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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY *
SEPTEMBER 9, 2010 ACCIDENT *
SAN BRUNO, CALIFORNIA *

Docket No. DCA-10-MP-008

* * * * *

Interview of: EDUARDO DE LA TORRE

Anaheim Room
Marriott Hotel
San Francisco Airport
1800 Bayshore Highway
Burlingame, California 94010

Thursday,
September 16, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
notice, at 1:55 p.m.

BEFORE: KARL GUNTHER
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

KARL GUNTHER, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
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Washington, D.C. 20594

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SUNIL K. SHORI, Engineer
California Public Utilities Commission

TOM FINCH, State Liaison
PETER J. KATCHMAR, Senior Accident Investigator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety
Administration

ROBERT FASSETT, Director
Integrity Management and Technical Services
Pacific Gas & Electric Company

GEOFF CALDWELL, Police Sergeant
City of San Bruno Police Department

DEBBIE MAZZANTI, Business Representative
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Local 1245

JOSHUA SPERRY, Senior Union Representative
Engineers and Scientists of California
Local 20

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:55 p.m.)

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MR. GUNTHER: I'm Karl Gunther. I'm investigating an accident with the National Transportation Safety Board that occurred September 9th, 2010, in San Bruno, California. It's our number DCA-10-MP-008.

And, again, I'd like to advise you for the record, one, the proceedings are being recorded and, two, you're allowed to have anyone with you that you wish. It can be an attorney; it can be anybody.

MR. GUNTHER: So, again, are you represented today by counsel?

MR. DE LA TORRE: Yes.

MR. JAQUES: And Dane Jaques, for the witness.

MR. GUNTHER: Okay.

INTERVIEW OF EDUARDO DE LA TORRE

BY MR. GUNTHER:

Q. What I'd like to do is get your name, address, and phone for the record.

A. Okay. My name is Eduardo De La Torre. Do you need me to spell that out?

Q. No --

COURT REPORTER: If you would, please.

MR. DE LA TORRE: Okay. It's -- the first name is Eduardo, E-d-u-a-r-d-o. The last name is De La Torre,

1 D-e, L-a, T-o-r-r-e.

2 BY MR. GUNTHER:

3 Q. And address and phone for the record?

4 A. My address is [REDACTED], [REDACTED], California
5 [REDACTED]. And my phone number is [REDACTED].

6 Q. Okay. And what is your affiliation and job title?

7 A. I'm an apprentice gas tech for PG&E.

8 Q. What I'd like you to do is on September 9th, just
9 basically start at the beginning of the day and just describe
10 everything that you did.

11 A. I reported to the Milpitas yard at 6:00 in the morning.
12 I went over our safety tailboard with Pete Beck. I prepared tools
13 for the day, to get ready to work on the UPS change-out in
14 Milpitas. I also, like, worked on the -- did the inspection on a
15 crew check on the foreman's truck the first part of the morning.

16 Q. Um-hum. Okay. What kind of formal training -- well,
17 first, what are your formal training, like high school, college,
18 and then training at PG&E?

19 A. PG&E, the whole apprenticeship program is training.
20 They send you to schools in San Ramon and all of that.

21 Q. And are you in an apprenticeship for something?

22 A. For a gas technician.

23 Q. Okay. And are you covered over the OQ program?

24 A. Yes.

25 MR. GUNTHER: Okay. All right. I'm going to turn over

1 to California PUC.

2 MR. SHORI: I'd like to come back.

3 MR. KATCHMAR: All right. I'll go.

4 MR. GUNTHER: All right. Pete?

5 BY MR. KATCHMAR:

6 Q. When did you start for PG&E?

7 A. I started seven years, July -- I mean June 25th, 2003.

8 Q. Okay. And can you explain -- after you did the
9 inspection on the two vehicles -- and during your explanation --
10 what you did and during your explanation, can you try to throw in,
11 "It was about 3:00 that this happened," or, "It was about 5:00
12 that this happened," or whatever?

13 A. Well --

14 Q. Just in your own words, just let us know what kind of
15 things happened between -- after your vehicle inspection.

16 A. Okay. I'm not too sure on the times, but --

17 Q. That's good, just generally.

18 A. Well, I started on the vehicle inspections about, say,
19 9:00-ish -- 9:00 in the morning. I got done with that about
20 10:30. I pretty much had a little meeting with my foreman about
21 the scope of the job was going to be. I followed my foreman and
22 my local tech around a little bit, doing research on breaker
23 panels and stuff, things like that, of that nature. Then it was
24 lunch time.

25 And after lunch, we came back and had another little

1 tailboard with my foreman, Pete Beck. We were going to wait on
2 the engineer to come in to get ready to do the work we were
3 supposed to do.

4 So it got to be about 1:30 when the contract engineer
5 came in and pretty much after that -- after that, I was there to
6 assist my foreman and the local guy, gathering tools for them --
7 whatever they needed.

8 Q. Did you notice any abnormal situations going on? Did
9 anybody say, "Oh, no. Look at that"? You know, was there any --
10 was there any excitement?

11 That's okay. You can say "no." That's a good answer.

12 A. Not to my recollection.

13 Q. Okay.

14 MR. KATCHMAR: Okay, I'm done.

15 MR. GUNTHER: Sunil?

16 BY MR. SHORI:

17 Q. I think I stepped in and I wasn't sure if we got -- I
18 got your title as apprentice gas tech?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. If you could describe a little bit of what exactly
21 normally is under that that you would perform or that you would
22 do?

23 A. I'm allowed to do wiring under the supervision of a
24 journeyman or a foreman, read prints, assist the foreman or the
25 journeyman with whatever tools they need, things of that nature.

1 Q. And how long have you been an apprentice gas tech?

2 A. I'm going on my third year.

3 Q. Third year?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And do you know which OQ categories, operator
6 qualifications, covered sites are -- covered tasks you're
7 qualified for?

8 A. I'm not too sure. We've got -- I've got a list of what
9 I am qualified on.

10 MR. JAQUES: I think that list has been produced to you,
11 as well.

12 MR. SHORI: It has, but I'd like to know if he's aware
13 of what should be on that list.

14 MR. DE LA TORRE: It's not coming to my mind right now.

15 BY MR. SHORI:

16 Q. Okay. How often do you do inspections of a crew truck
17 and the supervising --

18 A. Once a month.

19 Q. Once a month. And why was this time chosen to do that?
20 Were you due or --

21 A. Well, yeah, it's due. Because we try to always get them
22 done at the beginning of the month.

23 Q. Okay. You said there was either one or two tailboards
24 that you participated in. How many tailboards did you participate
25 in on that day?

1 A. Three -- to my recollection, it was three.

2 Q. Okay. Can we go to the first one, when that was held,
3 who was there, and around what time?

4 A. The first one was at 6:00 in the morning. That was me
5 and my foreman, Pete Beck. Just about 6:00 in the morning, about
6 what the scope of the day was going to be. Kind of -- he was
7 telling me what -- to get the truck ready, to do the truck
8 inspections, just --

9 Q. What were the scope -- I'm sorry, were you finished?

10 A. Yeah. I'm sorry.

11 Q. What was the scope going to be? What was communicated
12 to you?

13 A. At the beginning of the day, what was communicated to me
14 was to -- for my projects was to do the foreman's truck, to pretty
15 much assist them in what they needed. The contract engineer, my
16 foreman, and the district -- this guy, to assist them on what they
17 needed. Also, that we were going to wait around on the contract
18 engineer to come on, before we really started our project, the
19 project we were there for.

20 Q. Okay. And then the second board -- the second
21 tailboard, when was that held?

22 A. That was after lunch. But that was me and Pete Beck.
23 He was -- because we were still waiting around for the contract
24 engineer to come in. That's when he was telling me we were just
25 going to wait around and then do -- you know, do some research

1 with the local guy.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. And wait -- before we get into anything, wait for the
4 contract engineer to come in.

5 Q. And what time -- you said you're from Stockton --

6 A. Yes, I'm from Stockton.

7 Q. -- normally? Okay. So what time did you start work
8 that day? To basically -- you're traveling from Stockton to
9 Milpitas?

10 A. No, I stay in a hotel in Milpitas.

11 Q. Oh, so you're already local?

12 A. Yeah, I'm already there.

13 Q. Okay. What was the -- in terms of the scope of the
14 work, what had to get done that you were going to be involved with
15 that day? What time was that work supposed to have been
16 completed?

17 A. I don't think we had a set time on what time it was
18 supposed to be completed.

19 Q. Okay. And then you say there was a third tailboard,
20 right?

21 A. That's when the contract engineer came in and I think we
22 were all involved in that. He was pretty much telling us what we
23 were going to get ready for.

24 Q. Okay. Was there anything discussed -- you said that he
25 came -- kind of came late. Was there an expected time?

1 A. He was supposed -- he let us know he was going to be
2 there about 1:30.

3 Q. Okay.

4 MR. SHORI: I think that's it for me. Thank you.

5 MR. GUNTHER: PG&E?

6 MR. FASSETT: No questions.

7 MR. GUNTHER: City?

8 MR. CALDWELL: No.

9 MR. GUNTHER: Okay. I don't have any follow-up. Does
10 anybody have any questions operationally? Okay.

11 BY MR. KATCHMAR:

12 Q. This is always my last question. Is there anything that
13 we have not asked you here today that you know of that you think
14 that we need to know?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay. You're going to get a list of our names and
17 numbers and stuff. If you do, next week, think of something,
18 "Hey, these guys should know this," please give one of us a call.
19 We'll make sure that the other guys get it.

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 MR. GUNTHER: Okay. Any more operations questions?
23 Go ahead, Rick.

24 MR. NARVELL: Off the record for a minute, please.

25 (Off the record.)

1 (On the record.)

2 BY MR. NARVELL:

3 Q. Mr. De La Torre, this is Rick Narvell from the Human
4 Performance Group.

5 Would you, at the conclusion of your testimony, be able
6 to provide me with a general description of your activities,
7 work/rest information, with respect to the four days, 96 hours
8 from this accident back?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And we'll get that off the record. Thank you.

11 Can you just give us just a brief word or two just about
12 your overall health? How would you characterize it?

13 A. Good.

14 Q. Good. Okay.

15 Do you happen to recall the date of your last, most
16 recent physical?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay. Is there a requirement at PG&E to have a physical
19 in your position?

20 A. Not to my knowledge.

21 Q. Okay. On the day of the incident, had you taken any
22 medications? Are you on prescription medications, over the
23 counter or dietary supplements?

24 A. No.

25 Q. All right. And do you know anything about your vision

1 in terms of the rating? Do you know what your vision rating is?

2 A. I don't know what my rating is.

3 Q. Okay. Any problems seeing?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. Reading glasses, contacts, prescriptive lenses --
6 anything?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. All right. And the same question with respect to
9 your hearing.

10 A. No.

11 Q. Any problems with hearing?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. All right.

14 On the day of the incident, which is a week ago today,
15 the 9th, can you just kind of give us a general description of
16 your work load that day as you went about your business? Was it
17 high, normal, or low?

18 A. On that day, it was between normal and low.

19 Q. Between normal and low. Okay.

20 Anything unexpected develop that might have caused an
21 increase in work load of any nature?

22 A. I don't think I understand that question too well, but
23 like you mean --

24 Q. Was there anything abnormal or unusual in the course of
25 your work day that would have resulted in maybe a higher work

1 load, you know, busier, more things to do, more tasks -- those
2 kinds of things? Or was it just normal to low?

3 A. Just normal to low, because assisting -- with assisting.

4 Q. Okay. Any problems, again, throughout the day of any
5 equipment -- of your equipment, whether mechanical, electrical or
6 otherwise? Anything break?

7 MR. FASSETT: Just to clarify, you're talking other than
8 the incident, correct?

9 MR. NARVELL: That's right.

10 BY MR. NARVELL:

11 Q. Other than the incident? Thank you.

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. All right. Anything that might have been a basis
14 for a distraction or a pre-occupation that day?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Like, for example, a recent death in the family,
17 financial -- adverse financial news -- as examples. Anything that
18 may have distracted or preoccupied you?

19 A. No.

20 Q. And I'll extend that question, if you know, to any of
21 your co-workers there that day?

22 A. None.

23 Q. Okay. All right. And then, finally, Mr. De La Torre,
24 were you subject to and provided samples for post-accident drug
25 and alcohol testing?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. Can you give me an idea -- if you know -- of the
3 times that you provided them and what you provided?

4 A. Urine sample about 3:30, 4:00 in the morning.

5 Q. And this would have been on the 10th, now?

6 A. The 10th, yeah.

7 Q. So between 3:30 and 4:00 a.m.?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And also a breath sample.

11 Q. All right.

12 A. Or breathalyzer.

13 Q. Would that have been about the same time?

14 A. About the same time.

15 Q. Okay. And have you been informed the results of either
16 or both?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. Tell me, go ahead.

19 A. The urine sample came back negative, which is good. And
20 the breathalyzer was zero, point-zero-zero.

21 Q. That's an immediate read-out?

22 A. Yeah, that's an immediate read-out right then and there.

23 Q. And do you know what -- was that -- what was the
24 reading?

25 A. Zero -- zero-point-zero-zero.

1 Q. Okay, very good.

2 When were you informed of the results of your drug test,
3 do you recall?

4 A. Monday -- Monday morning.

5 Q. Okay. All right. And have you since returned to work?

6 A. For part of that Monday, yeah.

7 Q. Okay. Very good.

8 MR. NARVELL: Thank you. That's all I have.

9 MR. GUNTHER: Okay. Does anybody have any more
10 questions?

11 Would the witness like to make a statement for the
12 record?

13 THE WITNESS: No.

14 MR. GUNTHER: Okay. Thank you for your cooperation. We
15 do appreciate it.

16 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC
SEPTEMBER 9, 2010 ACCIDENT
SAN BRUNO, CALIFORNIA
Interview of Eduardo De La Torre

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-10-MP-008

PLACE: Burlingame, California

DATE: September 16, 2010

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


Richard Friant
Official Reporter