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: MICHAEL SIMON

Con Edison
4 Irving Place
New York, New York

Monday,
August 4, 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 EMEABA 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)

ROBERT ALBANO, Esq.
(Representative on behalf of Mr. Simon)

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

MR. CHHATRE: Good afternoon. Today is Monday, August 4, 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 this 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 may transcribe it at a later date. Transcripts will be 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 like to inform Mr. Simon that you are permitted to have one other person present with you during the interview. This is a person 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, organization you work for and your title, business contact information such as business mailing address, and whom you have chosen to be present with you during your interview.

MR. SIMON: Okay. My name is Michael Simon, currently a chief construction inspector in the Brooklyn Public Improvement Department. My contact information is -- my e-mail address is [redacted]. My phone number -- a business phone number is [redacted]. Mailing address is 4 Irving Place, New York, New York, and zip code, I'm not sure. And I chose to bring Robert Albano with me today from Con Edison.

MR. CHHATRE: Thank you for that.

Now I'd like to go around the room and have each person introduce themselves. Please state your name, spelling of your name, title and organization that you represent, and your business contact information, starting from my right.

MR. NICHOLSON: Matthew Nicholson. I'm an investigator with the NTSB. That is spelled Matthew, M-a-t-t-h-e-w, N-i-c-h-o-l-s-o-n. My e-mail address is [redacted]

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

MR. McCARTON: My name's Frank McCarton, spelled M-c-C-a-r-t-o-n. I am in the Office of Emergency Management. I am the New York City party rep on the investigation with the NTSB. And my e-mail is[redacted]

MR. STOLICKY: Chris Stolicky. That's S-t-o-l-i-c-k-y. I am the New York party rep. I am the Utility Supervisor (Safety), New York State Department of Public Service. My e-mail

address is [redacted]

MR. SINGH: Leonard Singh, L-e-o-n-a-r-d, S-i-n-g-h, chief gas distribution engineer. NTSB party rep representing Con Edison on this case. E-mail contact is [redacted]

MR. ALBANO: Robert Albano, R-o-b-e-r-t, A-l-b-a-n-o. I'm accompanying Mr. Simon at his request.

MR. CHHATRE: Thank you.

INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL SIMON

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Mr. Simon, for the record, can you give us some background information about your formal training, informal training, and what your duties are?

A. As far as Con Edison or prior to Con Edison too?

Q. You can tell me all your background, but duties with Con Edison.

A. Okay. Background real quick is aeronautics. I was an airline pilot up until 2008 and then I came to work for Con Edison. I did work for the DOT as a fireman at an airport in New York State prior to that. I came to work for Con Edison in December of '08 right into the gas department in Manhattan. I was out at 28th Street in the new business section at the time and I was put in charge of new business installations gas main services for Con Edison, and I worked there up until May 31st, 2012. And then I transitioned over to Brooklyn Public Improvement as a chief construction inspector, where I'm currently still at.

Q. Okay. So with your current duties, what is it that you do?

A. Currently, I'm a chief construction inspector in the Borough of Brooklyn. We're in charge of the interference work that goes on in relation to the Con Edison system. When the city does work in an area, we're there to make sure the Con Ed system is protected, supported, maintained, and/or moved out of the way for the work that's being planned.

Q. And were your duties the same at the time of the accident on Park Avenue?

A. No. I was operating supervisor for the gas department at the -- oh, at the time of the accident? No, I was in -- I was a Brooklyn chief construction -- I was at this current position.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm sorry.

Q. And what about the 2011, when the replacement took place on Park Avenue?

A. I was operating supervisor.

Q. At that time?

A. Yes.

Q. And as an operating supervisor, what were your responsibilities?

A. Operating was to oversee the installation of gas mains, either with Con Edison crews or with the contractor crews in partnership with the construction management group as far as the

contractor crews go.

Q. Okay.

A. Installation of services and/or gas mains or both.

Q. Okay. So when you say oversee, what is it that you do in overseeing?

A. Basically, when a job is issued, go over the layout, make sure everything looks good. Bird-dog the location, make sure if there's buildings involved that we get into the buildings to make sure everybody is aware of what's going on. If there's going to be a gas cut-off or a bypass of their building in hand, which is almost every time. Set up the materials, set up the time frame so we're within the time frame for the encroachments if it's a main cut-out. Mainly, main cut-outs was the concern with my group -- well, the position I was in was mainly main cut-outs.

There was four supervisors in my yard from Manhattan and it was broken up per supervisor and who did what. I was given -- encroachments mainly was my concern. I did get services every once in a while. And it was to set up the job, make sure the material was there, make sure the contractors knew what was there. Make sure everything was ready to go at the time of the cut-out and there was no delays on anything. Make sure that there was no delays as far as another cut-out going on in the area so the main could be cut out, along those lines.

Q. So who were the supervisors overseeing the job for the service installation and main replacement on Park Avenue?

A. The main replacement was myself and I believe, if I can remember correctly, another individual, Bruce Jacob, for the main. The service installation was construction management.

Q. So for the 1642 where the service was being replaced?

A. Next door.

Q. Next door to ground zero building?

A. Yes.

Q. So you're saying you will be responsible only for the main and somebody else will be responsible for the service?

A. Well, we worked in partnership. So I was only there -- I had to be there for the main cut-out due to the kind of rules, the specs that the supervisor had to be on location when stoppers are thrown.

I arrived there for the, if I can remember correctly -- well, at all main cut-outs we arrive there for the pressure test, which starts in the beginning. And then if they don't cut the main out at that point, after a pressure test is done, then -- it's either a contractor or the Con Ed crew gets the main ready for installation and the existing main for cut out, ready for cut out. And then once they're ready to cut it out, you show back up on location and do the cut-out.

And, yeah, there could be at some times where we do the installation and service, CE crews, Con Edison crews, or the contractor does it and we set them up, make sure everything's good, and then once the main's installed, we either leave, if

there's another location we have to go to, or stay depending on our schedule.

Q. So on the main installation, I'm a little bit at a loss, so help me out. How do you get the job? What is the internal process?

A. Usually, it goes through engineering first. Well, it depends for -- so if you're talking about an encroachment on a main or it's someone --

Q. No, I'm talking --

A. -- because there's different ways.

Q. Again, my questions are really focused on Park Avenue --

A. Okay.

Q. -- installation, so --

A. So I believe that was an encroachment, if I remember right.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm not sure. Don't quote me on that.

Usually the encroachment would be found out by engineering, however they find it out, and then they would issue a layout and then the layout would get sent to my department at the time --

Q. Okay.

A. -- usually the planner, who would review it. And that's when the clock starts on getting it replaced.

Q. Okay.

A. And once that happens, we would go check out the location, make sure the contractor that was there that created the encroachment, if it was a contractor, was out of the area, or if there was any other issues: parking, steps, or maybe work going on, construction work. And then we would get it set up for a date for installation, but we would get the main ready. So that's where the contractors would come in and they would usually go there and dig it. Contractors did all the digging, the excavating. And then they would dig it all up and then they would prep the main, get it all ready for cut-out. I would go there, check it, make sure everything is good, get it ready for cut-out. And then when the day was set by either the contractors to ask us if we could do the cut-out, or we would tell them we want it done by this certain day due to the time frame. And then that's when the job would get scheduled to get cut out.

Q. And that's when you are required to be present?

A. Well, I'm there throughout as time goes on, from the start, maybe there before the excavation starts, during the excavation, during the installation, and maybe stop there after the backfill, when the backfill is being done.

Q. Okay. So for this particular job, it was given to the contractor, the main replacement and the service replacement?

A. Yeah, I believe so.

Q. It goes to Hallen Construction?

A. Yeah.

Q. How does -- so you are told that this is an encroachment job that you need to do. How do you get that information? Through computer, somebody tells you that?

A. It's physically handed to us, the layout, from our planner.

Q. From a planner?

A. Yeah.

Q. And how does that information get translated to in this case, Hallen Construction?

A. That would be through CM, however they do it. That's -- and I don't know that function.

Q. Through what?

A. Construction management.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm sorry.

Q. No, that's okay.

A. I apologize. Through construction management. I think there was a meeting, which I did attend sometimes, that they would pass the information along to the construction management group. But sometimes it was just done by the planner actually stopping at the construction manager's office and dropping off, this needs to get done. Or sometimes engineering would give it. There was multiple ways it was --

Q. So it didn't come from you? Somebody else will give the package to construction management?

A. Yes.
Q. And they are responsible for what?
A. As construction management? Same thing I'm responsible for.
Q. So they hire the contractor to do the job?
A. Um-hum. Well, I couldn't tell you their full role. I never worked for construction management.
Q. Okay. So you never contacted the -- Hallen Construction, is that correct?
A. Never contacted them? Well, we would be in contact as time goes on, yeah.
Q. Okay.
A. As to when --
Q. So who assigns jobs to construction -- engineering offers job --
A. Yes.
Q. -- to Hallen Construction?
A. Yes.
Q. So how and when you interact with Hallen Construction?
A. Oh, we would get a route sheet and they would tell us when they're going to be digging the job. Or we might -- through the planner, one level above me, would tell them we need to dig this job now, or you could get in there now, or there's an embargo coming up so you should get there, or there's going to be a building being worked on there, or a parade, or whatever the

circumstances are; they would be in contact with each other on when to get it done. And then I would receive a route sheet. Well, we would all receive a route sheet from that group as to when and where they would either start the excavation or doing the cut-out or --

Q. Okay. So when the Hallen Construction excavated this particular job location, did you visit the excavated site?

A. I don't remember. There was multiple supervisors that would cover everything.

Q. Okay.

A. I was just there that day of the cut-out.

Q. So you only went when they actually removed the cast iron pipe and replaced it with plastic pipe?

A. Not only. Maybe prior to that. I don't remember. I can't recall.

Q. Okay.

A. I might have been.

Q. So what do you recall about the job, if anything?

A. What I do recall on that job, there was one layout issued originally and then it was revised due to the new business installation being put in. So they actually extended the main cut-out, if I remember correctly, to include the new business installation.

And then I don't know if it was myself or another supervisor that went there and they extended the job a little bit

further. I think it was either due to the proximity to the service, so we wouldn't be too close to the installation of the service, or the condition of the pipe -- I can't tell you exactly -- of the cast iron, the existing cast iron, but they extended a little bit more. And then there was another revision issued, a revision 2, if I remember correctly, and that made the pipe -- the cut-out a little bit larger than it was originally. I think it went from the 30, to 40, to 60, maybe in and around there.

Q. Okay.

A. And then that's what I remember. And then I remember showing up on location for the pressure test, which was good, because if it wasn't good, we wouldn't have done the job. And then I remember being there -- vaguely remember being there for the cut-out. I mean, I think I was on a couple other jobs that day.

Q. Now, when you say pressure test, which pressure test you are talking about?

A. On the main.

Q. On the main.

A. No, not the pressure test, the --

MR. ALBANO: Flow test.

MR. SIMON: Flow test, I apologize. Yeah, the flow test, yeah.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Okay. But you said pressure test (indiscernible) --

A. Yeah. Well, the pressure test is later on that day.
Q. Okay.
A. When they cut it out.
Q. So when they cut it out, what kind of pressure test you are talking about now?
A. Well, if it's less than 100 feet, it would be a pressure test on the line pressure.
Q. Okay. And was a pressure test done on this --
A. Oh, yeah, of course. Yep.
Q. It was done?
A. Yeah. From what I recall, I mean, vaguely, yes. It wouldn't have gotten done if unless it wasn't done. If I was there, I made sure it was done, because I never went to nowhere without doing a pressure test. I made sure no job was done without a pressure test.
Q. Okay. So do you remember that you are present for the pressure test?
A. For pressure? It was line pressure. It was less than 100 feet. That's according to the spec for the company.
Q. Okay. So for line pressure, how do you pressure test? Just for the leaks with a gate on it or just the leak --
A. No, you would tie it in. You would gas in from one side, usually a stronger side, side closer to a tie. So if there was an intersection there, you would gas in from that side so you had more pressure -- you know, better -- so you wouldn't drop

anything on the other side. And then you would soap test everything.

Q. So the pressure test really is a soap test, not --

A. Yeah, it's pressure -- it's less than 100-foot pressure test, which is a soap test.

Q. Right, the soap test.

A. Yes.

Q. I thought you were talking about like pressurizing it to a certain pressure for a leak --

A. Well, technically, there is pressure on it. It's the line pressure.

Q. Line pressure.

A. Yeah.

Q. And do you recall anything about the service installation?

A. No, I don't.

Q. You don't?

A. No, I don't.

Q. Do you recall seeing the trench for the where the gas line pipe was removed?

A. I mean, I've seen a lot of trenches, but --

Q. No, but I'm -- like I said, I'm --

A. Yeah, I --

Q. -- particularly interested in that particular trench.

A. I vaguely remember. I mean, now, ever since the

incident happened, I started thinking. I do remember some of it. I mean, I remember there was -- I believe it was plastic on one side and then a cast iron tie on the other side.

Q. Okay.

A. On the north side was a cast iron tie and the south side was a plastic tie, if I remember right.

Q. Okay.

A. I remember the trench was a little -- I think it was a little messed up, if I recall, because of the excavator -- the prior work that was done. I think there was a water or something being done there? That's why the encroachment happened.

Q. When you say messed up, what do you mean? In what way?

A. Meaning it was larger, it wasn't a perfect trench. It was larger than we were used to and it might have been sheeted differently. It wasn't perfect, perfect sheeting trench.

Q. And does it have any backfill material or it was all native soil?

A. I don't remember that.

Q. You don't remember that.

A. I don't recall, no.

Q. Now, with your construction requirement or procedures, were you required to have backfill on the pipe?

A. Prior to the incident?

Q. No, once you replace the pipe with --

A. That would be -- construction management would take care

of that with the Hallen crews, if they did the backfill, which I assume they did.

Q. And that will be per your specification or --

A. That's per --

Q. -- per Hallen's --

A. Well, that's per, I guess, the company specification.

Q. Company specification.

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Do you recall seeing any water in the trench?

A. I don't recall that, no. Maybe. I don't know. I can't say that with 100 percent.

Q. Okay. Have you been on any other trenches on Park Avenue?

A. Any other trenches on Park Avenue? I'd have to go and review my notes. I'm -- maybe, probably I was. Park Avenue is pretty long.

Q. Okay. Do you remember how the street looked like when you went before the --

A. I remember there was an incline, a hill.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't remember if the hill was to the north or to the south. I know there was an incline on it, on the block.

Q. Did you see any recent work, road work being done on that street?

A. Well, there was work -- well, what I do remember is

going there to bird-dog the job, there was -- I believe there was a contractor doing work because the building was under construction. So the street was worked on.

Q. Okay. But you --

A. That's why the encroachment was probably issued. It was an encroachment.

Q. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you so much.

A. No problem.

MR. CHHATRE: Kelly? Matt?

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. If I could follow up. You did mention the plastic pipe being line pressure tested?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Okay. And if I'm understanding you properly, what you mean by that, the section of plastic pipeline that was installed less than 100 feet was not air tested; is that what you're saying?

A. It's not required to be air tested according to specifications if it's less than 100 feet. If it was over it, it should be tested at max operating pressure and/or 90 pounds, whichever is greater for that area.

Q. Okay. So what you observed was the fact that it was installed, the dresser coupling was installed and you soap tested it to assess confidence?

A. Yeah. If I remember, yeah, that's -- well, it would pass. If it didn't pass, we would have either cut it out further

down the line or called for an emergency permit and --

Q. No, what you said that the dresser coupling, you didn't see bubbling from that?

A. No. No, no, no.

Q. Okay. That's it.

A. No, because I would have stopped it.

Q. That stuff you did not see.

A. I would have stopped it. No, we would have threw the stoppers back in. Definitely not.

Q. Okay. That does not say there was no pinhole leak on it. That -- you didn't test for that?

A. Well, if it's soap tested, usually you would see a leak somewhere if it was soap tested.

Q. No, you're not -- if you test the whole pipeline, that's what you're saying?

A. Yes.

Q. But not with pinhole leak. You may not. You may not --

A. Well, maybe.

Q. -- but that's okay.

A. Maybe.

Q. Yeah, you already answered the first question. How --

A. That doesn't make -- yeah, that doesn't make any sense.

MR. SINGH: I guess, what's the relevance?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah --

BY MR. EMEABA:

Q. How are you qualified, please?

A. I'm qualified, I was trained through the learning center at Con Edison with my op qual and my fusion plastic at the time, which currently as of -- as we speak right now, is expired. At the time it wasn't.

Q. Okay. Well, how did you know it was expired?

A. Because there's a date on it.

Q. Okay. How often do you look at it to make sure you are still qualified?

A. Well, I no longer work in that department, so it's not required by my department to have the op qual anymore, because I work an electric-only area.

Q. While you were on site, who monitors to make sure that you are still qualified?

A. Well, we -- the learning center. There's multiple people: learning center, the planner, the clerks in the office, myself, the manager; it goes right up the line. Everybody's pretty much responsible for everybody else's.

Q. Okay. Since you go to site, even though you are a supervisor and when there is need for a contact, okay, does any other person oversee what you do?

A. Yes. There's a planner that oversees the supervisors.

Q. The planners. Okay.

A. The planners oversee the supervisors. The managers oversee the planners, and so on and so forth.

Q. Okay. Thank you.
A. You're welcome.
MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Chris?
MR. STOLICKY: I don't have any questions.
MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Frank?
MR. McCARTON: I have no questions.
MR. CHHATRE: Lenny?
MR. SINGH: Nothing.
MR. CHHATRE: Matt?
MR. NICHOLSON: I got some.
BY MR. NICHOLSON:
Q. Okay. So on this particular job you were there for the main cut-out?
A. Correct.
Q. And the pressure test -- well --
A. The soap pressure test.
Q. -- is that the flow test? I'm a little confused too.
A. The flow test happens prior. So -- is it okay if I explain?
Q. Please. Yeah.
A. The soap test happens prior. I mean, the flow test happens prior. So what you would do is you would go there at the beginning of the day. The supervisors would have multiple jobs. So if we had -- whatever docket of jobs we had for that time, we would be required to hit along -- you know, to make sure

everything was okay.

Q. Sure.

A. So you would schedule it with the crew when you were coming. And they would call you constantly on the phone, constantly calling you saying, are you coming, are you coming, are you coming? So you would get there as quick as you could. They would do the flow test. So that means that they would the throw the stoppers and test for the pressure on each side.

Q. With the bypass?

A. With the bypass up, correct.

Q. Okay.

A. Yes, with the bypass up. And I believe it was a new business service so there was no bypass required for the building or tanking of the building. I don't know if you're familiar with tanking a building?

Q. I can imagine what that is.

A. Yeah, so that -- I think that was a new building going up, so there was none on that, if I remember right. So the flow test, you make sure you got good pressure on either side. If you do, you could tell them, okay, start prepping everything for the cut-out. You either stay there or you leave, as long as they're not cutting it out, because you're required to be there while they're cutting it out.

Q. Okay.

A. So you would tell them don't do anything -- fuse the

pipe up, get it all ready. And then you would maybe stop back randomly here or there to check if they were doing every --

Q. Fuse the pipe up? Sorry. That's like fusing the butt --

A. Fusing is welding it together. Yeah, butt fusing.

Q. -- butt joint? Okay.

A. Correct. And sometimes it was the electrofuse couplings that were used too, depending on the scope.

Q. Okay.

A. And then you would go -- you would leave and/or stay. And then after the flow test, if there was a problem with the flow test -- I'm sorry, I'm getting off track. If there was a problem with the flow test, you would check if there was any other cut-outs going on in the area that you didn't know about maybe, which happens very rarely. There might have been another cut-out up the block which might have lowered the pressure.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. There might have been a regulator station that was down, maybe not working or up for maintenance or --

Q. Okay. Right.

A. Whatever it is. Once the flow test is done and you determine you have your water column that you want for that area, that you're required to have, then you can proceed on telling them to okay, or let's stop the job and figure out what's going on; we'll do it the next day. Or maybe the --

Q. Considering that it's good --
A. You would proceed.
Q. You tell them it's okay to cut?
A. Well, not at that point.
Q. Oh.
A. Start prepping everything.
Q. Just prep?
A. Prep.
Q. Okay.
A. Meaning Cleco in the main, the existing main, to make sure it's clean and ready for the couplings to be joined to it.
Q. Okay.
A. Maybe they had a little bit more digging to get a little bit deeper in. Maybe myself, as a supervisor, I have to call, say, you know what, I don't like this; let's cut back a little bit further, maybe.
Q. Okay.
A. Maybe that's what I did. I don't remember.
Q. All right.
A. I mean, I think the layout was issued for 65 feet. I think the cut-out was 69 feet, if I remember correctly.
Q. Okay.
A. So I might have told them to go 4 more feet back, maybe.
Q. Okay.
A. For whatever reason. So that's the flow test. The flow

test is getting it ready to --

Q. Got it.

A. -- we can prep it and proceed with the job.

Q. Okay. At that point they prep, and then you can go do whatever else?

A. Well, I would either stay there -- I don't remember on this --

Q. It's up to you?

A. -- particular job. Yeah, it's up to me or maybe I had a meeting to go to or --

Q. But when they go to the next phase, which is cut-out, you have to be on site?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Yes. And the cut-out could take anywhere from 20 minutes to an installation, depending on the length of the pipe, to five hours, six hours.

Q. Right. Okay. Once it's cut out and they're ready to put the new segment in, do you have to be there?

A. We're there, yeah.

Q. You are there?

A. Yeah, up until it's all soaped in -- or gassed in and soap tested.

Q. Okay.

A. Or pressure tested. And/or pressure tested.

Q. Okay. That's per Con Edison procedures?
A. That's Con Ed, yeah.
Q. Okay.
A. That's your manager telling you.
Q. Well, is it a formal procedure, like written down?
A. I --
Q. Inspectors will be on site for these --
A. I can't answer that question. I don't know. Maybe.
Q. You only inspect mains? Is that like your dedicated --
A. Well, at the time there was four supervisors, so some of them might have said, all right -- the planner, to get us experience in different aspects, he would say you cover maybe main cut-outs this week or for the month and you cover services, or you cover inserts or you cover high pressure, whatever's going on, high pressure.
Q. So if you covered a service, what sort of -- how does that work?
A. Covering a service is going and making sure they have the right POE.
Q. P -- tell --
A. I'm sorry.
Q. Spell it out.
A. Point of entry into the building.
Q. Point of entry, okay.
A. Make sure that the customer is ready for the cut-out or

the plumber -- or for the tie-in, the plumber ought to swap over, make sure --

Q. Oh, okay. That's after your work's been done and they're ready to run it out further --

A. Yeah, they usually -- if it's a service -- I mean, I don't know how it is now, but back then, if it was a service installation, construction management would do it with Hallen, with the contractor.

Q. Okay, right. But you've had --

A. We would go --

Q. -- these other jobs before?

A. Oh, yeah. Yeah. If it was a slow -- like, you know, if it was a slow week, we would cover services.

Q. Is it mandatory for the inspector to be there when a T is fused to the main?

A. I can't answer -- that wasn't my --

Q. Well, in your experience, though, did you have to --

A. Inspectors were there, yeah. I don't know if they were --

Q. Is that considered critical like you must be there for the main cut-outs? Same kind of --

A. For the inspectors?

Q. Yeah.

A. I'm assuming, yes, it should have been, yeah. I mean, all the jobs I was on the inspectors were always there.

Q. Okay.
A. There was a good bunch of inspectors in Manhattan at that time.
Q. Okay. But as -- you had been an inspector --
A. No, I was never an inspector.
Q. Oh, I'm sorry. Back in 2011, what was your role?
A. Operating supervisor.
Q. Okay. And that's different than --
A. Yeah, that's a management -- I oversee the crews.
Q. Okay, so that's not your role?
A. Yeah, I oversaw my own crews, my Con Ed crews.
Q. I see, okay. That helps. Thank you.
Going back to the route sheets or the job in general, you said you're given the job from this route sheet, right?
A. Yes.
Q. And then on this particular job, you said the length changed. You said it was originally so many feet and then it went --
A. I mean --
Q. How does that happen? Who's making that decision?
A. Well, okay, so on that job, if I remember correctly, I think it was 30 feet was the first initial layout and then it went to 40 feet. And I think because there was a new business service that was being installed to that 1642 address, that instead of installing the main here down the line and then having to go back

and tie-in a new service, they said let's just extend the main. This is probably what engineering was thinking, which if I remember correctly, that's what they were thinking.

Q. I see.

A. Let's extend it and include the service.

Q. Okay.

A. Since we're replacing --

Q. So originally it was an encroachment only just to replace the main?

A. The main.

Q. Okay.

A. And then it went to, I think, to include the service.

Q. Okay.

A. It was revision -- the first one was just the layout and then there was the layout revision 1, which was with the service, and then it went to revision 2. I don't know if it was myself or the supervisor that may have said, you know what, let's dig a little bit further on this job, or maybe the planner stopped there.

Q. And that comes out on this route sheet or is that in the layout? How did you see that?

A. No, you wouldn't know the layout changes as time goes on. The planner would give it to you and say there's an update to this layout, here it is, and they would sit down with you. It was like a little job briefing in the office. He would say, okay,

here's the deal; they went from this amount of footage to this amount of footage.

Q. So if we wanted to see that, what would we request? The layout sheets?

A. Layouts.

Q. Okay.

A. Layouts, yeah. Oh, there's two different layouts. There's a service layout and a main layout.

Q. Okay. That's all I've got, thanks.

MR. CHHATRE: Frank? Kelly?

MR. EMEABA: I'm okay.

MR. CHHATRE: Lenny?

MR. SINGH: I'm good, thank you.

BY MR. STOLICKY:

Q. Were you there when they cut the cast iron?

A. When they physically cut it? Yeah, I was there.

Q. Do you recall them running into any issues cutting it?

A. No, and I can't recall. On that particular job, no, I don't recall.

MR. STOLICKY: Okay. That's all.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. A couple of clarification questions for you.

A. Sure.

Q. Do you remember why the cast iron, this length changed from 39 to 69, 70 feet, whatever the number is?

A. Well, the -- what I just explained to you -- I'm sorry, you're --

MR. NICHOLSON: Matt.

MR. SIMON: Matt. Was that it was probably due to the new business service installation, the revision 1. And revision 2, it might have been somebody else going in there and saying extend it a little bit for whatever reason.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

MR. SIMON: Maybe there was a hub there and you can't cut too close to a hub. I don't know.

BY MR. CHHATRE:

Q. Do you recall the condition of the cast iron pipe?

A. On that particular job, I do not.

Q. But you're not required to note down any issues with the pipe that -- as a supervisor, are you required to feed some information back to somebody at the headquarters saying, well, this pipe was replaced for whatever reason, maybe for encroachment, but the pipe looked good or the pipe looked bad or there was --

A. No. The only time we would relay back to engineering's group, if the pipe was really bad, we would say, you know what, we're not going to proceed with this cut-out, maybe we should extend it the whole block or maybe we should go to plastic to plastic, if there would happen to be plastic; or maybe we should just reconsider and do maybe even more, maybe extend it even

further. I mean, that's happened to me before.

Q. Okay. Do you remember when or where?

A. A job that was extended?

Q. I mean, like because the pipe is not good?

A. Particular jobs? I could review my notes. I --

Q. No, the -- well, I mean, you mentioned that if a pipe is really bad, then you had to say --

A. In Manhattan, there's -- you run into areas where there's bad pipe. I can't give you particular locations. I'd have to go review my notes, if I have them, and tell you where that was. But there was incidents where we had to extend due to corroded pipe.

Q. Corroded pipe?

A. Corroded pipe or another issue, maybe another service or something.

Q. Uh-huh.

A. There's a thousand different reasons.

Q. Right. But now the procedure, you're not required to file a report saying I looked at the pipe, the pipe looked good, or I looked at it --

A. No, there's no --

Q. -- and the pipe looked bad?

A. No, you would just determine that for the tie-in point.

Q. That's your initiative to tell people that the pipe is really looking bad?

A. Well, yeah, there would be numerous people that would say that. The first and foremost person to say that, because he's down there doing it, is the mechanic. If he's down there physically touching it and looking at it, he's the guy who's going to say this pipe's no good, which has happened a thousand times; let's not do this, and he would say to me this is the reason. And then whoever the supervisor is, myself, I would say, all right, let's stop and let's dig for more pipe, better pipe, or let's just go and have this revised, maybe go to plastic. I mean, contractors as per the GMs and stuff, we were only allowed as a supervisor to extend the job so much. After that, we had to go to engineering.

Q. I see.

A. So for five, six, seven feet, we could do that on the fly.

Q. Okay. But anything more than that, then --

A. Yeah, there was no set number. But anything more, you would -- you know, common sense, you would say, you know what, another 20 feet, no, no, we got to go back for -- you know, because, you know, the material -- maybe they didn't have enough material on the job, whatever the reason was.

Q. Anything else that comes to your mind that we haven't asked you that might help us in looking at this accident?

A. No.

MR. NICHOLSON: I need to --

MR. CHHATRE: You have a question?

MR. NICHOLSON: I just have a couple follow-ups.

MR. CHHATRE: Okay.

BY MR. NICHOLSON:

Q. Excuse me. Before I was confused. So in 2011, you were construction operating --

A. Operating supervisor.

Q. -- supervisor?

A. Correct.

Q. You worked for the construction department?

A. Yeah, gas construction.

Q. Right. Okay. And there you're really just overseeing the execution of that construction project? That's your role?

A. Yeah, the services or mains or inserts.

Q. But now, you are a chief construction inspector?

A. Inspector, yes. I'm a supervisor of inspectors now.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah, maybe that's where the confusion is here.

Q. So, which means you don't actually do inspections?

A. No, I oversee people who do inspections.

Q. Okay.

A. But it's not inspections as you would think. It's inspections as far as making sure that the contractor that works for the city on a city job doesn't damage a system, a Con Ed system.

Q. Right. Okay.
A. Or cause an outage.
Q. You talked about that, interferences.
A. Interference, yes.
Q. Is that what you were calling that?
A. Yes.
Q. It's kind of a watch and protect? You're --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- making sure city workers don't hit --
A. Making sure the city workers don't get hurt, mainly.
Q. Okay.
A. That the public doesn't get hurt. And then secondly, there's no outage.
Q. Okay. Terrific. Thank you for that. That's all I got.
MR. CHHATRE: If you have no questions --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: City workers or contractors working for the city?
MR. SIMON: Contractors working for the city. Outside contractors working for the city.
MR. CHHATRE: Okay. Thank you so much.
MR. SIMON: Thank you.
MR. CHHATRE: I appreciate your time --
MR. SIMON: I hope I helped.
MR. CHHATRE: -- for helping us out. 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 Michael Simon
DOCKET NUMBER:	DCA-14-MP-002
PLACE:	New York, New York
DATE:	August 4, 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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Shari K. Doyle
Transcriber