

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: JING LINGANG
Chief Mate

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

ZHAO JIANBING, Captain
Chipolbrok Moon

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 CWO [REDACTED]: Good morning. This is Chief Warrant Officer
3 [REDACTED]. We're going to resume interviews on the *Chipolbrok Moon*.
4 Today is Sunday, May 27th, and we're going to be interviewing the
5 chief mate.

6 Can you pronounce your name for the recording?

7 MR. LIGANG: Jing Ligang.

8 CWO [REDACTED]: Okay. And since we're recording for a
9 transcript, can you spell out your name?

10 MR. LIGANG: Yes. Spell J-I-November-Golf; Lima-India-Golf-
11 Alpha-November-Golf.

12 MR. HENSLEY: Okay. Which one is it?

13 MR. YOUNG: Number 4.

14 MR. HENSLEY: Okay. Okay, I got it.

INTERVIEW OF CHIEF MATE JING LIGANG

15
16 BY CWO [REDACTED]

17 Q. Chief, can you just talk us through briefly about how many
18 years you've been sailing, how long you've been a chief mate, and
19 then we'll go into what you recall from the night of the fire,
20 we'll let, just let you talk about that.

21 A. The -- only the fire, fire as it occur?

22 (Conversation in Chinese)

23 MR. LIGANG: 1-3, 1-3, 1-3 years.

24 BY CWO [REDACTED]

25 Q. You've been sailing 3 years?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 1-3, 13.

2 MR. HENSLEY: Thirteen.

3 BY CWO [REDACTED]

4 Q. Thirteen years.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. And how long have you been a chief mate?

7 A. Four year.

8 Q. Four years?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. So briefly talk to us about the fire, how you were
11 made aware of the fire, and then just talk to us about what you
12 recall from that night.

13 A. (Untranslated Chinese)

14 MR. PIANKOWSKI: What do you remember?

15 MR. LIGANG: Remember?

16 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yeah, what happened?

17 MR. LIGANG: Recall. Yeah, I heard the fire alarm. I heard
18 fire alarm, fire alarm and the call. And use walk-talk and muster
19 the fire on port.

20 BY CWO [REDACTED]

21 Q. When the fire alarm sounded, did -- were you able to account
22 for all of the crew?

23 A. Yeah, to my best, count all crew, all crew with the muster.

24 Q. Did you have any crew doing hot work welding prior to the
25 fire?

1 A. Yeah, I know, I know.

2 Q. Okay. Do you as a chief mate, do you give them the work, the
3 tasking for the hot work, the welding?

4 A. Yeah, yeah. Take the hot permit.

5 Q. Permit. Okay.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Is there a company checklist for hot work welding?

8 A. Yeah, checklist on hot work.

9 Q. Okay. Was that checklist done for this time of welding and
10 hot work?

11 A. Yeah. Yes, check.

12 Q. The checklist. Okay.

13 A. Our checklist.

14 Q. Okay, maybe -- and we'll get a, maybe we'll get a copy of
15 that later. But did you -- you signed off on the checklist as
16 chief mate?

17 A. Okay. I show you.

18 Q. Okay. Did -- was there anything from the checklist for
19 safety, anti-fire measures, was there anything that was not in
20 place per the checklist?

21 A. Just checklist --

22 MR. PIANKOWSKI: So the question is, whenever you check, you
23 do the checklist, right?

24 MR. LIGANG: Yeah.

25 MR. PIANKOWSKI: If everything was okay? I mean, if

1 everything was in place according to the checklist?

2 MR. LIGANG: Yes. I have the checklist. Yes, sir.

3 BY CWO [REDACTED]

4 Q. Maybe, maybe we can stop the questioning just for a second
5 and we could maybe allow you to go get a copy of the checklist,
6 and we could see what's actually on the checklist? Could --

7 A. Yeah, now you want to see the checklist?

8 Q. Yeah. I think that might be good for --

9 CWO [REDACTED] We're going to stop the questioning and --

10 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Pause the recording.

11 (Off the record.)

12 (On the record.)

13 MR. YOUNG: Okay. We'll resume the recording now. It's
14 10:39.

15 BY CWO [REDACTED]

16 Q. Chief, one of the first items here on the checklist is: Is
17 the working area clear of combustible materials? Fire -- things
18 that can catch on fire?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Did -- what is the company's policy on distance from any hot
21 work or welding with combustible material like wood or fabric,
22 anything that the fire sparks could get to? How do you determine
23 an area is clear and good for hot work?

24 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Before, before.

25 MR. LIGANG: Yeah. Clear the fire material from close.

1 BY CWO [REDACTED]

2 Q. Is there a distance?

3 A. Yeah, a distance, like clean (indiscernible)

4 Q. From where -- from how far? Like if you were welding, how
5 far clear area?

6 A. You normally, you normally -- the hold, I normally put two
7 sides, the cleaning for the hot work. And you need the hold, I
8 cleaning the fire material and I separate, put on this side, on
9 this side --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- the hold.

12 Q. Were there any fire blankets, fire pads put down before the
13 welding?

14 MR. PIANKOWSKI: On top.

15 MR. LIGANG: Yeah, blanket is -- before the hot work, I put,
16 put that on.

17 BY CWO [REDACTED]

18 Q. Where were the fire blankets put down at?

19 A. Yeah, take a bag, I take a bag of (indiscernible) and put it
20 on cracks by the (indiscernible) and then -- but, you know, is
21 there some cargo you put on and some close in -- cracks?

22 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Cracks.

23 MR. LIGANG: Have cracks, and no possible, no possible to put
24 on the blanket. No -- all, all put on, because now inside very
25 hard, very hard to put on the fire blanket.

1 MR. PIANKOWSKI: So is that --

2 MR. LIGANG: (Indiscernible)

3 MR. PIANKOWSKI: So I understand that the blankets were put
4 in the gaps between the pontoons, and in between the pontoons and
5 the ship's bulkhead. But you are saying that it's impossible
6 because of the nature of the cargo to put the blankets everywhere.

7 MR. LIGANG: Yes.

8 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Is that a true statement?

9 MR. LIGANG: Yeah, yeah.

10 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yes. Okay.

11 MR. LIGANG: Yes.

12 BY CWO [REDACTED]

13 Q. Do you have -- how many fire blankets do you have on board?

14 A. Total --

15 MR. PIANKOWSKI: There is a fire plan, right? And on the
16 fire plan there is a minimum quantity of the fire blanket required
17 on the ship, right? They have this minimum quantity?

18 MR. LIGANG: Yes, yes.

19 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yes. They have maybe more for work, maybe
20 yes?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They have more.

22 BY CWO [REDACTED]

23 Q. Do you have enough or did you have enough fire blankets to
24 cover the area where the hot work was going to be done?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. You're saying there was gaps where the blankets were?

2 A. Yeah, gaps. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. So --

4 A. I say I do my best on the gaps, but I put down
5 (indiscernible) the blankets.

6 Q. So some fire blankets were put out, but there were still gaps
7 between the fire blankets. Okay.

8 What -- can you talk to me about the company policies on a
9 fire watch for hot work welding? What is the normal procedure for
10 a watchman?

11 A. The -- yeah, the changing the watchman, changing before the
12 hot work and the changing.

13 Q. Where would the watchman normally -- where would they
14 normally be in relation to the welder, and then how many of them
15 would there be?

16 A. Minimum, we got two -- minimum we got two.

17 Q. Minimum of two?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay. And where would you position the watchmen?

20 A. Normally when people take the firefighting and other
21 (indiscernible), I know at the after deck and we will check the
22 car hold and looking aft the cargo hold.

23 MR. PIANKOWSKI: So one is same level and one is below level,
24 right?

25 MR. LIGANG: Yeah, yeah. Normally, yeah.

1 BY CWO [REDACTED]

2 Q. Is that how it was done this night, the night of the fire?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay. Did any of the welders or watchmen, did anyone have a
5 fire extinguisher with them?

6 A. Yeah, yeah.

7 Q. They did?

8 A. They did.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Firefighting and the pad -- and a hose, water hose.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Yeah. But the cargo, it was in the very (indiscernible),
13 very (indiscernible), and then was here your (indiscernible).

14 Q. When the hot work was going on were there lights on in the
15 cargo hold?

16 A. The cargo hold have a light and I take the portable --

17 Q. A portable. Okay.

18 A. -- for an flashlight. Yeah.

19 Q. So were they using -- were the lights on when they were doing
20 the welding or just flashlight, torch?

21 (Conversation in Chinese)

22 MR. LIGANG: Yeah. The cargo light, they use --

23 BY CWO [REDACTED]

24 Q. The cargo lights were on?

25 A. They turn on. And they take also the flashlight.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. The hose for the welds, for the oxygen acetylene, the
4 welding, can it reach the entire cargo space or do they have to
5 bring the cart down into the cargo hold? Is the hose long enough
6 to reach the entire space?

7 (Conversation in Chinese)

8 MR. LIGANG: Not less.

9 BY CWO [REDACTED]

10 Q. The hose is long enough?

11 A. Yeah, long enough.

12 Q. When the fire alarm sounded, what are your normal duties
13 during a fire?

14 A. I hear fire alarm.

15 Q. Okay.

16 (Conversation in Chinese)

17 MR. LIGANG: I was forward and I hear the fire
18 (indiscernible) and collect, muster the people and conduct on the
19 spot.

20 BY CWO [REDACTED]

21 Q. How long did cooling of the surrounding cargo holds, how long
22 did that go on for? How long was the fire pump running?

23 A. Two minutes, 2 minutes of the --

24 Q. Two minutes?

25 A. Two minutes to start. Two minutes to start the fire pump.

1 Q. So 2 minutes to start the pump?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How long?

3 MR. PIANKOWSKI: How long?

4 BY CWO [REDACTED]

5 Q. How long did the fire pump run?

6 (Conversation in Chinese)

7 MR. LIGANG: Two hours.

8 BY CWO [REDACTED]

9 Q. Two hours. Okay.

10 A. Yeah, the cool.

11 Q. And do you have a log of the -- of your temperature readings
12 taken from adjacent spaces?

13 A. No.

14 Q. No? How did you tell if -- what were you using to record the
15 temperatures? Was it an actual instrument device or was it just
16 with hand, hot -- to feel warm?

17 A. Use the hand.

18 Q. Just with the hand? Okay.

19 A. Yeah, yeah.

20 CWO [REDACTED] I don't got any more questions.

21 BY MR. YOUNG:

22 Q. Chief mate, this is Brian Young. I'm with the NTSB. I had a
23 few more questions, if you don't mind.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. The fire watch had an extinguisher in the cargo hold and you

1 said also a water hose?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Is it a fire main hose or a garden hose? What kind of hose
4 did they have?

5 A. They have fire hose --

6 (Conversation in Chinese)

7 MR. LIGANG: The hose was the fire hose.

8 BY MR. YOUNG:

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. Stand by all the time on the deck near the hose. And I take
11 the fresh water, the (indiscernible) in the hold. That
12 (indiscernible) me, I get ready the firehose, stand by around the
13 cargo hold. But my fire watch man takes the garden hose, takes
14 garden because that's a fresh water.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. If you see the fire, you can immediately put out that. So
17 you -- we use the garden hose in the hold, because the garden hose
18 (indiscernible) we can take everywhere. The water immediately can
19 go out.

20 Q. So is there a valve in the cargo hold for fresh water for the
21 cargo -- for the garden hose?

22 A. We use the pipe.

23 Q. Pipe.

24 A. We use a pipe, end of the pipe we get the valve, yeah.
25 Because the valve, we can stop or open.

1 Q. Okay. And that pipe is in the hold?

2 A. Yeah, pipe in near hold.

3 Q. Okay. Was the extinguisher or the garden hose used to fight
4 the fire at all? Did anyone use the extinguisher?

5 A. Yeah, extinguisher stand by.

6 Q. Was it used to fight the fire? Nobody used --

7 (Conversation in Chinese)

8 MR. LIGANG: Only use extinguisher only on standby, no use.

9 BY MR. YOUNG:

10 Q. Okay. Same with the garden hose?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay. I see on the crew list the fitter was the welder,
13 right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Do you know who was the fire watch?

16 A. Fire watch?

17 Q. Yes. Maybe you can identify who was the fire watch on here.

18 A. Here, second officer, and --

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Five and 22.

20 BY MR. YOUNG:

21 Q. Okay. The second officer was also fire watch?

22 A. Yeah, oiler.

23 Q. Oiler?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Okay. And which person was way at the bottom underneath the

1 welding hot work area?

2 A. Second officer.

3 Q. Second officer?

4 A. Yeah, second officer.

5 Q. And the oiler was up with the fitter?

6 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

7 Q. Following him?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And he take a walk-talk at the time.

11 Q. He had a walkie-talkie with him?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay. How long have you been chief mate on this ship?

14 A. Two months.

15 Q. Two months?

16 MR. PIANKOWSKI: This voyage.

17 MR. LIGANG: Yeah. This voyage is 2 months.

18 BY MR. YOUNG:

19 Q. And before? Have you been chief mate on here before this

20 watch?

21 A. Only this ship 2 months.

22 Q. Two months.

23 A. Yeah, this ship.

24 Q. Okay. So is this the first time as chief mate on this ship

25 you've been in Houston?

1 (Conversation in Chinese)

2 MR. LIGANG: Yeah. Working as the chief mate is the first
3 time. First time.

4 BY MR. YOUNG:

5 Q. First time.

6 A. Yeah, chief mate. Before working on the (indiscernible)
7 boat.

8 Q. As chief officer?

9 A. Not chief officer, no. Chief officer the first time.

10 Q. First time chief officer.

11 A. (Indiscernible) officer the first time.

12 Q. So when -- is this the first time that you have done hot work
13 permit as chief mate?

14 A. No, no. No, before, before working to -- I take the hot
15 permit.

16 Q. Okay. How many years as chief mate have you been doing hot
17 work permits?

18 (Conversation in Chinese)

19 MR. LIGANG: Before, before other ship, I take the hot work
20 permit. And normally --

21 MR. PIANKOWSKI: As a chief mate, so he always, he always --

22 BY MR. YOUNG:

23 Q. What I'm asking is how many years, how long as chief mate,
24 how many years?

25 (Conversation in Chinese)

1 MR. LIGANG: Four years.

2 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Four years.

3 MR. LIGANG: Four years.

4 BY MR. YOUNG:

5 Q. And is it frequent that when the ship comes into port that
6 there is hot work in the cargo holds? Does this happen
7 frequently, the hot work?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. It's normal procedure?

10 A. Normal.

11 Q. Normal for hot work?

12 A. Normal.

13 Q. So do you make hot work permits every day in port? That's my
14 question. Do you prepare hot work permits every day in port?

15 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Prepare?

16 MR. YOUNG: Yeah, yeah.

17 (Conversation in Chinese)

18 MR. LIGANG: Yeah, yeah. But you know around the port
19 having, have the hot work, I am preparing the hot permit for
20 government permit certificate. If no hot work, no need for the --

21 BY MR. YOUNG:

22 Q. Okay. And this evening when you prepared this permit --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. -- were there other permits for other cargo holds as well?

25 A. Yes, there was.

1 Q. Yes?

2 A. Yes. Other hold --

3 (Conversation in Chinese)

4 MR. LIGANG: In other hot working area, I need another hot
5 permit.

6 BY MR. YOUNG:

7 Q. In another cargo hold?

8 A. Because of the working area are different area, different --

9 MR. HENSLEY: Oh, so they require a different permit for
10 each --

11 MR. YOUNG: For each space.

12 MR. HENSLEY: Yeah, for each space.

13 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

14 MR. LIGANG: Yeah.

15 MR. PIANKOWSKI: So each cargo require a different hot work
16 permit, right, according to company regulation, right?

17 MR. LIGANG: Yeah.

18 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yes?

19 MR. LIGANG: Yes.

20 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Okay.

21 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Thank you. That's my questions.

22 MR. HENSLEY: This is Hensley with the fire marshal's office.

23 I was going to ask him --

24 BY MR. HENSLEY:

25 Q. Do you know what started the fire? Or what do you think

1 happened?

2 A. In the port?

3 Q. How the fire started?

4 (Conversation in Chinese)

5 MR. LIGANG: When I heard the fire alarm, fire alarm.

6 MR HENSLEY: The -- I guess my -- I'm trying to ask him -- I
7 know I asked you what -- you told me the other day when I was
8 talking you that you all think some sparks got down in. And I was
9 asking him the same question, what does he think happened how the
10 fire started? What do you think how the fire started?

11 MR. WIN CHO: So (indiscernible) how the fire started?

12 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Can you understand? In your opinion, in
13 your opinion, how is the fire started?

14 MR. HENSLEY: Yeah, what started the fire?

15 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yeah, what happened? What happened?

16 MR. HENSLEY: What started the fire?

17 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yeah.

18 MR. HENSLEY: Do you know what started the fire? Was it from
19 the welding? I think we're all -- pretty much been on the same
20 page, is we think that the welding got in the cracks. Is that
21 what he thinks happened also? And it fell down below and started
22 the fire?

23 (Conversation in Chinese)

24 MR. LIGANG: Before the -- before, I don't know that the fire
25 is underneath. I was thinking maybe the hot, hot wiring maybe I

1 think more possible.

2 MR. HENSLEY: Is he saying the hot beading? Is that what I
3 understood?

4 MR. PIANKOWSKI: That guy is saying hot (indiscernible) slag
5 drop down.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Slag.

7 MR. HENSLEY: Slag. Slag. Okay. Okay. That's all.

8 MR. PIANKOWSKI: But to be clear, but you are not sure that
9 this is --

10 MR. LIGANG: But I'm not sure, but is more possible, more --

11 MR. PIANKOWSKI: -- (indiscernible).

12 (Crosstalk)

13 MR. PIANKOWSKI: This is just, this is just, this is just --

14 MR. HENSLEY: Yeah, I'm just trying to --

15 MR. PIANKOWSKI: -- just opinion.

16 MR. HENSLEY: Yeah, because we didn't see any other --

17 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yeah, we didn't --

18 MR. HENSLEY: -- any other possibilities, other than maybe
19 the hot slag. So I didn't know if there was something else that
20 he thought might have happened or not.

21 Okay. That's all I had.

22 MR. YOUNG: Okay. It's 10:55 and we'll stop the recording.
23 Thank you, Chief Mate.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Thank you.

25 (Whereupon, at 10:55 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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 Jing Ligang, Chief Mate

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