

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: XU JIN
Fitter

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
(Translator for Mr. Jin)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 CWO [REDACTED]: This is Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED] again with
3 the Coast Guard. We're going to resume the questioning into the
4 *Chipolbrok Moon* fire investigation. Today is Sunday, May 27th,
5 and we're going to be talking with the fitter.

6 And can you say and also spell your name using international
7 phonetic alphabet?

8 CAPT. JIANBING: Sorry, he cannot speak English. But I can
9 translate for him.

10 CWO [REDACTED]: Okay.

11 CAPT. JIANBING: His name is Xu Jin.

12 CWO [REDACTED]: Okay. And can you have him spell it?

13 CAPT. JIANBING: I can spell, I can spell both. Xray-
14 Uniform; Julie-India-November.

15 (Whereupon, Captain Zhao Jianbing translated the
16 questions/answers for Mr. Jin.)

INTERVIEW OF FITTER XU JIN

17
18 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

19 Q. Mr. Jin, when -- what were your duties during the welding?
20 Were you the actual welder?

21 A. Cut the (indiscernible) and cut --

22 Q. How long have you been a welder, fitter on the ship?

23 A. He said 10 years as a welder.

24 Q. Ten years. During the welding, did you ever see any smoke or
25 any sparks catching anything on fire? Did you see fire?

1 A. No.

2 Q. How long had you -- you were in the 3 starboard hold when the
3 fire was discovered; is that correct?

4 A. Twenty minutes or a half hour.

5 Q. When you came out of the cargo hold, did you see smoke then?

6 A. He saw.

7 Q. Saw smoke when he came out?

8 A. He saw smoke.

9 Q. Okay. What side of -- did you come out the aft stairwell or
10 forward stairwell?

11 A. From the aft.

12 Q. From the aft stairwell of the number 3 cargo hold?

13 A. Starboard side.

14 Q. Starboard side is where you came out? Okay.

15 And where did you see the smoke -- what air vents did you --
16 from where you were at, where was the smoke coming out? Was it on
17 the forward vents or the aft vents of the cargo hold?

18 A. He saw the smoke from the number 3 port side after pass the
19 manhole.

20 Q. So number 3 port --

21 CAPT. JIANBING: Port side.

22 CWO [REDACTED] Port side. Aft --

23 CAPT. JIANBING: After part.

24 CWO [REDACTED] Aft ventilation is where the smoke was --

25 CAPT. JIANBING: Manhole.

1 CWO [REDACTED] Manhole. Okay.

2 BY CWO [REDACTED]

3 Q. Did you do a checklist with the chief mate before the
4 welding?

5 A. Yeah, was (indiscernible)

6 Q. Like this?

7 A. Yeah, yeah.

8 Q. This form?

9 A. Yeah.

10 CWO [REDACTED] And for the record, I am showing the Chipolbrok
11 Company hot work permit.

12 BY CWO [REDACTED]

13 Q. So you're -- so you are familiar with this checklist?

14 A. Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

15 Q. Yes. Okay.

16 CWO [REDACTED] I don't have any more questions.

17 MR. HENSLEY: So basically, just so I understand, he was the
18 one doing the welding, was actually doing the welding? And what
19 do they call those -- he had a name for those, I think.

20 CWO [REDACTED] The fitter?

21 MR. HENSLEY: No, the little, the little brackets for
22 welding.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Stoppers.

24 CWO [REDACTED] Oh, stoppers.

25 MR. HENSLEY: Stoppers? They call them stoppers?

1 CAPT. JIANBING: Steel stop?

2 MR. HENSLEY: Oh, it's just metal plates, right, and they're
3 welding them to hold the cargo?

4 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah, (indiscernible).

5 MR. HENSLEY: Okay.

6 MR. PIANKOWSKI: If you don't mind, I got a question. So get
7 ready to translate.

8 BY MR. PIANKOWSKI:

9 Q. So I understand that you are the fitter 10 years. So this is
10 like 10 years' experience, that's pretty quite experience. So was
11 your leaving the cargo hold to moving from hold to hold, it was
12 about 2310. And you are a professional. So, so there was no
13 fire, there was no sign of fire, right?

14 Can you ask him? Did you feel comfortable once leaving the
15 cargo hold that you are leaving the safe space?

16 A. He did -- he start -- he said when they finish the cutting,
17 they found no smokes and didn't smell any smoke and didn't see any
18 fire. And also he knows the second officer --

19 Q. Okay. I have no more questions. Thank you.

20 A. -- stay in the hold. So he come out.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. He come out to relieve the pipe, take off the pipe. Take off
23 the oxygen.

24 MR. HENSLEY: It sounds like what I'm understanding from
25 talking to everybody so far, that the fire started below where

1 they were cutting. So do I understand they start at the bottom
2 and they work their way up, and then they're done? Or with the --

3 CWO [REDACTED] How do you -- when you start the welding in a
4 hold, do you work bottom up or top down?

5 MR. PIANKOWSKI: When he started, he started from the top to
6 the down or from the -- to the bottom, or from the bottom to the
7 top?

8 MR. JIN: First they go down the lower part, the bottom, cuts
9 the bottom. After --

10 CWO [REDACTED] Second deck.

11 CAPT. JIANBING: Second will go to the upper deck. Then goes
12 to the lower hold, lower turn deck. First the bottom, the second
13 goes the top, and then in the middle.

14 CWO [REDACTED] Then the middle? So they go to the middle
15 level --

16 CAPT. JIANBING: Middle level last.

17 CWO [REDACTED] -- would be the last one where the welding was --
18 so it would go: bottom level, top level, and then middle level.

19 MR. HENSLEY: So the middle level would have been the last
20 one, which would be above where the fire started.

21 CWO [REDACTED] Right.

22 MR. HENSLEY: Okay. Which that sequence makes sense, then.

23 MR. PIANKOWSKI: And the reason why this was this because
24 logically it might (indiscernible), you know, if you -- okay, is
25 there's any specific reason why he did this way?

1 CAPT. JIANBING: Because the forward is the pontoon, less
2 there pontoons.

3 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Because of the pontoons location?

4 CAPT. JIANBING: Pontoons location. No pontoons at the
5 forward, you cannot, you cannot go up.

6 CWO [REDACTED] Okay, I see. There was one side where there was
7 one. So --

8 CAPT. JIANBING: If started from, starts from the aft part,
9 we cannot go the --

10 MR. PIANKOWSKI: But I understand that the hot work, that
11 they need to change the holders, right, from the --

12 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah.

13 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Yeah.

14 CAPT. JIANBING: We need to change the lines from the aft
15 part.

16 CWO [REDACTED] Change what line? The acetylene
17 (indiscernible) --

18 (Crosstalk)

19 CWO [REDACTED] Oh, okay. Got it. That makes sense.

20 MR. HENSLEY: That's all I got now.

21 BY MR. YOUNG:

22 Q. Okay. Can you estimate which of the three decks required the
23 most cutting and required the most hot work of the three docks in
24 3 hold that night? Which hold required more cutting and how much
25 time did he spend -- which of the three decks had more hot work or

1 were they all the same?

2 So was there more cutting on the bottom, more cutting on the
3 top, or more cutting in the middle?

4 A. The after deck the lower turn deck, the cutting job is the
5 same, but the lower hold, the cutting job is half.

6 Q. Half?

7 A. Half of the lower turn deck.

8 Q. Okay. And what is directly below the lower deck? Is it a
9 ballast tank, fuel tank, or --

10 CAPT. JIANBING: Ballast tank.

11 MR. YOUNG: Ballast tank?

12 CAPT. JIANBING: Ballast tank.

13 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

14 CAPT. JIANBING: If the fuel tank, we cannot do the job. You
15 cannot welding the stuff, so we don't need to cut it.

16 BY MR. YOUNG:

17 Q. Okay. And were all these stoppers or tees the same on all
18 three decks, or were they a different configuration of these
19 stoppers?

20 A. It's in like tee.

21 Q. Like a tee? And what was the --

22 A. Tee steel.

23 Q. What's the thickness --

24 A. Steel plate.

25 Q. What's the thickness of the steel plate? Maybe three-

1 quarters of an inch or 1 inch thick, or --

2 MR. PIANKOWSKI: Usually they use, when they -- they use
3 standard is 20 millimeters or 25 millimeters. And so this is
4 between -- up to 1 inch, yes.

5 MR. WIN CHO: 20 millimeter.

6 MR. YOUNG: 20 millimeter?

7 MR. WIN CHO: Because they have upper turn deck and lower
8 (indiscernible) all size, size of the cargo's the same side. So
9 all the stoppers they get all sides of the (indiscernible), right
10 side and left side, and fore and aft. You have the stopper on the
11 3 position on that side, 3 position on that side, 3 position on
12 fore and aft. Because any operator can work, can take any port
13 side from that (indiscernible) they are align, pointed side to
14 side. So operator go (indiscernible) same size. At the bottom,
15 they have a half unit. That is a smaller size compared to the
16 (indiscernible) units.

17 So port via starboard, thickness is almost the same,
18 (indiscernible) 20 millimeter.

19 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

20 MR. WIN CHO: Yeah, the stop, around there.

21 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Thank you.

22 BY MR. YOUNG:

23 Q. And the oxyacetylene, the gas, where were the tanks located
24 on the cart? Where was the cart kept? The cart where the
25 bottles, the gas bottles --

1 MR. WIN CHO: The bottle, where is, if you're on deck?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is it a fixed -- is it a cart or is it
3 a fixed station on the ship?

4 CAPT. JIANBING: Fixed.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Fixed station on the ship?

6 MR. PIANKOWSKI: No, the cart -- you have the portable
7 bottle, right?

8 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah.

9 MR. PIANKOWSKI: So where is the portable bottle were
10 located?

11 CAPT. JIANBING: On the passageway.

12 MR. PIANKOWSKI: On the passageway exactly where? On which
13 side of the ship (indiscernible)? Port side all the time have --
14 where exactly, where are the bottles found?

15 (Conversation in Chinese)

16 BY MR. YOUNG:

17 Q. Forward port side up on deck on the passageway?

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. Okay. And are you the only fitter on the ship?

20 Is he the only fitter on the ship?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There is only one.

22 CAPT. JIANBING: Only one, only one fitter.

23 MR. YOUNG: Can any other crew members do hot work?

24 CAPT. JIANBING: No.

25 MR. YOUNG: Nobody?

1 CAPT. JIANBING: Nobody.

2 MR. YOUNG: How many hours a day does he work in port?

3 CAPT. JIANBING: Eight hours normal; 8 hours.

4 MR. YOUNG: Eight hours?

5 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah. Eight hours.

6 MR. YOUNG: And the normal workday, what time does he start
7 his work in port?

8 CAPT. JIANBING: Normally we start morning time 8:00, 8:00,
9 and then goes to 8:00, 8:00 in the afternoon. But I ask the chief
10 engineer -- or permitted him to rest that afternoon.

11 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: To work at the nighttime.

13 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah, to work at night.

14 MR. YOUNG: So resting throughout the day, and then come to
15 work at night when there's no cargo working?

16 CAPT. JIANBING: Yes, yes. To rest in the daytime.

17 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Okay. So he rested during the day that
18 day?

19 CAPT. JIANBING: Yeah.

20 MR. YOUNG: Can you confirm with him?

21 CAPT. JIANBING: Because we -- because he will do the job at
22 nighttime, so he rest at the daytime.

23 BY MR. YOUNG:

24 Q. Okay. And what qualifications does he have as a fitter? Are
25 there special training, special certification as a welder that he

1 has?

2 A. Yes, he have qualify certificate for the welding.

3 Q. For the welding?

4 A. The welding and the cutting.

5 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Thank you. I have no more questions.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm good. Thank you.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

8 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Thank you, and the recording is stopped.

9 (Whereupon, 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 Xu Jin, Fitter

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