7 Q. It was just a matter of pulling --

8 A. Yeah, you've got a shield back here, then
9 there'd be one -- one or two that you'll leave
10 back, and you can pull the other one in in front of
11 the drum.

12 Q. The last question, do you know if there
13 was a rock dust crew on the midnight shift?

14 A. I don't know.

15 MR. BECK: That's all I have.

16 MR. TUCKER: Just a couple of quick
17 follow-ups there.

18 EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. TUCKER:

20 Q. You was talking about there's a plate on
21 the backside of that pin that's welded on to keep
22 it from backing out.

23 A. Right.

24 Q. Would it be normal then when you're done

1 with the job that you weld that plate back on?

2 A. Yeah. Well, we used to, but I don't know
3 how they done on this one. We had trouble down at
4 Logan's Fork, one of the ears broke off the
5 shearer. So we had to pull the shearer off line.
6 And they reinforced it and had the third ear to the
7 outside with a longer pin.

8 Q. Would you run into any problems where you
9 needed to use torches during that job on the pin?

10 A. No, I wouldn't think, not if it was backed
11 out.

12 EXAMINATION

13 BY MR. MAGGARD:

14 Q. When you set those set bits can you kind
15 of describe how the bits normally were when you
16 took them off? A lot of people call them F shoe
17 bits, did you ever see some worn real bad?

18 A. Yeah, I seen some that wore.

19 Q. Where would they normally be worn at?
20 What drum? What part of the drum? Tell me what
21 you recall?

22 A. Well, I come across them where they'd be
23 all the way across the drum in different spots.

24 Q. So let's say you were setting bits and

1 normally you say you changed out, whatever, 48, I
2 think you said 52, but you're changing 48, how many
3 would you expect normally would be past the carbide
4 tip when you were changing them?

5 A. You'd still see the tips on the biggest
6 part of them but they wanted new drum sets, pretty
7 much every day. We had to go through and change
8 them all.

9 Q. But out of all the ones you took off how
10 many would you say on a drum would be worn pretty
11 bad most of the time, average?

12 A. I come across a couple of them that was
13 wore that had lost a carbon tip, but I'd say most
14 of them still had the tip to them, but they'd be
15 wore narrower and we'd have to set the whole drum.

16 Q. Did you ever have to do that job by
17 yourself or would you always have somebody with
18 you?

19 A. Most of the time I had somebody with me.

20 Q. Had you ever done it by yourself?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Was it normally you and -- who all was on
23 maintenance? You, Shannon?

24 A. Me, Shannon and Kevin was on our crew.

1 Then we had a couple shield tech guys, which they
2 had their own schedule, then we'd have a lap night
3 with the other crew.

4 Q. Did the shield tech guys ever assist you
5 or was that just normally your job every night?

6 A. That's what we done every night, but they
7 would help us carry bits or something if we had to
8 carry them.

9 Q. Anybody else ever help?

10 A. Other than the crew.

11 MR. KOERBER: Let's take about a three
12 minute break just so people can confer and make
13 sure we have all the questions done. If you need
14 to use the restroom or get a drink you're free to.

15 (Break.)

16 MR. KOERBER: Let's go back on the record
17 please.

18 MR. CRIPPS: I have a couple questions if
19 you're up for it.

20 THE WITNESS: I guess.

21 EXAMINATION

22 BY MR. CRIPPS:

23 Q. When you did your work for instance
24 setting bits on the shearer, 30 minutes to set a

1 drum for the bits, did you have a set amount of
2 time that you was allotted to do that?

3 A. No.

4 Q. If it took you 45 minutes was somebody
5 chewing on you wanting to know why it took so long?

6 A. No.

7 Q. What kind of a report did you fill out and
8 turn in at the end of your shift?

9 A. I didn't fill any out.

10 Q. Did anybody on your crew?

11 A. Shannon usually did.

12 Q. Would he report the times that it took to
13 do the various jobs?

14 A. As far as I know he didn't.

15 Q. Are you familiar with the reports that the
16 day shift electricians and mechanics turn in?

17 A. No.

18 Q. You haven't seen them?

19 A. No.

20 Q. The reason I ask, the reports have several
21 items that I guess those guys are responsible to do
22 every day and it has a time associated with those
23 tasks, are you familiar with that at all?

24 A. I know the coal crew was set up

1 different. But like I say, we had jobs to do, if
2 we got it done then everything was good, just so we
3 had it ready to run by morning, no matter how long
4 it took or whatever.

5 Q. The jobs that you guys had to do, you told
6 me earlier that Shannon was the one that had the
7 list?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Who developed that list for Shannon?

10 A. It usually just handed down to I think
11 either Danny or Delbert.

12 Q. That would be Danny Lafferty?

13 A. Yeah, Danny Lafferty or Delbert Bailey.
14 They was one step above us, they was our other
15 bosses. They have like seven of them.

16 Q. You had seven bosses?

17 A. But I only answered to one, that was
18 Shannon.

19 Q. One at a time or just one period?

20 A. Just one period. If it had something to
21 do with me they had to go through him.

22 Q. What about Chris Blanchard, did you ever
23 answer to him?

24 A. No.

1 Q. Did you ever see him?

2 A. I seen him a time or two.

3 Q. Did you ever see him underground?

4 A. I couldn't say I had.

5 Q. Did he ever give you any work
6 instructions?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Do you know of him overruling anybody
9 else's work instructions?

10 A. I've heard before, but -- like if you need
11 somebody you have to call him, or somebody to get
12 it confirmed. But like I say, I never had to deal
13 with that.

14 Q. What about Jack Roles, did you ever deal
15 with Jack?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. What are some of the dealings you had with
18 Jack?

19 A. He was just a longwall coordinator.

20 Q. Would he ever give you instructions as far
21 as work to do?

22 A. No, not us. We would pretty much go to --
23 I guess he would probably tell them what to do if
24 something was -- or something he needed done if we

1 had time to get it done.

2 Q. So he didn't work third shift with you
3 guys?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Before you went underground on the normal
6 shift did you review the pre-shift and on-shift
7 books?

8 A. No, I didn't.

9 Q. Who did that on your shift?

10 A. I would say either probably Shannon or
11 Larry or Keith.

12 Q. Do you know for sure if they looked at
13 them?

14 A. I don't know. They'd go upstairs, so...

15 Q. Did you go in UBB side or Ellis side?

16 A. UBB side.

17 Q. Do you know where the pre-shift books for
18 the longwall were kept?

19 A. We did have maybe a longwall office up
20 there.

21 Q. At the UBB side?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. What about at the Ellis side?

24 A. They had their own offices everywhere, but

1 I don't know what was what.

2 Q. So I got a little confused I guess.
3 You're not sure who looked at the pre-shift books
4 prior to going underground?

5 A. No. I guess one of them guys did it,
6 they'd go upstairs every day.

7 Q. Just from your standpoint as a coal miner,
8 would you expect that somebody looking at the
9 pre-shift books, if any hazards were listed in
10 those books, would see that those hazards were
11 taken care of?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. What would you think of someone that
14 looked at those books and noted the hazards but
15 didn't take action to correct them?

16 A. See, I never felt that way with this crew
17 I was working. I felt they made all the right
18 decisions and whatever they decided is what I'd go
19 with.

20 Q. Is it your feelings that it is their
21 responsibility though to see that the areas where
22 you're working is in fact made safe?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. But you felt pretty good about -- you say

1 this crew, who in particular?

2 A. Well, all of them on the hoot owl.

3 Q. That includes Shannon?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Keith?

6 A. Larry, Keith, Smokey.

7 Q. Did any of them ever mention to you any
8 hazards listed in the books?

9 A. They had something there before in the
10 last open or something, but they went through --
11 the outby crew went through there and timbered it
12 off and all that, got everything set before we go.

13 Q. Anybody ever talk to you about the float
14 dust on belt line?

15 A. Probably have, but...

16 Q. You don't remember specifically?

17 A. No.

18 Q. None of your guys ever complained or
19 mentioned the fact that the belts weren't getting
20 rock dusted?

21 A. No, I never heard it.

22 Q. Do you have examiner's papers?

23 A. No.

24 Q. So you've never done no pre-shift or

1 on-shift examination?

2 A. No.

3 Q. In your training that you've had, I guess
4 you've got your black hat?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. In any of your training did the hazards of
7 float coal dust, was that ever talked about?

8 A. Yeah, we'd watch videos and stuff of
9 different things.

10 Q. What did the videos entail?

11 A. I can't recall, it's been about four years
12 ago.

13 Q. Do you recall, did they talk about the
14 hazards of float dust?

15 A. Yeah. I can't recall what it was, but I
16 do remember seeing it.

17 Q. Do you think if float dust is listed in
18 the examiner's book, shift after shift after shift,
19 would you as a miner just have to work in those
20 conditions or would you expect those conditions to
21 be corrected by management?

22 A. Yes.

23 MR. CRIPPS: That's all I have.

24 EXAMINATION

1 BY MR. TUCKER:

2 Q. Just to clear up something in my mind
3 about working on the ranging arm pins on the plate,
4 because you referred to Logan Fork having the ear
5 broke off, had you ever worked on the ranging arm
6 pins at UBB?

7 A. No, I can't recall I have. When I got
8 there the shearer and everything was online.

9 Q. Right, but that's the same longwall that
10 came from Logan's Fork.

11 A. Which they got different shearers and
12 everything on every panel. But the shields, they
13 come from Logan's Fork. I think they -- they go
14 through every time they do they change the pan
15 lines and the shearer on every panel.

16 Q. But would you expect that plate that you
17 was talking about being welded over at the -- would
18 you expect that same plate to be welded over the
19 pin on that longwall at UBB?

20 A. I'm not for sure, because toward the end
21 of that last panel they had that new style that had
22 the third ear on it and they went to the longer
23 pin. Where that other ear broke off and we had to
24 change the shearer on-line, we had to take it off

1 and put a new shearer on.

2 MR. TUCKER: That's all I have.

3 EXAMINATION

4 BY MR. BECK:

5 Q. Greg, you said you pulled from the UBB
6 side your crew, right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Where did the production crews pull from?

9 A. Over at Ellis.

10 Q. And the midnight shift now was -- your
11 primary job was to have everything ready for the
12 day shift when they come in?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Were you ever told, We've got visitors
15 coming tomorrow or higher-ups coming tomorrow, we
16 have to make sure things are right because of that
17 company coming?

18 A. No. No, I haven't.

19 Q. Do you know if anybody was -- I mean --

20 A. I don't know. I mean, I hadn't been told.

21 MR. BECK: That's all.

22 EXAMINATION

23 BY MR. MAGGARD:

24 Q. When you're unplugging them sprays,

1 unclogging them, what normally come out of them?

2 A. Just coal fines and stuff.

3 Q. Do you see any sand?

4 A. No, just packed coal.

5 Q. What about when you talked about slag
6 being, you know, a three-eighths inch hole, did you
7 ever see any mud or anything behind the sprays when
8 you took them out?

9 A. When we first -- let's see, when you first
10 put a set of drums on, most of the time you have to
11 pull them out and flush them. So I guess where you
12 drive it across the line to put them on. But like
13 I say, on this one here most all I seen was the
14 slag or the fines built up on the sprays.

15 Q. Before they went to fresh water what was
16 going on with the shields, what made them have to
17 go to fresh water?

18 A. I think they was getting a little
19 sluggish, like slowing down.

20 Q. What did you have to do to work on the
21 shields? What was you having to clean the lines,
22 the --

23 A. The main thing was right there by the fuel
24 drum, I'd say them filters, they would catch the

1 biggest part of them.

2 MR. MAGGARD: That's all I have.

3 MR. KOERBER: Anybody else? Any other
4 questions.

5 Greg, everybody has been asking you
6 questions, if there is anything you would like to
7 state, anything you would like to clarify, anything
8 you would like to add, the floor is yours.

9 THE WITNESS: (Indicating).

10 MR. KOERBER: Copy.

11 THE WITNESS: That's it.

12 MR. KOERBER: Greg, on behalf of the
13 Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training and
14 the other two teams I thank you very much for
15 coming today.

16 (This interview concluded at 10:15 a.m.)

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