

INTERVIEW OF NUNEZ

JUN 29 1982

Case No.: 5-82-009

Transcript of tape
recorded interview of:

Hector R. NUNEZ
General Foreman-Electrical
Bechtel Power Corporation

Date of Interview:

June 29, 1982

Interviewers:

Eugene J. POWER and Owen C. SHACKLETON Jr.,
Investigators, NRC

Purpose of Interview:

To obtain NUNEZ's responses to allegations
made by Robert D. GUNDERSON Jr., Electrician,
who formerly worked from April 1980 to
March 1982 on Unit 1, PVNGS, in one of the
electrical termination crews under NUNEZ's
supervision.

Location of Interview:

NRC Resident Inspector's Office,
Construction Building, PVNGS

Conditions of Interview:

Interview was conducted with NUNEZ under
oath.

INTERVIEW OF NUNEZ

SHACKLETON: ... interview of Mr. Hector NUNEZ, first name is spelled "H" as in "Henry", E-C-T-O-R, no middle initial, and the last name is spelled "N" as in "Nancy", "U" as in "uncle", "N" as in "Nancy", "E" as in "easy", "Z" as in "zebra." Mr. NUNEZ is a General Foreman for the Bechtel Power Corporation in the electrical field presently assigned to the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station in Arizona. Present to conduct this interview from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission is Mr. E. J. POWER and myself, Owen C. SHACKLETON. Mr. POWER and myself are investigators for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission assigned to Region V in Walnut Creek, California. This interview began at 8:30 a.m. on June 29, 1982, at which time I advised Mr. NUNEZ that his appearance here was voluntary and he could leave at any time. Mr. NUNEZ agreed to conduct this interview and was placed under oath by me. I advised Mr. NUNEZ of the laws that are applicable for a person testifying under oath. Mr. NUNEZ, do I have your permission to tape record this interview?

NUNEZ: Yes, sir.

SHACKLETON: And also, Mr. NUNEZ, you requested a copy of the transcript of this interview, is that correct?

NUNEZ: Yes, sir.

SHACKLETON: I will see that the Commission provides to you a copy of

the transcript which will be typewritten in our office and then mailed directly to your home. And now we will begin the interview. Gene, do you want to start, please?

NUNEZ: Excuse me ...

SHACKLETON: Uh-huh?

NUNEZ: ... an initial. I do have a ...

SHACKLETON: Oh, you do have an initial? O.K. We got it off the payroll and it showed no middle initial.

NUNEZ: "R".

SHACKLETON: Middle initial is "R". Thank you.

POWER: O.K. What are the procedural requirements for preparing termination cards here on the site?

NUNEZ: Would you repeat that again, sir?

POWER: Yeah. What are your procedural requirements? Do you have a written procedure for preparing termination cards?

NUNEZ: I don't prepare the cards, it says ...

POWER: No, what I meant ... Bechtel does.

NUNEZ: Yeah, there is a procedure that ... at this time I am not familiar with the work line procedure that they have.
Uh ...

POWER: Do you get involved with the termination cards?

NUNEZ: Yes, sir I do. Only from the standpoint of terminating the conductors.

POWER: What does this involvement entail? What part do you play in this operation? You know, the termination card when it comes out of this computerized system through engineering to yourself and ...

NUNEZ: It comes to me, to the superintendent, Reggie JOHNSON. At that time, we read the card as to the location, equipment, cable number, termination numbers and proceed as instructed in the card.

POWER: O.K. And you disseminate that to various foremen under you?

NUNEZ: Yes, sir.

POWER: How many, how many foremen do you have?

NUNEZ: At this time, I have three foremen.

POWER: How many, how many did you have, say, six months ago?

NUNEZ: Possibly six foremen, I believe.

POWER: Had a reduction?

NUNEZ: A reduction in force.

POWER: Uh ... On Unit 1, what would be your estimate of the number of termination cards prepared? Any idea?

NUNEZ: No idea.

POWER: Several thousand?

NUNEZ: Yes, sir. In the thousands.

POWER: What happens when there is either a lost, misplaced, damaged, or otherwise unavailable termination card? Have you ever been faced with that problem?

NUNEZ: The only area that I am aware of at this time that I recollect is that a tool box was stolen in the field, or possibly removed from the work area of the electrician. There was a few cards in it, possibly six. I am not sure of the number but ... and that's the only ones that I know of that have been actually lost in the field. Engineering has come back to Reggie JOHNSON saying that the cards are not available in the cabinets I guess that they have, whatever system they use, and they issue out a new card to reterminate.

POWER: That's not a normal recurring basis when they come back to engineering?

NUNEZ: Would you repeat that again?

POWER: Yeah. Is that just that one instance or is that a normal requirement or a normal commitment where engineering comes to Reggie JOHNSON and says we have some ...

NUNEZ: I was speaking of a particular case that I knew of the tool box that had been misplaced or ...

POWER: When, when did that occur? Do you recall? Roughly?

NUNEZ: You could probably find out through the ...

POWER: A year ago? Six months ago?

NUNEZ: I would say roughly a year ago. And those cards were reissued through engineering for retermination. The cards had not been terminated yet.

POWER: Allright. That was before the fact, then? If the card ... if you issued the cards to subordinate foremen and then, of course, they their crews, how do they come back? From the original electrician? Can you reverse the process and tell me how they get back through you?

NUNEZ: As I said before, the cards are issued to me ...

POWER: Right.

NUNEZ: ... through supervision, uh, I assign the cards to a different foreman, either by the billing or the work areas and we go together and look the situation over in most cases, uh, what's required, what's necessary to do the job, uh, he in turn gives to the wireman and explains to him whatever conversation we might have had on it and the wireman goes out in the field and tries to terminate it to the best of his ability, to the design of the card, any problems he will either flag it or log it into the side of the card, come back in explaining to the foreman when he

cannot do that particular termination, and the foreman brings it to me and we try to resolve it in the field the best we can, uh, sometimes it might mean equipment or scaffolding in the way that needs to be removed; it doesn't have to be an engineering problem. Other times, we have to go through engineering and define terminal points and give us a better location as to where the indication of the card is in reference to the termination.

POWER: O.K. And as either the work is completed or its disposition, what happens to the completed termination card?

NUNEZ: As the work is completed, the wireman brings it to the foreman, the foreman logs it in a notebook that we've more or less made our own logging system. He uses a pink color for a problem card, a green color for a completed card, without any problems. That goes back into Reggie JOHNSON. He goes back into the system back to engineering. Where it goes from there, I don't know.

POWER: How long have you been utilizing this, I understand a book for a, to track ...

NUNEZ: Almost since the day that it started ...

POWER: Oh.

NUNEZ: We started finding out that we were having to trace our work and had no way of really finding out who did it ...

POWER: Yeah.

NUNEZ: ... or, so we determined that it would be a problem in the future, so we decided to have some means of keeping track ...

POWER: But, yeah. Other than that one instance that you related, let's say approximately a year ago, or whatever, has there been any other situations where engineering has prepared or made duplicate cards and sent them to the field for whatever reason, for ... to show that the documentation gets back into their computerized system?

NUNEZ: Yes, sir. They have.

POWER: What circumstances, then?

NUNEZ: Uh, they found it determined or that somebody other than our effort, either they claimed it was a lost card or a misplaced card ...

POWER: Yeah ... what happens in a situation like that? There's a lost or misplaced card for work previously completed?

NUNEZ: I issue the work back out to the foreman.

POWER: O.K. And you get the cards again from engineering?

NUNEZ: Uh-huh.

POWER: From Reggie to you?

NUNEZ: Right.

POWER: O.K.

NUNEZ: ... and back up to the foreman. I instruct the foreman to have a wireman go out and look the situation over, to see if we can analyze why it is it has to be reworked, whether it's fault of the wireman or fault of engineering or whatever, and the cases that has to be resigned or documented by the wireman, he's supposed to cut the lugs off that are terminated, re-lug it, enter his new tool number in it, date it, and cut basically a new card, a new termination system.

POWER: A new termination. Other than those situations where it's reworked, and I'm not interested in those, I'm primarily interested ...

NUNEZ: I didn't hear that, sir.

POWER: I'm not interested in the re-work ones. I'm interested in those where the work was satisfactorily completed on primarily class Q cable, now. Have you ever had a situation where the individual went out and determined that it's already been terminated properly. Then, then what happens? Then the wireman goes out and looks at it?

NUNEZ: They're supposed to reterminate the wire.

POWER: They're supposed to?

NUNEZ: They're supposed to reterminate wire.

POWER: Is that in writing?

NUNEZ: No, the instructions go from me through the foreman to reterminate the wire.

POWER: Orally?

NUNEZ: Yes, sir.

POWER: In all cases?

NUNEZ: I would say that in all cases, yes. Because it must have been misinterpretation between me and the foreman back to the wireman that they're supposed to look at it, reterminate, use new lugs ...

POWER: Are there any, uh, written instructions or procedures as to what a wireman or electrician can do in these situations for these lost/misplaced cards?

NUNEZ: Not to my knowledge.

POWER: Not to mine either. I just want to make sure we don't misunderstand the situation. (Pause) What instructions do you receive when you get the cards from Reggie JOHNSON on ... in such instances when they are lost or misplaced? What does Reggie say to you?

NUNEZ: He ...

POWER: Does he give you any specific instructions relative to lost/misplaced cards?

NUNEZ: To go check this card out and reterminate it.

POWER: Is that what he generally says ...

NUNEZ: That's what he generally says. He says that it's been lost. Go find out what happened to it ... you know ...

POWER: Have there been any situations in which you have directly given instructions to a foreman or an electrician to complete the card without looking at the work?

NUNEZ: Complete a card without looking at it?

POWER: Right. In other words, sign a new termination card and give it back to the foremen or yourself and go back into the system.

NUNEZ: I can't recall that ever ... I've always asked them to look the work over.

POWER: You can't recall.

NUNEZ: No.

POWER: 'Cause we have testimony to the effect that you have, in fact, made those statements to electricians that you weren't really interested in them looking at the work. They wanted a card signed and forget about looking at it. Have there been any situations where an electrician could infer from your conversation that that's what you wanted?

NUNEZ: Possibly it may have been his work that he had done within a few days or whatever ...

POWER: No. I'm not referring ... I'm talking about work that he didn't initially do. You know, for foremen I mean if an individual goes back out and looks at his own work,

that doesn't give me heartburn at all. That, that's like did you paint this wall? And you come back tomorrow and you say yeah, that's the same wall I painted. I'm not worried about that situation. I'm talking about a situation where the electrician did not do the initial work and has been asked to sign a termination card for work that he did not complete.

NUNEZ: No, sir.

POWER: Have there ever been any situations ...

NUNEZ: Not that I can recall at this time, sir.

SHACKLETON: We have ...

NUNEZ: We usually try to get the work to the best of the logging system we have is, is reasonably traceable to the individual that originally did the work unless he's not here, he has been terminated.

POWER: How, how frequently do you receive lost or misplaced ... how frequently do you receive new cards for lost or misplaced termination cards? How often does it occur?

NUNEZ: It isn't very often. I ...

POWER: How many in a week would you estimate? As an average?

NUNEZ: We go weeks without anything at all.

POWER: Two at the most? Say five a month? How many in the last year have you ... your estimate, really?

NUNEZ: I, I have no positive knowledge to this fact ...

POWER: O.K. Would you say 50 in the last year? I'm just trying to get a figure for a problem if a problem exists, and I'm very much interested in what you believe to be the total amount that ...

NUNEZ: Fifty is way too high, I believe.

POWER: Way to high? Under 50 then?

NUNEZ: I think that ...

POWER: More than 10 but less than 40?

NUNEZ: Strictly as a guess I say in that range.

POWER: Can you put it any closer? The reason I am asking for a guess, we have other individuals that are making allegations and they are giving us certain figures and I'm just trying to make a determination of how many cards that are going back through this system, and we're really attempting to make an evaluation of a technical problem that ...

NUNEZ: I understand.

POWER: ... electrical engineer. I'm not trying to tie you down to 31, and then say oh, we found 32. That's not the point at all. I'm trying to get an understanding of the situation.

NUNEZ: I think less (unintelligible) 10 to 40.

POWER: Ten to 40? Then over the last couple of years, you wouldn't expect more than a hundred cards?

NUNEZ: As a loss, re-work, duplicate?

POWER: Yeah, yeah.

NUNEZ: I would say upper 30.

POWER: That would be high side?

NUNEZ: Plus or minus.

SHACKLETON: See, Hector. The Safety Licensing Board, they want to know how big the problem is, and that's what we're trying to narrow down. In this case, as I understand it, uh, Reggie JOHNSON is the first person to receive notification or get a new card to replace a card that is lost ...

NUNEZ: Yes, sir.

SHACKLETON: ... and then because you're the number 1 man, he gives it to you because the foremen all report to you.

NUNEZ: Right. And then I issue it to the foreman with the instructions and usually we try to get it back to the particular individual that originally did the work and, in most cases, we can tell because the same cable number will be on the new card ...

POWER: Yeah.

NUNEZ: ... traceable to the notebook that he have out there and we, and ...

POWER: Who, who reviews that book to determine if the individual that initially performed the work is available and he wasn't terminated or transferred or ...?

NUNEZ: That's in the foremen's shed. I'm, I'm ... it's available to me and the foreman or anybody that ...

POWER: Yeah, but no, what I'm saying do, do the foremen actually go back to the book if they end up with some new cards ...?

NUNEZ: Well, yeah. I, I'm with him in most cases where we have a new card done.

POWER: How can you identify new duplicate termination cards? How do you know it's a new card?

NUNEZ: I've been instructed in most cases that it's a duplicate card.

POWER: O.K. Then there's nothing on the card that identifies it as a duplicate.

NUNEZ: There's nothing.

POWER: When these go back to the foreman, have there been any situation ... or the electrician ... have there been any situation where you have directly provided a card to an electrician to prepare a new termination card? Over, say, the last six months? Without going through a foreman, you know, an electrician walks in, whichever, Jones or Smith,

and you hand him a new card and say I'd like you to fill out a new termination card. Have there been any situations like that?

NUNEZ: One that is lost, you mean?

POWER: Yeah. Right. A duplicate, yeah, I'm talking about a lost/misplaced; the work is done and he is not the electrician that performed the work.

NUNEZ: I cannot recall that incident ever happening.

POWER: In the situation where the cards are, again, lost, misplaced or for whatever reason the termination card is prepared, in all cases what general reasons have you given either to the foreman or the electrician for a new card? What do you tell them? I just want to make sure that no misunderstanding ... you just related it ... I'm just asking you to repeat the same answer.

NUNEZ: When the ...

POWER: Yeah, what reason do you give when you give them the duplicate cards? What do you tell them to do?

NUNEZ: The superintendent informs me that it is a lost card or ... (unintelligible)

POWER: Right.

NUNEZ: ... and that's usually what I tell the foreman.

POWER: O.K.

NUNEZ: We need to ...

POWER: To go out and look at the termination ...

NUNEZ: Yeah.

POWER: Are there any situations where an electrician, other than the one that performed the work, looked at the work, considered it good, and did not reterminate it, and just signed the card?

NUNEZ: I have no specific way of knowing that, actually because I'm not with him when he's terminating.

POWER: No, I'm just trying to determine whether or not there have been any situations where you have gone with him or you made a comment after he came back, it looked alright and I just signed the card. We're getting other indications of individuals that are going out looking at cards ... they're signing it because they say they're receiving these types of instructions. That is what I'm interested in determining. Where are these instructions coming from?

NUNEZ: When they get a lost card ...?

POWER: Correct.

NUNEZ: ... to go out in the field ...

POWER: Correct.

NUNEZ:

... and usually the foreman will go with him, they look the termination over and everything, you know, that's it, and they are instructed to re-lug it, look the work over, see what it looks like, you know, and if it's acceptable, he'll ...

7(A)

7 (A)

SHACKLETON: O.K. The other area that we wanted to talk about, uh, Hector, was splicing of Class Q cables. Have you ever directed anyone under your supervision to splice Class Q cables?

NUNEZ: I don't believe that we're allowed to splice Class Q cables, and I don't think that I've ever instructed anybody to make the splices, Class Q cables. Between the ... unless it was an (unintelligible) to the end, you know, splicing it through a terminal (unintelligible)

SHACKLETON: How about in the ...

NUNEZ: (Unintelligible)

SHACKLETON: ... in a manhole, down on the manhole? Up by the spray ponds?

NUNEZ: I think they pulled a new cable in there and, uh ...

SHACKLETON: But prior, Hector, prior to pulling a new cable, did you direct someone to splice cable?

NUNEZ: I'm trying to recollect my thoughts on that particular incident.

SHACKLETON: Do you know the incident I'm relating to?

NUNEZ: I believe you're talking about the manhole right outside spray pond next to a wood patrol center?

SHACKLETON: I'm ... that sounds the way it was described to me ...

NUNEZ: I would have to look at the blueprint or something of the area. At the time, uh, there's a possibility that we were going to terminate a splice rather in that manhole and, uh, this went back to Reggie JOHNSON and he looked into it

(unintelligible). Engineer Al BOYCE have maybe been the engineer, I'm not for sure ...

SHACKLETON: Al BOYCE?

NUNEZ: Yeah. I'm not for sure whether he was the engineer or not, he comes to my mind. That could be the wrong person, you know.

POWER: But the engineer ... engineering went back and decided against it ...

NUNEZ: Yes, sir.

POWER: ... and they repulled the cable?

NUNEZ: Uh-huh.

POWER: Do you recall when this occurred? Month and year, roughly?

NUNEZ: Oh, I'd say either plus or minus a year.

SHACKLETON: And that was for Unit 1, right?

NUNEZ: Yeah, it was.

SHACKLETON: Was the splice actually made?

NUNEZ: I don't believe it was.

SHACKLETON: The cable was too short, or what was the problem?

Why ... why, why did ... why was the idea of using a splice considered, what was the reason?

NUNEZ: I would have to get back with my foreman, Richard KEITH, and ...

SHACKLETON: O.K.

NUNEZ: ... He's ... handles most of my manhole problems and relate to him. Un, I don't think the splice was ever made, to the best of my knowledge.

POWER: Who do you personally have? KEITH, uh, SANDOVAL ...

SHACKLETON: CRANE ...

POWER: Joe CRANE?

NUNEZ: CRANE, uh-huh. Yeah. He would be a closer associated person to that splice.

POWER: Yeah.

NUNEZ: ... if he was directed by me to splice, it was because that information came through the superintendent, you know, and they looking at the whole situation and finding out ...

POWER: So in effect then, that would have been procedurally the right thing to do or would engineering have decided that was correct for you to pass those instructions on?

NUNEZ: I don't ... whether that engineer was aware of that that splice (unintelligible) ...

POWER: Oh, no. What I'm ... what I'm saying, is to the best of your recollection, what you were doing in accordance with your procedures and your design and your blueprints ...

NUNEZ: Oh, yeah. I was ...

POWER: ... and engineering ... Right ...

NUNEZ: I was doing what I thought was, uh, a normal operation, you know ...

POWER: Yeah.

NUNEZ: ... We weren't trying to hide or do anything you know.

-POWER: Yeah.

NUNEZ: ... I thought it was the procedure to do. We, uh, come to this place that, uh, (unintelligible) maybe the cable wasn't long enough, you know, so they have that (unintelligible) you know, nobody was trying to hide something or ... there's just no procedure I think due to the knowledge of not splicing Class Q cable that was questionable and I don't think that a splice was ever made or attempted to be made in that manner. I think that was questionable right from ... like I said, it, uh, you could talk to foreman Richard KEITH, I think he would give you more definite input into that.

SHACKLETON: Alright, thank you. The next area, Hector, is, is the relationship of JOHNSON, yourself, and the three foreman, with QC inspectors. Do you feel that the QC inspectors that are inspecting the work done by the wiremen that they are able to operate freely and independent without any intimidation from, uh, supervision over the wiremen?

NUNEZ: Would you repeat that, now?

SHACKLETON: O.K. Do you feel that the QC inspectors that inspect the work being performed by your men ...

NUNEZ: Right.

SHACKLETON: ... are able to operate freely and independent without any intimidation from, uh, supervision over the wiremen?

NUNEZ: You mean pressurizing them to go ahead and accept it, or ...

SHACKLETON: Right.

NUNEZ: ... is that what you're talking about?

SHACKLETON: Right.

NUNEZ: They operate on their own. We don't, you know, we give checks to it, it's good, we take the back end, say, the QC people did not accept for whatever reasons it may be ...

SHACKLETON: You feel then, you're saying to me that you feel they have their proper independence?

NUNEZ: Oh, yes.

SHACKLETON: O.K. Fine. Hector, you've got a lot of years of experience and you've been on this project now for almost six years, six years this coming month. Do you have, from your observations, any ideas or concerns that you feel, in your field that you're working on out here, should ... that the ... the Commission should look at? Do you feel anything ... everything is alright, or do you feel there are some areas that should be inspected more closely?

NUNEZ: Other than what we have discussed here today, I thought that the job was, well, satisfactory and installed in an electrical manner except for the documentation ...

SHACKLETON: Alright.

NUNEZ: ... that I've been made aware of today.

SHACKLETON: O.K. I don't have any other questions and Hector, I appreciate your sitting here and going through this, I know it's not pleasant ...

NUNEZ: No, it's not.

SHACKLETON: ... but it's, uh, it's important that we get everything out in the open, because we're not headhunting, we're trying to find do we have a problem, how big is it, and then management will take corrective action so that we don't repeat it on other units, 'cause we still have Unit 2 and 3 to go. Uh, at this time, Hector, do you have any additional things you would like to say?

NUNEZ: No, not at this time. (Unintelligible)

POWER: Don't you want to get a statement later on?

SHACKLETON: Yes, I think we should. Uh, at this time, we'll bring this interview to a close and the time is now 9:33 a.m.