

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION PIPELINE

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LEAK AND MULTISTORY STRUCTURE

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EXPLOSION IN HARLEM, NEW YORK

*

MARCH 12, 2014

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Interview of: MICHAEL PANARESE

Consolidated Edison
 4 Irving Place
 New York, New York

Tuesday,
 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
(Party Representative)

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)

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1 I N T E R V I E W

MR. CHHATRE: Good afternoon. Today is Tuesday, August 5th, 2014. We are currently in Con Edison's facility located at 4 Irving Place, New York, and we are meeting regarding the investigation of natural gas distribution pipeline leak and multi-story explosion that occurred on March 12, 2014, in Harlem, New York.

8 My name is Ravi Chhatre. I'm with the National
9 Transportation Safety Board located in Washington, D.C., and I'm
10 Investigator-in-charge of this accident. The NTSB investigation
11 number for the accident is DCA-14-MP-002.

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

18 Also I'd like to inform Mr. Michael -- Panarese?

19 MR. PANARESE: Yes.

20 MR. CHHATRE: That you are permitted to have one other
21 person present with you during the interview. This is a person of
22 your choice: your supervisor, friend, family member or, if you
23 choose, no one at all.

24 Please state for the record your full name, spelling of
25 your name, organization you work for, your title, business contact

1 information such as your mailing address, and whom you have chosen
2 to be present with you during your interview.

3 MR. PANARESE: Okay. My name is Michael Panarese, P-a-
4 n-a-r-e-s-e. I'm a supervisor with the New York City Department
5 of Transportation. I work out of [REDACTED] My
6 cell number is [REDACTED]

7 MR. CHHATRE: And is that a work phone number?

8 MR. PANARESE: [REDACTED]

9 MR. CHHATRE: No, that cell phone is a private number
10 or --

11 MR. PANARESE: No, it's a city cell. It's [REDACTED],
12 I believe, is the office number.

13 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. And whom have you chosen to be with
14 you?

15 MR. PANARESE: I have a union rep, a union lawyer from
16 DC37.

17 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Now, I'd like to go around the room
18 and have each person introduce themselves to you.

19 MR. PANARESE: Okay.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Please state your name, title,
21 organization that you represent, and your business contact
22 information. Starting from my right.

23 MR. NICHOLSON: Matthew Nicholson, Investigator NTSB.
24 Spelled M-a-t-t-h-e-w, N-i-c-h-o-l-s-o-n. E-mail is

25 [REDACTED]

1 MR. EMEABA: Kalu Kelly Emeaba, K-a-l-u, K-e-l-l-y, E-m-
2 e-a-b-a. I'm an investigator with NTSB. E-mail address

3 [REDACTED]

4 MR. McCARTON: My name is Frank McCarton. It's M-c-C-a-
5 r-t-o-n; [REDACTED]. I'm Deputy Commissioner in the
6 Office of Emergency Management and I'm also the New York City rep
7 on the NTSB investigation, party rep.

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

13 MR. SINGH: Leonard Singh, L-e-o-n-a-r-d, S-i-n-g-h,
14 Chief Engineer of Gas Distribution, Con Edison. The NTSB party
15 representative representing Con Edison on this team. It's

16 [REDACTED]

17 MR. STOLICKY: Chris Stolicky. That's S-t-o-l-i-c-k-y.
18 I'm the New York State party rep in this investigation. I work
19 for the New York State Department of Public Service. E-mail
20 address is [REDACTED]

21 MR. CHHATRE: Thanks.

22 INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL PANARESE

23 BY MR. CHHATRE:

24 Q. Mr. Panarese, for the record, can you tell us some
25 background information, like your formal/informal training, your

1 work with the city DOT?

2 A. Well, I've been with the Department of Transportation
3 for 26 years. I started out as a laborer and I worked my way up.

4 Q. Okay. And what are your current -- what is your current
5 title?

6 A. My current title is supervisor, highway repairer.

7 Q. And with that position what are your responsibilities?

8 A. Well, I take care of all the paperwork, gang sheets. I
9 assign work, and if they have any work -- if the central or my
10 boss -- if the central office or my boss gives me work, I go do
11 it.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I assign it.

14 Q. You assign it. And whom do you assign the work to?

15 A. To the crews.

16 Q. To the crews. And what kind of work do you assign them?

17 A. It depends. It's either hummocks, potholes, sometimes
18 cave-ins. We don't do many of them anymore.

19 Q. Okay. And how do you define these terms? What is --
20 what are the different things? What is a pothole? What is a
21 cave-in?

22 A. Well, a pothole would be -- as you saw this winter,
23 there were holes all over the city. You couldn't pass any of
24 them. Those are potholes. And we used to do the Con Ed steam
25 work.

1 Q. Say that again.

2 A. We used to do the Con Ed steam hummocks.

3 Q. Okay. What is that?

4 A. That's when the -- you know, you see the steam coming
5 out of the manholes and when traffic hits it the asphalt gets soft
6 and as traffic stops on it, it just pushes it up. And, you know,
7 you've seen the bumps in the streets; that's what we used to cut
8 out. But Con Ed now does their own work, so --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. You know, we -- we'll do whatever, like any emergency's
11 come up; push-ups at bus stops, we'll take out. That type of
12 thing.

13 Q. And how do you know where to send your crews?

14 A. Well, somebody will go out and check -- usually HIQA,
15 the Quality Assurance Division of DOT, they'll find stuff for us
16 to do, like failed plumbers cuts, push-ups, whatever they say.

17 Q. Okay. And how does that information come to you?

18 A. I get it from their boss, Vinnie Maniscalco. He's in
19 charge of HIQA.

20 Q. But, I mean, how does the information come to you? Is
21 it through e-mail, regular mail or a call --

22 A. He'll e-mail it to me or he'll call me, or -- he'll tell
23 me he has work for me. I go pick it up.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Usually there's a call report.

1 Q. Okay. And how do you get that report?

2 A. I pick it up from him.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Or he'll e-mail it now. It depends.

5 Q. And do you have crews 24/7 or --

6 A. On weekends we're 24/7. During the week we're 3-12.

7 Q. You said 3-12?

8 A. 3 to 12.

9 Q. 3 to 12, okay.

10 A. Right.

11 Q. Okay. In the afternoon to midnight, that's the only

12 shift?

13 A. Yeah.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Those are your crews?

15 MR. PANARESE: Yes, those are my crews.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There are other crews that are on

17 during the day shift.

18 MR. PANARESE: Yeah. During -- the boroughs work during

19 the day, now and if they're doing special sometimes --

20 BY MR. CHHATRE:

21 Q. So you are the supervisor of only the night crew?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Our unit is the JETs.

25 Q. Okay. Now, and what happens -- can the crew do their

1 work on their own if they see a problem on the street? Are they
2 allowed to do that?

3 A. No, it's usually assigned to them. I'll go out --
4 sometimes I'm driving around and I'll see some bad push-ups at a
5 bus stop with trip conditions; we'll take it out. Or the radio
6 room will call us. Like, the radio room might call me and say,
7 listen, a woman fell at so and so place. I would go up and look
8 at it, and if it's a bad trip condition, we'll go up -- I'll set
9 it up to repair it the next day or however we do it.

10 Q. Okay. And as you know, we are investigating this
11 incident that happened on Park Avenue. Do you recall sending
12 anybody, any of your crew to repair -- do any repair work on Park
13 Avenue prior to the accident?

14 A. Well, my crew was patrolling in that area. They were
15 having a pothole blitz that day. Manhattan had crews working and
16 that was -- that area no one was working, so that's where I sent
17 my crew. I gave them -- you know, 125th Street to 96th Street,
18 river to river, just patrol, because there were potholes all over
19 the place.

20 Q. Okay. So what happens when they do work like that, do
21 they report to you and the it gets marked someplace or --

22 A. No, they put it in their -- they do the worksheet.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What day was that that they were
24 doing this?

25 MR. PANARESE: That was 3/9 on the -- 3/9/14.

1 BY MR. CHHATRE:

2 Q. And do you have that document with you?

3 A. Yes, I do. That's the front of the sheet, then you have
4 the back and the trip sheet.

5 Q. This is a --

6 A. That's all the work he did that day.

7 Q. Okay. We were told somewhere on the sheet here there
8 should be dimensions given. I'm looking for those.

9 A. If there's dimensions, it'll be -- he'll write it down.

10 MR. SINGH: It's on this page.

11 MR. PANARESE: That's his work for the day.

12 MR. NICHOLSON: Where did he write it?

13 MR. PANARESE: Everything was a pick-up.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The far right column.

16 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, I see it. Yeah, thank you.

17 MR. PANARESE: Nothing was assigned. And I think this
18 is the one we're talking about.

19 MR. NICHOLSON: Can I see it? Right there -- 16th, this
20 guy?

21 MR. PANARESE: Yeah, 16th.

22 (Simultaneous conversation.)

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The one inside, they're not
24 (indiscernible).

25 MR. PANARESE: This says you put pothole and there's the

1 dimension.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh, okay. Yeah.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me one second.

4 MR. NICHOLSON: Oh. Well, Ravi stepped out.

5 Kelly, do you want to go ahead?

6 BY MR. EMEABA:

7 Q. So what dimensions were written at the --

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you want to pass this around?

9 MR. NICHOLSON: Well, we've seen the dimensions here, 28

10 by --

11 MR. EMEABA: 28?

12 MR. NICHOLSON: -- by 120.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: .55?

14 MR. PANARESE: His dimensions are 18 by 14 by 1½.

15 MR. EMEABA: 18 by 14 by 1½?

16 MR. PANARESE: Right. Wear and tear.

17 MR. CHHATRE: Is this our copy we can keep or can we

18 make a copy?

19 MR. PANARESE: You can keep that one.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This is the same as that?

22 MR. PANARESE: Yeah, these are the originals.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. I've gotcha.

24 MR. CHHATRE: For the record, the copy for the

25 dimensions for your work on 3/19.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Read those dimensions again.

2 MR. PANARESE: 18 by 14 by 1½.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And 1½ is inches -- feet?

4 MR. PANARESE: Inches.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

6 MR. PANARESE: Well, 18 feet by 14 feet by 1½ inches.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 1½, okay.

8 MR. EMEABA: Okay. Not 1½ --

9 MR. PANARESE: No, it was small -- it was depressed.

10 MR. EMEABA: Okay.

11 BY MR. CHHATRE:

12 Q. Do you recall if you had sent the crew to the same
13 location in the recent past, like, past few years?

14 A. Well, they said there was another job we did there on
15 9/6/13, but they happened to be working with Special Events.
16 Special Events is a crew, they work with -- you know, if they have
17 street fairs, parades.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Like the Macy's Day Parade, they'll go out and inspect
20 the area if there's anything that needs to be repaired or there's
21 something dangerous there to fill in. And I think they were there
22 -- let's see -- they were there that day too, 1646 Park Avenue;
23 same thing, depression.

24 Q. Same location?

25 A. Um-hum.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you want to see that one?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, sure.

3 MR. CHHATRE: It is 15 feet by 9 feet by 2 inches.

4 MR. NICHOLSON: Do we have copies of this, because the
5 copy I have does not match? We need to re-request.

6 Do you have these, Lenny?

7 MR. SINGH: Which one is that? I have --

8 MR. NICHOLSON: Do you have these sheets?

9 MR. SINGH: I have this one. I don't have the one from
10 the --

11 MR. PANARESE: You probably got -- you have the latest.

12 MR. SINGH: I have the 2014. I have the latest one. I
13 don't have the 2013 one.

14 MR. PANARESE: All right.

15 MR. SINGH: I have the electronic version. That's the
16 same.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Lenny, where did you get them
18 from?

19 MR. SINGH: From Frank. That's part of the package we
20 got.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right. So I was just asking
22 where -- but then you guys have something different?

23 MR. NICHOLSON: It's just truncated, it looks like.
24 It's not formatted correctly.

25 MR. CHHATRE: A little bit is cut off.

1 MR. NICHOLSON: I need to check that. Are these copies
2 we can keep or can you scan --

3 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah, these we can keep?

4 MR. PANARESE: Yeah, you can keep those.

5 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think we need to keep those.

7 MR. CHHATRE: So on 9/13 we have one.

8 MR. NICHOLSON: Same thing?

9 MR. CHHATRE: Yeah, same location.

10 MR. PANARESE: If you look over all the way to the left,
11 you'll see SE, that's Special Events.

12 MR. EMEABA: Special Event.

13 BY MR. CHHATRE:

14 Q. Where do we see that?

15 A. All the way over to where it says "Defect Number," all
16 the way over to the left. Yeah, all the way over. Do you see at
17 the top?

18 Q. Oh, Special Events, okay.

19 A. SE, you see SE underneath that.

20 Q. Okay, okay. So underneath -- so all these are Special
21 Events?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And Special Events meaning after the event or before the
24 event?

25 A. Before.

1 Q. Before the event, okay.

2 MR. NICHOLSON: What was the event? Do we know?

3 MR. PANARESE: 9/6, I don't know. It could be anything.

4 MR. EMEABA: Were there a event (indiscernible).

5 MR. PANARESE: It could have been a parade. It could
6 have been a street fair. It could have been anything. Like now
7 you've got Summer Streets going on.

8 MR. McCARTON: I can -- if you need that I can -- why
9 the reasons on the 6th.

10 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. That would be great.

11 MR. McCARTON: I can look that up. So just remind me
12 then.

13 MR. CHHATRE: Okay, I will. And, for the record, Frank
14 has to leave for some emergencies, so --

15 MR. PANARESE: I understand, OEM. Say hello to [REDACTED].

16 MR. MCCARTON: Flash (ph.)?

17 MR. PANARESE: Yeah.

18 MR. MCCARTON: I will.

19 BY MR. CHHATRE:

20 Q. Anything prior to 9/13 on Park Avenue?

21 A. Not that I have. No, I don't know if the borough went
22 there or -- I only could tell you what I got.

23 Q. Okay. So only two incidences 9/13 and --

24 A. Yeah. For us, the JETs unit.

25 Q. Right. Now, if the morning crew went there, would you

1 know that or you would not know that?

2 A. I wouldn't know that.

3 Q. You would not know that?

4 A. I couldn't tell you, no.

5 Q. So would the system have it someplace?

6 A. The system might have it, yeah, should have it.

7 Q. Okay. And what is that system?

8 A. They call it the FITS system.

9 Q. FITS?

10 A. FITS, FRITS, whatever you call it.

11 MR. SINGH: F-I-T-S.

12 MR. CHHATRE: F-I-T-S, okay.

13 MR. PANARESE: They should have it.

14 BY MR. CHHATRE:

15 Q. And who maintains that system?

16 A. I believe Manhattan, the borough itself. They put their
17 own stuff in.

18 Q. Okay. And do you have a procedure for doing this repair
19 like pothole and depression and cave-ins, how the repairs should
20 be made?

21 A. Well, a cave-in is totally different. A cave-in is down
22 -- that's the street failed, it collapsed. You might have it 2
23 feet, 3 feet deep.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. That's the whole -- that has to be broken out,

1 backfilled, and compacted.

2 Q. And have you done any of that kind of work on Park
3 Avenue in the past?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Not recently. I haven't done cave-ins in a while.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Well, I should -- well, we did one downtown, but --

9 Q. Okay. And what causes a cave-in?

10 A. Could be a number of things. It could be a leak, a
11 water leak in the street. It could be up the block the water's
12 washing down the street. Or a plumber or whoever did work there,
13 they didn't compact it good and the cut failed.

14 Q. Say that again.

15 A. A contractor or plumber, whoever worked there, they
16 didn't compact it good and the street fell.

17 Q. Okay. You have the water, groundwater moving in?

18 A. Well, it could be a water leak too on the block. Who
19 knows how long it's been there. A building service; it could be
20 anything.

21 Q. Okay. And what causes the depressions on the street; do
22 you know?

23 A. Over time, you know, it -- same thing, the street
24 settles.

25 Q. Settlement. Is there groundwater in the area, in the

1 Park Avenue area that you know of?

2 A. I don't know.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So I couldn't tell you.

5 Q. If the repairs are all occurring at the same location
6 all the time -- frequently, not all the time -- do you do -- take
7 any action or you just go ahead and keep fixing it?

8 A. Well, it -- if it's really bad. If we go there and it's
9 down like a foot, now you know there's something wrong. I'll call
10 the radio room. They'll call our radio room -- they'll call the
11 radio room and tell them there's a large depression here, a sink
12 hole, refer it to HIQA; have them come and inspect it.

13 Q. Okay. And how do you decide how many people to send on
14 a particular job?

15 A. Well, usually a crew is, what, four or five people?

16 Q. Four people. Okay.

17 MR. CHHATRE: That's all I have. Thank you so much.
18 Kelly?

19 BY MR. EMEABA:

20 Q. I don't really have much, but I can just ask you this
21 question. From what you said, except on the condition you have or
22 you observe a sinkhole of up to maybe a foot down before you can
23 call the HIQA people?

24 A. Well, a foot -- you know, it depends. If it's like
25 really bad --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I would say a foot.

3 Q. Okay. But if it's, say, a 6-inch?

4 A. Six inches, even then I would call up -- you know, my
5 guys know to call central and notify them, say have HIQA come and
6 look at it.

7 Q. Okay. But we know -- we talked about depression. Okay,
8 depression could come -- could be the concave nature, correct --

9 A. Right.

10 Q. -- you're looking at? Then if it did not really break
11 through as giving you a measurable 6-inch or 1 foot, but then how
12 deep would it be in terms of that concave will you think it could
13 -- could it raise an eyebrow or call for quick attention?

14 A. Well, I mean, my thing would be if I saw it like 6
15 inches I would fill it so nobody trips, and then I would notify
16 the central. I would notify the radio room to have an inspector
17 go there and check it for a possible cave-in.

18 Q. Okay. For your crew or yourself, you observe a concave
19 on a roadway, which had been paved before up to 12 -- let's say 12
20 feet by 12 feet, and then you observe it. What should you -- what
21 do you think is the right decision to make: to pave over it or to
22 find out why there was a pavement in that same spot you wanted
23 to --

24 A. Again, I would call the radio room and tell them -- I
25 would make it safe so nobody falls. And, again, I could call the

1 radio room and tell them send an inspector there for possible
2 cave-in. It could be a number of reasons why it sinks down.

3 Q. Okay. So you will not, you know, ordinarily pave over
4 the previous pave that is up to 12 feet by 12 feet?

5 A. If it's dangerous, yeah, I would pave -- I would cover
6 it. I would put something there so nobody trips. If it's broken
7 through, I would put a barricade there.

8 Q. Okay. No, I'm just looking at the cave-in.

9 A. It depends on the area. If it's a place where there's
10 kids playing in the street, yeah, I would pave it and I would put
11 something in it and just notify the central office and tell them
12 it's a bad condition, send HIQA there right away.

13 Q. Okay. Because in this case there was --

14 A. In this case, it was like, what, an inch and a half.
15 That's nothing.

16 Q. But there was a previous patch of that 12 by 12 feet
17 that was then patched over again.

18 A. Yeah, but it probably wasn't bad. I mean, you know, if
19 it's not -- I used to -- when I did them, if they were bad, I
20 would call them in. I mean, I can't say there was anything wrong
21 there. It could be that it just settled. It could be a million
22 things.

23 Q. Okay. So at what point do you see it as being bad?

24 A. I said if it was down at least a foot.

25 Q. A foot?

1 A. Then I'd call -- I would call it in.

2 Q. Okay. Less than that then --

3 A. Then we know there's something going on under there.

4 Q. Okay. So a foot is the only parameter to determine
5 there is something going on?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. Less than a foot it means it still --

8 A. I mean, you know, it depends. If we've been there
9 before -- like I've been -- when I was on a gang, I used to go out
10 -- one day I was there and then two days later went back. There's
11 something wrong there, so you call the office.

12 Q. Okay. So if in a case your crew did not go there the
13 first time and that crew went there, that you do not know?

14 A. No, I don't know.

15 Q. You don't know, okay.

16 A. See, you've also got day crews that were working during
17 the day so I don't know what they do.

18 Q. Correct. So the decision to repave it is based on the
19 fact that your crew were not there the first time?

20 A. No, if we weren't there, I couldn't tell you. But if --
21 like I said, if it's an emergency -- usually we get a call from
22 the radio room and they'll tell us there's a sinkhole and we'll go
23 look at it.

24 Q. Correct.

25 A. And if it's bad, we'll make it safe, temporarily safe,

1 and we'll give it to HIQA.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Or tell them refer it to HIQA, have them go check it.

4 Q. Which is a planned work order when you call --

5 A. Yeah. Well, when we call it in they've got to give it
6 to them.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. They determine, you know, what it is.

9 Q. Yeah. But in a situation that is a pick-up, you are
10 driving by and you saw a depression, you did not get a call from
11 your --

12 A. If it's bad, we'll do it.

13 Q. You do it. Is that --

14 A. Again, if it's down a foot, I would call it in and say,
15 there's something going on here; have HIQA inspect it.

16 Q. Okay. So when you do a pick-up that is not up to 1 foot
17 depression, there may be 6 inches or 2 inches depression, you've
18 paved over it, you've done it where to make the road safe, fine.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Is there a procedure requiring you to still at least
21 call it in to let them know what you've done, what you observed.
22 that you did do the previous --

23 A. Again, it depends on the supervisor.

24 Q. It depends on the supervisor, okay.

25 A. But most of the time that it sinks down a little bit,

1 that's normal. You know, who knows -- you know, they could have
2 paved -- they could have milled and paved there a month before.
3 It could be anything.

4 Q. Okay. More or less, it depends on the supervisor if he
5 wants to report that?

6 A. Right. But, like I said, if they're bad, they know to
7 call it in.

8 Q. Okay. Because when the workers finish the work, they
9 report to their supervisor, correct?

10 A. Well, they just hand in the sheets.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I mean, they know -- they don't call me; they'll call
13 the radio room and tell them refer it to HIQA or whatever.

14 Q. Okay. And from you, your understanding of the system,
15 do the supervisor ask their workers -- you know, kind of they
16 follow up after the work to know more about what happened, other
17 than just keeping --

18 A. I don't know. Couldn't tell you.

19 MR. EMEABA: Okay. Thank you.

20 MR. CHHATRE: Chris.

21 BY MR. STOLICKY:

22 Q. This is Chris Stolickey from New York State. You made a
23 comment that you're not sure what the day crews work on because
24 you handle the night.

25 A. No, I don't. I know they have a pothole crew on during

1 the day, but -- and they got the paving at night, so -- I don't
2 know where they are.

3 Q. So, I guess, on -- you mentioned a little bit about this
4 and the previous person talked a little bit about this. How does
5 the DOT schedule work? I mean, do you have a centralized system
6 where something comes in -- a complaint from any number of sources
7 and do you work on that? Is there a loop where you close it out?
8 I mean, is there a tracking system?

9 A. Well, if I don't have any work for that day, I would go
10 into the system and I will pull work out of FITS, potholes -- you
11 have, you know, those DM numbers? Well, the --

12 Q. So when you say you don't have work for the day that
13 means someone didn't tell you to go fix something on the street
14 already?

15 A. Right. If I don't have no major work, I would, you
16 know, do potholes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. And we'll pull it out of FITS.

19 Q. And so --

20 A. And I'll assign them the work and then we'll do it.

21 Q. How does the FITS system work?

22 A. Well, you've got all -- it's -- you got DM numbers, and
23 you assign them to the crew, and you get a printout and you give
24 it to them. I don't think I have any printouts here. Oh, I
25 might.

1 Q. So they would go out and do the work?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And do they fill out any kind of paperwork that comes
4 back to you on that?

5 A. Same paperwork that we do there.

6 See, that's a FITS printout.

7 Q. Okay. That's good.

8 A. And they'll go do it and they'll write it on the back of
9 the gang sheet. Whatever's there is here. Sometimes they go
10 there and there's nothing there, or it's a low head. People call
11 in low manhole heads and they'll call them a hole.

12 Q. Okay. So once it gets back to you, what happens?

13 A. Well, the office -- my backup will close them out, put
14 them in the system what we found there. It's the same thing
15 that's here. Whatever's written there you put in the system.

16 Q. Okay. And so once it's back in the system and closed,
17 is there any record in there that that's visible to you or anyone
18 else or it just (indiscernible)?

19 A. It should be in there that it was closed out and how
20 many -- it gives you a history of the hole.

21 Q. Okay. So there is a history based on an address or a
22 location?

23 A. Yeah. A lot of them don't have addresses, they just
24 have the street, so -- it could be on 16th Street between 2nd and
25 3rd; it could be at the beginning of the block, the end of the

1 block. It could be anywhere.

2 Q. So it depends on how people put it into the system?

3 A. Right.

4 Q. There's not really a protocol for this address or --

5 A. Well, sometimes they have an address. This one happened
6 to have an address. Or, the supervisor -- you put the address in;
7 it's in front of this address.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But, yeah, that's what I know of the system. I really
10 don't know how the whole thing works, but -- you know.

11 MR. STOLICKY: No, that's fine. You have a lot of
12 knowledge and you're here helping us today with what you know.

13 That's all I have right now.

14 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Tasios, do you have any questions?
15 Len?

16 BY MR. SINGH:

17 Q. Yeah, just a couple quick questions. Mike or Michael?

18 A. Anything. Anything you want to call me.

19 Q. I want to call your right name.

20 A. Mike.

21 Q. Mike. Mike, do your crews take pictures before and
22 after?

23 A. No.

24 Q. No. You talked about multiple times on locations and
25 sometimes you see that you have a history. If you see it get

1 progressively worse, whether yourself or somebody maybe in the
2 back office, does somebody analyze that to see if there's any
3 further action?

4 A. I don't know. I only enter it and that's all --
5 whatever we do, or my backup man will enter it, and that's it.

6 MR. SINGH: Yeah. I think that's it for me.

7 MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

8 MR. NICHOLSON: I may have some follow-ups, Ravi.

9 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Go ahead.

10 BY MR. NICHOLSON:

11 Q. I just wanted to understand, what's HIQA? What is this
12 HIQA?

13 A. HIQA.

14 Q. HIQA, what is that?

15 A. Highway Inspection Quality Assurance.

16 Q. Okay. Is that a software system?

17 A. No, that's a unit. They go out.

18 Q. That's a group of people?

19 A. Right.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. They'll go out -- like plumbers cuts. They'll go out
22 and survey the street and if a plumber did a job there, because a
23 plumber's got a file, if it sinks down, they'll tell us to go
24 there and repair it, because the plumber has so many days to
25 repair it, something like that.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And if they don't repair it in a month, he'll say, here,
3 go get -- go do these jobs.

4 Q. Okay. And the FITS system is the software system that
5 gives -- where the work is entered for you?

6 A. For potholes, cuts, yeah, sidewalks.

7 Q. Does HIQA -- can they get into FITS?

8 A. I think they can. I don't know.

9 Q. Okay. And then earlier you mentioned you're part of the
10 JETs unit and I heard you say something about Manhattan, the
11 borough puts in its own work. How many units are there?

12 A. Well, we're night emergency.

13 Q. Yeah, right.

14 A. What we were set up for was to do steam hummocks for Con
15 Ed. And it's called -- what was the -- Jolt-Elimination Team for
16 smoother streets.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. That's what we are. But we used to do the Con Ed
19 push-ups. Because I think they had -- I don't know how it worked,
20 but they had so many days to fix it. If they didn't, we did it,
21 and the city back charged Con Ed.

22 Q. Okay. All right.

23 A. But Con Ed now has their own contractors and most of
24 their steam lines are repaired.

25 Q. Okay. But you say you're the JETs unit. Is there

1 another unit?

2 A. No, that's it.

3 Q. Okay. It's only you?

4 A. It's JETs night emergency.

5 Q. Oh, JETs night emergency, okay.

6 A. Right. Since we're not doing that, then we'll do
7 potholes.

8 Q. But then I heard you say something about Manhattan puts
9 in its own work?

10 A. Manhattan, if during the day they got their own crews,
11 they got their own office people that do their work.

12 Q. And they'll put their work in FITS as well?

13 A. They'll put their own work in.

14 Q. So it all goes into FITS?

15 A. Yes.

16 MR. NICHOLSON: Okay. All right. That's all I've got.
17 Thanks.

18 MR. PANARESE: I mean, I don't know how the system works
19 100 percent. I'm only giving you the way it was explained to me,
20 so --

21 MR. NICHOLSON: I understand. Thank you.

22 MR. PANARESE: I don't know.

23 BY MR. CHHATRE:

24 Q. A couple of follow-up questions. You said if you have
25 no work, then you just pull out the pothole --

1 A. I'll go -- yeah.

2 Q. -- potholes. So potholes is kind of on a low priority
3 that you don't have a deadline to finish those before a certain
4 time?

5 A. I'm not sure.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. But, like I said, if -- I can't keep a crew sitting in
8 the yard getting paid. I got to send them out to do something.

9 Q. Yeah. Now, do you have a protocol as to what the
10 procedure is how much asphalt that you are putting on to repair
11 the -- to do a repair job?

12 A. No. If I go out and do a cut, a street cut, when we
13 pull it out, I'll say, okay, we need 10 tons or whatever. I
14 figure it out and that's what we order.

15 Q. Okay. So whatever thickness it may be, it can be maybe 3
16 inches, 4 inches?

17 A. Sure.

18 Q. And are you ever involved in doing a new road
19 completely, like -- I'm just trying to figure out how much of an
20 asphalt thickness typically will be on a new road?

21 A. Usually 6 inches.

22 Q. Six inches?

23 A. Sometimes 6, sometimes 3. It depends on the street.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I mean, sometimes you dig down, you've got an inch,

1 you're like -- it's all concrete under there.

2 Q. Okay. But nothing more than 6 inches typically?

3 A. No, no, not all the time. Sometimes you dig, you'll
4 find it even deeper in certain areas -- not the whole thing, but
5 it's deep here, it's -- somebody might have made a repair and put
6 concrete in and it's lower at that one spot. But we just break it
7 open. We don't really go below concrete. We just go to the
8 concrete and just pave it again.

9 Q. Okay. So that's your limit then?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. You go as deep as concrete?

12 A. Right. And we do small cuts. We don't do major
13 resurfacing.

14 Q. Okay. And typically how deep is the concrete?

15 A. I think in Manhattan -- I'm not sure -- 13 inches, 12
16 inches.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I'm not 100 percent sure.

19 Q. No, I mean, I'm just looking for a ballpark. I'm not
20 looking for 100 percent. As long as -- like 12, 13 inches would
21 be --

22 A. I'd say 12 inches.

23 Q. Below is -- okay. That's all I have. Thank you so
24 much. I appreciate it.

25 MR. CHHATRE: Kelly?

1 MR. EMEABA: I'm good.

2 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Tasios?

3 BY MR. GEORGELIS:

4 Q. So just -- Mike, just so everyone's clear because they
5 keep asking questions. During the day each borough has street
6 maintenance?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And they're the day guys. And then they're the relief.
9 They come in to --

10 A. It's like your guys. You've got your night sewer guys
11 working. That's what we do.

12 MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Lenny?

13 MR. SINGH: I'm good. Thank you.

14 MR. CHHATRE: Chris?

15 MR. STOLICKY: I'm good.

16 MR. CHHATRE: Well, in that case, thank you so much for
17 coming.

18 MR. PANARESE: Okay.

19 MR. CHHATRE: Off the record.

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

21

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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 Michael Panarese

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.

Cheryl Farner Donovan
Transcriber