

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FIRE IN CARGO HOLD ABOARD THE
CHIPOLBROK MOON

* Accident No.: DCA18FM025

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Interview of: ZHAO JIANBING
Captain

On Board the *Chipolbrok Moon*

Sunday,
May 27, 2018

APPEARANCES:

BRIAN YOUNG, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

CWO [REDACTED] Investigating Officer
U.S. Coast Guard

DEAN HENSLEY, Chief Investigator
Harris County Fire Marshal

DANIEL SPEARS, Fire Investigator
Port of Houston Authority

SLAWOMIR PIANKOWSKI
Chipolbrok America

NAING WIN CHO
Seatran Maritime

DOMINIK SCHAFER, Surveyor
Sea of Gravity

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 CWO [REDACTED]: Good day. This is Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED] with the United States Coast Guard. We're on board the
4 Motor Vessel *Chipolbrok Moon*. Today's date is Sunday, May 27th,
5 and we're conducting a joint investigation into the fire that
6 happened between May 22nd and May 23rd on board the *Chipolbrok*
7 *Moon*.

8 I'm going to go around the table and let each individual
9 identify themselves for the purpose of the investigation.

10 MR. SPEARS: Daniel Spears, Port of Houston Authority, fire
11 inspector.

12 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Slawomir Piankowski, Chipolbrok America,
13 vessel manager.

14 CAPT. JIANBING: Zhao Jianbing, the master of the *Chipolbrok*
15 *Moon*.

16 MR. HENSLEY: Dean Hensley, Harris County Fire Marshal's
17 office. I'm a chief investigator, and we're here assisting with
18 the fire investigation.

19 MR. YOUNG: Brian Young with the National Transportation
20 Safety Board. I'm the investigator in charge of this accident for
21 the NTSB.

22 CAPT. WIN CHO: Captain Naing, Seatran Maritime, LLC, on
23 behalf of vessel's owner P&I.

24 MR. SCHAFER: Dominik Schafer, director of marine operations,
25 company SEA.O.G. I was the attending surveyor to monitor and

1 report about the discharge operations on board.

2 CWO [REDACTED] Captain, for the -- just for the transcription,
3 can you spell your full name?

4 CAPT. JIANBING: Spell?

5 CWO [REDACTED] Yes.

6 CAPT. JIANBING: One that's spelled one by one?

7 CWO [REDACTED] Yes.

8 CAPT. JIANBING: Okay. Zulu-Hotel-Oscar -- wait, wait.

9 That's wrong. Zulu-Hotel-Alpha-Oscar; Julie-India-Alpha-November-
10 Bravo-India-November-Golf.

11 INTERVIEW OF CAPTAIN ZHAO JIANBING

12 BY CWO [REDACTED]

13 Q. Okay. Captain, can you just talk us through -- before we get
14 into actual questions, can you just tell us in your words what you
15 recall from the fire, from the time you first were made aware of
16 the fire to the time that the fire watch was stood down? Can you
17 just talk us through that?

18 MR. PIANKOWSKI: All right. Just can you tell them -- I
19 mean, once -- what happened once you notify the fire? Who called
20 you and how -- you know, from your view, how it was, you know, at
21 that time?

22 CAPT. JIANBING: How to know the fire happen or --

23 MR. PIANKOWSKI: I mean, can you tell us --

24 CWO [REDACTED] What happened.

25 MR. PIANKOWSKI: -- yeah, what happened?

1 CWO [REDACTED] That might be the easiest thing. What happened?

2 MR. PIANKOWSKI: What happened?

3 CAPT. JIANBING: The fire had -- I heard -- first, I heard
4 alarm I'm in my cabin. I heard the device or the fire alarm is
5 sounding. Then I go to the bridge. I check, check my smoke
6 detecting, the color code, and I found number 3 port side cargo is
7 on fire. So next we take action, take necessary action to
8 extinguish all the fire.

9 BY CWO [REDACTED]

10 Q. What did those actions -- can you describe those actions?

11 A. First, I sound the alarm for caution the fire in the number 3
12 port side hold on fire. Call my crew, go outside and muster,
13 prepare to take action to putting out the fire as per my training,
14 like some --

15 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Procedures, right?

16 CAPT. JIANBING: Procedures. Emergency procedures.

17 BY CWO [REDACTED]

18 Q. Can you describe some of the firefighting training you had as
19 a mariner?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. We have record.

23 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Have the manual, right? Okay.

24 Captain, so this is -- Coast Guard is asking what was your
25 training? I mean, as a seaman, what kind of training you had in

1 regards to firefighting? What kind of training in China did you
2 get to, you know, in case, you know -- like advanced firefighting
3 training, do you have this?

4 CAPT. JIANBING: Yes, I have.

5 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Okay.

6 CAPT. JIANBING: I have certificate from my authorities.

7 MR. PIANKOWSKI: You do -- yeah. Okay.

8 CAPT. JIANBING: Usually we get on board and I run the, I run
9 these certificates.

10 CWO [REDACTED] And for the record of the interview, we'll be --
11 Coast Guard will obtain copies of these training certificates to
12 include in the record.

13 BY CWO [REDACTED]

14 Q. Captain, how long have you been sailing?

15 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Entire, how long have you sailed?

16 MR. WIN CHO: How many years is --

17 MR. PIANKOWSKI: How many years?

18 CAPT. JIANBING: Serving 1-3 years. 1-3.

19 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Thirteen.

20 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah, 13.

21 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Thirteen years.

22 CAPT. JIANBING: Thirteen years.

23 BY CWO [REDACTED]

24 Q. And out of the 13 years, how long have you been a master?

25 A. Master, this is second trip.

1 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Second?

2 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah, second trip.

3 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Second command.

4 BY CWO [REDACTED]

5 Q. Okay. During the fire how did you account for all of the
6 crew on board? Can you describe that?

7 A. How count crew on board?

8 Q. How -- muster, how did you -- when the fire alarm went off,
9 did you hold a muster to account for crew?

10 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Did you count the crew members before you
11 have -- whenever the fire occurred?

12 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah. Yeah, I call my chief engineer. My
13 chief engineer counts the number of the crew.

14 BY CWO [REDACTED]

15 Q. Okay. And I know we discussed earlier, but for the record
16 for the transcript, you made a decision to discharge CO2 into the
17 cargo hold. Can you describe what made you make that decision to
18 use the CO2? Can you just -- can you talk about that?

19 A. Depends -- first, depends the cargo load in the hold and the
20 deck cargo loading on deck. The hatch cover cannot open. Because
21 I very familiar with what kind of cargo loading in the hold, what
22 situation in the hold. For the people to go down to detect the
23 fire, it's impossible.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I consider my people's safety. So I close the manholes

1 immediately and ask my chief engineer and the chief officer, also,
2 to call muster to counter -- to call my crew and count them one by
3 one to make sure everyone is outside. And I decide -- I think
4 fill the CO2 in hold to put out the fire is the best way. So I
5 make my decision.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Because I can on the number 2 hatch cover, I see the
8 (indiscernible) of smoke.

9 Q. Okay. Did -- after the CO2 was released into the number 3
10 cargo hold, can you describe what the crew was doing with adjacent
11 cargo holds? Were they doing any cooling with water hoses or
12 temperature readings, or how were you monitoring that the fire was
13 not spreading? Can you talk about that?

14 A. I (indiscernible), I urging to my crew search, search the --
15 search all around the number 3 hold, fore and the after, fore and
16 after just above the deck, just above the deck. Use the firehose
17 cooling the boundary.

18 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Boundary cooling.

19 CAPT. JIANBING: Boundary cooling. And my crew monitor the
20 temperature of the outside, just around -- no go inside.

21 BY CWO [REDACTED]

22 Q. And how many bottles of CO2 were discharged into the cargo
23 hold?

24 A. Actually, actually 59, 5-9.

25 Q. And how long did the -- how long did you maintain the water

1 cooling and temperature readings of the surrounding spaces?

2 A. The temperature after and -- after discharge the CO2, after
3 discharge the CO2, I arrange my people continuous measure the
4 temperature from the 01, 002, 0400. And they didn't find
5 temperature reading increase. It keeps normal. And after 0400,
6 and after crew measuring temperature 12 hours, 12 hours one time.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Twenty-four hours.

8 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah, 24 hours.

9 BY CWO [REDACTED]

10 Q. Who -- other than the -- notifying the crew and the crew
11 responding to the fire, did your ship notify anyone outside of the
12 vessel about the fire?

13 MR. PIANKOWSKI: You inform your company or whoever of the
14 fire?

15 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah, yeah. I notify my company.

16 BY CWO [REDACTED]

17 Q. Okay. What -- do you recall what time that notification to
18 your company was about the fire?

19 A. I remember, I just remember -- because I don't keep my watch,
20 I don't know the time exactly. After the CO2 discharge the hold,
21 I stay on the hatch cover of hold (indiscernible). I told -- I
22 ask my chief engineer in charge on the, in charge on the spot. I
23 go back into cabin, make phone call to head office Shanghai.

24 Q. Okay. Did -- was that via a phone or email?

25 A. Phone.

1 Q. Telephone call?

2 A. Yeah, telephone call.

3 Q. Okay. So just -- that was a few minutes after CO2 discharge?

4 A. Yeah. Sure. Okay.

5 Q. Did you get on -- go to the bridge and make any kind of radio
6 broadcast about the fire?

7 A. No.

8 Q. No? Okay. Did you notify the shoreside terminal that you
9 had a fire?

10 A. I was -- I send my report to my agent. To my agent, I came
11 to forward my --

12 Q. Okay. When did you notify your vessel agent? Was that the
13 same time you notified the company?

14 A. Maybe I need some time to write my report. After write
15 Wednesday --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- I send, I send that.

18 Q. Okay. How many guys -- before the fire alarm went off, how
19 many people were in the cargo hold doing welding?

20 A. Three people.

21 Q. Three people. Okay. So that's one welder and two watchmen?

22 A. Two watchmen.

23 Q. Okay. Can you describe where those men would normally be
24 positioned during welding in the cargo hold?

25 A. What kind of job for the --

1 Q. Because your cargo hold has three levels --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- can you describe -- okay, the welder is going to be right
4 where the hot work is. Where would you normally position the
5 watchmen for the fire watch? Where would they be in relation to
6 the welder?

7 A. One guy is -- one crew, one crew following the cut --
8 following the fitter. The fitter cutting job, cutting the stuff,
9 one crew following him and they watch on the spot. Another crew
10 will be go down, watch everywhere, search everywhere, go down.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. He found any hot (indiscernible) slag drop down below, he
13 search to (indiscernible) any abnormal and smoke.

14 Q. How often does your vessel crew conduct welding hot work with
15 cargo evolutions? Is that pretty common for the type of cargo you
16 normally carry?

17 A. Because this ship is a special for the general cargo ship,
18 and my crew has all the training for the cuts, the deck fitter
19 have the safety for the cuts.

20 MR. PIANKOWSKI: He said his job has been (indiscernible)
21 from very open. I mean, we are having heavy cars, lifted vessel,
22 you know, and this is the way how the cargo is secured. So this
23 has been pretty often. There is a lot of weldings usually on this
24 ship when they move cargo.

25 BY CWO [REDACTED]

1 Q. Does your vessel have any fire blankets or pads that they put
2 down when doing any kind of welding? Does your vessel ever use
3 any fire blankets?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Do you have some on board on the vessel?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. Do you know if those were used during the night of
8 this welding?

9 A. Yeah, yeah. I -- before the welding, before the welding we
10 have the hot permit work. We check the items one by one. All the
11 anti-fire, all the anti-fire measures should be carry out and
12 check okay, make sure the safety, we -- then we can start. We can
13 start to cut.

14 Q. For the anti-fire measures that you're describing, who on the
15 ship certifies that that's been done before the hot work starts?
16 Do you do that or chief mate? Who certifies that those measures
17 are in place?

18 A. Chief mate. Chief mate.

19 Q. Chief mate does. Okay.

20 A. Chief mate in charges the work. He gets the paper. All the
21 work is finished, he gets paper to my cabin. And ask of him, I
22 make sure everything is okay. I sign the paperwork for him.

23 Q. Okay. And to your knowledge, there was the -- no one --
24 chief mate did not mention any fire safety measures that were not
25 in place; is that correct? Okay.

1 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Say again? Maybe he's not hear the
2 question.

3 BY CWO [REDACTED]

4 Q. It was your understanding that all of the fire safety
5 measures were in place before the welding; is --

6 A. Yeah. Because I ensure that --

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hot work checklist you can properly?

8 CAPT. JIANBING: Yes, yes.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That is the question.

10 CAPT. JIANBING: Yes, because I sign it. I signature it. I
11 signature that.

12 BY MR. [REDACTED]

13 Q. Is there a hot work checklist for -- that you could, maybe we
14 could get a copy of that for this particular hot work evolution?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hot work checklist, you have this?

16 CAPT. JIANBING: Yes.

17 BY CWO [REDACTED]

18 Q. How work checklist?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Could we get a copy of that?

21 A. You can.

22 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. I don't have any further questions, so
23 I'll open it up to the other parties present.

24 MR. YOUNG: I have a few if that's okay.

25 CWO [REDACTED] All right. Go ahead.

1 BY MR. YOUNG:

2 Q. Thank you, Captain. This is Brian Young with the NTSB.

3 Would you please describe to us some of the anti-fire
4 measures that are checked for the permit so we can understand the
5 permit process for hot work?

6 A. It's a lot, it's a lot of items. I cannot remember. I need
7 to, to get the copies and review them.

8 Q. Okay. Do you know if there is certain equipment that the
9 fire watch is required to have? As a fire watch are they required
10 to carry extinguishers in the space that's hot work?

11 A. Must be.

12 Q. Must be?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. Okay. Do you know if the fire watch had extinguishers or
15 some type of fire extinguishing agent with them that night?

16 A. Yeah, I ask him. He told me he take it. I told --

17 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Portable fire extinguisher?

18 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah.

19 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Okay. Thank you.

20 BY MR. YOUNG:

21 Q. Do you know if there is a certain time that the men must stay
22 in a space after hot work is complete?

23 A. After that, I also in the investigation my crew, I ask them,
24 I gave you permission for there 25 minutes or half hours that is
25 there.

1 Q. Okay. So after hot work is complete?

2 A. Yes. But after the port side, the hot work is accomplished,
3 they stay there about half hours, 25 minutes to half hour,
4 something like that. And they go to starboard side in the same
5 hold. Go to the starboard side in the same hold.

6 Q. Okay. When they were working on the port side, do you know
7 if there is much lighting or is it very dark in that space?

8 A. We have a color code -- we have color code lights in the
9 (indiscernible) we switch on.

10 Q. And where are those lights located? On forward and aft
11 bulkheads or in the overhead?

12 A. The overhead in (indiscernible) in the bulkhead. In the
13 bulkhead in the (indiscernible) bulkhead.

14 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Bulkhead.

15 BY MR. YOUNG:

16 Q. In the bulkhead. Forward and aft?

17 A. Not forward.

18 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Bulkhead is side. So the side part.

19 CAPT. JIANBING: On the side.

20 BY MR. YOUNG:

21 Q. Okay. And is it pretty well illuminated with those lights on
22 or is it still dark in there?

23 A. You know, it's hard to say because the hatch cover is closed
24 and the (indiscernible) on the lights should be on the starboard
25 head side, on bulkhead side near lights, near lights is the lights

1 very -- I see, because it's good. And near the stair we have
2 lights go down. We have the lights for ladder. But I'm not sure
3 the -- because my crew go down the cargo hold work, I went prepare
4 the torch, (indiscernible) highlight torch so they can search.

5 Q. Okay. So they had flashlights or torches with them?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. When the crew was performing hot work in cargo hold 3
8 on the port side, were they using oxyacetylene torch for cutting
9 or other type of hot work machine?

10 A. For --

11 Q. For the cutting.

12 A. Port side?

13 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Your (indiscernible). Gas.

14 MR. YOUNG: Gas. Oxygen acetylene?

15 CAPT. JIANBING: Oxygen. Yeah, oxygen ace --

16 MR. YOUNG: Oxyacetylene.

17 BY MR. YOUNG:

18 Q. And do you know if those bottles were located in the cargo
19 hold or just hoses from away?

20 A. From the outside.

21 Q. From the outside.

22 A. The bottles on deck.

23 Q. On deck. Okay.

24 And about how long was the hot work going on in that cargo
25 hold before the fire? Were they welding for many hours and

1 cutting prior to the fire, or did they just start?

2 MR. PIANKOWSKI: What time they start cutting on port side
3 and what time they finish?

4 CAPT. JIANBING: Port side we start 1950.

5 BY MR. YOUNG:

6 Q. 1950?

7 A. Yeah. And the fire is on 0010, next day.

8 Q. 0010?

9 A. Yeah. 0010. The fire alarm is on bridge.

10 Q. So a question about the fire alarm. We understand there are
11 sensors in the cargo hold and then there's a unit in the CO2 room?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. When the fire alarm is detected in a cargo hold, where is the
14 alarm ringing?

15 MR. PIANKOWSKI: The whole entire ship. Even the alarm
16 (indiscernible) is connected to the ship's siren. So it's being
17 sounded inside and outside. You cannot hear it -- you cannot not
18 hear it, you know.

19 MR. YOUNG: Is it the same as the general alarm or different?

20 MR. PIANKOWSKI: This is -- I don't know how is fire alarm.

21 Fire alarm, so this is the same like seven short and one
22 long?

23 CAPT. JIANBING: No, no, no, no.

24 MR. WIN CHO: Was it bell or by horn or --

25 CAPT. JIANBING: By horn.

1 MR. WIN CHO: Horn. Okay.

2 MR. PIANKOWSKI: But this is the same alarm like the general
3 alarm, fire alarm?

4 CAPT. JIANBING: No. See, general alarm -- general alarm, we
5 use general alarm we can put abandon ship alarm.

6 BY MR. YOUNG:

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. But this alarm is very, very --

9 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Different audible?

10 CAPT. JIANBING: Is different.

11 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Different audible.

12 CAPT. JIANBING: Completely different.

13 BY MR. YOUNG:

14 Q. Different.

15 A. You can identify that's the fire alarm.

16 Q. Okay. Okay. And no matter where the fire is, whether cargo
17 hold, engine room --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. -- same sound?

20 A. Yes, yes. Yes, constant; alarm is continue.

21 Q. Continue.

22 A. So outside is very, very loud.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And the inside also.

25 Q. Inside, outside very loud.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Separate from general alarm. Okay.

3 Do you remember what time you heard the alarm?

4 A. I just remember 0010.

5 Q. Okay. And then to identify where the fire is, you can see a
6 readout on the bridge?

7 A. On the bridge. On the bridge.

8 Q. And does the fire detection system identify the cargo hold
9 and side or just cargo hold?

10 A. Just -- we know, we know the cargo hold is number 3 because
11 we have the instruction; instruction can check where is a fire.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. We can identify that.

14 Q. After you identified fire in cargo hold 3, did you also ring
15 the general alarm to alert the crew or did you call on a radio?

16 A. I broadcast, broadcast. I broadcast the -- and the alarm.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, you raised the alarm broadcast to
18 call the crew, right?

19 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah, broadcast to call the crew.

20 BY MR. YOUNG:

21 Q. Using the PA system?

22 A. No, no. Broadcasting system.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Broadcasting system, okay.

24 CAPT. JIANBING: Broadcasting system.

25 BY MR. YOUNG:

1 Q. Okay. Okay. Broadcasting system.

2 Are you able to communicate with the fitter in the cargo hold
3 on the radio?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Yes?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Does the fire watch have a radio as well?

8 A. Yeah. So the two mans, the fitter -- the fitter did have the
9 radio, but the oiler follow the fitter have the radio, have the
10 radio always stand by near the fitter. Another guy is -- another
11 fire watchman have the radio. We got two radios in the hold.

12 Q. Two radios in the hold?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Was the fitter going to continue to work beyond
15 midnight or was he complete with work around midnight? What are
16 his hours, the fitter? When is his workday done?

17 A. Maybe -- I told him 0-1 -- 0100 maybe you can finish the
18 number 3 hold port side work. Maybe 0-3-0 -- because the
19 (indiscernible) pieces still left in the starboard side, it's soon
20 -- it's faster to finish before the fire alarms start.

21 Q. So when --

22 A. We almost done when --

23 Q. Almost done. So the fitter was completing the work on the
24 port side --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- and then was going to do some more work on starboard side?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. And was there cargo operations going on at night or
4 waiting till the morning?

5 A. At night no cargo operation. Waiting on the morning.

6 Q. Okay. Are there other fitters, or just one on the ship?

7 A. One fitter.

8 Q. One fitter only?

9 A. Yes. One fitter only.

10 Q. Okay. And about how many hours does the fitter work in port
11 to cut all the brackets off?

12 A. Sometimes from one night at zero start work. Started work
13 and then he work, he cuts, cut a few pieces then stops, and then
14 go outside and have -- take a break, drink some water and take
15 some break, and then go down again.

16 Q. Okay. So there's only one fitter on your crew; is that
17 correct?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Can you also discuss in the firefighting effort about the
20 ventilation system, the mechanical ventilation in the cargo hold?
21 Were there any fans running at the time that the hot work was
22 being conducted for ventilation?

23 A. No. No.

24 Q. No?

25 A. No ventilation.

1 Q. Okay. Do you know if the dampers were open at the time of
2 the fire?

3 A. I don't remember that open or closed.

4 MR. PIANKOWSKI: So you don't know.

5 BY MR. YOUNG:

6 Q. Are they normally kept open or closed underway or in port?

7 A. Normally, normally we go down, we go down the -- go down
8 catch the job, we normally open them for ventilation.

9 Q. Okay. When all the ventilation dampers are closed and the
10 manhole is closed, is the cargo hold considered a confined space?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. It is?

13 A. This means enclosed the space?

14 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Enclosed space, yes.

15 BY MR. YOUNG:

16 Q. Okay. And when all the dampers and manholes are closed and
17 pontoons are closed, is there a process or procedure that's
18 required to enter the space? Do you have to have a permit to go
19 into the cargo hold?

20 A. Yeah, I have, I have the permits.

21 Q. Okay. But the company considers the cargo hold a confined
22 space --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. -- when everything is closed?

25 A. Company considers the cargo hold if the hatch cover is

1 closed, as a enclosed space, as an enclosed space.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. We have a list for that.

4 Q. Okay. And then when all the hatches are open, it's not an
5 enclosed space anymore; is that correct? Or is it always an
6 enclosed space?

7 CAPT. JIANBING: Say (indiscernible)?

8 MR. PIANKOWSKI: If the hatch cover are open, then it's no
9 enclosed space anymore, right?

10 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah.

11 BY MR. YOUNG:

12 Q. So then no more permit?

13 MR. PIANKOWSKI: If everything's open, (indiscernible)?

14 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah.

15 BY MR. YOUNG:

16 Q. All right. Just checking.

17 Do you remember if during the firefighting event that the
18 manholes and dampers were secured and checked to make sure that
19 there was no more air coming into the cargo hold?

20 A. You mean the fire occur, we --

21 MR. WIN CHO: Yeah, when you released the CO2, you seal all
22 the hatch cover?

23 CAPT. JIANBING: Yes, yes. That must be check, and I check
24 the procedure.

25 BY MR. YOUNG:

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Firefighting procedure.

3 Q. There is a firefighting procedure that helps you fight the
4 fire on the ship?

5 A. (No audible response.)

6 Q. And is that in your safety management system?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. On your fire detection system do you remember how
9 frequently it's tested?

10 MR. PIANKOWSKI: According the manual, ship's procedure, how
11 often -- every week, every month -- how often you check this fire
12 system?

13 CAPT. JIANBING: We get a manual, according the manual we
14 have the -- well, we have the record for that. We have the record
15 for that so maintenance the, maintenance the system in good
16 condition.

17 BY MR. YOUNG:

18 Q. Okay. And do you recall if there were any problems with the
19 fire detection system? No?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Okay. When you mustered your people and assembled your
22 people, did any of the men get suited up in firefighting gear such
23 as helmets and the jacket and the gloves?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Yes?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. And was that the team that was doing the boundary cooling?

3 MR. WIN CHO: They wear the proper dress when they making the
4 boundary cooling water? Fire watch, they wear the coverall,
5 helmet, everything?

6 CAPT. JIANBING: Yes. Yes, yes. Always like the training.

7 BY MR. YOUNG:

8 Q. Okay. How often do you train for firefighting?

9 A. One week.

10 Q. Every week?

11 A. Every week, yes. Every week.

12 Q. Okay. During your firefighting training do you train about
13 releasing CO2?

14 A. Of course.

15 Q. Yes. And what the Coast Guard was asking before was, do you
16 have a choice of the quantity of CO2 bottles to release based on
17 the volume of cargo?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. So what made you decide to use 6-0 bottles? Can you tell us
20 about how you were thinking about the quantity of cargo in that
21 hold?

22 A. Depended, depended the instruction for the CO2 manual, the
23 post on the CO2 room, and also -- I also check the training. We
24 remember, we generally remember if the cargo hold is empty, we
25 need how many bottles; if the cargo is half loaded, we need a

1 different; and if the cargo hold is full loaded, we need another
2 figure. So I asked my third officer to check, to check, okay, how
3 many bottles.

4 Q. Okay. And when you decided to release 6-0 bottles, is it --
5 does that require manually operating 6-0 bottles to release all of
6 them, or is there one pilot bottle to release to set off a bank of
7 CO2 bottles?

8 A. I don't ask the chief. I just ask him to release not at one
9 time six bottles. We got in 10 by 10 -- 10 by 10, because the
10 high pressure to -- you don't -- from the 0020 to the -- from --
11 we need 10 minutes, 10 minutes, 6 bottles go down. That was the
12 -- we got some times -- I didn't ask him by manual one by one.

13 Q. Okay. And when the ship is in port, is there a mate on watch
14 who makes rounds around the vessel, or is the mate on the bridge
15 in port?

16 A. The mate is not on bridge.

17 MR. PIANKOWSKI: No, duty officer.

18 CAPT. JIANBING: Duty officer?

19 MR. YOUNG: Yeah.

20 CAPT. JIANBING: On the deck.

21 BY MR. YOUNG:

22 Q. On the deck?

23 A. On deck, search on the deck.

24 Q. Okay. And is -- at the time of the fire, was the duty
25 officer the third mate who assisted with CO2 or a different mate?

1 Who was on watch as the duty officer at the time of the fire?

2 A. Second officer.

3 Q. Second officer. Okay.

4 MR. PIANKOWSKI: If I may ask, because I'm thinking that this
5 is some misunderstanding. But the second officer is not that
6 officer who is releasing the bottles, right?

7 CAPT. JIANBING: Yes.

8 MR. PIANKOWSKI: It is usually being done by the chief
9 engineer, right? Who was releasing the bottles, second officer or
10 the chief engineer?

11 CAPT. JIANBING: Third officer.

12 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Third officer. Okay.

13 CAPT. JIANBING: I also ask the second engineer to assist
14 him.

15 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Okay. Okay.

16 BY MR. YOUNG:

17 Q. Do you know how the hot work -- the fitter and the fire watch
18 were able to leave 3 hold? Did they come up through the starboard
19 side or through the port side? Do you know?

20 A. I heard from their radio, that guy -- please say again, sir.

21 Q. How did the fitter and the fire watch escape the fire?
22 Through the port side or starboard side?

23 MR. PIANKOWSKI: We have only the --

24 CAPT. JIANBING: Starboard side. Starboard side. On the
25 starboard side.

1 BY MR. YOUNG:

2 Q. Starboard side. So we understand the cargo hold 3, even
3 though it's separated port and starboard, has access between port
4 and starboard on the lower level, correct?

5 A. Yes. Yes.

6 Q. So they --

7 A. They escaped from starboard side.

8 Q. Starboard side. Okay. When the CO2 is released to 3 hold,
9 does it release into port and starboard or only port or only
10 starboard?

11 A. The port side and starboard side.

12 Q. Both. So the entire 3 hold --

13 A. Entire.

14 Q. -- received CO2?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay. Were -- was there going to be more hot work in other
17 holds other than 3 hold for this port stay or was 3 hold the only
18 place for hot work?

19 A. The whole week we have number 4 hold, number 4 hold.

20 Q. Also?

21 A. Yeah. Also number 4 hold.

22 Q. Was that work done before the fire or after?

23 A. After the fire.

24 Q. After the fire. And was the same fitter doing the hot work
25 for number 4?

1 A. We get same shop. Yeah. So --

2 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Having a -- there was a -- rest of -- at the
3 beginning, they don't want to allow the crew members to use the
4 torch anymore, so the intention was to arrange them, the shore
5 (indiscernible) with the grinders, big grinders. But finally they
6 figure out that it's impossible to use the grinders and they are
7 to (indiscernible) doing the same thing with the torches.

8 MR. YOUNG: After the fire?

9 MR. PIANKOWSKI: After the fire. I mean, after releasing the
10 hot work permit by (indiscernible), yeah.

11 MR. SPEARS: I came out the following day. I inspected the
12 CO2 system -- this is Daniel Spears, Port Houston Fire.

13 MR. YOUNG: Thank you.

14 MR. SPEARS: I inspected the CO2 system. I spoke with Fire
15 Protection Services, who was fixing it. They said it was in
16 service and was able to extinguish any fire in cargo hold number
17 3. I inspected the cargo hold and the work area and their
18 extinguishers and their safety precautions. The cargo hold was
19 completely open, open air. And I issued a hot work permit for
20 that day.

21 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Was that for 4 hold or 3 hold?

22 MR. SPEARS: That was for 3.

23 MR. YOUNG: Three hold. Okay.

24 BY MR. YOUNG:

25 Q. And when you issue a shipboard hot work permit is it only

1 issued for a certain location or can you have one hot work permit
2 for 3 hold and 4 hold and 5 hold, or --

3 A. No, no.

4 Q. Separate permit?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. For each space.

7 A. Separate, separate permit each space.

8 Q. Okay. And how long is the permit effective?

9 A. It depend on, it depend on the -- how many stuff we need cut.
10 How many we just -- on the days, on one days, and if the -- for
11 example, if the days of the cargo cutting work is going to finish,
12 we start -- we will start tomorrow and we will start tomorrow at
13 -- we will -- before the start we will must be get another permit.

14 Q. Very good. And in order to issue a permit is the atmosphere
15 checked with a meter before starting hot work?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And who does that test?

18 A. Chief mate.

19 Q. Chief mate. Okay. And do you know if the meter has been
20 calibrated frequently?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Yes? You have --

23 A. Yeah, a certificate.

24 MR. YOUNG: Okay. That's all my questions for now. If
25 anybody else --

1 MR. HENSLEY: I wanted to clarify a couple of things. This
2 is Hensley with the fire marshal's office. And you guys can
3 probably help me answer these.

4 I understand the oxygen acetylene is -- it's not a portable
5 unit, it's actually a onboard unit with long hoses that go down
6 in. Is that what I understood?

7 MR. YOUNG: That's what it sounded like. The --

8 MR. HENSLEY: Okay. So it's not like a small portable unit,
9 it's actually attached to the ship and --

10 MR. YOUNG: Right.

11 MR. HENSLEY: Okay.

12 BY MR. YOUNG:

13 Q. Is the oxygen acetylene gas for cutting, is that hoses from
14 the engine room or hard piped or portable bottles?

15 A. Portable.

16 MR. WIN CHO: The bottles.

17 CAPT. JIANBING: Portable bottles.

18 BY MR. YOUNG:

19 Q. But the bottles were not in a tank, they were up on deck?
20 For cutting.

21 A. On the passageway.

22 MR. PIANKOWSKI: On the bow. Yes, on the deck of the
23 passageway. Yeah.

24 BY MR. YOUNG:

25 Q. Usually they're in a cart with wheels that you can move

1 around.

2 A. Yeah, yeah.

3 Q. Is that what it is?

4 A. We have the, we have the carts that they -- the little cart.

5 Q. And the size of the bottle is similar to the CO2 bottle?

6 That big, or smaller?

7 A. It's similar. Yes, yes. Similar. Both similar.

8 MR. YOUNG: So they're in a cart.

9 MR. HENSLEY: Okay.

10 BY MR. YOUNG:

11 Q. Same size as a CO2 bottle? One oxygen, one acetylene --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- in the cart? Okay.

14 MR. HENSLEY: Maybe before we get off the ship, we could --
15 I'd like to get a picture of that, one of those, just an exemplar
16 of one of the carts.

17 MR. YOUNG: Sure.

18 MR. HENSLEY: And then my other question -- I think I
19 understood that the cutting started at 1950 and it was 0010 is
20 when the fire alarm went off? That's what I understood. Did
21 everybody get that same information? Okay.

22 And then I guess the one thing I wasn't clear on was, was the
23 workers actually down in there when they noticed the fire or was
24 all the work done, the hatch is closed, and not till the fire
25 alarm went off, then we knew there was a fire?

1 MR. SPEARS: They had transferred -- the hatch was covered.
2 They had transferred from the port side --

3 MR. HENSLEY: Right.

4 MR. SPEARS: -- to the starboard side and were over there
5 when the --

6 MR. HENSLEY: So nobody saw the fire till -- well, just the
7 alarm went off and then they went and found it?

8 MR. SPEARS: Right.

9 MR. HENSLEY: That's what I wanted to make sure I had clear.
10 Okay.

11 BY MR. YOUNG:

12 Q. So to clarify, the hot work team was not in the port side
13 when the fire started; is that correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Do you know where the fire team was when the fire alarm
16 sounded?

17 A. In the starboard side.

18 Q. Starboard side. Okay.

19 Did the fire team call on the radio that they smelled a fire
20 or sensed the fire?

21 A. On the bridge, I checking my radio. I heard, I heard a sound
22 alarm. I heard the radio. Then my, then my report smell some
23 smoke, smell some smoke in the -- in starboard side. He search
24 around until he found the, until he found the abnormal on the
25 starboard side, so he go off.

1 Q. So he did not go into the port side?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. He just went up?

4 A. Yeah, yeah.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Only know the cargo load in the hold is very (indiscernible)
7 to the starboard to the port side.

8 Q. Right. Right.

9 Before 1950 for the hot work, was there any other hot work
10 before this time in that hole?

11 A. No.

12 Q. This is the first time any hot work since you arrived in
13 port?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. In 3 hold?

16 A. Yeah, after I get the hot permit from my agent, they start
17 the work.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. First I get hot permits.

20 Q. Okay. Do you -- when you come into many different ports in
21 the United States, how are you made aware that you have to have a
22 permit from the different ports? How do you know this?

23 A. I just go tell him -- get the information from my agent. I
24 see the application for the hot work permits, ask my agent to get
25 the permit from the (indiscernible).

1 Q. Okay. And when you started the hot work permit procedure for
2 this port in Houston, the agent called somebody to bring a --
3 somebody on the ship? Is that true?

4 A. Yes. Marine chemist, marine chemist come on board.

5 Q. Okay. And do you remember when the marine chemist came
6 aboard?

7 A. I think certificate here to ensure the (indiscernible) for
8 me.

9 Q. Okay. And what areas on the ship did the marine chemist
10 inspect?

11 A. Exact I don't know. The chief officer accompany here,
12 accompany the guys around the ship.

13 Q. Okay. And did the marine chemist speak with you about his
14 permit?

15 A. I go down the ship's office and met him. I ask a few
16 questions about the permits.

17 Q. And did you -- did the marine chemist have any special
18 request or anything he said to you about the welding and cutting
19 on the ship that you remember?

20 A. Oh, oh, the guys, the guys just -- the guys told -- ask me
21 the way the cuts are stop, the way the cuts are stop, you measure
22 cuts a little high, do not touch the hatch cover because they say
23 the pontoons is enclosed space and some air in there, you must
24 leave some space for the pontoon. There was a head space to be --
25 where it hits the pontoons, impossible to explode. So I asked him

1 make a -- cut the stops very high.

2 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Thank you. I have -- I'm all set with my
3 questions.

4 BY MR. HENSLEY:

5 Q. Hensley again with the fire marshal. I had a question about
6 smoking, people smoking below. I thought it was said there was no
7 smoking posted, but we found cigarette butts down in there, so I
8 don't know what the smoking procedures were.

9 During a fire investigation we always want to rule out all
10 ignition sources. I'm pretty confident we can rule out smoking,
11 but we did find discarded smoking materials on the decks below, so
12 I didn't know what the procedures were for the crew smoking while
13 they're down there working.

14 A. No, I know that -- I ask them no smoking in hold. I also ask
15 the stevedore, I ask the stevedores that working (indiscernible)
16 the hold, no smoking in hold. No smoking in hold. My crew, I'm
17 sure my crew comply with the regulation, no -- they didn't smoke
18 in hold.

19 Q. Do we know how the cigarette butts might have got down there?
20 Are they flipped from the top?

21 MR. SPEARS: So -- this is Daniel Spears, Port of Houston
22 Fire. It's very common for the stevedores or longshoremen to
23 smoke when on board a vessel, even though it is strictly
24 prohibited by the (indiscernible).

25 MR. HENSLEY: Okay.

1 MR. SPEARS: And it's also prohibited by the ship's crew.

2 MR. HENSLEY: Okay.

3 MR. SPEARS: They do it anyway.

4 MR. HENSLEY: Okay. So they would do it without the captain
5 or somebody knowing? They just --

6 MR. SPEARS: That is correct. I see it a lot.

7 MR. HENSLEY: Okay. That was all I had. I just -- because
8 we saw -- I wanted to note that we did see discarded smoking
9 materials.

10 MR. SPEARS: It happens all the time.

11 MR. HENSLEY: Okay.

12 MR. SPEARS: It's a constant battle.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Are there any other questions for the captain?

14 MR. SPEARS: I had one. Daniel Spears, Port of Houston.

15 BY MR. SPEARS:

16 Q. At what time did you activate your vessel response plan? If
17 you did indeed activate it.

18 A. So emergency response?

19 Q. Yes. What time did you activate that?

20 A. We go on the bridge, I check the -- will check the actual
21 fire in the hold, I active my emergency response.

22 Q. Okay. And at that time your salvage company was contacted?
23 Which I believe is Ardent?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ardent Global.

25 BY MR. SPEARS:

1 Q. Ardent Global was contacted at that time?

2 A. No.

3 Q. No. Were they contacted?

4 A. I just -- I just send my report to my agent, ask him. Ask
5 him to contact. Because Ardent, Ardent contact, we -- before
6 leave here, we also have -- make phone call, have (indiscernible)
7 contact him, contact with him, with (indiscernible).

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Normally we have the pollution -- oil spill, pollution
10 accident, so we inform them.

11 MR. SPEARS: Okay.

12 BY MR. YOUNG:

13 Q. Do you remember about what time you contacted the agent about
14 this fire? Can you recall that?

15 A. I send him (indiscernible) email. First I send email; after,
16 I make phone call him.

17 Q. Was it still dark out when you sent the email or light or
18 after breakfast?

19 A. Well, I send an email outside is still dark.

20 Q. Still dark. Okay. Was it during the time when the boundary
21 was still being cooled or was it after -- can you estimate about
22 what time you remember calling or emailing the agent? Still dark?

23 A. There's a history. Check my emails.

24 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yes, (indiscernible) printed email was in
25 charge of this, in charge of the ship for the contact. He receive

1 notification as we know about 3 a.m. in writing. And then
2 followed by the phone call from master around 8:00 once
3 (indiscernible) was allowed to work. So, so he didn't -- he was
4 not checking emails during the night. So the phone call was
5 around 8:00 in the morning.

6 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

7 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yeah.

8 MR. YOUNG: Thanks. That's (indiscernible). Thank you.

9 BY MR. YOUNG:

10 Q. And I'm sorry to jump around, but one more question about the
11 CO2 system. After you discharged the 6-0 bottles, is your CO2
12 equipped that you could have dumped more if you need it? Or --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. You could?

15 A. We have, we still have after 60, we still have 67 bottles.

16 Q. Because your whole system comprises of how many bottles?

17 A. 126 bottles.

18 Q. And all 126 bottles could be used for a cargo hold fire?

19 A. Yeah, could be used.

20 Q. Okay. And -- okay. That's good. Thank you.

21 Do you have any questions for us?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Or anything else to help explain what happened during the
24 fire? Or anything we didn't ask you, to help us understand
25 before, during and after the event?

1 A. No.

2 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Thank you, Captain. We're going to stop
3 the recording. It is 10:24. Thank you, Captain.

4 (Whereupon, at 10:24 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE IN CARGO HOLD ABOARD THE
CHIPOLBROK MOON
Interview of Zhao Jianbing, Captain

ACCIDENT NO. DCA18FM025

PLACE: On board the *Chipolbrok Moon*

DATE: May 27, 2018

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.



Kay Maurer
Transcriber