UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*
	*
NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION PIPELINE	*
LEAK AND MULTISTORY STRUCTURE	* Docket No.: DCA-14-MP-002
EXPLOSION IN HARLEM, NEW YORK	*
MARCH 12, 2014	*
	*

Interview of: ERIC ACOSTA

Consolidated Edison
4 Irving Place
New York, New York

Wednesday,
August 5, 2014

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: RAVI CHHATRE
Investigator-in-Charge

APPEARANCES:

RAVI CHHATRE, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C.

KALU KELLY EMEABA, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MATTHEW NICHOLSON, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

FRANK McCARTON, Deputy Commissioner
Office of Emergency Management
New York, New York
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ANASTASIOS GEORGELIS, Director of Field Operations
Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations
Department of Environmental Protection
New York, New York

LEONARD SINGH, Chief Engineer
Gas Distribution Services
Con Edison
(Party Representative)

CHRIS STOLICKY, Utility Supervisor (Safety)
New York State Department of Public Service
(Party Representative)

BELINA ANDERSON, Esq.
(Representative on behalf of Mr. Acosta)

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

MR. CHHATRE: Good morning.

MR. ACOSTA: Good morning.

MR. CHHATRE: Today is Wednesday, August 6, 2014. We are currently in Con Edison's facility located at 4 Irving Place, New York. We are meeting regarding the investigation of natural gas distribution pipeline leak and multi-story structure explosion that occurred on March 12, 2014, in Harlem, New York.

My name is Ravi Chhatre. I'm with National Transportation Safety Board located in Washington, D.C. and I'm Investigator-in-Charge of this accident. The NTSB Investigation Number for the accident is DCA-14-MP-002.

I would like to start by notifying everyone present in this room that we are recording this interview and we will transcribe it at a later date. The transcription is provided directly to the interviewee for review and identifying any typographical errors. The transcripts may be posted in NTSB's public docket.

Also, I would also like to inform Mr. Eric Acosta that you are permitted to have one other person present with you during the interview. This person is of your choice: your supervisor, a friend, family member, or, if you choose, no one at all.

Please state for the record your full name, spelling of your name, the organization you work for and your title, business contact information such as building address, and whom you have

chosen to be present with you during your interview.

MR. ACOSTA: Eric Acosta. I'm a construction laborer for the City of New York Environmental Protection. The site number is 2124904155, and I have present with me my city lawyer attorney, Ms. Anderson.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Now I'd like to go around the room and have each person introduce themselves. Please state your name, spelling of your name, your title and organization that you represent. Starting from my right.

MR. NICHOLSON: Matthew Nicholson, NTSB investigator, spelled Matthew, M-a-t-t-h-e-w, Nicholson, N-i-c-h-o-l-s-o-n; [redacted].

MR. EMEABA: Kalu Kelly Emeaba, K-a-l-u, K-e-l-l-y, E-m-e-a-b-a. I'm an NTSB investigator. My e-mail address [redacted].

MR. McCARTON: My name is Frank McCarton, M-c-C-a-r-t-o-n, Deputy Commissioner in the Office of Emergency Management. I'm the New York City party rep on the investigation. My e-mail address is [redacted].

MR. GEORGELIS: Anastasios Georgelis, A-n-a-s-t-a-s-i-o-s, G-e-o-r-g-e-l-i-s. I'm here with Frank. I am with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. My title is Director of Field Operations, Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations. My e-mail address is [redacted].

MS. ANDERSON: Belina Anderson, New York City Department

of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Legal Affairs. I spell my name B-e-l-i-n-a, Anderson, A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n. My e-mail address is [redacted].

MR. SINGH: Leonard Singh; L-e-o-n-a-r-d, S-i-n-g-h, Chief Engineer, Gas Distribution, Con Edison; the Con Edison NTSB party rep on this investigation. [redacted].

MR. STOLICKY: Chris Stolicky, S-t-o-l-i-c-k-y, New York State party rep, Utility Supervisor (Safety) for the New York State Department of Public Service. My e-mail address is [redacted].

MR. CHHATRE: Thank you.

INTERVIEW OF ERIC ACOSTA

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Mr. Acosta, for the record, can you please tell us your formal/informal education background, any training you received over the years, and your current job title and responsibilities?

A. Well, for the last 20, 21 years on the job, I've received water and sewer and water maintenance training. My current title now is -- I'm an investigator for the water department and I do emergency shutdowns.

Q. And in your responsibility do you try to locate water leaks or you do the digging?

A. Yes, I do -- as part of my job description, I do try to resolve water leaks, yes.

Q. Water leaks. Can you walk us through as to how you go

about doing that?

A. There's various type of strategy you use. I mean, everybody's different. But, I mean, if it's a water -- if it's a cellar leak, you know, you sound the service and you sound water mains to see if you pick up anything, and then you take it from there.

Q. Now, how do you know where the leak is?

A. Well, you don't know where the leak is at, you know. You can't see it. But, you know, you have an idea of just sounding; everything is just pretty much sounding and what visible structure that might be damaged within the path of the leak.

Q. So do you actually listen through some instrument to find out if there is a leak or if there is no leak?

A. In some instances, yeah, you can use an instrument, depending on what kind of leak it is. We have an aquaphone and we have -- we have detections that scans and pick up leaks if it can be picked up.

Q. So have you used any other instrumentation?

A. I'll be using my own basic instrument, which is an aquaphone. It's pretty much just a small component. It's like an outside telephone ring, and you just apply it to something metal to see if you hear anything.

Q. Okay. And that's your personal equipment or provided to you by city?

A. It's provided by the department.

Q. And do you have any training how to use it or what a leak sounds like?

A. Well, you know, you pick up as you go along. You know, you pick up your different types, you pick up from previous -- from having been on the job for some time. You know, you pick up the experience.

Q. So, is it on-the-job training from --

A. It is on-the-job training.

Q. -- some more experienced person, then?

A. Yes.

Q. And how long you have been listening to the water mains for leaks?

A. I've been doing water main leaks for the last -- for 16 years.

Q. Okay. And can you walk us through the process on if you go to detect a leak or do a survey on a pipe? How do you go about doing that?

A. Do you want me to --

MS. ANDERSON: Tell -- describe your --

MR. GEORGELIS: Ravi, can I --

MR. CHHATRE: Yeah, go ahead.

MR. GEORGELIS: Before you go to Eric. So, part of -- Eric is part of water maintenance yard. So part of their task is to investigate water leaks. As far as doing surveys, that's a different task in addition to his regular duties. When you go out

specifically to survey water mains for leaks, it's a different test than just performing an investigation to find a leak. When you're doing an investigation to find a leak, it's a report that there's a leak either in the cellar or somewhere and they're performing an investigation to find a specific leak.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

MR. GEORGELIS: Now, a general leak is when you do leak surveys with equipment. So that's --

MR. CHHATRE: Thanks for the clarification because --

MR. GEORGELIS: You know, depending on what -- which answers you want to hear from him, you should make --

MR. CHHATRE: I understand. Because the previous person said he said he was investigator, right? So when he said he investigates, I presumed it was the same --

MR. ACOSTA: Well, that's what I'm saying.

MR. GEORGELIS: They both do investigations.

MR. ACOSTA: Right.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

MR. GEORGELIS: But a specific task in the investigation is when you do the survey work.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

MR. ACOSTA: Right. That's -- yeah.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. So, you are doing both survey and actually locating the leaks?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So, how do you go about locating the leak, physically?

A. Well, you've got to give me like an example. If it's a cellar leak, you know, usually something like that could be off the water main to the building or it could be something outside.

Q. Okay.

A. Or maybe a property across the street. So you do your sound services. That's one of the components that is provided, that you pick up a task and you sound service lines, meaning the water line to the building. And if you get noise, then, you know, you try to minimize it to the various point and see maybe where they come out from.

Q. Okay. So somebody tells you that there's a leak, then you get involved trying to --

A. Right. Then we get --

Q. -- is that correct?

A. Yeah, if we get a complaint order saying that we have a water -- or a leak, yeah, that's what we do. We go out and we investigate.

Q. So, this is a complaint from the (indiscernible)?

A. It is complaints from the public, yes.

Q. Okay. So when the complaint from the public comes, do you -- when you go, do you see water on the -- if it is a main leak, do you see water on the main, on the street, or not always?

A. No, not always, you know, on the street. I mean, you know, if this is the ground here, you can't look through, you know. But, yeah, you know, sometime you see that, you know, and you -- sometime it just goes into, directly into the cellar.

Q. Okay. And typically how deep you have to dig to physically locate?

A. How deep I have to do what? Excuse me?

Q. How deep you have to dig?

A. To dig? Well, I don't dig, I don't. I mean, but -- I I mean I can't say because I don't dig. It's been a while, so I don't know. But it's not deep. Depending on the footage where at that time that main was installed, it could be 4 feet, could be 3 feet, 5 feet. You know, it varies.

Q. Maybe I should back up and actually find out physically what you do. When you say you investigate leaks, what is it that you do?

A. Okay. So an example, let's say you call, "I have water going into my basement." That's a cellar leak. Okay? So what you do with something like that, you know, you -- the first thing you want to do, you want to just sound the property's line, make sure that the line is not broken. And that would determine -- if that line is broken, that will cause any significant damage. And then if that's the next step, then the next step is you sound probably a main or something outside or a property beside the property or across the street. What you want to do, you want to

eliminate as much as possible within that zone where the leak is coming from. That's what I've done.

Q. And that's what you do?

A. Yes. That's basically one of the things I do, yeah.

Q. And so how do you go about eliminating the service line or --

A. Well, if it doesn't have any noise, then -- if it's not -- it's metal, so pipe -- if there's no noise traveling through the pipe where it's broken, a good noise, which is a loud noise, then you know that's not broken. So you go where noise is picked up, like a vibration, like a gushing noise on a metal pipe.

Q. And where do you make the connection on the pipe?

A. Well, the connection is New York City main, that's where the water is --

Q. Okay. So, you look at the main?

A. Right, we do the -- yeah, the service, yeah. We can -- we could -- we do sound the water main to see if you pick up a noise on it.

Q. Okay. It's still not clear to me. If you made the connection on the water main, how does it tell you that certain service is broken?

A. That's -- I just repeated. If there's no -- if there's no noise on a line --

Q. Right.

A. -- then there's no -- that's an indication that nothing

is broken because there's nothing escaping.

Q. Okay.

A. Okay? If it was broken, if something was escaping, you'll have a noise.

Q. Right.

A. It's like a faucet. When you open it, you're going to hear a traveling noise throughout the pipe. But if you close it, you're not going to hear anything because nothing is getting away. That's how you can determine whether the service is broken.

Q. So if you hear the noise, how do you know it is not on the main or it is not on the service? How do you --

A. One is the amount of water that may be coming out. So it's -- if it has a very good flow of the water, a push, which that doesn't really tell you much because it can be a small leak on a pipe or a big leak on a pipe.

Q. Okay.

A. But when you have a good noise on something, then that's what you go with, meaning a noise like a noise. You have to have a noise on it to determine.

Q. Right.

A. And then you go to the other locations. If there's nothing there or barely just having a noise, then you know that's eliminated. You want to go with the greatest noise.

Q. Okay.

MR. CHHATRE: All right, that's all for me. Kelly?

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. You mentioned hearing the noise, which confirmed the fact that a pipe could be leaking or the main line could be leaking. If a hydrant is open, maybe a block from where you are actually probing, which means that main is open, how does it affect what you hear?

A. Well, from your years of training you learn how to isolate the type of sound over how -- remember, a hydrant is -- it come out full pressure because basically the hydrant is there to fight a fire, so a lot of pressure will come out. And you can tell from the distance from the leak at, where the leak is currently happening to where the fire -- it could be -- the fire hydrant could be like maybe 45, 75 feet away. You determine, like I said, the amount of flow of the vibration, what determines a little bit, what is more. So you test it. You open it up. As you open or close it, you see does the noise decline, increase, either way.

Q. If the opening of the hydrant happens to be performed by a private entity who actually has it controlled, not full opening, how will it affect the noise you hear?

A. Well, because the distance of the noise. If the main -- if the service line to a building is where your sounding is greater, you won't be able to pick -- you may pick up a little bit of the hydrant that is in the distance at full head.

MR. EMEABA: Okay, thank you.

MR. SINGH: Can I piggyback on your question a little bit, because I have that same -- a similar question around that issue, Eric.

BY MR. SINGH:

Q. So, how do you -- you mentioned before flow. So when you have a leak there's a path, there's a path of flow, right?

A. Um-hum.

Q. You mentioned a faucet being open. How do you know it's not -- a sound is not -- how do you distinguish an adjacent building? Let's say I have a large building and there's multiple, you know, flows in that building or they have a big line feeding a tank or something. How do you know it -- how do you distinguish that from a leak?

A. You distinguish -- the right thing to do is you ask the property owner to eliminate some of the equipment that might be on the main to eliminate the noise on that service line. So if you have a generator running or you have a cooling system running, those things can make a bigger noise. That's why you ask to shut those off where you can minimize it and make sure it's coming off the water main and not being -- participating with the other conditions coming in.

MR. SINGH: Can I follow up on that?

MR. CHHATRE: Yeah, follow up.

BY MR. SINGH:

Q. So is there a procedure that you have that says before

you do a sounding in a street you go to all the buildings and say, hey, can you minimize or shut down, or do you check to see if there's operation in those buildings though?

A. Well, we check if there's operation in those buildings, because you want to --

Q. But is that -- is there something -- is that a protocol or is just that instinctual?

A. It's just instinctual, yeah.

MR. SINGH: Sorry, Kelly. Thank you.

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. Also you mentioned when you (indiscernible) from you work, you mention some damages detected in the general area that you observe sometimes or you check for. Can you tell us what kind of damages will you detect in the general area of your work?

A. I'm not getting what he's trying to --

Q. Let me repeat my words. Initially when in answer to Ravi's questions --

A. Okay.

Q. -- you mentioned that when you go for a noise check, I know that you also check if there are some damages --

A. Oh, damages --

Q. -- in the general area. So my question to you then, can you tell us what kind of damages will you expect or do you check for in the general area which will impact what you are doing?

A. Street depression is one. That's one of the main things

you look for, street depressions. That's a damage.

Q. Okay.

A. Meaning that if, you know, something's leaking in that area and above that, sometime the water wash away the dirt and it reaches the surface of the street. That's where you really -- sometimes a lot of these things are just bad pavement from a department, from other agency that come and probe the street, you know, bad pavement. But usually you look for some signs like that, some type of structure damage.

Q. Okay. Ravi asked you a question. He asked you how long have you been doing this listening work on the water main. Instead you responded how long you have been working on water main. So how long have you been doing this listening work?

A. Sixteen years.

Q. Sixteen years.

A. Sixteen years. But besides just that, I got 21 years on the job.

Q. Okay. Okay. And if I may ask you, in order to detect this noise do you have a setting for how your instrument is actually set?

A. No. No. You know, it's -- everything is just -- no, there's no -- I don't have a piece of equipment that I go and it tells me you got 3 minutes to do something, you know, nothing like that. You know, it's just a, it's a -- it's just a piece of equipment that's provided and that's one of the equipment that is

provided to use to sound a surface. If that's what you're asking.

Q. Okay. So, it doesn't have any setting, like something that will help you to have a decibel level or --

A. No, no. An aquaphone doesn't have that, no. That's what we use, an aquaphone.

Q. In your earlier response you said most of the work you go out for are called in by the customer or people --

A. Well, yeah, I mean -- yeah, when they go through the complaint center it is -- it gets dispatched to the yard where the -- your zonings are.

MR. GEORGELIS: I think we're getting confused again. His duty in the maintenance yard is finding leaks due to complaints, and that's -- he's performing a leak investigation with an aquaphone. That's when we go.

When they're doing leak surveys, you use different types of equipment, Eric?

MR. ACOSTA: When we do a leak survey, yeah.

MR. GEORGELIS: If you want him to answer questions about leak investigations or leak surveys, he's going to answer differently. If you want to know leak surveys, then explain to him how leak surveys -- what he follows.

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. Can you tell us now about your leak survey?

A. A leak survey is you go out with a crew, three men usually. We put -- there's a listening device, like a -- sort of

like a computer type and headphones and a probe bar, a metal bar looks like a T. You make contact with the metal of the water main and you apply a component, an electrical component on top of it, the metal. And through the computer system it reads off if there's any traveling noise of leaks happening within that water main, which is an electronic device.

Q. What prompts the leak surveys?

A. I'm sorry?

Q. What prompts, what leads you to conduct leak surveys?

A. What?

MS. ANDERSON: Why would you start -- why would do it?

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. Why do you have to start a leak survey?

A. Well, if it's -- well, you do leak surveys to, just to -- well, it's up to the yard. I mean, you know, they give you work, you know.

MS. ANDERSON: On a schedule?

MR. GEORGELIS: Eric, let me -- so if I could, it's programmatic leak survey ranking. Manhattan, I think, all of Manhattan or either upper Manhattan is on a 9-month schedule. When the supervisor comes in, he'll be able to tell you what schedule is Manhattan. It's programmatic work that you would do them on a site. And then they'll be given, the crew will be given a map and this is the area you've got to go out today to perform a survey.

MR. EMEABA: Okay.

MR. GEORGELIS: Is that -- does that describe it?

MR. ACOSTA: That's -- yeah, I couldn't put it any better than that. Yeah. Thank you.

MR. GEORGELIS: Sure.

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. Can you remember conducting a leak survey on Park Avenue?

A. Not really, no, sir.

Q. Have you ever been there for any work?

A. I mean, I've been on Park Avenue but not at any work around that area, no.

Q. Okay, thank you for --

A. You've very welcome.

MR. STOLICKY: Hi, this is Chris Stolicky.

MR. ACOSTA: How you doing?

MR. STOLICKY: Another day in paradise.

BY MR. STOLICKY:

Q. You had mentioned that when you're using this acoustical device that you're listening for the noise count. Then you try to focus on the highest reading or the highest indication --

A. Okay, what are you talking about? You talking about a leak or my survey?

Q. Well, when you're using the device to find a leak --

MR. CHHATRE: The survey.

BY MR. STOLICKY:

Q. The survey.

MR. GEORGELIS: So when you do a leak service --

MR. ACOSTA: A leak service.

BY MR. STOLICKY:

Q. You listen for the highest indication?

A. Yes.

Q. Once you guys pinpoint that location and do a repair, do you go back and survey again, listen for any others?

MR. GEORGELIS: Just to specify, when they go out to do a leak survey, the initial leak survey, they're doing a big area. All they're going out is to see if they hear a noise. If they hear a noise in a particular street, they'll make a note that there's a noise. That's all they do when they go out there.

Right? Correct?

MR. ACOSTA: That is correct, yes.

MR. GEORGELIS: And then what they would do is if they indicate that on this block you had a noise, that would trigger a further investigation with another crew to come back and do a more in-depth leak detection to try to pinpoint what could be leaking on the block. When they go and do the initial survey it's just to get a noise on the water main to give an indication of any potential leaks on the water main.

So, Eric -- and if I can ask another. Do you ever participate in that second round of investigation or just the

initial leaks survey?

MR. ACOSTA: In just the leak survey. Yeah, the second round, just like to you say, goes -- if it needs further, it goes further.

MR. CHHATRE: Do we have anybody on our list that belongs to that second group?

MR. GEORGELIS: Does John Lobello perform that --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, John Lobello.

MR. GEORGELIS: He'll be here.

MR. NICHOLSON: At 1:00.

BY MR. STOLICKY:

Q. So, is there a defined process where the you will back out to do a return survey once a repair is made, or do you just do it every --

MR. GEORGELIS: We can ask his supervisor. That's -- I get what you're asking him. That's (indiscernible) his supervisor.

MR. STOLICKY: Okay, thanks.

MR. ACOSTA: You're welcome.

MR. CHHATRE: Any more questions?

BY MR. GEORGELIS:

Q. So Eric, I just want to clarify a little bit. So you didn't get -- go on Park Avenue or not, but have you performed leak service in upper Manhattan?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. All right. So you remember every street you were on?
A. No. I'm not going to remember every street.
Q. But when you do perform the surveys, you're given like a map?
A. You get a zone, yes.
Q. And when you get that zone, do you check every street in that zone?
A. You check the -- as per as the map, yeah.
Q. So it's not like you pick one street here or one street there?
A. No, no, no, you do the zone.
Q. You check every street that's on that map?
A. That is correct.
Q. Okay.
MR. CHHATRE: Len?
BY MR. SINGH:
Q. Yeah, Eric -- good morning again.
A. Good morning.
Q. A couple quick questions. So 21 years in DEP, 16 years in investigation. And I think we talked this morning, we might have crossed paths 20 years ago.
A. Probably, yeah.
Q. A couple of questions around training. You mentioned your formal -- is there a formal training that you got at the DEP throughout your career as you progressed from one position to the

next?

A. It's on-the-job training.

Q. On the job but nothing formal?

A. Right. No, it was on the job.

Q. All right. Procedures were mentioned before and you said a lot of it is inherent. Anything at all in written documentation that tells you how to do your job?

A. No. Like I said, everything is just -- you pick up as you go along.

Q. Right. So I remember my days when I interacted with the Water Department the little telephone thing you put on there.

A. Yeah, the telephone, the aquaphone.

Q. Or you use a flashlight, right?

A. Well, yeah, guys got different tactics how they do their jobs.

Q. Right. So that's some of the instinctive things that you're taught along the way?

A. Yes. That is correct.

Q. And, again, at some point they went to some sort of electronic listening device, and those have been improved. Any training on those devices on how to use them?

A. I mean, it's a brief, you know, training.

Q. Are they required to be calibrated so often?

A. Well, it's done a lot.

Q. Yeah. Do you calibrate in the office or does it go out

to a shop somewhere to be calibrated?

A. What do you mean by calibrated? I mean --

Q. So after so many -- like your car. Let's say --

MS. ANDERSON: One calibration a turn.

BY MR. SINGH:

Q. Calibration is like you get something brand new and it's set to a certain standard. After so many use you have to take it back to re-tune it to make sure it's still working.

A. Oh, I don't know. I don't know that. I don't know. I mean, you check the -- if some wire, if your wire's displaced and it's defective, you don't use it.

Q. Right. Okay.

A. You know, or if the battery's not charging, something in that nature. But as far as them returning equipment and it could be new, you know, I don't really -- can't answer that because I don't know.

Q. I'm going to ask you the same question I asked Domenic before. Hearing is an important, right, part of this process?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. As part of your job do you get your hearing checked?

A. Yes. The department has an outside agency that comes in and they do yearly tests for our employees.

Q. How often?

A. Maybe like -- I think maybe once a year it is, maybe once or twice, something like that.

Q. Okay. And you spent most of your career, spent all of it in Manhattan, or do you sound in all the other boroughs?

A. I spent all my career in Manhattan.

Q. Okay. Do you think it's simple or difficult, if you had to put a scale on it, to detecting water sound or that unique sound in Manhattan?

A. A unique sound? Well, I mean, like I say, you go with the highest sound, you know.

Q. Right. Any other sounds that could camouflage a water main leak or (indiscernible)?

A. In some instance there is.

Q. Such as?

A. Certain -- running equipment, which there's a lot of it, some underground utilities, steam, gas, maybe. I don't know.

Q. Subways?

A. Subways, a lot. You're going to get a lot of that, sure.

Q. Okay, that's all I have. Thank you. Thanks.

MR. SINGH: Thank.

MR. CHHATRE: Chris?

BY MR. GEORGELIS:

Q. Eric?

A. Yes.

Q. What shift do you work?

A. I'm on the midnight, 12 to 8.

Q. So, when you're performing leak surveys, what shift is that usually performed on?

A. It's usually a lot on the 12 to 8, midnight -- overnight.

Q. Why is that?

A. Less traffic. That's one of the safeties that they performing, because during the day just so much traffic to get around, and it's hard to get around some of these water mains that's a car being parked over it.

Q. So I wanted to walk through a leak survey. So you're going out tonight to perform a leak service.

A. Okay. You go out with a three-man crew. One blocks traffic; the other two guys are walking the -- whatever the map indicates what to work on.

Q. Okay.

A. Let's say, for an example, you go up Lexington Avenue from such-and-such. You know, you do both sides; going up Lexington Avenue, coming back down. There's a zone.

Q. Okay.

A. There's a zone that you can walk.

Q. So Domenic mentioned that he's the prober.

A. He's the prober.

Q. What is that?

A. That he puts the metal rod making contact with the water main itself.

Q. Okay. And then what's the other person doing?

A. And the other person, what he does, he puts the electronic component on the metal rod then once he's made contact with the water main. And that electronic component would pick up if there's any noise within that range.

Q. Have you ever done the electronic component --

A. I -- maybe once or twice.

Q. Okay. And generally what do you -- do they put headphones on?

A. There's a headphone component that covers -- it's like the regular headphones where you use your music. It covers both side of their ear. And they -- the way I seen it, they concentrate on the noise and that if they pick up something, they note it down, and if not, just, you know, move on.

Q. So if they hear any noise they note it down or specific noises?

A. If they hear noise.

Q. Just if they hear noise --

A. If they hear noise --

Q -- they note it down?

A. Yeah, within that range, yes.

Q. And so if they note that they heard noise, what does that trigger?

A. That means there's something leaking or something may be broken that's in that range.

Q. So -- but does that trigger have follow up response?

A. It does trigger a -- yeah, that's when Lobello comes in and he follows up.

Q. Okay.

MR. SINGH: Just a follow-up question before I forget.

MR. GEORGELIS: Yes.

MR. CHHATRE: Go ahead.

MR. SINGH: Do we know when was the last leak survey done on that Park Avenue between 116 and 117?

MR. GEORGELIS: Yes.

MR. SINGH: And was that documentation --

MR. CHHATRE: Yes. You have --

MR. SINGH: -- (indiscernible) report? It's in that document? Okay. I just wasn't sure. Is that the March 5th?

MR. CHHATRE: Do you have any questions?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm all set.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Thank you so much for coming helping us out.

MR. ACOSTA: Oh, okay. Okay. All right.

MR. CHHATRE: Off the record.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION PIPELINE LEAK AND MULTISTORY STRUCTURE EXPLOSION IN HARLEM, NEW YORK MARCH 12, 2014 Interview of Eric Acosta
DOCKET NUMBER:	DCA-14-MP-002
PLACE:	New York, New York
DATE:	August 5, 2014

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.

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Linda L. Brown
Transcriber