

Gasoline Forensics: Source Identification for Low Level Groundwater Contamination

D.A. Birkholz¹; M.Ralitsch²; J. Arthurs³ and A. Wood³

- 1. Deib-Chem Forensics, Edmonton, Alberta**
- 2. Paracel Laboratories, Hamilton, Ontario**
- 3. LRL Associates Ltd, Ottawa, Ontario**

Part XV.1
Environmental
Protection Act
- Ontario

Stipulate the maximum levels of total petroleum hydrocarbons (PHC F1-F4) allowed to meet generic site condition standards.

Nine table based on various generic site conditions are provided which may be applied to a Site depending on the drift thickness, proximity to surface water bodies, soil texture, and water usage with the surrounding area (potable or non-potable).

Part XV.1
Environmental
Protection Act
- Ontario

Depending upon which table is applicable to a subject site, PHC-F1 concentrations between 420 – 750 ug/L and PHC-F2 concentrations of 150 ug/L in groundwater are posted as the criteria.

Exceedance of either of these values generally requires further delineation followed by remediation or risk assessment

Responsible Parties

These low levels provide analytical challenges in determining sources of gasoline (n-C₄ – n-C₁₂)

This is particularly true in urban settings where multiple sources of gasoline may exist

Source delineation is critical in determining the responsible parties and assigning liability for remediation. Who is going to pay for cleanup?

How is Gasoline made

- As many as 10 different gasoline components might be blended together to meet finished gasoline specifications

Examples include:

- Straight run gasoline or natural gas condensate
 - Reformate
 - Alkylate
 - Fluid catalytic cracking
- Isomerization of C_5/C_6 normal paraffins
 - Butane blending
 - Etc.
- Can have simple refineries with few processes and complex refineries with many process



Chromatographic comparisons



- Usually the first step
- BTEX, PHC – F1 – F4 not desirable
- These methods are designed for compliance monitoring, not for forensic investigations.

Information commonly sought



- Composition based on PIANO analysis (paraffins, isoparaffins, aromatics, naphthenes and olefins).
- PIANO tells us a lot about the refinery process (i.e. process forensics)
- Total organic lead concentration
- Identification of lead alkyl types
- Presence of oxygenate additives (MTBE, TAME, ethanol, methanol, etc)
- Bulk carbon and hydrogen isotope analyses
- Some additives have time restrictions and if present can provide insights into likely release dates (e.g. Alkyl lead, MTBE, etc).

Process forensics

- Process forensics focuses on the current and historic engineering practices and how these practices would predictably have affected the chemical composition of the contaminant of interest
- Butane blending – effect on normal-butane and iso-butane abundance
- Isomerate blending – effect on normal pentane and iso-pentane abundance
- Alkylate blending – effect of trimethylpentane distributions
- Naphtha reforming – reformat blending
- Fluidized catalytic cracking
- Octane enhancers – organic lead and oxygenates

Process Forensics

- Alkylation: 2,2,4-trimethylpentane/methylcyclohexane
- Octane index: $2,2,4\text{-trimethylpentane} + \text{toluene} / (\text{n-C}_7 + \text{n-C}_8)$
- Butane/isobutane blending: $\text{n-C}_4 / (\text{n-C}_4 + \text{i-C}_4)$
- Isomerase blending: $\text{i-C}_5 / (\text{i-C}_5 + \text{n-C}_5)$
- Reformate blending: $\text{toluene} / \text{-C}_8$
- Naphtha Reforming – reformate blending: $\text{naphthalene} / \text{n-C}_{12}$
- Fluidized catalytic cracking – presence of pentenes and hexenes
- Catalytic reforming – rich in C_3 and C_4 alkylbenzenes
- Ethanol blending – presence of ethanol

PROCESS FORENSICS

Source	Iso/MCH	Octane index	Butane ratio	Isopentane index	Toluene/n-C8	Naphth /ISTD	C5 & C6 olefins	C3 and C4 benzenes	Ethanol
A	1.46	2.46	0.84	0.82	3.61	7.37	16.78	52.56	24.34
B	1.4	2.55	0.82	0.79	3.91	7.27	15.29	51.37	22.52
C	1.35	2.44	0.82	0.83	3.62	6.94	14.93	49.00	21.25
D	2.53	3.39	0.86	0.60	5.60	6.32	13.50	58.36	21.40
E	2.60	3.41	0.84	0.61	5.61	6.36	15.79	58.01	22.43
F	2.51	3.16	1.0	0.53	5.07	7.93	11.45	20.40	71.19
G	1.34	2.06	0	0	2.60	15.14	2.82	100.08	0
H	0.17	0.52	0	0	0.75	21.55	0.28	209.29	0
I	0.31	0.52	0.75	0.7	1.02	8.09	5.75	96.08	22.42

PROCESS FORENSICS

- Source A, B, C derived from a common source
- Source D,E – derived from common source
- Source F, G, H, I derived from differing sources

- Data fits with chromatograms of gasoline samples also PCA and cluster analysis

What about weathering

- Evaporation
- Water dissolution
- Biodegradation

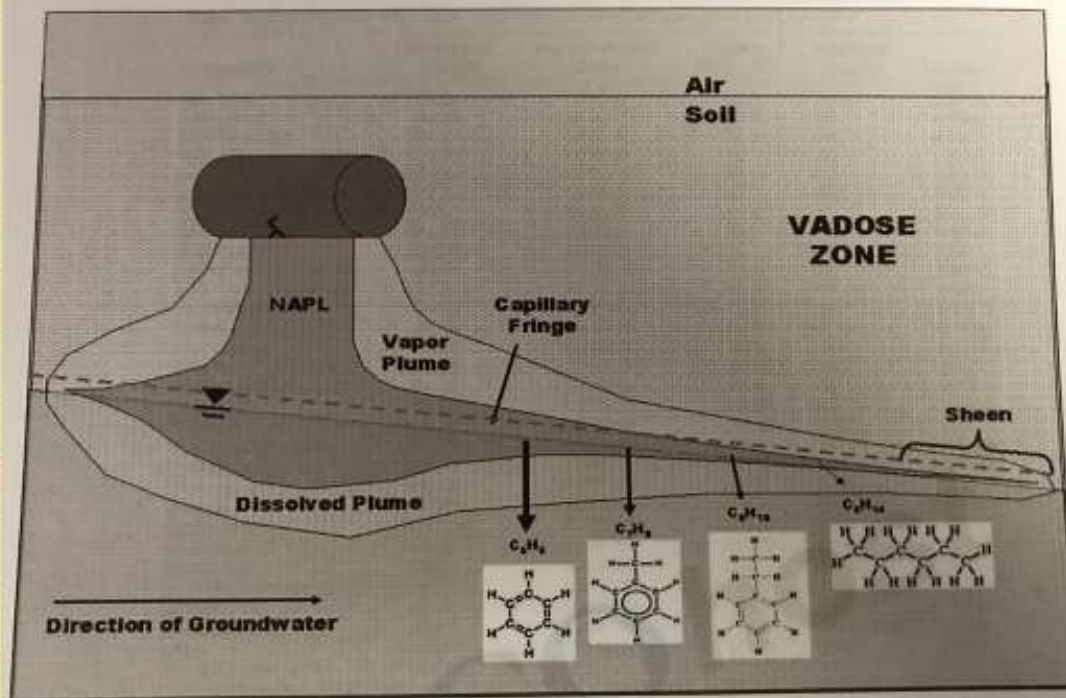


Figure 18.6.1 Schematic showing migration and typical distribution of gasoline-derived NAPL in the subsurface.

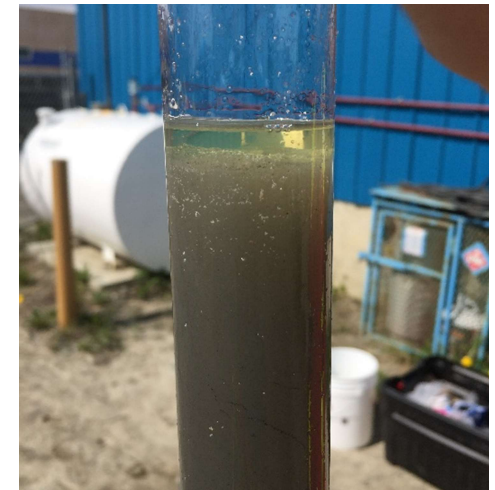
the gasoline occurs. For example, near the surface, where evaporation than gasoline released into subsurface soils. The extent to which gasoline released into surface soils will ultimately

Gasoline Analyses

- Several ways to perform forensic analyses of gasoline in water (source/spill investigations)
- If LNAPL is present – direct GC/MS using a PONA column. Used by refineries for product QC. CAN/CGSB-3.0 No. 14.3-2016; ASTM E1618-10
- LNAPL can be analyzed using GC/MS purge and trap; getting concentration right is a challenge
- LNAPL can be analyzed using GC/MS headspace
- If no LNAPL is present, use GC/MS purge and trap
- If no LNAPL is present extract groundwater and employ GC/MS using a PONA column
- Because observed PHC values are low, we proposed concentrating the groundwater samples during collection (multiple composite bailer samples 16 - 20) and extracting the concentrated hydrocarbons using an ETFE net.
- ETFE netting has been reported in the literature for use in collecting gasoline samples but no data
- Propose analyzing the ETFE net using passive headspace because better precision relative to solvent extraction and concentration

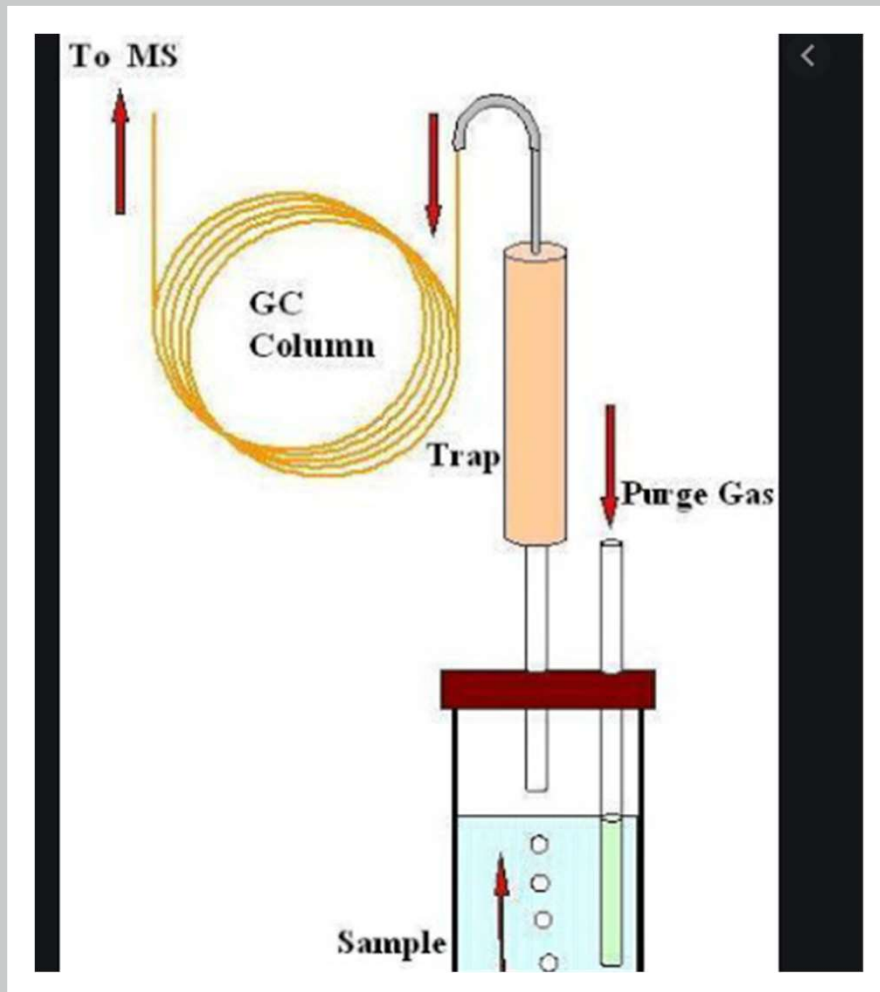


LNAPL



Purge & Trap GC/MS

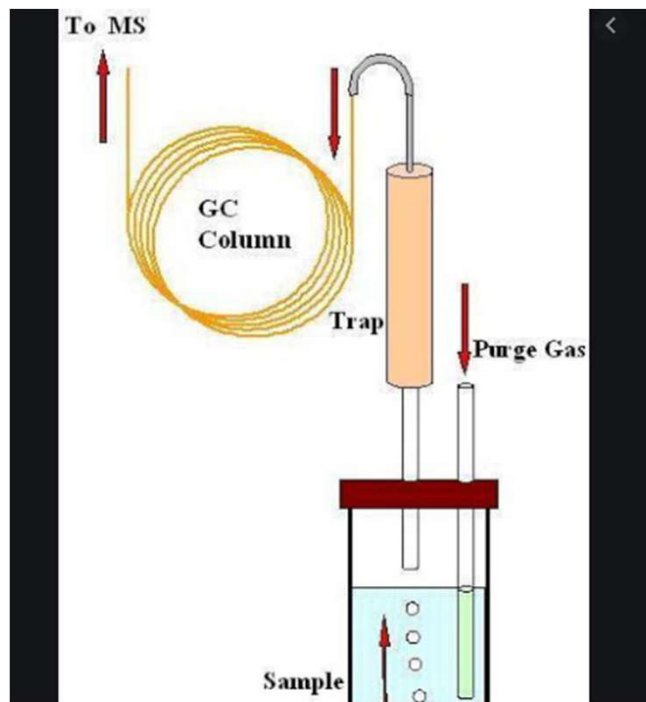
- Gasoline contains 361 individual compounds (Whittmore, 1979)
- Method 8260 measures 109 compounds
- Method tested using SRMs which reported 23 analytes
- In our experience low concentrations of TPH < 500 ug/L may not provide sufficient chemical details using PIANO methodology or < 100 ug/L BTEX”
- “Values of 6.3 and 160 mg/L contained full suite of detectable PIANO analytes
- ” Ref: Uhler, et. al., (2003). Intern. J. Environ. Anal. Chem., 83: 1 – 20
- Ref: Stout, et. al., (2006). Environmental forensics: contaminant specific guide, pp 466 - 527



Purge and Trap – Gasoline Samples

- The accuracy of the modified EPA Method 8260 is demonstrated through the comparison of the published NIST SRM certified and reference values and the concentrations determined by the modified EPA 8260 method
- **23 analytes out of 109 reported**
- ***The RPD between the NIST and modified EPA Method results are shown to be less than 15% for most compounds.***
- RPD not to exceed 25%
- Highest RPDs are evident in compounds present at low concentrations.

We Rejected Purge & Trap



- No data provided on analytes measured at 500 ug/L Using method . What chemicals were detected?
- Experience with purge-and-trap systems has shown that analysis of highly contaminated samples can potentially contaminate the transfer system: after analysis of such a sample, a reagent water blank should be analyzed to confirm that the system is free from interferences and cross-contamination. If the reagent water blank analysis is not free of interferences, the system must be decontaminated by either a bake-out procedure or through more detailed instrument maintenance. Sample analysis should not resume until a reagent water blank demonstrates that the system is free of interferences”
- Need to screen samples before analyses which takes time and is inefficient
- Reference: Douglas et. al., (2007). Chemical Fingerprinting Methods. In: Introduction to Environmental Forensics, Second Edition, Eds. Brian L. Murphy and Robert D. Morrison, Elsevier Academic Press, pp 351 – 352

Alternative Method: ETFE Netting followed by Passive Headspace Analyses

ETFE netting is used to sample petroleum sheens (CEN/TR 15522-1:2012; EN 15522-2:2020) both methods adopted by the Oil Spill International Network of Experts (OSINET). EN 15522-1:2020 deals with light end petroleum hydrocarbons

Has also been recommended for use in gasoline sheen collection (Stout et al., 2016)

Hydrophobic pads to sample ignitable liquids from surface water samples following fire extinguishing (Totten and Willis, 2020).

Passive headspace analysis has been used for fire debris analyses (Stauffer E. et al., 2008) and there have been many peer reviewed publications including an ASTM standard (ASTM E1412-07). Birkholz has a wealth of data looking at precision of ratios, e.g., alkylated benzenes, etc., etc.

We were particularly interested in ratios involving alkylated naphthalenes. Sandcock and Pasquier published three papers involving gasoline (2003, 2004a, 2004b).

Because we had two well established methods under ISO Guide ISO/IEC 17025 all we had to do was a validation study

***Gasoline Samples Employed in
Method Validation
Obtained from Hamilton, ON***

***Triplicate analyses of neat samples
PROCESS FORENSICS***



	Esso	Costco Premium	Pionner	Comment
toluene/n-C8	19.62 ± 2.11	33.38 ± 3.12	9.55 ± 1.34	Amount of reformate blended
1M3PB/1M4PB	2.00 ± 0.02	1.80 ± 0.04	1.85 ± 0.06	Reforming conditions
1M2EB/1M3EB	2.27 ± 0.05	1.98 ± 0.03	2.08 ± 0.08	Reforming conditions
224-TMP/MCH	8.12 ± 0.56	11.72 ± 1.19	2.83 ± 0.06	Amount of alkylate blended
isopentane/pentane	0.76 ± 0.05	1.59 ± 0.24	0.92 ± 0.13	Amount of isomerate blended
KI = 2MH + 23 DMP/3MH + 24 DMP	0.93 ± 0.01	0.87 ± 0.01	1.01 ± 0.01	Amount of straight run gasoline
2-MN/1-MN	1.93 ± 0.06	2.00 ± 0.08	2.17 ± 0.06	Reforming conditions
pentenes/pentane	13.65 ± 2.03	8.31 ± 0.73	9.54 ± 0.45	Amount of FCC gasoline
octane index	10.96 ± 0.93	15.50 ± 0.90	4.92 ± 0.20	Index relates to octane rating

Process

1.0 mL gasoline added to 500 mL distilled water

Gasoline and water mixed

Mixture extracted with ETFE netting

Netting stored in a jar for several days

After addition of surrogates placed in a 1 quart can

Carbon strip added

Heated at 80°C overnight

Carbon strip retrieved added to vial containing CS₂ + ISTD

Analyzed by GC/MS scanning using PONA column (GC/MS SIM may be required in some instances)

ETFE Netting followed by Passive Headspace Analysis



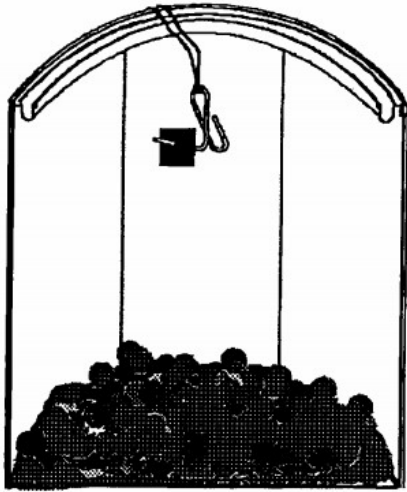


FIG. 1—Extraction apparatus (not to scale).



GC/MS Total Ion Chromatograms



ESSO GASOLINE SPLIT



NL:
4.32E6
TIC MS 04 -
gas esso reg

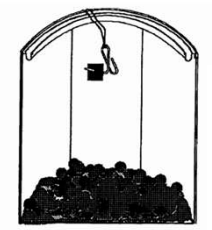
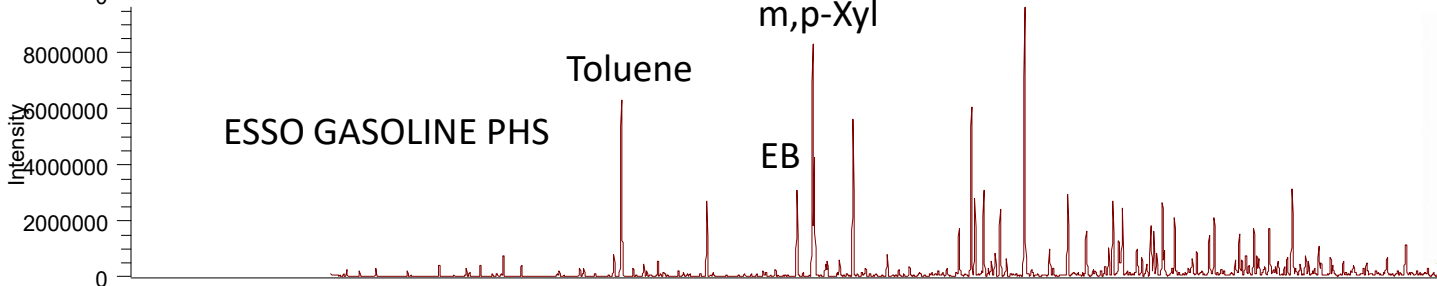
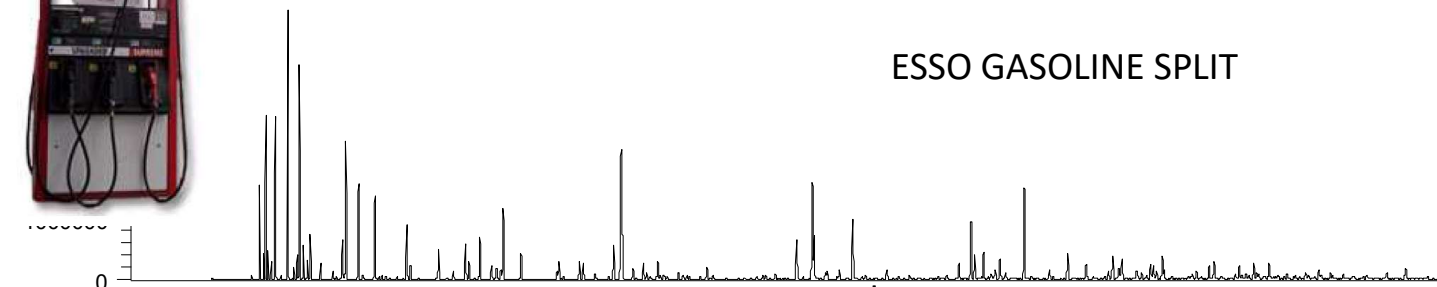


FIG. 1—Extraction apparatus (not to scale).



NL:
9.61E6
TIC MS 02 -
Esso neat
Can

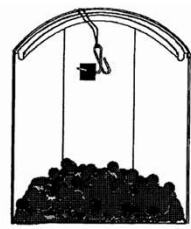
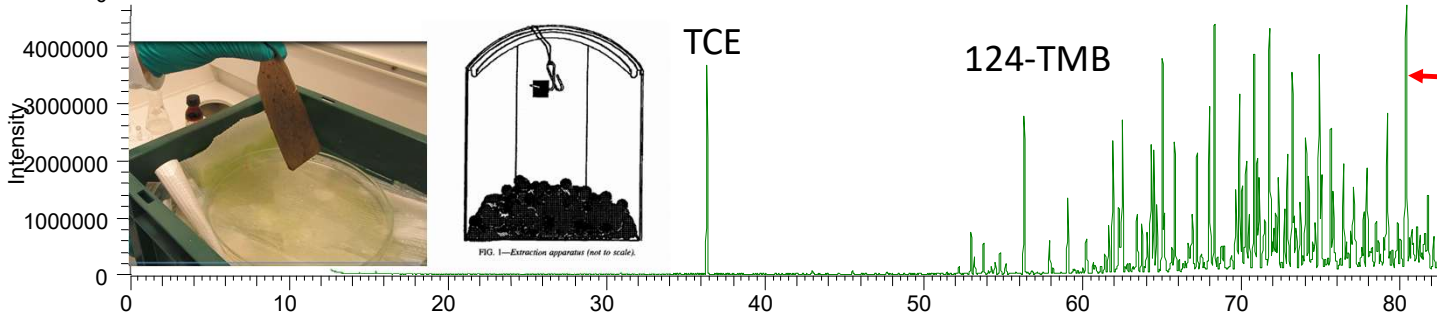


FIG. 1—Extraction apparatus (not to scale).

NL:
4.69E6
TIC MS 03 -
esso net 1
can

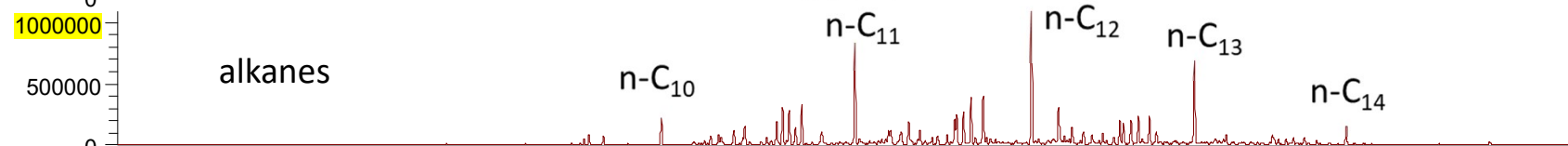
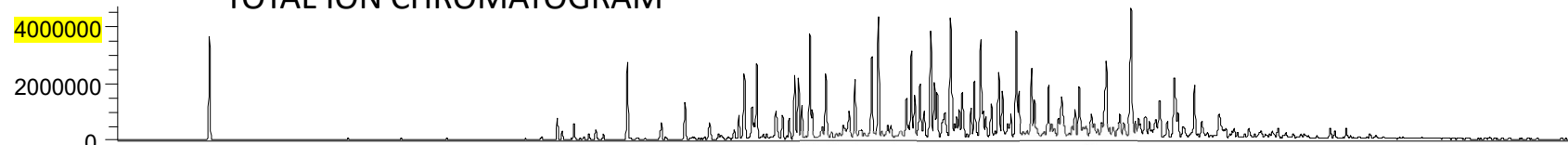
Methyl-tetrahydronaph

ESSO GASOLINE ETFE NET & PHS

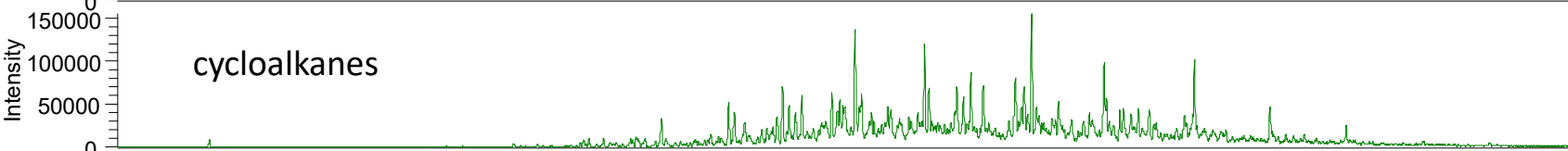
RT:31.91 - 101.59

TOTAL ION CHROMATOGRAM

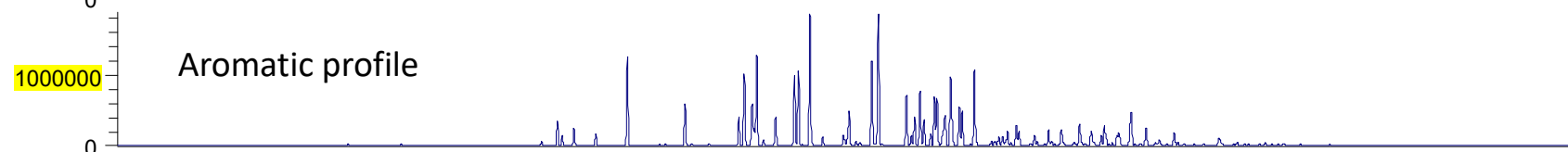
NL: 4.69E6
TIC MS 03 - Esso Net 1 Can



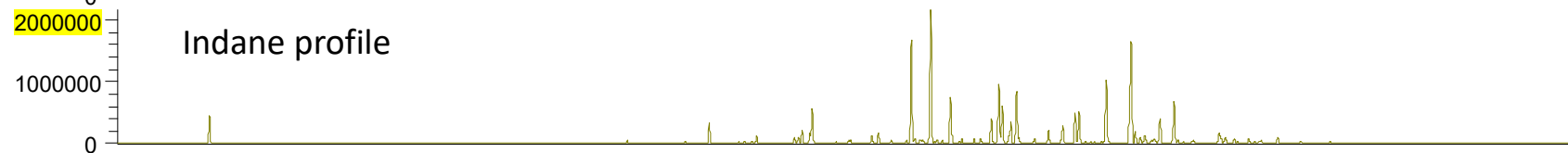
NL: 1.08E6
m/z=
56.50-57.50+70.50-71.50+
84.50-85.50+98.50-99.50 MS 03
- Esso Net 1 Can



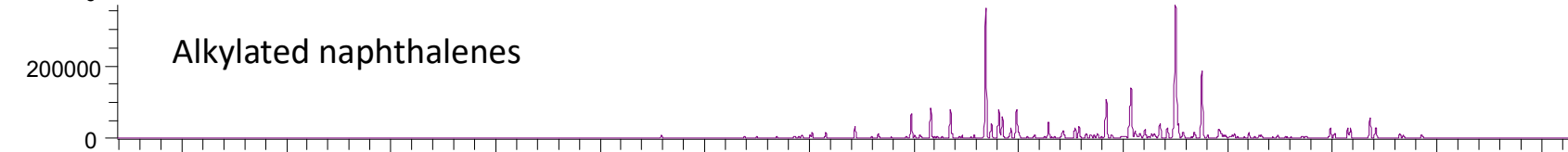
NL: 1.54E5
m/z=
54.50-55.50+68.50-69.50+
82.50-83.50 MS 03 - Esso Net 1
Can



NL: 1.87E6
m/z=
90.50-91.50+104.50-105.50+
118.50-119.50 MS 03 - Esso Net
1 Can



NL: 2.15E6
m/z=
116.50-117.50+117.50-118.50+
130.50-131.50+131.50-132.50
MS 03 - Esso Net 1 Can



NL: 3.65E5
m/z=
127.50-128.50+141.50-142.50+
155.50-156.50 MS 03 - Esso Net
1 Can

35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100
Time (min)

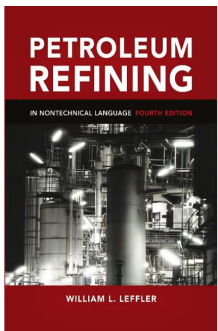


Table 14-3. Blending for octane number

	Barrels	(R + M)/2
Straight run gasoline	4,000	63
Reformate	6,000	89
Hydrocrackate	1,000	74
Cat-cracked gasoline	8,000	85
Normal butane	3,131	92.5
Total	22,131	82.7

ALKYLATED INDANS

ESSO

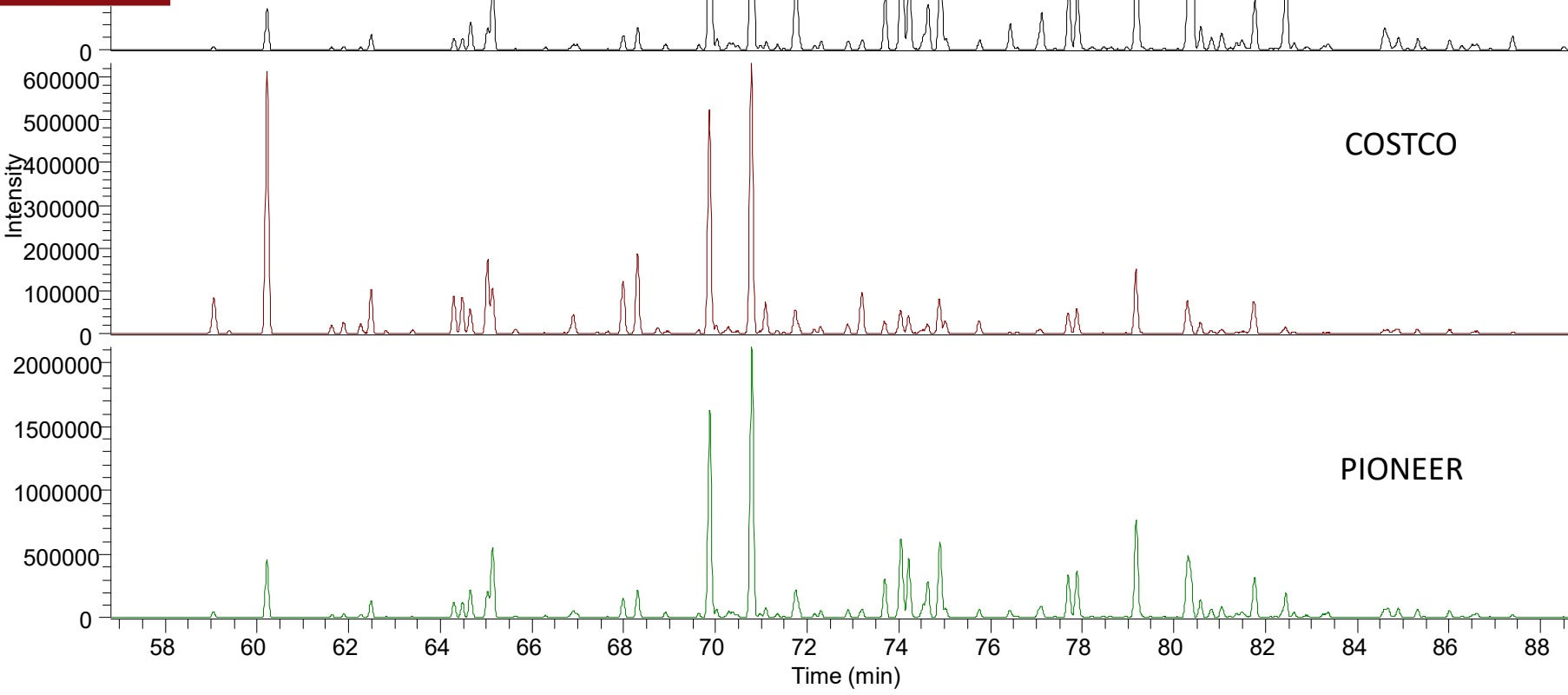
NL: 2.15E6
 m/z=
 116.50-117.50+
 117.50-118.50+
 130.50-131.50+
 131.50-132.50 MS 03
 - Esso Net 1 Can

COSTCO

NL: 6.30E5
 m/z=
 116.50-117.50+
 117.50-118.50+
 130.50-131.50+
 131.50-132.50 MS 03
 - costco net 1 can

PIONEER

NL: 2.12E6
 m/z=
 116.50-117.50+
 117.50-118.50+
 130.50-131.50+
 131.50-132.50 MS 06
 - pioneer net 1 can



DOES OSINET PROCESS ETFE NETTING USING PASSIVE HEADSPACE ANALYSES



No, they rinse with solvent (DCM) and concentrate



Why did you not follow the OSINET process?



Why did you opt for Passive Headspace Analyses?

Reason we processed ETFE nets using PHS

	Relative Percent Difference Duplicate Analyses								
	ESSO	ESSO	Costco	Costco	Pioneer	Pioneer	Esso	Costco	Pioneer
	ETFE	ETFE & Can	ETFE	ETFE & Can	ETFE	ETFE & Can	mean	mean	mean
EB/MPX	#DIV/0!	200.00	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!			
135TMB/124TMB	59.46	16.22	30.00	18.18	34.78	0.00	0.19	0.22	0.20
1M3PB/1M4PB	0.54	1.05	4.71	0.58	27.21	0.57	1.90	1.72	1.75
1M2EB/1M3EB	26.92	16.22	11.76	6.90	23.08	6.25	0.55	0.58	0.64
1M3EB/1M4EB	1.34	2.14	0.49	4.40	24.86	4.67	2.34	2.04	2.14
1M2EB/1M4EB	27.83	18.60	13.22	10.97	47.42	1.47	1.29	1.19	1.36
1M2EB/123TMB	109.86	18.18	34.67	20.95	153.13	10.81	0.33	0.52	0.37
123-TMB/124TMB	48.98	6.74	0.00	0.00	154.29	4.76	0.44	0.40	0.42
1M2EB/124-TMB	66.67	6.90	31.58	19.05	5.13	6.45	0.15	0.21	0.16
1M3EB/124-TMB	90.32	26.42	22.22	27.78	15.79	4.08	0.27	0.36	0.24

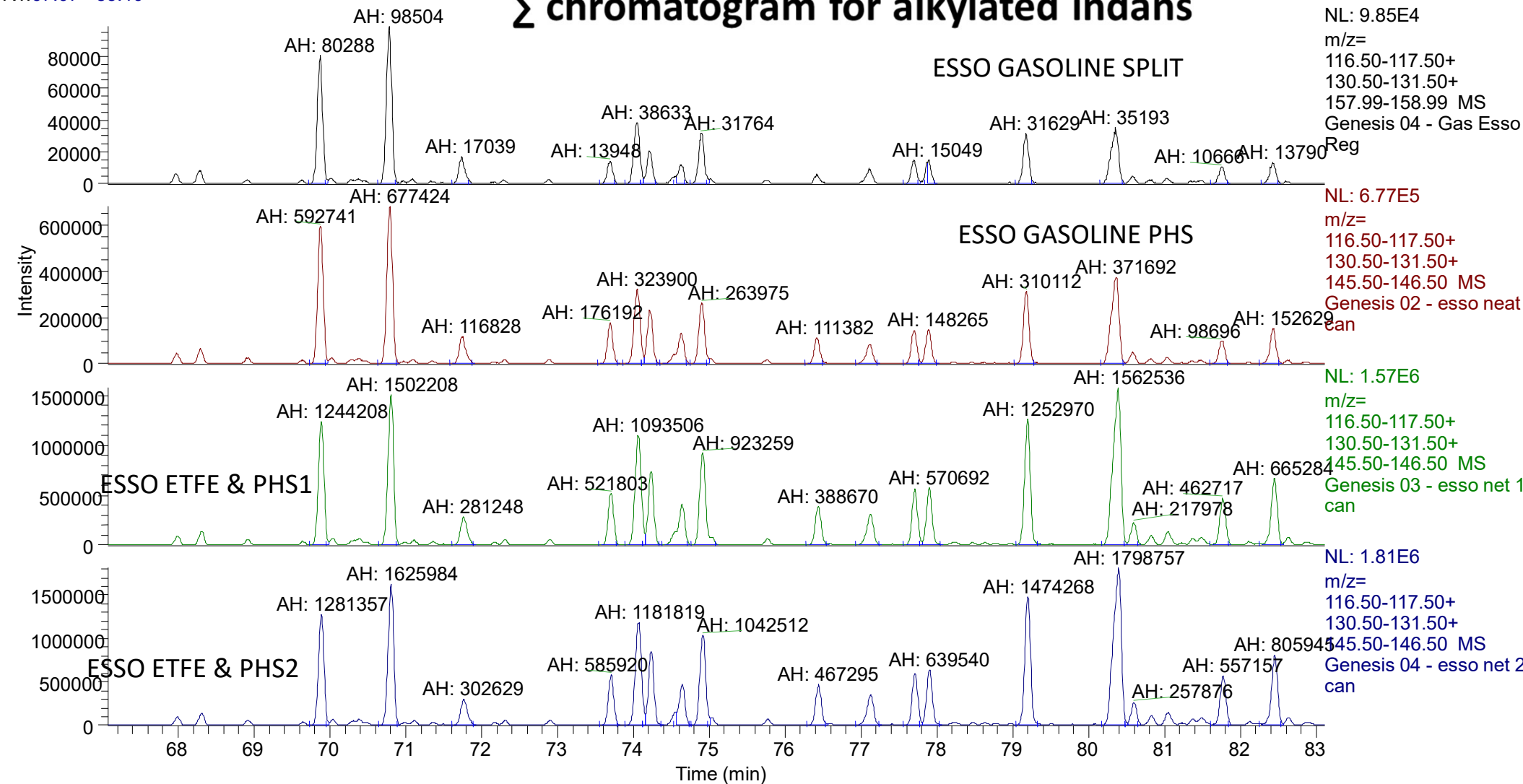
C₃-BENZENES, M/Z 105

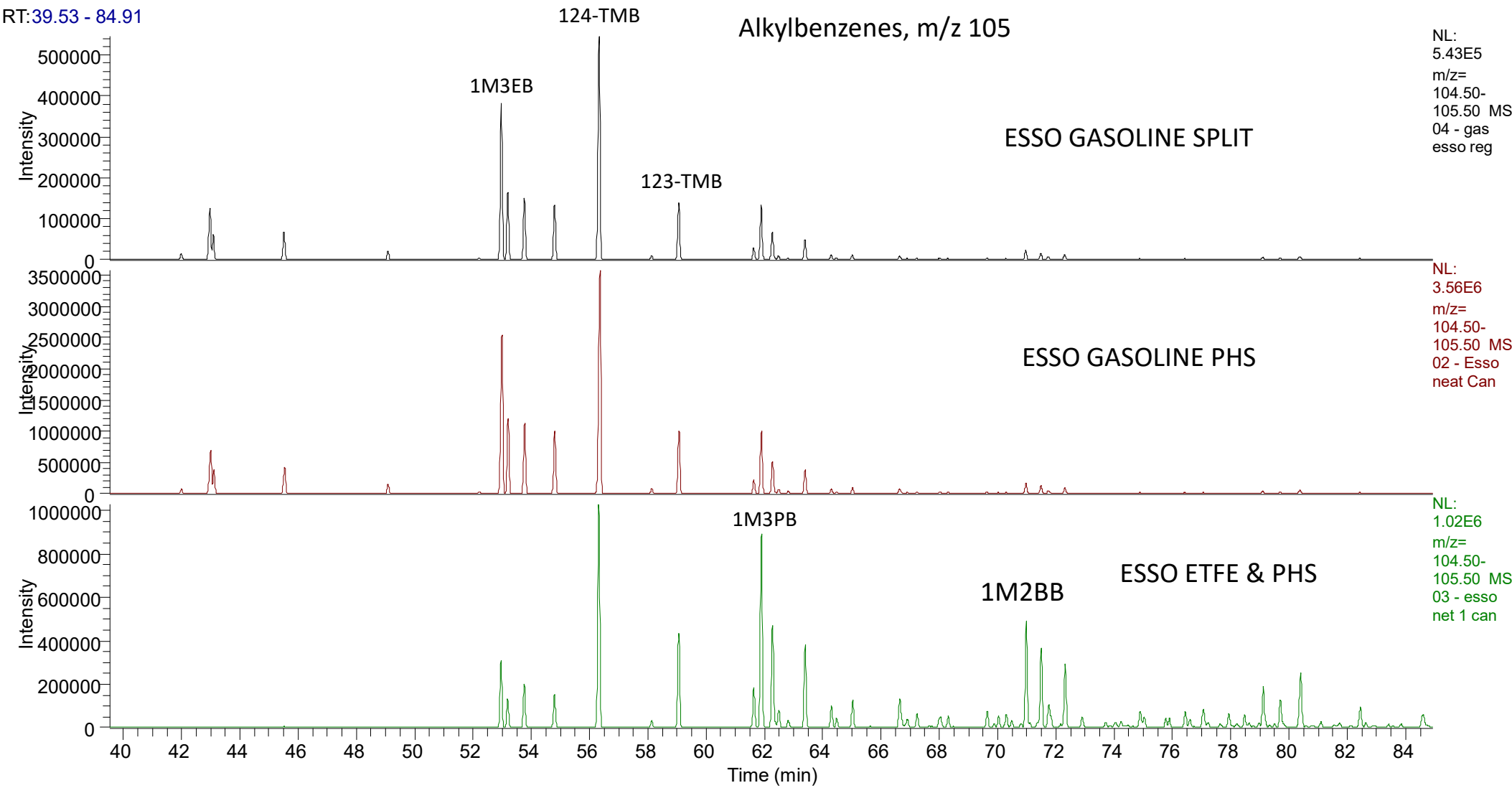
Reason we processed ETFE nets using PHS

	<i>Relative Percent Difference Duplicate Analyses</i>								
	ESSO	ESSO	Costco	Costco	Pioneer	Pioneer	Esso	Costco	Pioneer
	ETFE	ETFE & Can	ETFE	ETFE & Can	ETFE	ETFE & Can	mean	mean	mean
123TMB/124TMB	51.92	2.22	10.40	9.79	25.49	14.21	0.90	0.72	0.91
124TMB/123TMB	52.43	2.69	10.34	8.57	26.00	14.55	1.11	1.40	1.10
14M2EB/12M4EB	4.17	5.71	10.31	3.92	36.52	7.14	0.53	0.51	0.56
1245/1235	1.57	0.00	9.38	3.08	14.97	0.00	0.64	0.65	0.67

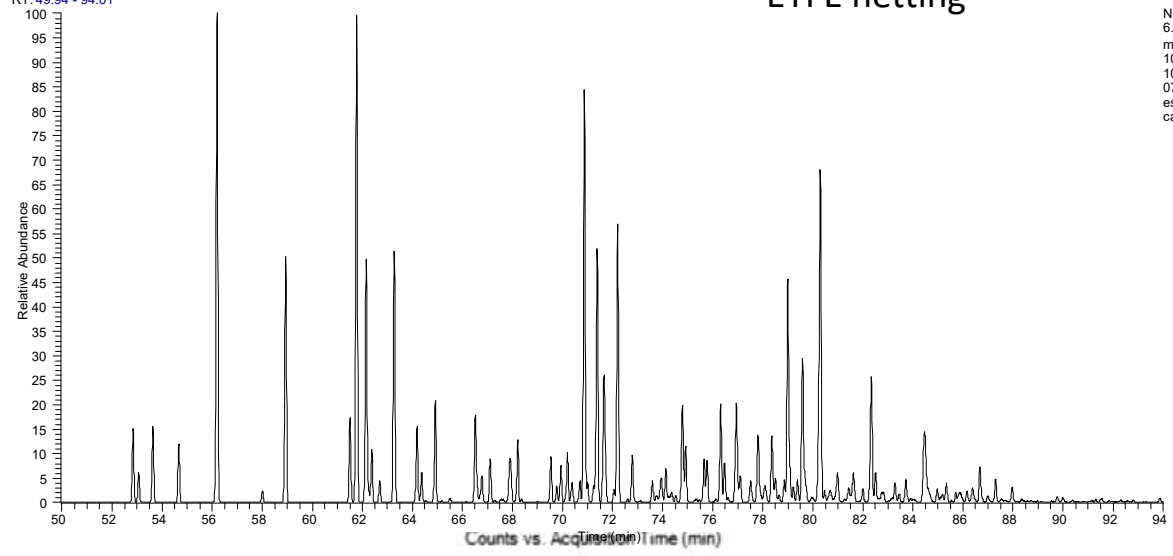
RT:67.07 - 83.10

Σ chromatogram for alkylated indans





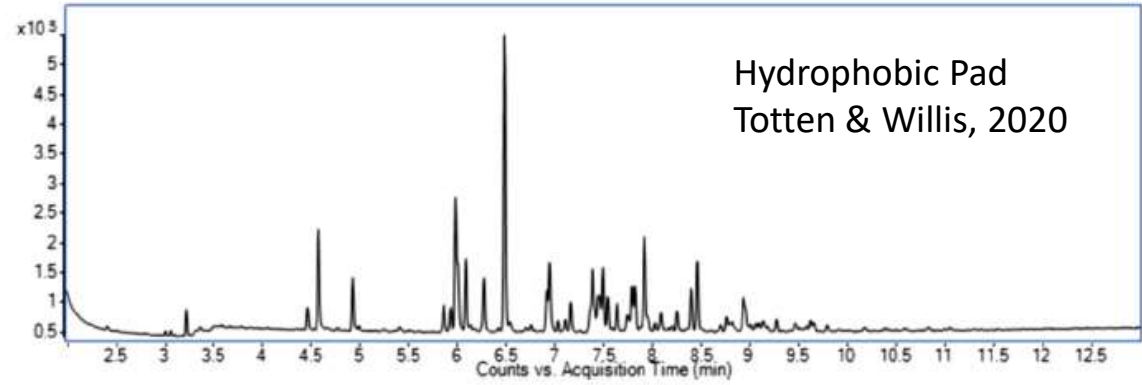
RT: 49.94 - 94.01



ETFE netting

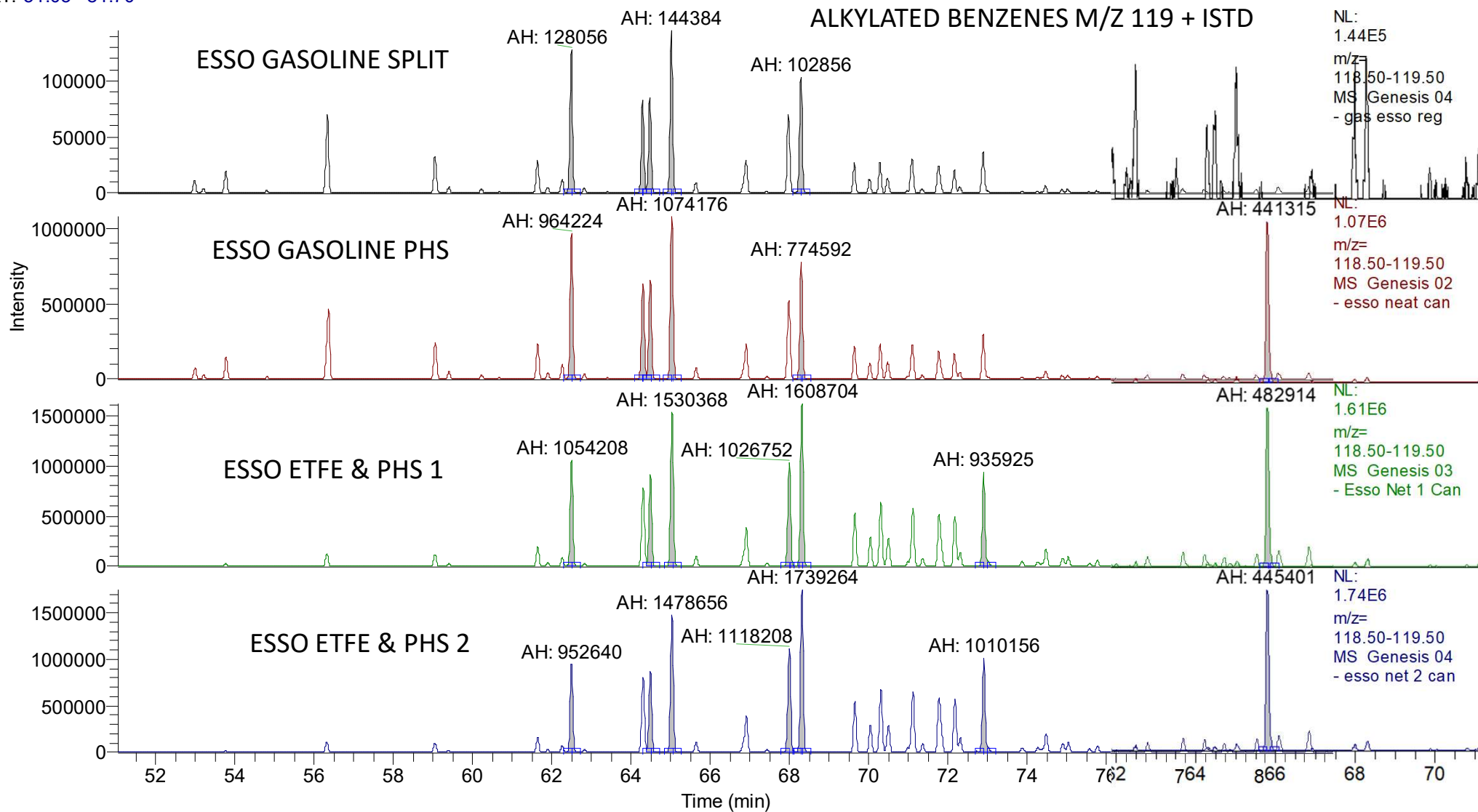
NL:
6.85E5
m/z=
104.50-
105.50 MS
07 -
essonet 2
can inj 2

d.

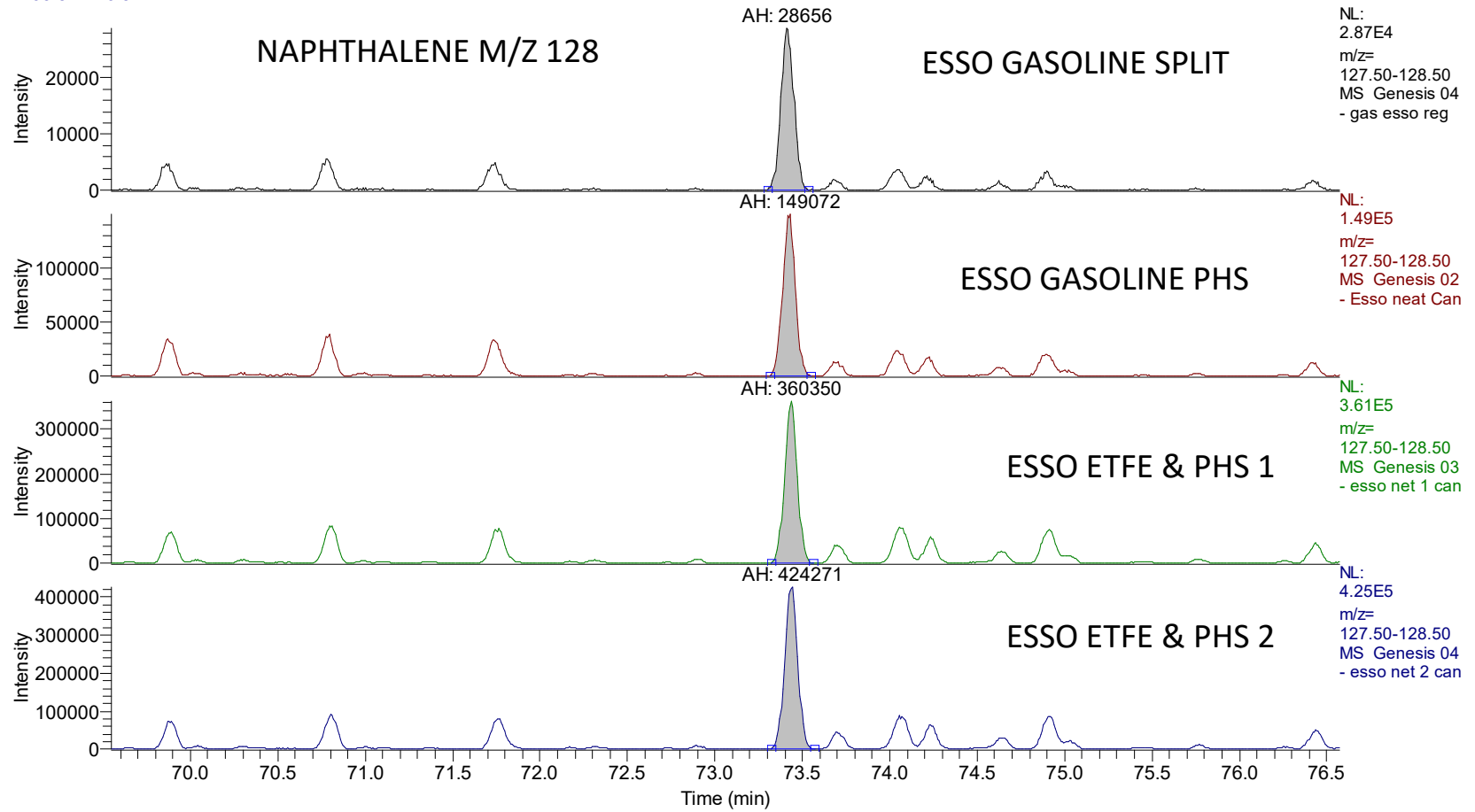


Hydrophobic Pad Totten & Willis, 2020

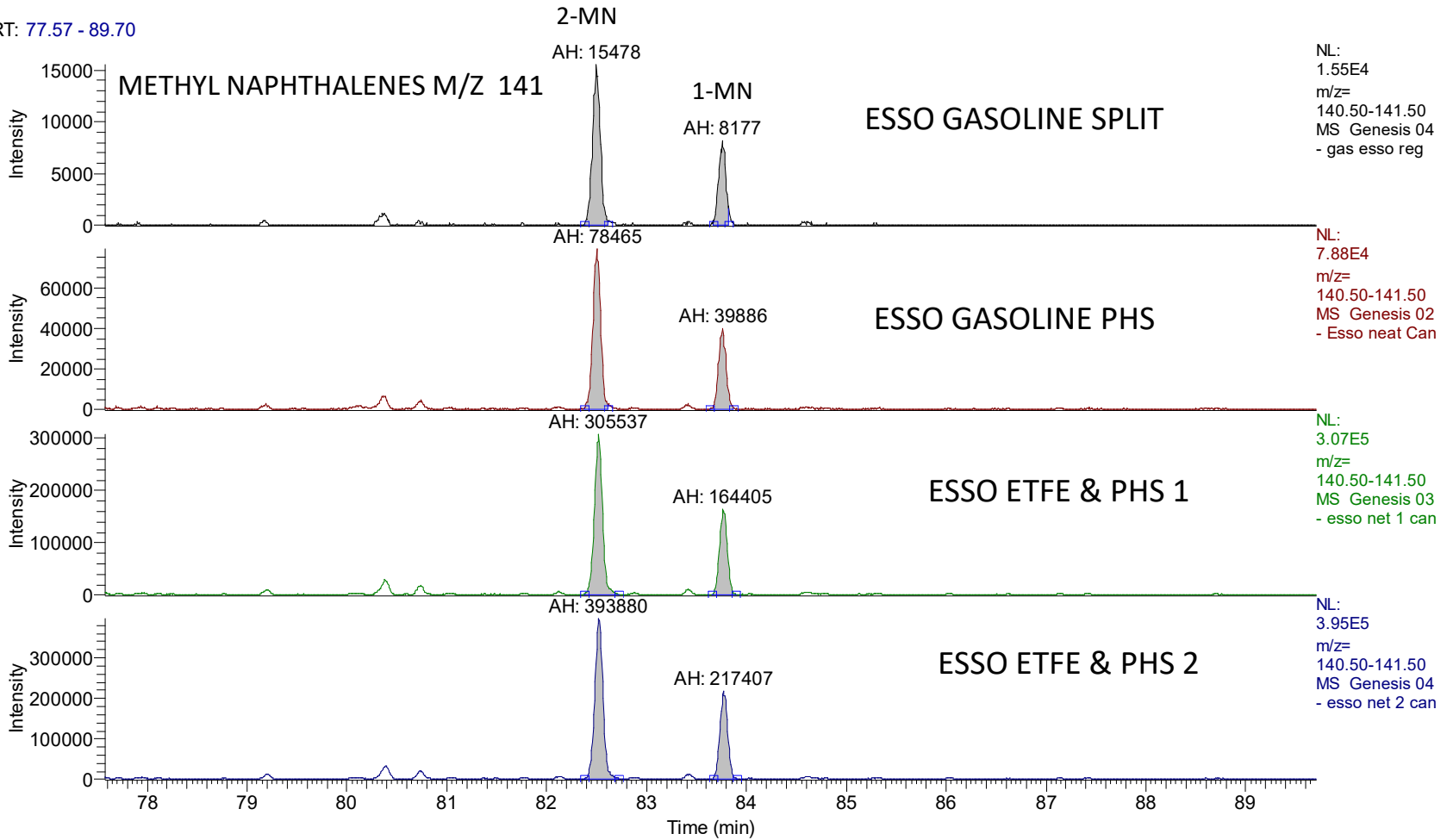
RT: 51.03 - 81.70



RT: 69.54 - 76.57

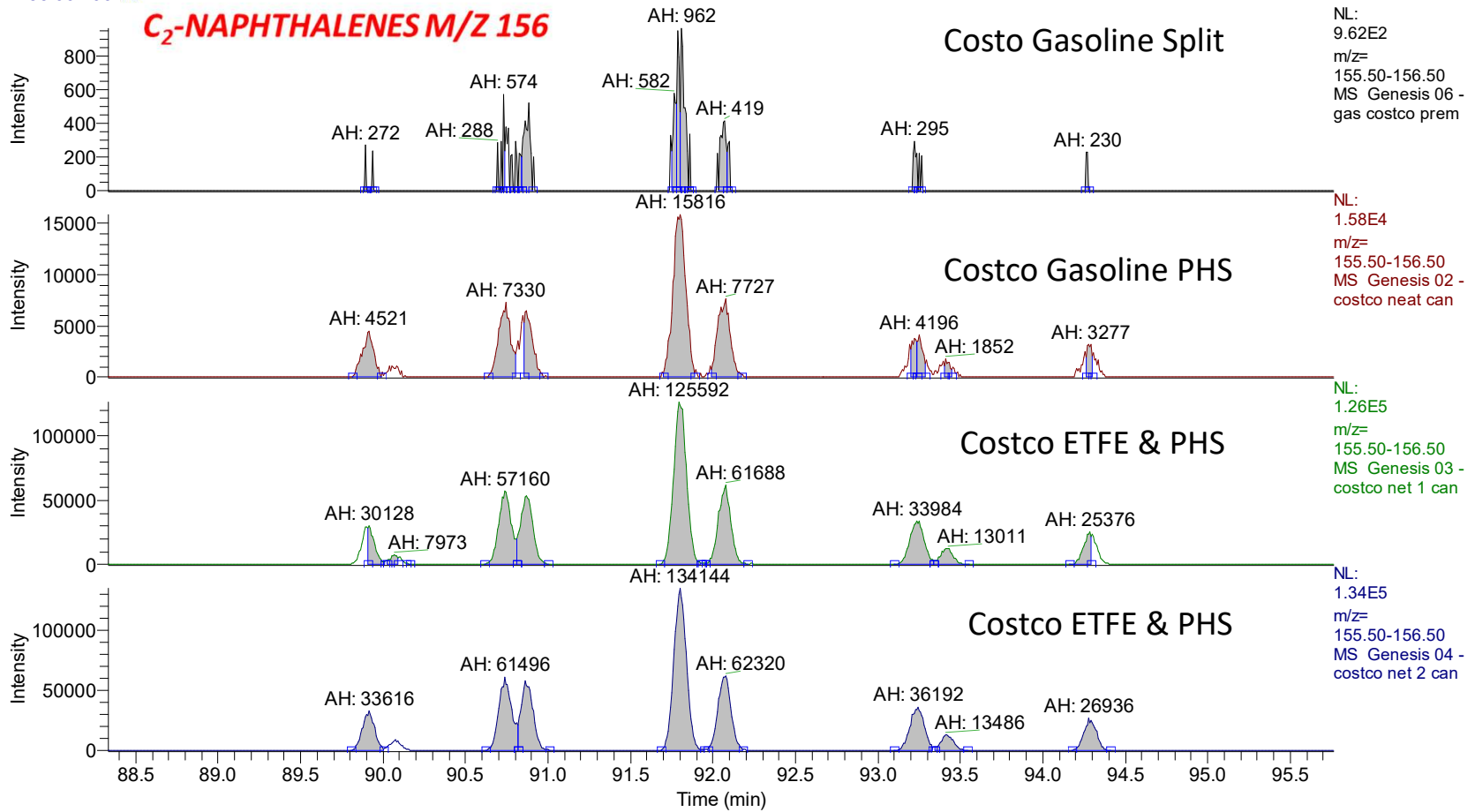


RT: 77.57 - 89.70

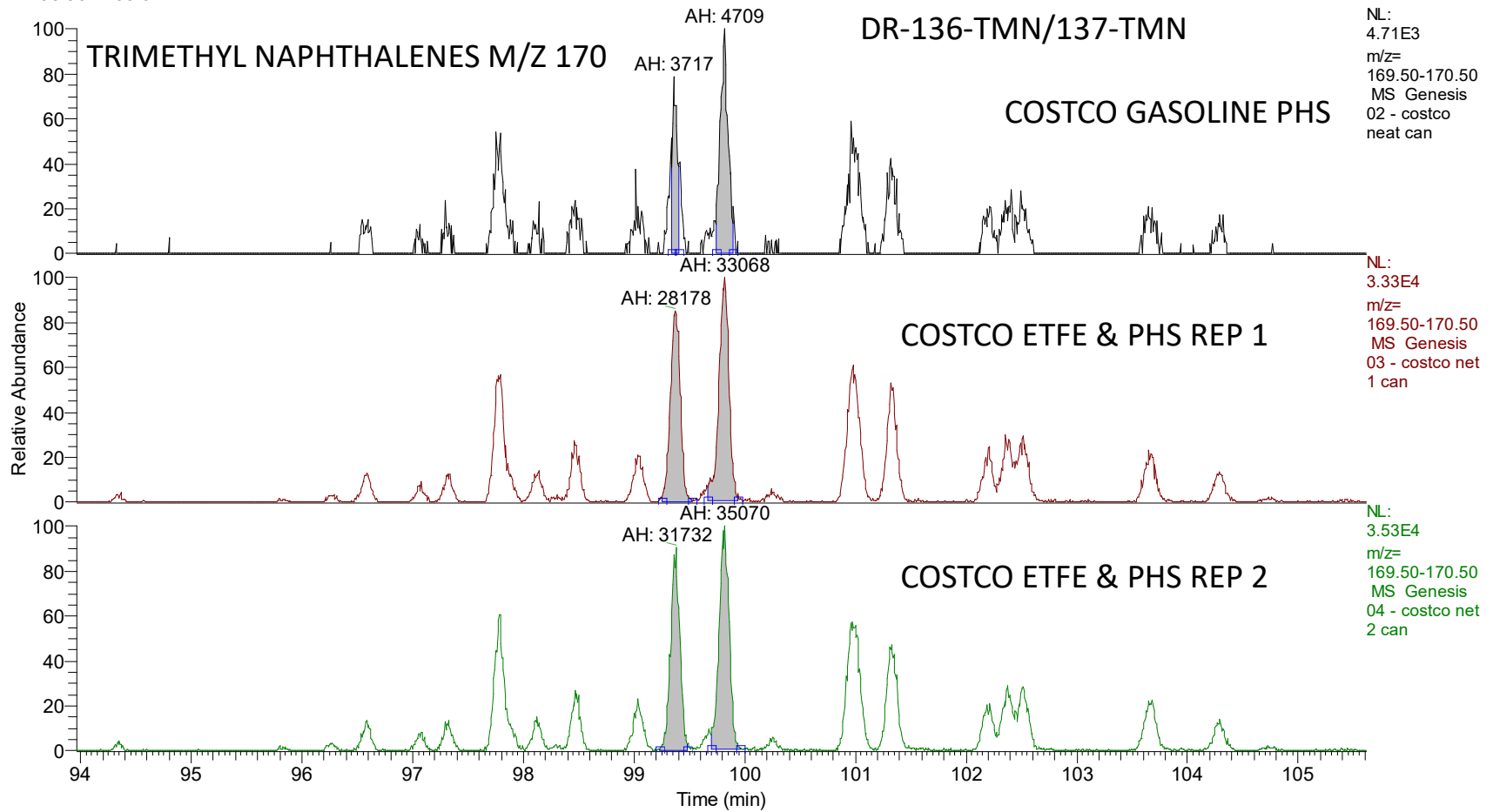


RT: 88.33 - 95.76

C₂-NAPHTHALENES M/Z 156



RT: 93.96 - 105.61



	ESSO NEAT			COSTCO NEAT			PIONEER NEAT		
	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
2-MN/1-MN	1.90	0.09	4.74	2.00	0.08	4.13	2.17	0.06	2.53
2-EN/26 + 27-DMN	0.33	0.02	5.52	0.40		0 RPD	0.39		2.6 RPD
16-DMN/13 + 17-DMN	0.46	0.01	1.37	0.47		0 RPD	0.44		2.3 RPD
DR-B/2-EN	0.78	0.10	12.54	0.26		3.9 RPD	0.93		6.45
NAPH/DODECANE	0.71	0.09	12.98	NA	NA	NA	6.75	0.55	8.12
	ESSO NEAT PHS			COSTO NEAT PHS			PIONEER NEAT PHS		
	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
2-MN/1-MN	2.02	0.07	3.63	1.95	0.03	1.42	2.18	0.07	3.00
2-EN/26 + 27-DMN	0.48	0.08	16.66	0.56	0.04	7.46	0.56	0.01	2.04
16-DMN/13 + 17-DMN	0.50	0.04	8.28	0.42	0.02	5.23	0.48	0.00	0.43
DR-B/2-EN	0.76	0.06	8.35	0.92	0.03	2.88	0.25	0.01	4.38
NAPH/DODECANE	0.34	0.07	19.60	22.11	2.73	12.34	3.59	0.15	4.29
137-TMN/136-TMN	1.08	0.12	11.14	0.84	0.09	10.73	0.85	0.03	3.52
	ESSO ETFE PHS			COSTCO ETFE PHS			PIONEER ETFE PHS		
2-MN/1-MN	1.81	0.07	3.61	1.86	0.03	1.78	2.00	0.04	2.15
2-EN/26 + 27-DMN	0.46	0.03	6.74	0.51	0.01	2.47	0.50	0.00	0.26
16-DMN/13 + 17-DMN	0.47	0.03	6.13	0.43	0.01	2.30	0.48	0.01	3.02
DR-B/2-EN	0.81	0.03	4.05	0.87	0.02	1.90	0.24	0.01	3.97
NAPH/DODECANE	0.26	0.04	14.48	15.63	3.23	20.69	2.28	0.47	20.50
137-TMN/136-TMN	0.90	0.05	5.19	0.88	0.04	4.12	0.94	0.01	0.99

	ETFE Nets Followed by PHS (n = 6)								
	ESSO			COSTCO			PIONEER		
m/z 105	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
135TMB/124TMB	0.18	0.02	12.45	0.19	0.03	17.95	0.18	0.02	12.09
1M3PB/1M4PB	1.92	0.05	2.64	1.75	0.04	2.46	1.79	0.05	2.66
1M2EB/1M3EB	0.67	0.12	17.68	0.58	0.02	3.97	0.62	0.03	4.75
1M3EB/1M4EB	2.38	0.08	3.17	2.05	0.05	2.25	2.16	0.09	4.01
1M2EB/1M4EB	1.61	0.32	19.78	1.18	0.06	4.80	1.34	0.05	3.51
1M2EB/123TMB	0.29	0.06	19.69	0.45	0.09	20.36	0.33	0.06	16.69
123-TMB/124TMB	0.48	0.03	7.18	0.39	0.05	13.01	0.41	0.04	9.03
1M2EB/124-TMB	0.14	0.02	14.46	0.17	0.04	21.09	0.13	0.02	15.07
1M3EB/124-TMB	0.21	0.06	30.10	0.30	0.07	21.59	0.22	0.03	12.11
m/z 119	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
123TMB/124TMB	0.86	0.06	6.70	0.69	0.11	15.86	0.87	0.16	18.02
124TMB/123TMB	1.16	0.08	7.08	1.47	0.26	17.58	1.18	0.23	19.05
14M2EB/12M4EB	0.54	0.08	15.17	0.49	0.03	5.54	0.49	0.06	11.70
1245/1235	0.60	0.09	15.38	0.63	0.03	4.91	0.63	0.04	5.66
DR-naphthalene/dodecane	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
	0.26	0.04	14.48	15.63	3.23	20.69	2.28	0.47	20.50
DR-2MN/1-MN	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
	1.81	0.07	3.61	1.86	0.03	1.78	2.00	0.04	2.15
2-EN/26 + 27-DMN	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
	0.46	0.03	6.74	0.51	0.01	2.47	0.50	0.00	0.26
16-DMN/13 + 17-DMN	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
	0.47	0.03	6.13	0.43	0.01	2.30	0.48	0.01	3.02
DR-B/2-EN	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
	0.81	0.03	4.05	0.87	0.02	1.90	0.24	0.01	3.97
137-TMN/136-TMN	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%	mean	std dev	RSD%
	0.90	0.05	5.19	0.88	0.04	4.12	0.94	0.01	0.99
Average RSD%			11.14			9.72			8.70


USEABLE SOURCE
APPORTIONMENT
RATIOS
ETFE & PHS

MASS/CHARGE (M/Z)	RATIO
105	1M3PB/1M4PB
105	1M3EB/1M4EB
105	123-TMB/124-TMB
119	1245-TeMB/1235-TeMB
128,57	NAPHTHALENE/UNDECANE
141	2-MN/1-MN
156	2-EN/26+27-DMN
156	16-DMN/13+17-DMN
154,156	B/2-EN
170	137-TMN/136-TMN
117,131	2-ME-INDAN/1-ME-INDAN

Quality Control

	Naphthalene-d8
	<i>Percent Recovery</i>
Costco - Neat PHS	118
Costco - ETFE & PHS Rep 1	108
Costco -ETFE & PHS Rep 2	105
Pioneer - Neat PHS	103
Pioneer -ETFE & PHS Rep 1	96
Pioneer - ETFE & PHS Rep 2	104
Esso - Neat PHS	88
Esso - ETFE & PHS Rep 1	90
Esso - ETFE & PHS Rep 2	88

CONCLUSIONS

- Extraction of water samples containing low levels of gasoline can be performed using ETFE netting
 - The gasoline is extracted and concentrated using passive headspace analysis
 - Analyses are performed using GC/MS (scanning or SIM) using a 100 m PONA column
 - RSDs and RPDs consistent with an alternative method namely purge & trap GC/MS
 - The netting actually concentrates some analytes from water, namely alkylated benzenes, alkylated naphthalenes, alkylated indans, etc.
 - This results in greater signal to noise response and increases precision
- 

Detlef (Deib) Birkholz

MSc., PhD., P. Chem.

Edmonton, Alberta

website: <https://deib-chemforensics.com>

Email: birkholz@deib-chemforensics.com

Phone: 587-597-5197

Forensic services in toxicology (T), chemistry (C)
biology (B), sampling and statistics (S)

