ORIGINAL

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Investigation of:

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

Docket No. DCA-10-MP-008

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Interview of: CHUCK MARTINEZ

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

Friday,
September 17, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice, at 10:22 a.m.

BEFORE: KARL GUNTHER
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

KARL GUNTHER, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'EnFant Plaza East, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20594

RAVINDRA M. CHHATRE, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'EnFant Plaza East, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20594

LAWSON F. NARVELL, JR., Investigator
Human Performance Group
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'EnFant Plaza East, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20594

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

DANE B. JAQUES, ESQ.
(Counsel for Mr. Martinez)
Dombroff, Gilmore, Jaques & French
1676 International Drive, Penthouse
McLean, Virginia 22102

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

(10:22 a.m.)

MR. GUNTHER: All right. I'm Karl Gunther, National Transportation Safety Board. We're investigating an accident that occurred September 9th, 2010, in San Bruno, California, covered under DCA-10-MP-008.

What I'd like first is to advise you that you have a right to have someone sit with you as counsel. Have you chosen someone?

MR. MARTINEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. GUNTHER: And that is?

MR. JAQUES: For the record, Dane Jaques, on behalf of the witness.

MR. GUNTHER: Okay.

What I'd like to do is go around the panel and everybody introduce themselves and their affiliation.

MR. CALDWELL: Geoff Caldwell, City of San Bruno.

MR. FASSETT: Bob Fassett, PG&E.

MR. CHHATRE: Ravi Chhatre, NTSB. I'm the investigator in charge of this accident.

MR. SHORI: Sunil Shori, California Public Utilities Commission.

MR. KATCHMAR: Peter Katchmar, United States Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

MR. GUNTHER: Karl Gunther, NTSB.

MS. MAZZANTI: Debbie Mazzanti, IBEW Local 1245.

MR. SPERRY: Joshua Sperry, ESC, Local 20.

INTERVIEW OF CHUCK MARTINEZ

BY MR. GUNTHER:

Q. Okay. I'd like to get your name, address, and phone number for the record.

MR. JAQUES: The work address and phone number are fine.

BY MR. GUNTHER:

Q. Yeah, that's fine. Either one.

A. Chuck Martinez, [redacted]

Q. And your job title?

A. San Francisco T&R Supervisor.

Q. And T&R stands for?

A. Transmission and regulation.

Q. Okay. What I'd like you to do, go back to September 9th, and just say from the beginning until the end exactly what you did and what you saw.

A. I responded -- I received a call from gas control about a possible incident with line 132. I started looking into it. I responded to the scene with a T&D crew. I shut off -- I shut down the transmission line and the distribution system. That was pretty much it.

And then I supervised until the next morning.

Q. Okay. Do you have an idea when you were called by gas control, what time?

A. It was about 6:30.

Q. Okay. And roughly when you got to the scene?

A. I don't recall exactly when I got to the scene.

Q. Okay. Do you remember when you ordered the transmission valves to be shut off to 132?

A. We were at the first valve in CM and water shed, I imagine it was close to 7:30.

Q. And then do you have an idea when both valves were shut off?

A. No, I don't.

Q. Okay. All right.

Now, Pete?

MR. KATCHMAR: I have no questions.

MR. GUNTHER: Sunil?

MR. SHORI: Yeah.

BY MR. SHORI:

Q. You said you got -- you were actually part of the crew, turning the valves off?

A. Correct. I met the crew at the scene.

Q. And you are OQ qualified? Are you OQ qualified on any covered tasks?

A. No, sir.

Q. So it's -- you assigned the crew or you directed the

crew?

A. I directed the crew.

Q. Who was the crew?

A. Mike Hickey and Ed Sickenger.

Q. And when you were contacted at 6:30 and you got to the scene, where did you go when you got to the scene?

A. To the Skyline valve yard in the water shed.

Q. And so just -- was the crew already there or did you wait for the crew?

A. No, we actually arrived at the same time.

Q. Did you direct the crew to the next valve -- what time did the crew finish and move on to the next valve?

A. I don't know, I wasn't keeping track of time. We closed that valve and we proceeded down to Healy Station.

Q. So you stayed --

A. So it was minutes.

Q. You stayed with the crew?

A. Yes.

Q. Any difficulties getting down to the Healy Station from the valve at the water shed?

A. Not really. There was some traffic, but we made it pretty quick.

Q. What were your actions after the valve at the Healy Station was closed?

A. We went up to the distribution reg station by Linardi's

and closed that end, so it wouldn't back-feed.

Q. By the time -- I guess by the time you met up with the crew, had they already identified the valves needed to isolate them -- isolate the location they wanted to isolate?

A. Yes.

Q. Any indications from the crew to you in terms of what time they got to the scene?

A. No, no.

Q. Were you the one who had called the crew -- the crew out to basically isolate the valves or who --

A. No. The crew responded on their own.

Q. How did they close the valve?

A. Manually.

Q. Both -- similar valves or --

A. No, the water shed requires a valve wrench. Healy Station is a wheel valve.

Q. How long did it take to close the valve at the water shed in Healy?

A. I don't know, a matter of a few minutes.

Q. Okay. Any difficulties with closing the valve -- the valve not operating correctly or anything else that --

A. No.

Q. -- in the process?

A. Both valves operated as expected.

Q. Okay. Which valves at Healy were operated as part of

the response? 40,05 CM

A. Valve 4005 and, I believe No. 2.

Q. Okay. And what does each of those valves do?

A. 4005 CM is the main line valve on line 132, and the other valve is a cross-tie.

Q. And that cross-tie is to?

A. Line 109.

Q. Okay. Was that valve closed or was it opened? So what did the operation of the inter-tie valve entail?

A. Closing. I believe closing. At the time I was making a phone call to let the OEC know that we -- what operations we were doing, when the M&C was checking that valve.

Q. Okay. So, just for clarification, so the valve was -- you believe open and to be closed?

A. I believe.

Q. And you said, again, after that point is when you moved on to the command center at Linardi's?

A. To that location, to the reg station. That's all in the same general area.

Q. Okay.

MR. SHORI: That's it for me. Thank you.

MR. GUNTHER: Ravi?

MR. CHHATRE: Yes, sir.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. I just need some clarification. Who called you to go to

the accident scene?

A. No one -- no one directed me to the scene.

Q. And I believe you said no one directed the crew and the crew acted on their own?

A. Correct.

Q. How did everybody know where to go?

A. Familiarity with the system.

Q. But how did you know it was a gas line or your line and it was at the location that it is?

A. Based on experience and the information I had.

Q. Can you elaborate? What information did you have?

A. The information I had from the load center that they received a call of a possible rupture on line 132, and the fact that I was losing pressure at Martin Station.

Q. And were you at the Martin Station?

A. Pardon me?

Q. Were you at the Martin Station.

A. No, I was at home.

Q. Okay. So somebody at the Martin Station or somebody told you that you were losing pressure on 132?

A. The gas load center informed me.

Q. Okay. And that is located where?

A. Excuse me, the load center?

Q. Where is the gas load center located?

A. San Francisco.

Q. Okay. And did you close lines -- valves on all lines, 101, 109, and 132, or only on 132?

A. Only 132.

Q. And after you closed those, did you report that to anybody at PG&E, that you had done that?

A. I was reporting to the OEC every valve operation as we performed it.

Q. You might have told us earlier, what is "OEC"? Stands for?

A. You know what? I'm not really sure. We have so many acronyms.

Q. I know. That's what we'd like to understand. I mean, if you have so many. Okay. We can get that later on. That's not a big deal.

So you report to OEC after each valve closure or after both were closed?

A. Each one.

Q. Okay. Can that -- is there some kind of a record, either on your phone or the phone that received the information? Because we are trying to find out some data inputs and transmission of that.

A. It's probably on my phone records. They would also have been writing the times down, as I called.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Go ahead.

MR. FASSETT: It's also on the timeline that we

provided.

MR. CHHATRE: And that is not stamped confidential.

MR. FASSETT: It is now.

MR. CHHATRE: When are you going to clear that, because I need some of that information.

MR. GUNTHER: We can go off the record.

(Off the record.)

(On the record.)

MS. MAZZANTI: "OEC" is the Operating Emergency Center, point of clarification.

MR. FASSETT: That was also stated yesterday on the record.

MR. CHHATRE: I'm sorry. I just didn't remember.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. So nobody called the crew. The crew came to the accident scene on their own? I just want to make sure that I understand it correctly. The crew that --

A. That's what I understand, yes.

Q. Okay. Now, what happened after you closed the valves on 132 -- both of them -- and the distribution valve, what are the next actions that you took?

A. We looked at our distribution plat map and started working on how we would shut down the distribution system.

Q. Okay. And did you start that operation? Did you start shutting down the distribution lines after you looked at the map,

finding out which ones are impacted?

A. Yes.

Q. As a supervisor, can you describe briefly what your duties are? Can you describe what your duties are as a supervisor?

A. I operate and maintain the gas infrastructure in San Francisco.

Q. And does that include distribution mains -- the entire distribution system?

A. In San Francisco, yes, that's correct.

Q. Does that include most of the mains, like 301? Does that include also these lines in your territory for 101, 109, and 132?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that part of --

A. Yes.

Q. And when you say maintain, does that include corrosion control or maintenance?

A. Correct.

Q. Can you describe what those activities are in corrosion control and maintenance?

A. We monitor the level of cathodic protection on hose lines.

Q. And do you know what the minimum -- what --

A. Eight-fifty, minimum.

sulfate cu

Q. Minimum 850. Copper center?

A. Yes.

Q. Any incidents where these potentials dropped below 850? Anything in the last few years, couple of years.

MR. FASSETT: For the record, you have all of that information.

MR. CHHATRE: We do?

MR. FASSETT: We provided you all of the maintenance.

MR. CHHATRE: I mean, I told you already, you should stop me at the very first opportunity.

MR. FASSETT: I apologize. It's all my fault.

MR. CHHATRE: No, I don't have familiarity with all of the information that these other people have. So it's not that --

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Any past incidents about corrosion damage on your lines? Again, I'm only referring to 101, 109, and 132.

A. Not that I'm aware of.

Q. Okay. And do you guys do -- I understand it is -- there is a ECDA -- external corrosion direct assessment you use for these three lines, or am I wrong?

A. We don't. The company does. We don't locally.

Q. Okay. And do you get the data from that ECDA in some way? You as a supervisor.

A. I don't recall if I received it.

Q. Okay. Any past incidents on -- of a corrosion leak? If

you have sent me that information, you can stop me right now. Do you have any past incidents of corrosion damage on any of these three lines?

A. Not that I'm aware of.

MR. FASSETT: You do have in the two studies that we gave -- the 2005 ECDA -- the 2004 ECDA and the 2009 ECDA any documents associated with the integrity of the line as part of the pre-assessment. It's in your hand.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay, great.

And I have no more questions. Thank you for coming.

MR. GUNTHER: Bob Fassett?

MR. FASSETT: A couple, I think.

BY MR. FASSETT:

Q. So, the water shed valve, is that in a vault or above-ground?

A. It's in -- it's below ground.

Q. And that's the one --

A. It's accessed through a manhole cover.

Q. And that's the one that requires the valve wrench?

A. Yes.

Q. So the Healy Station is above ground with --

A. The key operator is above ground with a wheel.

Q. Okay. Both multi-turn valves?

A. Yes.

Q. So you say no one directed you to the scene, but you did

have -- you were talking to gas control. They just didn't say, "Chuck, go to the scene"? Is that correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. Okay. And then the crosstie to line 109, do you recall if that's downstream of the main line valve or upstream?

A. I believe that's upstream.

MR. FASSETT: Thank you.

MR. GUNTHER: Geoff?

BY MR. CALDWELL:

Q. The question I have, is it -- earlier on in the investigation I was led to believe that there might be a protocol to try to turn off both valves simultaneously. Is that true or not true?

A. No.

Q. Okay. So it doesn't -- and then you turned off the feeder valve, so to speak, first -- this other one?

A. Correct.

Q. And then went to --

A. Upstream.

Q. Okay, the upstream one. And then from there, do you remember what route you took to get to the other one?

A. Down Skyline and down Sneath.

Q. To Crosswood? Crestwood CM

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

MR. CALDWELL: That's it. Thank you.

MR. GUNTHER: IBEW?

MS. MAZZANTI: No questions.

MR. GUNTHER: Engineers?

MR. SPERRY: No, thank you.

MR. GUNTHER: PHMSA?

BY MR. KATCHMAR:

Q. I have some follow-up questions.

A. Okay.

Q. Did -- if nobody sent you or the crew to the south valve first, how did you both get there at the same time?

A. By sheer coincidence, I imagine.

Q. Okay. They didn't show up at the incident command center and then you drove over there together?

A. No, sir.

Q. Okay. And, please, help me out here if I do this wrong, but we were told that someone dispatched a crew from the north and someone dispatched a crew from the south, both to go to their respective valves. And wait until I finish here.

And then we were told that the people from the north were able to get there to their valve, which would have been the 40.05 4005 -- and I understand that you went to the other one first. But we were told that they got -- the north people got to their valve and then after they closed those valves appropriately, they went to the southern one just because that's the next thing to do

and they were able to get there and close the valve before the south guys got there. In your recollection, can you comment on that?

A. That's not correct.

Q. Okay. Just getting it on the record.

Could you explain to me what a valve wrench -- a valve type of closure is?

A. There are different types of valve wrenchs. Basically there are -- they're a long piece of steel -- it might be pipe or square tube. On the end of it, it has a particular square head for that type of valve. I believe this was a No. 4 key, what we refer to.

Q. So you did -- your guys did not have to go down into the vault to close the vault, you did it from above ground on a long --

A. Correct.

Q. Okay -- a long wrench. Okay. Gotcha.

Thank you, that clarifies that.

MR. GUNTHER: Sunil --

MR. KATCHMAR: No, wait.

MR. GUNTHER: Oh, I thought you were done.

BY MR. KATCHMAR:

Q. After you did that, you say you went back to the OEC and you looked at the distribution system plat maps to find out maybe where your emergency valves were so that you could isolate the

distribution system?

A. Correct.

Q. Were you asked to turn those -- turn that distribution system in the area affected by the fire, were you asked to turn that off -- gas to that area off?

A. It was a request made by the fire department.

Q. Okay.

A. We would have done that, anyway.

Q. Okay. And I know that you are supposed to have emergency valves strategically placed. I happened to be watching a live feed and it appeared that it didn't -- the distribution system, anyway, didn't get shut off for a long period of time. Can you tell me when you got it turned off?

A. It was some time after 11:00.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't know exactly.

Q. And can you tell me the reason it took that long to shut the distribution system off?

A. There were four locations. One was a valve, the other three needed to be excavated.

Q. Okay. And why would they need to be excavated?

A. To get down to the gas line, to squeeze it. We didn't have valves available at those locations.

Q. Okay. Were you trying to maintain service outside the area? Is that why you squeezed off or didn't go to the next

valve?

A. I'm not familiar with the distribution, per se, in San Bruno.

MR. KATCHMAR: Okay. Thank you, sir.

MR. GUNTHER: Sunil, California PUC?

MR. SHORI: Thank you.

BY MR. SHORI:

Q. Can you indicate those particular valves one more time on the distribution system, what -- which ones were squeezed and which ones were -- where you had to squeeze and where you operated valves?

A. We operated a valve at Sneath and Claremont, and that would be West Claremont.

MR. FASSETT: Just a point of clarification, I believe he's referring to the transmission system. And I thought you just asked about the --

BY MR. SHORI:

Q. I'm talking about the distribution.

A. The distribution. We operated a valve at the east portion of Claremont and Sneath -- excuse me, that would be West Claremont and Sneath. At East Claremont and Sneath, we squeezed the plastic. At Glenview and San Bruno, a little bit down the hill, we squeezed the steel. And at the bottom of the hill, at Earl, we squeezed the steel.

Q. So that's four points?

A. Yes, four points.
Q. When you were contacted -- you indicated earlier you were contacted by gas control at approximately 6:30?
A. Correct.
Q. Who from gas control contacted you?
A. I believe it was Mike.
Q. Do you have a last name?
A. I think his name is Valenti.
Q. And do you recall what exactly or what Mike said to you?
A. Not exactly. He said they had a report from a gas station of a gas leak and at that time, he also told me Martin Station was losing pressure. It was down to about 60 pounds.
Q. And at that point -- you're using the telephone. Is this your personal phone or your company phone?
A. That would be the company cell phone.
Q. Now, you said you had already proceeded to the scene before you were contacted by gas control?
A. No, sir. After.
Q. After. So, did you have any knowledge of any event or anything going on prior to your -- prior to being contacted by gas control in regard to the gas facilities in San Bruno?
A. No, no.
Q. Where did you proceed from, what area, general area?
A. Belmont.
Q. Do you know if there's any blowdown valves on any of the

facilities that you operated, for example the two valve stations?

A. There is a blow-off at the water shed where we operated that valve.

Q. Are there blow-offs anywhere else on the isolated portion?

A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. Was there any thought given by you or the crew in terms of the need to use blowdown?

A. No.

Q. Would the blowdown valves have been on the maps that were being used to determine the valves to isolate --

A. Yes, they are.

Q. -- the transmission line?

A. Yes.

Q. Did the crew have equipment -- what's the extent of equipment that was available to the crew? What kind of crew truck was it that was being used at this time to go to the valves?

A. It was a standard M&C truck.

Q. Would they have blowdown extensions or anything they would need to do a blowdown on that truck?

A. No, I don't believe they had an extension.

MR. SHORI: Okay. Thank you.

MR. GUNTHER: Ravi?

MR. CHHATRE: One follow-up question.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. What would have happened -- if you guys wouldn't have gone to the accident scene, since all three of you had volunteered, how the process would have worked for PG&E to send somebody to the accident scene?

MR. JAQUES: I'm going to object. It calls for speculation on his part.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Let me rephrase the question, then.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Who had responsibility to send the crew at the accident scene?

A. Whoever the first responder into the OEC was.

Q. And do you know who that person was at the time of the incident?

A. No, I don't.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. No further questions.

MR. GUNTHER: PG&E?

BY MR. FASSETT:

Q. This may be speculation, so, Counsel, I apologize ahead of time. But there's a question about blow-offs. There's only a blow-off on one side as I understood it. Is that correct? I think you said at the water shed.

A. Yes, at the main line valve we operated, there are two blow-off valves, one upstream, one downstream. They tie together to the blow-off.

Q. But that's the upstream -- the water shed is the

upstream valve? It's the source valve, is that correct?

A. Yes, that's correct.

Q. So, you get two lines going. You essentially have, for all you knew, two blow torches: One blowing from the south and one blowing off a line pack from the north, is that correct?

A. Correct.

Q. Is it accurate to say that should you have opened that blow-off at the water shed, you may start sucking that gas up the pipeline, because of the venturi effect of that open blow-off?

A. Yes.

Q. So that would not be a wise thing to do, is that correct?

A. Correct.

Q. And then you said you didn't know who the first responder at the OEC was, so you don't know if the crew had already shown up and reported that they were there or if he needed to call them out, is that correct?

A. Well, I was en route. I was in communication with the San Carlos acting T&R supervisor. He informed me that he had made contact with the Colma crew -- who is Mike Hicky -- and that they were, indeed, en route already and that the OEC had called in another crew who was, I believe, Brad Schuback.

MR. FASSETT: Okay. Thank you.

MR. GUNTHER: Okay. IBEW?

BY MS. MAZZANTI:

Q. The crew that you're referring to, that Brad Schuback is on, that crew is headquartered where?

A. San Carlos yard.

Q. But it had already been the end of the day, so there wouldn't -- it was the end of the day. Was that crew actually in the yard?

A. No.

Q. So if they would have been called, they would have been called from home?

A. Correct.

MS. MAZZANTI: No further questions.

MR. GUNTHER: Okay. Engineers?

MR. SPERRY: No questions.

MR. GUNTHER: Okay. Sunil?

MR. SHORI: I need to ask another one.

BY MR. SHORI:

Q. Are you aware if there's blow-off valves at Healy Station?

A. I'm not personally aware exactly what's at Healy Station.

Q. Okay. But, again, in response to the question earlier I asked if you considered doing blow-offs, had you considered -- had you talked to the crew in terms of doing a blow-off?

A. We did not discuss it. Based on experience, it wouldn't be prudent.

Q. It wouldn't be prudent doing it where?

A. At either location. We needed -- the line was breached. By shutting off the valves and eliminating the flow, it wouldn't -- there would be nothing left to blow off.

MR. FASSETT: I'm finished.

MR. GUNTHER: Bob?

BY MR. FASSETT:

Q. You mentioned -- in a sense, you gave us a description of the low pressure, the size of the low pressure that you shut --

A. The distribution?

Q. Yeah. You mentioned that the distribution was closed in one valve and three squeeze points, is that correct?

A. Correct.

Q. And Mr. Katchmar asked, "Well, why didn't you have the other valves," and you said you weren't familiar with the distribution system, is that correct?

A. Correct.

Q. Is it accurate to say that especially in a fire situation, you really want to make that system as small as you can, because when you squeeze it in, you're squeezing in gas? So if, for example, you squeezed in 100 customers, that's only a hundred customers of gas as opposed to if you had a zone valve that was designed for 1,000 customers, you could shut that end and that fire would have burned a whole lot longer, is that correct?

A. Correct.

MR. FASSETT: Thank you.

MR. GUNTHER: Does anybody have any more questions?

Again, is there anything that you haven't told us that we should know?

MR. MARTINEZ: No, sir.

MR. GUNTHER: Again, would you like to make a statement for the record?

MR. MARTINEZ: No, sir.

MR. GUNTHER: Okay.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY SEPTEMBER 9, 2010 ACCIDENT SAN BRUNO, CALIFORNIA Interview of Chuck Martinez
DOCKET NUMBER:	DCA-10-MP-008
PLACE:	Burlingame, California
DATE:	September 17, 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.

[redacted]
Richard Friant
Official Reporter

[redacted]