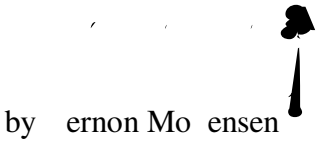

by ernon Mo ensen

On Marc t wor ers at a construct on s te on East st treet n Man attan were atte pt n to add stee sect ons to extend a tower crane s reac e atte pt to u p t e crane fa ed and t cras ed stor es to t e round n s x wor ers and a wo an n a nearby apart ent bu d n n ur n On May t anot er tower crane co apsed on East st treet dur n an atte pt to secure t e tower to a bu d n w t a co ar two wor ers were ed and two ot ers were n ured nc ud n a bystander In bot cases New Yor C ty s Bu d n s Depart ent ed ate y ssued stop wor orders and Mayor M c ae B oo ber e d press conferences to nfor t e pub c about t e azards nvo ved and d scuss w at cou d be done to prove crane safety

New Yor C ty s rap d response ave t e press on t at crane co apses are str ct y a atter of oca ur sd ct on But w ere was t e Occupat ona afety and Hea t Ad n strat on O HA w ose ss on s to assure safe and ea t fu wor n cond t ons for wor n en and wo en e prob e of construct on and crane safety s nat ona n scope but O HA as been so ev scerated and any of ts funct ons so pr vat zed t at t s fra ed as a oca ssue n po t ca d scourse Indeed t e reporters w o covered t e story sa d t e a ternat ves were e t er to en ar e t e c ty s Bu d n s Depart ent or re y on ore se f po c n by contractors but t ere was no ent on of O HA ese recent crane co apses ustrate t e conundru confront n O HA ts ss on s broad n scope but t ac s t e po t ca e a and bud etary powers necessary to carry out ts respons b t es New Yor C ty s ut down t e crane wor s tes under ts aut or ty to protect pub c safety but O HA cannot s ut down an unsafe wor p ace un ess t can prove n court t at t ere s an nent t reat to wor er safety Loca overn ents ave tr ed to f t e vacuu eft by O HA but t e Occupat ona afety and Hea t Act O H Act of pro b ts t e fro enact n wor er safety standards It does a ow for state p ans but any are not very effect ve For exa p e twe ve construct on wor ers ave been ed n a ont span n Las e as yet Nevada O HA s ac of enforce ent and f nes as fa ed to ste t e t de

Created n O HA s ss on nc udes pro u at n safety standards to t ate reco n zed azards enforc n standards t rou wor p ace nspect ons and assess n f nes for v o at ons of standards suff c ent to deter future nfract ons e recent wave of construct on and crane re ated deat s prov des a star re nder t at construct on wor s dan erous s art c e w exa ne wor n cond t ons n t e construct on ndustry to deter ne to w at extent t e ad n strat on of Pres dent Geor e Bus s per tt n O HA s fu f n ts andate to protect wor ers safety and ea t

Profile of a Dangerous Industry

e construct on ndustry e p oys ore t an on wor ers and wor n cond t ons are a on t e ost dan erous n t e n ted tates s s ou d co e as no surpr se w en one cons ders t at t s done under cond t ons t at pose cons derab e r s s to wor ers safety and ea t Muc of t e wor s done outdoors under var ab e weat er cond t ons w ere pass n ve c es or construct on equ p ent pose a ob e t reat at e ts w ere t e r s of fa s s reat on scaffo ds t at can co apse by fa n ob ects fro above n trenc es t at can cave n or n conf ned spaces t at can trap wor ers

Fa s are t e ost co on cause of deat a on construct on wor ers and t e second ead n cause of deat for a wor ers after way nc dents ere were fata fa s n up fro n More t an a f of a fata fa s were fro causes co on to construct on wor percent nvo ved fa s fro a roof percent fro adders percent fro scaffo ds and percent fro bu d n rders or structura stee Many of t e re a n n cate or es a so nvo ve construct on wor percent fro non ov n ve c e percent fro fa s on t e sa e eve percent fro f oor doc or round eve percent down sta rs or steps and percent were unreported a prob e t at often occurs n construct on wor Construct on aborers ave one of e est nu bers of ost wor days a ead n nd cator of wor azards

e construct on sector ad t e ar est nu ber of fata wor n ur es n w t percent of a fata t es far a ead of transportat on and ware ous n w t wor p ace fata t es e a n tude of t e azards of construct on wor s ustrated by t e fact t at ts fata ty rate of per e p oyed s ore t an two and one a f t es t e fata ty rate of percent for a wor ers e nu ber of construct on ndustry deat s went up to n fro n Accord n to se f reported stat st cs wor ers were n ured n for a rate of wor ers n ured per n percent er t an t e avera e of n ur es for a wor ers

a to d s zed co pan es ave t e est reported n ury rates w t co pan es of to e p oyees av n a rate of per wor ers v rtua y t e sa e as co pan es w t to wor ers e ar est f r s w t or ore wor ers are t e safest w t a rate of on y percent e s a est f r s to wor ers are a c ose second at but s nce t e verac ty of t s data s n doubt s nce t ey don t ave to report t to BL

Construct on aborers are ost e y to d e on t e ob w t percent of t e tota n fo owed by

Another problem is that OSHA does not require that construction firms keep logs of injuries and illnesses incurred on site. They are required to keep internal site logs but the BLS doesn't use this data to compile statistics. A recommendation that has been ignored since. Nor does anaheim have to keep track of workers who are hired as independent contractors or work for subcontractors a practice common in the construction industry.

Construction accounts for percent of workplace deaths and ten percent of reported occupational injuries and illnesses. It is difficult to cover up workplace deaths the severity of injury and illness

ree ey nd cators of O HA s stren t or wea ness are t e nu ber of staff nspectors nvest at ons and pena t es On t e f rst O HA c ear y doesn t ave enou nspectors to cover a wor p aces under ts ur sd ct on In O HA ad staff to cover on wor ers at on wor p aces but n t ere were on y O HA staff for on wor ers n on bus nesses nder t e Bus ad n strat on O HA as put a b e p as s on vo untary co p ance by bus ness w c ves e p oyers an ncent ve to avo d nspect ons by report n fewer or no wor er n ur es Consequent y t e nu ber of wor ers covered by O HA nspect ons decreased by percent fro t e C nton ، FY ، to Bus ، FY ، pres denc es

ere are so few O HA nspectors today، ، t at t wou d ta e t e years to v s t eac wor p ace under ts ur sd ct on O HA as fa en so ow t at t e s tuat on s better under state O HA p ans A to et er t e states ave nspectors and t wou d on y ta e years to nspect wor p aces under t e r ur sd ct on

Fewer nspectors ave eant fewer nspect ons and t at as resu ted n ower pena t es For exa p e t e avera e O HA pena ty for ser ous v o at ons s tuat ons w ere deat or ser ous n ury are y e y as dropped fro n FY dur n t e C nton ad n strat on to n FY under Bus

c an e of eart to t ten safety standards No t was a ru e to wea en t e r s assess ent for u a t at wou d e p e p oyers by a n t ore d ff cu t for O HA and t e M ne afety and Hea t Ad n strat on ˛ M HA, to estab s and re u ate safe t res o ds of wor ers exposure to tox ns and c e ca s For exa p e t proposes to use assu pt ons favorab e to e p oyers to arb trar y ca cu ate t e r s t at a wor er exposed to crysta ne s ca dust wou d beco e

e sta t e standard strate y s p y nvo ves pus n t e oa posts bac every t e t e dead ne