

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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ENBRIDGE - LINE 6B RUPTURE IN
MARSHALL, MICHIGAN

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Docket No.: DCA-10-MP-007

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Telephonic Interview of: KIRK SEIBEL

Crowne Plaza Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada

Tuesday,
January 31, 2012

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MATTHEW NICHOLSON
Investigator-In-Charge

APPEARANCES:

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Office of Railroad, Pipeline, and
Hazardous Materials Investigations
National Transportation Safety Board

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MR. NICHOLSON: This is NTSB Pipeline Case No. DCA10MP007, Enbridge Energy, July 2010 Crude Oil Release in Marshall, Michigan. These are the Human Factors Group interviews being conducted at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Today is Tuesday, January 31st, 2012.

This interview is being recorded for transcription at a later date. Copies of the transcripts will be provided to the parties and the witness for review once completed.

For the record, Kirk, please state your full name with spelling, employer name, and job title.

MR. SEIBEL: Kirk Seibel. K-i-r-k, S-e-i-b-e-l. Employer is Enbridge, Inc. Job title?

MR. NICHOLSON: Yes.

MR. SEIBEL: Control Center Operator.

MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. And for the record, Kirk, please provide a contact phone number and e-mail address that you may be reached at.

MR. SEIBEL: [REDACTED]

MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Thanks. Kirk, you're allowed to have one other person of your choice present during this interview. This other person may be an attorney, friend, family member, co-worker, or no one at all. If you would, please indicate whom you've chosen to be present with you during this interview.

1 MR. SEIBEL: No one.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. We'll go around the room now and
3 introduce ourselves for the record. I'll start. We'll go to my
4 left. My name is Matthew Nicholson, M-a-t-t-h-e-w, N-i-c-h-o-l-s-
5 o-n. I am the NTSB IIC. My phone number is [REDACTED] My
6 e-mail is [REDACTED].

7 MR. EMEABA: My name is Kalu Kelly Emeaba, K-a-l-u, K-e-
8 l-l-y, E-m-e-a-b-a, from NTSB, and I'm the SCADA Operations Group
9 Chair. My phone number is [REDACTED] and my e-mail address is
10 [REDACTED]

11 MR. JOHNSON: I'm Jay Johnson, with Enbridge. I'm the
12 Supervisor of U.S. Compliance. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED]
14 MS. BUTLER: Karen Butler, K-a-r-e-n, B-u-t-l-e-r. I'm
15 the Supervisor of Accident Investigations for PHMSA, which is the
16 Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration [REDACTED]
17 [REDACTED]. It's [REDACTED] and the phone
18 number is [REDACTED]

19 DR. STRAUCH: I'm Barry Strauch with the NTSB. B-a-r-r-
20 y, S-t-r-a-u-c-h. My phone number is [REDACTED] My e-mail is
21 [REDACTED]

22 INTERVIEW OF KIRK SEIBEL

23 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

24 Q. Okay, so maybe to start with a little background would be
25 in order here, because I'm not entirely sure why you're here at

1 this point -- right?

2 A. No.

3 Q. I know you were on shift on the 26th --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. -- of July 2010. And if you could, just tell us maybe a
6 little bit about what console you were at and maybe what you
7 remember from that morning.

8 A. I was working the incoming side of the Superior
9 terminal.

10 Q. Can you draw for us where you would be in relationship
11 to the 6B console? I don't think any of us really know.

12 A. This would be the line 6 console right there, and I
13 would have been right there.

14 Q. That's 6B?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Can you label that for me please?

17 A. Sure.

18 Q. And if you would for us to orient ourselves, could you
19 also put where the MBS and shift lead sat.

20 A. Yeah, sure. They would -- you want --

21 Q. Just doesn't have to be to scale. Just --

22 A. It would have been over here.

23 Q. Okay, so there at the top. Okay. If you'd continue.
24 You said your console is Superior?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. And is that a pipeline or terminal?

2 A. Terminal. Superior Terminal.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And yeah, it would be controlling the incoming lines, so
5 lines 2, 3, and 4 at that time.

6 Q. Okay. So, that puts you right across from Tim Chubb.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Yeah, it would have been Tim Chubb that night, that
9 morning. Okay. And can you tell us a little bit about what you
10 observed on that night. Did you notice any issues with the start-
11 ups or --

12 A. I really don't remember much.

13 Q. Okay. It's been a while.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. You -- nothing stood out?

16 A. Nope.

17 Q. Did you see lots of activity over there?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Did you know that Tim was maybe struggling with the
20 start-up or --

21 A. Yeah, I know the shift leads were over there and the MBS
22 guy --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- but other than that --

25 Q. Did you hear any conversations?

1 A. Not that I can remember, no.

2 Q. Was Ghazal -- do you know Ghazal?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Was she part of the conversations or was she involved?

5 A. I don't know -- I don't really remember exactly.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

7 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

8 Q. Okay. So, you just laid low. You were involved in your
9 work.

10 A. Yeah. I wasn't really involved in --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- in that part of it.

13 Q. The shift leads never came over to you --

14 A. No.

15 Q. -- and asked you any question. Okay. Have you ever
16 operated line 6B? Were you trained?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay. Okay. Who were the shift leads that night?

19 A. Darin Parsons and Aaron Zimmel.

20 Q. Okay.

21 MR. NICHOLSON: Good. I guess I'll pass it over to
22 Barry now and he's got some --

23 DR. STRAUCH: Okay.

24 MR. NICHOLSON: -- follow-ups.

25 BY DR. STRAUCH:

1 Q. Is this the first time you've been interviewed by us in
2 this investigation?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Can you tell us a little bit about your background?

5 A. I've been with Enbridge just over 4 years now.

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. And right from the start, I operated the Superior
8 Terminal.

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. And before that, I was a chemical plant operator for 6
11 years, and then before that, I was a greens keeper.

12 Q. Okay. And what kind of educational background do you
13 have?

14 A. I have third class power engineering.

15 Q. Um-hum. Okay. What made you leave the chemical company
16 to join Enbridge?

17 A. More security. The chemical company was pretty reliant
18 on power prices and they did actually end up shutting down after I
19 left, so --

20 Q. Smart move.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. All right. So, at the time of the accident, you would
23 have been with Enbridge about 2½ years?

24 A. Yeah, yeah, pretty much, exactly.

25 Q. Okay. You said you worked alongside, it would have been

1 Tim and Ghazal?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. How would you characterize them as operators?

4 How would you describe their performance?

5 A. Tim was a really good operator.

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. And Ghazal, she was still fairly new at that time.

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. So, she was less experienced.

10 Q. Okay. And by good operator, would you elaborate on
11 that?

12 A. Just his shutdowns and stuff were usually smooth and
13 controlled, that's all.

14 Q. Okay. And what about the ability to work with -- how
15 would you characterize Tim's ability to work with people?

16 A. Really good. He's easygoing.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Friendly.

19 Q. Were you friends with either Ghazal or Tim outside the
20 control room?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. And what about Ghazal's ability to work with
23 people? How do you characterize that?

24 A. I think she was able to work with people well.

25 Q. Okay. In your observation, how well did they get along?

1 A. I don't know. I think there may have been a little bit
2 of friction between them --

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. -- but I don't know -- not major, you know.

5 Q. What would you base that on?

6 A. I don't know, just -- I don't really have any specific
7 thing to base it on.

8 Q. Okay. And what was -- what were your interactions with
9 Ghazal like?

10 A. Good.

11 Q. Um-hum. And your interactions with Tim?

12 A. Good.

13 Q. Um-hum. Did you ever see either one of them being
14 criticized by supervisors?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Did you ever see anybody in the control room be
17 criticized by the supervisors?

18 A. No.

19 Q. And how would you characterize the quality of the
20 supervision in the control room?

21 A. In --

22 Q. Well, were you happy with it? Was it good?

23 A. Yes. Yeah.

24 Q. And what about the shift leads? What kind of
25 supervisors were they?

1 A. Aaron and Darin?

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. Yep, they were really good. They were fair and I talked
4 to them, I felt no problem talking to them.

5 Q. Did either one -- did you think either one had favorites
6 or people who were un-favorites with them?

7 A. I don't think so, probably no -- not that I could see,
8 anyway.

9 Q. What kind of -- how approachable do you feel the shift
10 leads were if you had complaints about things?

11 A. Well, I think the shift leads were pretty good.

12 Q. Did you ever have an issue that you'd discuss with them?

13 A. Not really.

14 Q. So, you're saying that based on your observation of them
15 in other capacities?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. I see.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay. What about the supervisors above them? How did
20 you feel they were in terms of creating a friendly work --
21 controller friendly environment in the control room?

22 A. They were a little tougher to talk to I think.

23 Q. Why is that?

24 A. Just less approachable, I guess. But as far as -- yeah,
25 the control room was a good atmosphere to be in.

1 Q. Good in what way?

2 A. Just team, really team-oriented and --

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. Yeah.

5 DR. STRAUCH: All right, I'm going to -- I'll pass it
6 off to you, Karen.

7 MS. BUTLER: Thank you.

8 DR. STRAUCH: That pretty much does it for me at this
9 point.

10 MS. BUTLER: Just a couple of questions.

11 MR. SEIBEL: Sure.

12 BY MS. BUTLER:

13 Q. Would Ghazal have started after you were already on
14 Superior?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. So, after you were there and she would have come
17 on, did she ever ask you for help at any time?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Our two jobs were quite different --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- like the terminal's quite a bit different from the
23 pipeline.

24 Q. Okay. If somebody makes an error, is it obvious in the
25 control room that something's happened?

1 A. I guess define what you mean by an error.

2 Q. Okay. All right. It's my understanding that there used
3 to be a formal process --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. -- for defining what an error was.

6 A. Yes, yeah.

7 Q. Okay. So, if we were to go with that formal process of
8 an error definition --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- and forgive me, I can't repeat it verbatim.

11 A. Yeah. Well, that's --

12 Q. If we were to go formally with that element --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- could you kind of tell when that was happening in the
15 control room?

16 A. Yeah, in the general vicinity of our console because
17 it's a fairly big room.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. We might not notice somewhere else, but, yeah, nearby
20 you would usually know something was --

21 Q. Okay. So, in the course of the time that you've been
22 there, people have had errors.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. And the shift leads come talk to them. Did their voices
25 ever get elevated or --

1 A. No, no.

2 Q. Okay. So, it's pretty mute or pretty low and --

3 A. Yep. Yeah, -- they're -- yeah. I've seen lots of
4 different times --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- and all the shift leads are -- would be professional
7 about it.

8 Q. Okay. So, if a shift lead kind of goes over and you
9 have reason to think probably there's an error going on and
10 they're talking to somebody, can you characterize for me if there
11 would be any difference between when that might happen versus when
12 they might be helping somebody look to see if they have a leak?

13 A. Not really. I guess, yeah, I really don't -- they --
14 yeah, I don't think so.

15 Q. Okay. So, I'm going to throw some questions back to
16 you, to see if I'm all wet. For example, in 6B, I think this
17 issue -- we understand that the MBS analyst was working with the
18 shift leads --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- and that they were periodically all of them at the
21 console.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And would that be typical in an error?

24 A. No --

25 Q. Would the --

1 A. -- not the MBS.

2 Q. Okay, so the MBS analyst would typically stay in their
3 area? Is that fair?

4 A. Unless, yeah, unless there was a reason for them to come
5 over to the console.

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. During an error, I couldn't see why --

8 Q. Okay. So, if an MBS analyst approaches the console, is
9 there a reason you can think of besides a potential leak that they
10 might come?

11 A. Just maybe to visit.

12 Q. Okay. All right. So, nothing that sticks out in your
13 mind -- oh, this happens all the time and they just come over to
14 tell us.

15 A. No.

16 Q. For example, if the MBS system for a particular console
17 they were going to take off line, do they go to the console to
18 tell them that?

19 A. They may. I don't know.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I don't deal with the MBS --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- too much in my capacity, but --

24 Q. Thank you. That's all I have.

25 MR. EMEABA: Not much actually. But --

1 MR. NICHOLSON: This is Kelly Emeaba.

2 MR. EMEABA: My name is Kelly Emeaba.

3 BY MR. EMEABA:

4 Q. Have you ever operated a line other than terminal since
5 you've been there?

6 A. Operated a line? No.

7 Q. You never did?

8 A. No.

9 Q. So, you don't have any experience about how the lines
10 are controlled?

11 A. Not really, no.

12 Q. Okay. So, if one should ask you, compare yourself from
13 Ghazal who is not experienced, you would not be able to?

14 A. Yeah. Our jobs would be different for sure.

15 Q. Because I know you mentioned early on that she's less
16 experienced.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. So, how do you know she's less experienced if you don't
19 do the same thing she does?

20 A. Just through interacting, because we do deal with the
21 line operators, like we do work together for swing times and stuff
22 like that.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So, just comparing her to, say, another operator running
25 the line that I would work with --

1 Q. Okay. So --

2 A. -- she would have been less experienced.

3 Q. Okay. It's based on comparing her with another operator
4 like you concluded or you can conclude that she's not experienced?

5 A. She's experienced.

6 Q. Or much experienced.

7 A. Not as experienced. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. And do you ever compare her with somebody within
9 the same years of experience as she had while working there?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Was any other person of the same years of experience as
12 she was in that console?

13 A. No.

14 Q. You don't know of anybody?

15 A. I don't think so.

16 Q. Okay. Because you said you've been with Enbridge for
17 about 4 years now?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And she also at the time of incident, was there for
20 roughly about 2 years also.

21 A. Yeah. She started after I did.

22 Q. Okay. Maybe 2 months, 3 months difference.

23 A. Probably about 6 months.

24 Q. Okay. All right. Thank you.

25 MR. NICHOLSON: Jay?

1 BY MR. JOHNSON:

2 Q. Did both Tim and Ghazal have lines coming in just
3 through your terminal or going out? Is that how your --

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. You said like when, you know, Tim would shut a
6 line down, it was smooth?

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. For a start-up, or --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Did you have similar experiences -- good, bad, or
11 otherwise with Ghazal, or --

12 A. Yeah, she -- I think she was fairly, pretty good too.

13 Q. Okay. I just, you know, talking about the interaction,
14 I know they do have lines coming in his terminal and leaving from
15 there, so I was just curious as far as how that related, you know,
16 what, like I say, so the interaction between the two, you know,
17 we've got this line coming and so and so forth, that was the gist
18 of a normal working environment, no issues?

19 A. Yep. Yep. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay. That's all I have.

21 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

22 Q. Well, just to clarify, what -- Superior of Wisconsin,
23 right?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Is that your line? Well, what's coming into 6B from

1 Superior?

2 MR. JOHNSON: Well, before the incident, they ran a line
3 up -- upstream (indiscernible).

4 MR. SEIBEL: 6E -- 6A, which is Ghazal's.

5 MR. JOHNSON: Which actually comes out -- 6A came out
6 after Ghazal, but he also had 3 at the time?

7 MR. SEIBEL: Yes.

8 MR. JOHNSON: At the time, so, he had that line 3 come
9 into Superior.

10 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. Oh, you're saying Tim and --

11 MR. JOHNSON: Tim. Yeah, because he talked about that,
12 maybe that's when you were out, yeah so --

13 MR. NICHOLSON: Yeah, I'm sorry, I might have missed
14 that.

15 MR. JOHNSON: No, that's okay.

16 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

17 Q. And when you -- just now, Jay mentioned when Tim did a
18 start-up, it was good. It was smooth.

19 A. I'm sorry, if you know the term, you would notice the
20 shutdowns.

21 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

22 MR. JOHNSON: That's what he had said.

23 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

24 MR. JOHNSON: That's what I asked him.

25 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

1 Q. Yeah, well that's -- but I didn't understand the term
2 smooth, as in no transients or as in --

3 A. Yeah. A lot less, yeah, because at Superior, we close
4 -- we close off the incoming valve for the line --

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. -- when they shut down, so you can have where you notice
7 a lot more pressure fluctuation or you can have a nice smooth
8 shutdown where, you know, your pressure isn't -- because we have
9 to watch the pressure when we shut -- when we close off.

10 Q. Right. I guess this was all discussed. I apologize.

11 MR. JOHNSON: No, it wasn't.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, okay.

13 MR. JOHNSON: When he just said he shut it down smooth,
14 I was trying to get some of the background while you --

15 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

16 Q. Well, where you -- I got to ask him, where you see the
17 fluctuation, what are you looking at for fluctuation, just your
18 single meter readout?

19 A. Yeah, Yeah, just a -- no, just the pressure transfer.

20 Q. So, you're watching it bounce on your screen?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. So, it bounced less when Tim would shut down a line?

23 A. Yeah. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay. I just wanted to be sure I understood what smooth
25 meant.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Less bounce. And he was smooth as opposed to -- who was
3 the other person we were comparing him against?

4 MR. JOHNSON: No, I just asked him -- he hadn't compared.

5 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, okay.

6 MR. JOHNSON: He had mentioned smooth, so I was asking him
7 how that related to Superior turn-off.

8 MR. NICHOLSON: Who would not be a smooth --

9 MR. SEIBEL: I don't know.

10 MR. JOHNSON: No, but I -- and then I asked him if Ghazal was
11 smooth, and he said yes.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay.

13 MR. JOHNSON: So, that's kind of where I was going.

14 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

15 Q. Yeah. Who was -- who sat behind you? Who was your
16 group mate or your teammate in your pod?

17 A. Jon Vaters.

18 Q. Jon Vaters. Okay. And what would that line be called?
19 What type of console?

20 A. That would be the Superior Injections.

21 Q. Oh, okay.

22 A. So, that would be lines 5, 6, 14, and 61.

23 Q. Gotcha. And how long has Jon been around?

24 A. We started at the same time.

25 Q. Okay. So, you rely on Jon quite a bit when you've got

1 issues?

2 A. Yep, yeah, we're both trained to operate both sides, so,
3 yeah, we work together.

4 Q. Did you ever cross the aisle there and ask Tim Chubb to
5 help you out on something?

6 A. Not really, no.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. It's -- yeah, just a lot different, got a different type
9 of console to operate.

10 Q. Yeah. Pipeline versus terminal?

11 A. Yeah.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, Barry? Anything else?

13 DR. STRAUCH: No questions, no.

14 BY MS. BUTLER:

15 Q. Since you've been in the control room for about 4 years,
16 I'm just curious on your take. Do you think that there's any
17 particular consoles that are more difficult to work than others?

18 A. I've only worked the Superior consoles, so --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- it wouldn't be fair to say.

21 Q. Okay. Thank you.

22 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

23 Q. So, you're the new control center now?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Okay. You're part of that.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Everything running smooth at the new control center?

3 A. Yeah. Okay. It's going good.

4 Q. No hiccups, no loss of control or anything?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I don't think so.

8 Q. And you would know, right?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay.

11 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay, Kelly?

12 MR. EMEABA: One more question.

13 BY MR. EMEABA:

14 Q. Is it something just one particular thing you can speak
15 of Ghazal that can make you conclude or maybe conclude that she
16 wasn't well experienced, based on your discussions with her?

17 A. Not one particular thing, no.

18 Q. So, there were several of them?

19 A. No, I just -- I really can't think of a particular
20 example.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. I think we're done. Thank you,
23 Kirk, for coming in. We'll conclude this interview now.

24 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: ENBRIDGE - LINE 6B RUPTURE IN
 MARSHALL, MICHIGAN
 Interview of Kirk Seibel

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-10-MP-007

PLACE: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

DATE: January 31, 2012

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

Aileen Hajmosi
Transcriber

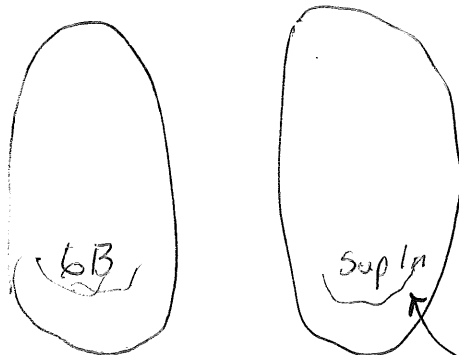


CROWNE PLAZA

EDMONTON
CHATEAU L'ACOMBE

THE PLACE TO MEET

Shift Leads MBS



Kirk Superior Terminal

KIRK SEIBEL SKETCH JAN 31ST

