

Oral History Collection

Mr. Keynan Swanner

Interviewer: Mr. Andrew Nelson

Date: Fall 2015

Place of Interview: Interviewer, Denton Texas
Keynan Swanner, Huston, Texas

Mr. Nelson: Keynan Swanner on the phone with us, all the way from, where you at, man? Corpus Christi?

Mr. Swanner: Right now I'm in Houston, but I'm working in Corpus Christi.

Mr. Nelson: Okay man, so how did you get involved with the oil and gas industry?

Mr. Swanner: I completed high school in 2004. Went to college and realized that the profession I chose, didn't agree, it wasn't going to really go anywhere. I got a phone call from a real good friend of mine, who asked me to come down to Houston to take a job. I started out as a fire watch, moved up to bolt up hand and helper, from there I've moved up to a journeyman, to a supervisor, and in the last

five years I graduated--I didn't really graduate--I turned into a safety supervisor.

Nelson: You said you were a fire watch. What exactly did you do?

Swanner: While the people were working, I pretty much made sure that there was no sparks coming down. We did work in a flammable environment, so I had a gas monitor to watch the readings for LEL [combustible hydrocarbons] CO, carbon dioxide.

Nelson: Exactly what do you do now, in your position?

Swanner: Right now I follow and enforce OSHA [Occupational Health and Safety Administration] rules, client and facility rules, and the company I work for rules.

Nelson: What would you say is probably the hardest part of your job?

Swanner: The hardest part of my job is getting the culture to adhere to the rules that are set in place. Whenever we hire somebody, we expect them to follow the rules and the regulations that are industry wide, but yet you still have a different culture. You have the old school people who want to do things the way they used to do twenty years ago, and then you have people that are new to the

industry who don't know a lot of things, but they're willing to adapt to the new rules.

Nelson: [Interrupts] Do the rules change a lot? Are the regulations pretty standardized for a while?

Swanner: They pretty much stay standardized for a while unless somebody gets hurt or killed.

Nelson: [under his breath] Oh, no!

Swanner: OSHA kind of takes a look at everything. As far as the company policy, that can depend on something as minor as a first aid, or near a miss, or an OSHA reportable, that the company can change the standard, within their company. As far as OSHA goes, or anything goes, it depends really on some major rule violations.

Nelson: Oh, okay. Alright. What would you want to see changed in your industry?

Swanner: That's easy. The safety culture. A lot of times you get the run of the mill people, their first job used to be flipping burgers and now they are doing boiler-making work. So there's a lot of experience that goes along with this industry. It would be nice to see some training, some background, and some culture going into these new employees as well as the old employees to get them

to realize, that "Hey look, if I take an unsafe action, I could get my coworker or myself hurt and not let them go home to their family."

Nelson: You're familiar with fracking, correct? And what happened over in Denton?

Swanner: Yes.

Nelson: Do you feel like fracking has a positive or negative effect?

Swanner: Ah, well there's a pro and con to everything. The fact that we are looking for a new fuel source, to wean us away from--we were pretty much buying from third party countries or outsourcing, I guess you could say is a good thing. The fact that we are on board, about pollution in the water--such as subdivisions getting polluted water, it really kind of goes back and forth with that. In the most part, we've done so much harm to the planet already with the mining and everything else that we've done as far as trying to get our own resources, I do think it rolls into a positive effect, the simple fact that we may not see it today, or tomorrow, or ten years from now but our children's children will benefit from a cleaner earth, from a cleaner environment, should we to

continue down this path.

Nelson: Would you be totally okay if fracking was in your neighborhood?

Swanner: Yes, because when I was in high school we had a place that was doing fracking just down the street from the high school. Granted, there was a lot more traffic. You had 18 wheelers coming down the road. There was the workers running in and out of the job site but for the most part

Nelson: [interrupts] You have kids, right?

Swanner: Yes, I do.

Nelson: Do you feel like--us, as a people, are harming the environment? Pretty much bend it to our will?

Swanner: I wouldn't necessarily say we have the right to do it, but as of today, if we are looking to better the population of the earth, better the environment. What will we have to do today to set ourselves apart from what we've done for decades? We've done drilling, we've done oil, we've outsourced our income, our economy, our fuel. [Unclear] what we've done wrong in the past, then, yes, I would say that we have to.

Nelson: Alright, man. I thank you for your time, your insight from the industry, and I appreciate it.

Swanner: Absolutely. Glad to help.

Nelson: [Under his breath] Hell, yeah.

[End of interview]

