

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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 IN RE: :
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 THE EL FARO INCIDENT OFF : NTSB Accident No.
 THE COAST OF THE BAHAMAS ON : DCA16MM001
 OCTOBER 1, 2015 :
 :
 ----- :

Interview of: KORINN MOWREY & NORRIE
 THOMPSON

Wednesday,
 November 4, 2015

BEFORE:

BRIAN YOUNG, NTSB
 BRIAN CURTIS, NTSB
 CARRIE BELL, NTSB
 KATY CHISOM, NTSB

This transcript was produced from
 audio provided by the National Transportation
 Safety Board.

APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard:

██████████ ██████████
U.S. Coast Guard

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 MR. CURTIS: -- casualties, and one
3 which this qualifies as, and to produce a report
4 with a probable cause and recommendations,
5 hopefully to prevent these occurrences from
6 happening again. That's what our mission is.
7 It'll play out as it'll take us about a year to
8 produce this report.

9 Currently, we're on scene in
10 Jacksonville, interviewed a lot of folks down
11 there related to the incident, shoreside folks.
12 We're actually actively, now, working with the
13 Navy. NTSB's working with the Navy. We're up
14 there. We've located the vessel on the bottom,
15 so we have its position. We've just recently
16 found, in the last couple days, the top two
17 layers of the deck, the navigation bridge, and
18 the deck below it, which actually holds the
19 voyage data recorder we're trying to get, has
20 been sheared off.

21 We're refocusing on a) we've done
22 some video work on the hull. We're also doing

1 some follow-up work, where we might try to
2 locate these top two decks. We're not sure if
3 they fell off on the surface or on the bottom,
4 but we're going back to some sonar work, which
5 basically identifies the profile of the bottom
6 of the sea, if we might find that. We're
7 actually working on that (Inaudible) for a few
8 more days. Then going forward, we'll produce
9 the report, probably take close to a year,
10 actually, to finish the entire report. There's
11 several months of material we need to collect
12 via interviews and documentation of the Navy's
13 work.

14 Then we'll get to work on the
15 analysis of what happened here and produce some
16 findings of what happened in the investigation,
17 a probable cause for the accident, and then the
18 biggest, most important part of the report will
19 be recommendations, which will go out to various
20 entities or groups, parties or whatever, that
21 will hopefully mitigate the chances of such an
22 accident from occurring again.

1 ████████████████████ with us. He works
2 for the Coast Guard. He's here from their --
3 they're fully participatory, from a technical
4 aspect, to help us collect information and to
5 see what happened with this investigation.
6 Before we get started, that's kind of who we are
7 and what we do. If you have any questions of us
8 before we start the questioning, I'll open up to
9 -- Norrie, Korinn, either one?

10 PARTICIPANT: I don't think so, no.

11 PARTICIPANT: No, thank you.

12 MR. CURTIS: Then let's get started.

13 Brian?

14 MR. YOUNG: I'll start it off first,
15 then. The easiest question, probably, of the
16 day is if you don't mind just stating your name,
17 so we can write it down. I know we got --

18 MS. MOWREY: Korinn Mowrey,

19 K-O-R-I-N-N M-O-W-R-E-Y.

20 MR. YOUNG: What is your
21 relationship to Danielle?

22 MS. MOWREY: (Inaudible) actually

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1 Danielle, she was one of my fitness students, so
2 I saw her about every day and stayed at her
3 place for a few weeks about a year ago, kind of
4 got close to her there.

5 MR. YOUNG: Okay. If you --

6 MS. THOMPSON: Norrie Thompson.

7 MR. YOUNG: Okay. T-H-O-M --

8 MS. THOMPSON: P-S-O-N.

9 MR. YOUNG: What was your
10 relationship to Danielle?

11 MS. THOMPSON: A long-time friend,
12 sideways cousin. Everyone's related in Maine.

13 MR. YOUNG: We're finding that.
14 We're finding that out. I guess what we'll do
15 is maybe we'll ask a question, maybe, of Norrie,
16 then maybe let Norrie finish her response, then
17 if it was applicable for Korinn to add anything,
18 just do that. We really do appreciate you
19 coming out here. What we are looking for is any
20 sort of insight as to communications with
21 Danielle, whether it's email, text, pictures,
22 communications. If you could help describe the

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1 culture on that ship or what she was seeing,
2 what she was feeling.

3 I know the way friends are, they
4 probably communicate very much more with you
5 guys, as opposed to her mom, and give you some
6 inside scoop as to how things were being run on
7 the ship and how she was interacting with people
8 because you will help paint a very good picture
9 as to what her perception of the ship was. I'm
10 sure she gave you some good information, maybe
11 on a day-to-day text or email or however, but
12 that's pretty much what we would really like to
13 try to extract out of you guys. Maybe just
14 start with -- we did receive the email you sent
15 to us, which --

16 MS. THOMPSON: I sent you three,
17 correct?

18 PARTICIPANT: Correct, yes.

19 MR. YOUNG: We did get those, and we
20 appreciate that. If you could just maybe give
21 us a little brief background on any
22 communications you have had over the past

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1 concerning the ship.

2 MS. THOMPSON: We just started
3 emailing through the ship back in February.
4 They had just gotten the online option on their
5 ship. She kept it really light and fluffy,
6 except that one email that she sent me.
7 Otherwise, it was texts when she was in cell
8 range. You wanted to know the --

9 MR. YOUNG: Just a general -- when
10 she's texting you, obviously she's probably
11 keeping in touch with you, but what is she
12 talking to you about? What had she talked to
13 you about, I guess, particularly about maybe the
14 condition of the ship, if she ever had any
15 concerns about boy, this thing is rusty and
16 falling apart, I love my ship, or --

17 MS. THOMPSON: She called it a rust
18 bucket. She was very vocal. She was very
19 passionate. She called it a rust bucket. She
20 said when they would scrape and do maintenance,
21 chunks of it would fall off, and they would
22 patch it up. She told me once they did do

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1 safety checks all the time, whatever you call
2 them, weekly checks. But she said they were at
3 bare minimum, and that if they came into a
4 situation, they would not be adequately
5 equipped.

6 MR. YOUNG: Was this over a phone
7 call or emails?

8 MS. THOMPSON: Talking.

9 MR. YOUNG: Talking?

10 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, just talking.
11 The last few days, she sent me a lot of texts.
12 She wasn't happy to be back out there. She said
13 that was basically the whole vibe of the ship.
14 She sent me a photo on my phone, which I
15 brought, of graffiti that somebody wrote. It
16 said, "God be with us all," I think. I can pull
17 it up. She's like, "Apparently I'm not the only
18 one that's having a hard time up here."

19 MR. YOUNG: Was that even before
20 this storm was brewing?

21 MS. THOMPSON: It was right as they
22 were leaving. I can pull it up because I don't

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1 remember what day. We texted a lot.

2 (Simultaneous speaking.)

3 MS. THOMPSON: This is just over the
4 course of a couple days.

5 MR. YOUNG: No hurry, it's okay. No
6 problem.

7 MS. MOWREY: The only thing she told
8 me -- this was quite a few months ago -- she
9 said that the ship is going to be scrapped soon
10 because it's not functionable. That's the only
11 thing she told me. I didn't talk to her a lot
12 about the condition of the ship. She'd just
13 come back, and she was really frustrated with
14 the condition of it.

15 MS. THOMPSON: And frustrated with
16 the silence of the company because --

17 MS. MOWREY: Yes.

18 MS. THOMPSON: -- she wasn't -- they
19 knew the new ship was coming and going to -- and
20 the El Faro going to Alaska. There was a lot of
21 -- she called it secrecy, but just a lot of
22 silence because she didn't know -- they were all

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1 getting split up and who was going where and who
2 was going to go to Alaska. She still didn't
3 know at the time.

4 MR. YOUNG: That was one of our
5 questions, if she was going to be chosen to go
6 to Alaska or --

7 MS. THOMPSON: She thought she
8 really was going to be chosen, but it still
9 wasn't set in stone. It was still up in the
10 air. But we talked about it as if she was
11 because she really presumed that she was.

12 MS. MOWREY: I thought she was, the
13 way she spoke with me. I didn't know that it
14 wasn't --

15 MS. THOMPSON: It wasn't fully set
16 in stone.

17 MS. MOWREY: She was prepping for
18 it.

19 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, prepping for it,
20 but that's just, I think, where her mental space
21 was, but she hadn't been -- this is who's going.
22 At least that's how she left it with me.

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1 MR. YOUNG: Going to sea for all
2 those years, no one likes going back to sea. We
3 hate leaving home and going and joining that
4 ship. The few days before that is miserable.
5 You're planning. You're trying to get
6 everything ready. Did it seem like she enjoyed
7 the crew she worked with, or was there anybody
8 in particular she didn't like working with out
9 there --

10 MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

11 MR. YOUNG: -- particularly the
12 captain?

13 MS. THOMPSON: Particularly the
14 captain.

15 MR. YOUNG: That captain?

16 MS. THOMPSON: I don't know how the
17 rotation goes and who's -- I know they don't all
18 go (Inaudible) all come at the same time. She
19 wasn't fond of either captain, but one, in
20 particular, she highly disliked. I'm not sure
21 if it's that one.

22 MS. MOWREY: It was the one on her

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1 last trip.

2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
6 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED]
9 [REDACTED]
10 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
12 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
13 [REDACTED]
14 [REDACTED]

15 MR. YOUNG: It was whoever the
16 captain was on the (Simultaneous speaking)?

17 MS. THOMPSON: That's what I'm
18 believing. I'm believing it's the one that was
19 on the (Simultaneous speaking).

20 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
21 [REDACTED]
22 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
5 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
6 [REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED]
9 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

10 MR. YOUNG: With the captain that
11 was on board the ship during the accident,
12 Captain Davidson, did you ever get any
13 indication that she either enjoyed -- or how she
14 felt working with him or for him?

15 MS. THOMPSON: She couldn't stand
16 it. She was exhausted. There were a lot of
17 weird rules put in place that they had to be on
18 the 12 hours, and it couldn't be the 8 to 12.
19 It was strict 12. She was always exhausted and
20 tired. The last thing was something about her
21 phone. They couldn't have phones on the bridge
22 anymore. They had to leave them down in their

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1 rooms. I don't know why.

2 MR. YOUNG: Would you communicate
3 with her when she was at sea or just in port
4 with texting? Would you get emails from her
5 while she was --

6 MS. THOMPSON: As soon as she was --
7 only at sea was the email because she wasn't in
8 cell service. Then as soon as she hit cell
9 service, my phone would light up --

10 PARTICIPANT: (Simultaneous
11 speaking.)

12 MS. THOMPSON: -- and we'd go at it.

13 MR. YOUNG: Would she generally send
14 any pictures of the ship or more selfies?

15 MS. THOMPSON: More selfies.

16 MR. YOUNG: Selfies, yes?

17 MS. THOMPSON: That was rare. That
18 was a rare thing (Inaudible). Sometimes she'd
19 send me circus animals or whatever, fancy cars.

20 MR. YOUNG: Right, but nothing of
21 lifeboats or anything?

22 MS. THOMPSON: Nuh-uh.

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1 MR. YOUNG: Did she have any, say,
2 close friends or mentors, someone that she
3 enjoyed hanging out with on the ship? Was there
4 any friends, in particular?

5 MS. THOMPSON: Mm-hm, Jimmy.

6 MR. YOUNG: The chief engineer?

7 MS. THOMPSON: Mm-hm.

8 MR. YOUNG: We understand, talking
9 to her mom, that they were close.

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MR. YOUNG: Were they about the same
age, do you know? We did meet Jimmy in
Jacksonville.

MS. THOMPSON: I don't know. I
don't know how old he is. To look at him, I
don't know. I think he's older.

MR. YOUNG: They would communicate
regularly, too?

MS. THOMPSON: Yes. I have Facebook

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1 messages of -- whatever she tells me, she's
2 like, "Jimmy just said," or whatever. They were
3 always talking.

4 MR. YOUNG: There's a lot that
5 she'll tell her mom, but even more than she'll
6 tell her friends. We get much better
7 information from you guys and Jimmy, so we
8 appreciate that. In any of your conversations
9 and emails and texts, [REDACTED]
10 [REDACTED], did she ever
11 say anything that the company really pushed the
12 ship hard or was maybe working it hard, in terms
13 of making schedules or loading extra cargo
14 (Inaudible) boy, we're carrying a lot of stuff
15 or more than usual?

16 MS. THOMPSON: Nuh-uh. No, she was
17 -- not to me, at least. She was really just get
18 the job done. Whatever they said, she would
19 follow through and do. She never really -- I
20 don't know. She never really complained much
21 about that.

22 MR. YOUNG: Yes, that's more

1 personal stuff, I'm sure. Who cares about the
2 cargo when you're talking to your best friend?

3 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, right.

4 MS. MOWREY: She did talk about
5 being in port, about the upkeep, the stuff that
6 should have been happening wasn't. Then they
7 would just go back out to sea. She was really
8 frustrated about that. She would talk quite a
9 bit about that, actually, just that it wasn't --
10 she said because it's going to be scrapped
11 anyway.

12 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, I did get a lot
13 of that.

14 MS. MOWREY: She would say it just
15 like that, too.

16 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, it's so stupid.

17 MS. MOWREY: Yes.

18 MR. YOUNG: In talking to other
19 people, too, we understood that Captain Davidson
20 wasn't chosen to go to one of the new ships.

21 MS. THOMPSON: I did know that.

22 MR. YOUNG: We were wondering, too,

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1 if maybe that was transmitted to you guys that
2 maybe things got worse on the ship once he found
3 that out. Did you hear anything on that?

4 MS. THOMPSON: It's all -- no. It
5 was all guesses on our end after the fact that
6 we assumed because we knew he wasn't chosen. We
7 did know that. [REDACTED]

8 [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED]

15 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

16 [REDACTED]

17 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

18 [REDACTED]

19 [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

21 MR. YOUNG: I'm the engineering guy,
22 so I know Danielle works up top. We also have a

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1 base set up there. They tell us what to do, and
2 we just run the engines. Is there anything that
3 you heard engineering wise, and if she did
4 communicate with Jimmy, if they had issues with
5 -- words that we hear are boilers, turbines,
6 engines, generators, if they had any problems
7 with machinery related stuff?

8 MS. THOMPSON: Just that Jimmy had
9 to work hard. I don't know -- because I'm not
10 engineer minded. I don't know what goes on down
11 there, but just that he was having to work hard.
12 That's all I know.

13 MR. YOUNG: Nobody talks about the
14 engine room. Just things happen magically down
15 there.

16 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, right? It was
17 magic.

18 MR. YOUNG: This might be a
19 difficult question to answer, and I'm reading
20 through the lines and watching your face, but do
21 you think that Danielle and Jimmy were just more
22 than pen pals or --

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1 MS. THOMPSON: They were an item.

2 MR. YOUNG: Okay (Inaudible).

3 That's why these interviews are so important
4 because you didn't need to say it.

5 MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

6 MR. YOUNG: On that note, I'm going
7 to pass it over to my colleague.

8 MS. BELL: Thanks, Brian. I can't
9 talk engineering, but you did a great job of
10 asking some good human performance questions, so
11 thank you.

12 MR. YOUNG: There's not much
13 engineering wise. I guarantee you're not
14 getting texts from Danielle saying it was a
15 great day for a turbo generator.

16 MS. BELL: One of the questions I
17 have, you mentioned that there was some weird
18 rules that were in place about the 12 hour on/12
19 hour off. Was that something that was recent?

20 MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

21 MS. BELL: Do you know how recent
22 that started? Was it --

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1 MS. THOMPSON: Maybe two trips out
2 for her ago, which would be 40 weeks, I guess,
3 ten/ten, yes.

4 MS. BELL: 40 weeks? Oh, okay, got
5 it.

6 (Simultaneous speaking.)

7 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, she's ten on and
8 ten off.

9 MS. BELL: Two trips, all right.
10 What other kind of -- aside from the 12 hours
11 on/12 hours off, were there any other rules that
12 you know about that were changed?

13 MS. THOMPSON: Just that phone rule.
14 I just remember her complaining because she said
15 that she could only text me in her off time,
16 which was sporadic. She had a few hours to
17 sleep, four and four hours to sleep because her
18 schedule was really broken up. So she's like,
19 "I'm not going to be able to text you because
20 I'll be sleeping."

21 MS. BELL: Do you know anything
22 about her sleep -- obviously she wasn't getting

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1 a lot of sleep. When she was sleeping, do you
2 know if she was taking any kind of medication to
3 help her sleep or anything that she was taking
4 to keep her awake?

5 MS. THOMPSON: She used to take
6 caffeine pills, but she has never said anything
7 -- that was a couple years ago, but not
8 recently. I'm trying to think. I think her
9 watch was 12:00 to 4:00, and then she had to do
10 something from 4:00 to 6:00. I can't remember.

11 MS. MOWREY: She did something from
12 4:00 to 6:00. I remember, too.

13 MS. THOMPSON: She could eat at
14 7:00, I think it was, and then could sleep for a
15 few hours, and then go back to work. Every 12
16 hours, that's her --

17 MS. MOWREY: Her breakfast would be
18 cold. (Inaudible) that. Her breakfast would
19 always be cold. She'd bring it in; she'd go to
20 sleep, and then she'd have a cold breakfast.

21 MS. BELL: That was just after the
22 12-hour change -- the ship change?

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1 MS. THOMPSON: It was eight and four
2 -- I wish I could remember.

3 MS. MOWREY: It switched, I know,
4 because I've taught her fitness for years.
5 These last few trips, her coming home, she'd
6 complain about it. She'd complain about how she
7 was so tired because of the switch in the watch.
8 I didn't know for sure what the switch was. I
9 just know there was a difference in when she
10 came back for a few weeks, until she acclimated.

11 MR. YOUNG: I'm sorry to interrupt.
12 This is Brian Young. Could it be maybe when she
13 was promoted from a third mate to a second mate
14 and the watch rotation changes?

15 MS. THOMPSON: That could've been
16 it, yes.

17 (Simultaneous speaking.)

18 MR. YOUNG: Because typically, the
19 second mate stands midnight to 4:00, and the
20 third mate will take an 8:00 to 12:00. Any
21 chance that may have been the reason for the
22 switch?

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1 MS. MOWREY: Could be, but I think,
2 for sure, she was doing that 4:00 in the
3 morning.

4 MS. THOMPSON: Her watch was noon
5 (Simultaneous speaking) 12:00 to 4:00, yes. I
6 feel like I have that in there (Inaudible). I
7 printed some stuff off (Inaudible).

8 PARTICIPANT: Bring it all in, take
9 it all. Put it all on the table.

10 MS. THOMPSON: Aside from the ones
11 (Inaudible) I printed for myself. This would be
12 Danielle. I guess you guys can have all those.

13 PARTICIPANT: Great, thank you.
14 (Inaudible.)

15 MS. THOMPSON: Just silly. Those
16 are the selfies that (Inaudible).

17 MS. BELL: You mentioned that she
18 called the ship a rust bucket and that she
19 expressed frustration with the upkeep before
20 they went out to sea. Did she give any examples
21 of that, perhaps?

22 MS. THOMPSON: Just the example that

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1 I gave when they were scraping, and she would
2 talk about the chunks that would come off, and
3 that they would just paint over.

4 MS. MOWREY: (Inaudible) if I could
5 remember the conversation, but it wasn't written
6 down. She did say specific things. I'm just
7 trying to recall it. She used her terms, as a
8 sailor.

9 MS. THOMPSON: She had really bad
10 sailor mouth, especially the first week home,
11 'til she got acclimated to land life again.

12 MS. MOWREY: A lot of rust. She
13 talked a lot about the rust. She seemed to talk
14 about bolts, though, and I don't know what
15 context. I can't remember, but just bolts
16 coming out or being so rusted. She said she
17 didn't know how it's being held together.

18 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, she did tell me
19 that.

20 MS. BELL: You mentioned something
21 about not being equipped to -- if something bad
22 would happen that they wouldn't be equipped.

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1 Were there details about that? Was that about
2 training, or was that about (Simultaneous
3 speaking)?

4 MS. THOMPSON: Not about training.

5 MS. BELL: -- supplies?

6 MS. THOMPSON: Because she did say
7 they would do tests every -- often. She said it
8 was supplies, but she didn't say specifically
9 what.

10 MS. BELL: Equipment that wasn't
11 functioning properly or just not having --

12 MS. THOMPSON: Just not enough.

13 MS. BELL: Did she ever talk about
14 the lifeboats, at all?

15 MS. THOMPSON: Nuh-uh, not that I
16 can remember.

17 MS. BELL: Switching gears a little
18 bit -- oh, unless you had something?

19 MS. MOWREY: If it comes forward
20 (Inaudible). You can switch.

21 MS. BELL: Oh, but it's fine. If
22 you have something, no, go ahead.

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1 MS. MOWREY: No, I'm trying -- she's
2 talked about them. The fact that she talked
3 about them would mean something, but I just
4 don't remember -- because it's not something you
5 really think to store away.

6 (Inaudible.)

7 MS. MOWREY: The last time that she
8 really talked about it with me, she was talking
9 about (Inaudible) it was to the extreme
10 conditions that she really wanted a different
11 job -- a different boat to be on. She really
12 didn't want to keep going out there. She was
13 definitely nervous about it. For her to say --
14 she says it in her way. She's tough. So for
15 her to talk about it -- she talked about it with
16 quite a bit of passion and anger that something
17 wasn't being done.

18 MS. BELL: Did she ever express any
19 thoughts about leaving the company?

20 MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

21 MS. MOWREY: Yes.

22 MS. THOMPSON: All the time.

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1 MS. BELL: Was that just recently,
2 or had that been for a while?

3 MS. THOMPSON: The last year,
4 definitely.

5 MS. MOWREY: Yes, it was.

6 MS. THOMPSON: She was just done
7 (Inaudible).

8 MS. BELL: Do you know if she was
9 actively pursuing another job anywhere else?

10 MS. THOMPSON: She was always
11 looking, and I would always encourage her to
12 send her resume out, so she had to a couple
13 places, but nothing had come up.

14 MS. MOWREY: Didn't she go back --
15 didn't she get some education?

16 MS. THOMPSON: That was with the
17 company.

18 MS. MOWREY: That was with the
19 company? Okay.

20 MS. THOMPSON: Mm-hm, to continue
21 her license.

22 MS. MOWREY: Oh, okay. It was just

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1 a year ago.

2 MS. THOMPSON: It wasn't that long
3 ago.

4 MS. BELL: Do you know what that was
5 related to? Was it just regular training that
6 she had to keep up with her --

7 MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

8 MS. BELL: -- her license?

9 MS. THOMPSON: She goes down to
10 wherever her union is and stays there. They
11 take classes down in Florida somewhere.

12 MS. BELL: [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was there any -- did you
15 know of any contention among the captain and the
16 crew, or among her and the captain?

17 MS. THOMPSON: They were very
18 frustrated. She was definitely frustrated with
19 him. She always said that he would just sit and
20 do nothing in his office. (Inaudible) she
21 complained about that.

22 MS. BELL: Do you know if she ever

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1 complained to anyone about that, other than her
2 friends, within the company?

3 MS. THOMPSON: Within the company,
4 she wouldn't say. No, she'd tell Jimmy, but I
5 -- maybe. I don't know how she was with the
6 next chief mate, the next one. I don't know her
7 relationship with him.

8 MS. BELL: Did she ever mention
9 anything about anyone else having issues with
10 the captain?

11 MS. THOMPSON: She would say that
12 everyone was frustrated, but that's -- but at
13 her level. I don't know -- she wouldn't tell me
14 much about engineers and the people making the
15 food and all that.

16 MS. BELL: How long had she worked
17 with Captain Davidson, do you know?

18 MS. THOMPSON: I don't know. She's
19 been with TOTE for eight years now, I think.
20 It's been close to a decade.

21 MS. BELL: How was her relationship
22 with the other officers on the bridge, do you

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1 know, just regular --

2 MS. THOMPSON: She never had
3 anything bad -- if she didn't say much, she
4 liked them. You didn't hear anything that was
5 good.

6 MS. BELL: Do you know if she kept
7 any kind of a journal or diary or anything like
8 that?

9 MS. THOMPSON: Of?

10 MS. BELL: Just anything that she
11 kept --

12 MS. THOMPSON: Circumstances on the
13 ship, she did keep a notebook of date, time,
14 what happened, but (Inaudible).

15 MS. BELL: Do you think she kept it
16 on the ship?

17 MS. THOMPSON: Mm-hm.

18 MS. BELL: But she did keep
19 something?

20 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, she kept a
21 notebook.

22 MS. BELL: Of what kind of specific

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1 -- do you know what kind of specific things she
2 was writing in those notebooks?

3 MS. THOMPSON: Just issues that she
4 had, interactions.

5 MS. BELL: And the dates?

6 MS. THOMPSON: The dates and the
7 times, mm-hm.

8 MS. BELL: Do you know if she had
9 any intention of doing anything with that?

10 MS. THOMPSON: No, she was holding
11 it for her own --

12 MS. BELL: Just keeping it --

13 MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

14 MS. BELL: -- here, yes.

15 MS. THOMPSON: If she needed it, she
16 would pull it out.

17 MS. BELL: Did you ever talk about
18 anything, just in reference to TOTE, the company
19 -- did she have concerns about the company
20 communications or processes or anything like
21 that?

22 MS. THOMPSON: She was frustrated

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1 with the company, thinking they didn't look out
2 for their -- look out is probably not a good
3 word, but appreciate their employees, I guess.
4 There was one that's in there just how she was
5 mad that -- it was like, "We can't even get a
6 Christmas card from these people." She was
7 frustrated with that. In one of those is also
8 how she is looking for another job. She's like,
9 "It'd be nice to work for a place that actually
10 cares about their employees."

11 MS. BELL: So in general, how would
12 you characterize the morale of the crew from her
13 perspective?

14 MS. THOMPSON: Low, especially that
15 last time with the image that she sent me. It
16 was the text with it saying she's clearly not
17 the only one having a hard time out there.

18 MS. BELL: I know these are emails
19 --

20 MS. THOMPSON: Facebook messages.

21 MS. BELL: You said you had texted a
22 lot. Are there texts from the days up to the

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1 accident or the day before that you would be
2 willing to share with us?

3 MS. THOMPSON: You can look at them.
4 I don't know how to transfer any of this, and a
5 lot it's about her mother.

6 MR. [REDACTED] Can I ask you -- this
7 is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] -- just a quick question? On
8 my phone, I have this SMS backup, where I can
9 save all my stuff, in case it gets accidentally
10 deleted. Do you have anything like that? No?

11 MS. THOMPSON: Mine's just a
12 Straight Talk, like a Tracfone, basically.

13 MS. BELL: I don't know if -- I
14 don't have to do it right now, but maybe if we
15 could take a look, that would be good. I don't
16 want to invade your privacy if that's not
17 something you're comfortable with sharing.

18 MS. THOMPSON: I really don't mind.

19 PARTICIPANT: If there is a way to
20 convey it, we can certainly redact out anything
21 that doesn't need to be included for the public.

22 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, there's some

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1 choice words in there.

2 (Simultaneous speaking.)

3 PARTICIPANT: The comments, maybe
4 they are about her mother, we can certainly
5 redact those out.

6 MS. THOMPSON: She talks about
7 having to have an emergency food box on the ship
8 because she always complained about the food.

9 MS. BELL: Not being good?

10 MS. THOMPSON: Right.

11 MS. MOWREY: Yes, that was a big
12 question she always came to me with. As her
13 fitness instructor, I coached her a little bit
14 on it. She was frustrated with the food.

15 MS. THOMPSON: Which is what we talk
16 about a lot on here.

17 MS. BELL: Food is important. Does
18 she ever mention -- while you're looking at
19 that, did she ever mention anything about any
20 grievances that anyone had filed about the
21 company or the captain --

22 MS. THOMPSON: Nuh-uh.

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[REDACTED]

MS. BELL: Any concerns that she had about weather? She worked there for a long time. Did she ever talk about when she had to change the route, when she was going into weather or anything like that? Was that something she ever --

MS. THOMPSON: She never spoke of alternating the route, which -- yes, even when they did go through -- they went through a

1 couple doozies, and she never said they altered
2 course.

3 MS. BELL: Did she ever express
4 concern about going into weather at any point
5 that you remember?

6 MS. THOMPSON: On occasion, she'll
7 have sent me one other -- I couldn't find it. I
8 dug for that. Maybe it was in a text because it
9 was hope to talk to you, whatever. The way the
10 last email she sent, I could sense something was
11 a little wrong. I hadn't really looked at the
12 weather, at the time, until after the email, and
13 then I figured it out. She really -- it was
14 always -- she kept it light, like, "Oh, hope to
15 talk to you Friday."

16 MS. BELL: Even in text messages or
17 just in the emails from the ship?

18 MS. THOMPSON: Text messages.

19 MS. BELL: That she kept it light.

20 MS. THOMPSON: Oh, no, just emails
21 in the -- but for our own concern, she would try
22 and be like, "Ha ha, okay, it's fine," so we

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1 wouldn't have that much to worry about back
2 here.

3 MS. MOWREY: But this last one was
4 very different.

5 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, this last one --
6 yes, you could almost feel it before you read
7 it.

8 MS. BELL: That's all I've got for
9 right now. Thank you, I appreciate that.

10 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I just
11 want to go back to a couple things we talked
12 about and just see if you can clarify things for
13 me. Talking about the work schedule, you talked
14 about a strict 12 hours. Could you maybe help
15 me out to understand that? I know she stood
16 watches, and she day worked and stuff like that,
17 but what do you mean by strict 12 hours?

18 MS. THOMPSON: They're -- is it
19 contracted to be on their 12 -- I might have the
20 numbers wrong, so I feel really bad if I do, but
21 they're contracted to work a certain amount of
22 hours out there, but it was up to 12. I'll say

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1 12 because I think that's what it was. They
2 could have two hours -- it was 8 to 12, but now
3 I feel like that's not enough. Maybe it was 12
4 to 16. They could use that if they could -- if
5 there was extra work to be done, they could
6 work. If they needed sleep, they could go down
7 and sleep. They could no longer use that extra
8 couple of hours a day to go down and sleep. She
9 had one -- I feel like she had one day where she
10 could have a few more hours off because she
11 never got a day off out there, but she lost that
12 a year or two ago.

13 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. There's a thing
14 in the maritime trade called STCW work hours,
15 which is -- it's a regulation about working.
16 Then there's maybe the company that was saying
17 this is what you have to do. Did you get a
18 sense that it was the company saying you have to
19 or something else?

20 MS. THOMPSON: The captain.

21 MS. MOWREY: The captain --
22 definitely the captain. I remember this

1 actually -- it was about a year ago that
2 changed. It wasn't -- if she got promoted --

3 MS. THOMPSON: Two years ago.

4 MS. MOWREY: -- two years ago, this
5 happened after because I remember the effect.
6 It was just about a year ago. It was really
7 frustrating. She was very -- it was a big
8 thing. She talked about it quite a bit. For
9 her to talk about that kind of stuff to me means
10 it was pretty big because I'm her fitness
11 instructor -- and friend. That was -- because
12 she was trying to figure out how she could
13 manage keeping this schedule.

14 MR. [REDACTED] You mentioned the
15 emergency food box. That was where she carried
16 healthy food, as opposed to southern cooking
17 with white gravy and all that kind of -- that's
18 kind of what you're talking about?

19 MS. THOMPSON: Basically, and just
20 food so she could eat while on the go because
21 she was always trying to stuff her pockets with
22 food because she'd be hungry.

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1 MR. ██████████ What was your sense in
2 talking to her about just the overall safety
3 culture?

4 MS. THOMPSON: I guess I never
5 really talked to her about it, if I'm
6 understanding how you're wording it. I wouldn't
7 --

8 MR. ██████████ In other words, when
9 she -- if she had a conversation about the
10 lifeboats or the drill that you mentioned, the
11 training and drills and so forth, did she
12 characterize that as hey, I'm really happy about
13 this, or did she say, on the other hand, the
14 drills are ridiculous and the lifeboats are not
15 the right kind for this route or anything like
16 that?

17 MS. THOMPSON: No, she wouldn't --
18 she didn't say anything like that to me,
19 probably because I wouldn't get it. But she did
20 say -- she always would say that the living
21 conditions were unfit, unsuitable (Inaudible) I
22 don't know what that was in reference to.

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1 MR. [REDACTED] Other than working
2 cargo, involved with cargo operations, what were
3 her job -- what was her job as the second mate,
4 as you understood it?

5 MS. THOMPSON: Other than
6 navigational watch and medical, she would go
7 about helping with the repairs on her off --
8 non-navigational watch time.

9 MR. [REDACTED] So June 1st marks the
10 beginning of hurricane season. The ship is
11 going to be going down into hurricane-prone
12 waters. Did she ever talk to you about her
13 duties as a navigator in that?

14 MS. THOMPSON: Nuh-uh.

15 MR. [REDACTED] Did she ever talk to
16 you about -- I know you mentioned that the ship
17 really never changed course and altered course
18 --

19 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, she never spoke
20 to me that they did. If they did, that would've
21 been something, I would assume, that she would
22 tell me, but she never, ever told me that they

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1 would alter course to go around a storm.

2 MR. [REDACTED] There was a course
3 alteration that the ship made coming out of
4 Jacksonville in late August. She wasn't on
5 board, but she didn't talk about it, like, "Boy,
6 they changed course, and that's not what they
7 usually do?"

8 MS. THOMPSON: I don't think she
9 would've kept track, unless Jimmy was on the
10 boat and telling her.

11 MR. [REDACTED] Speaking of that, did
12 she communicate with the ship while the ship was
13 at sea, while she wasn't aboard? Did she
14 communicate with Jimmy or anybody else?

15 MS. THOMPSON: Only her relief,
16 sometimes, and Jimmy, and then whoever she
17 needed to talk to -- a woman that used to set
18 her flights up at the company. That's all I
19 know that she would talk to.

20 MR. [REDACTED] Do you know if one of
21 her reliefs would be this guy -- a second mate
22 called -- his name was Baird. Did she ever

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1 mention -- yes, probably first name, if it was
2 used, right?

3 MS. THOMPSON: If it was used, it
4 would usually (Inaudible) refer to them as her
5 relief.

6 MR. [REDACTED] Just to follow up
7 again, I can understand her being upset at the
8 phone not being up on the bridge and all that,
9 but did you get a sense that was a company
10 policy or the captain's policy?

11 MS. THOMPSON: Captain.

12 MR. [REDACTED] The graffiti photo, is
13 there a way you can tell me when that was taken?
14 Does it have a date and time on it, just so I
15 can put that in my head perspectively?

16 MS. THOMPSON: Yes. It just takes
17 me a minute to get back up there.

18 MR. [REDACTED] That's okay
19 (Inaudible).

20 MS. THOMPSON: September 25th.
21 There's another one, she has to wear hard hats
22 now. That was (Inaudible) wear hard hats.

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1 PARTICIPANT: Do you know when that
2 started?

3 MS. THOMPSON: September 25th, at
4 least that's when she told me.

5 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
6 [REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED]
8 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
9 [REDACTED]
10 [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED]
12 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
13 [REDACTED]
14 [REDACTED]
15 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
16 [REDACTED]
17 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
18 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
19 [REDACTED]
20 [REDACTED]

21 MR. [REDACTED] So she's a deckie,
22 right? There's a line between him and I. It's

1 like this line on the table. I'm not happy when
2 he necessarily comes up to my bridge, and I'm
3 going down there if I have to. Did she ever say
4 anything like the engineers on the ship are
5 treated better than the deckies or anything like
6 that?

7 MS. THOMPSON: No.

8 MR. ██████████ Or the company -- you
9 said about the Christmas card, we don't even get
10 a Christmas card. Did she say the engineers --
11 anything --

12 MS. THOMPSON: No, that was
13 everybody, as a whole.

14 MR. ██████████ So everybody was
15 treated badly?

16 MS. THOMPSON: Well, the same.

17 MR. ██████████ Right. I get it, the
18 same. That's a distinction. Thank you, that's
19 all I have. I appreciate the information you've
20 both provided.

21 MR. YOUNG: You need a break or
22 anything? Are you doing all right?

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1 MS. THOMPSON: Doing good.

2 MR. YOUNG: This is Brian Young with
3 the NTSB. I've got two more questions. I know
4 you said you had a large number of texts from
5 Jacksonville the day the ship departed. Did any
6 of those mention anything about the upcoming
7 weather, that it was some concern of a hurricane
8 out there?

9 MS. THOMPSON: That was just in her
10 email -- her first email, I believe, is --

11 MR. YOUNG: That would be after the
12 ship departed?

13 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, the day after.

14 MR. YOUNG: But was there anything
15 while they were in port? I know you said you
16 had a lot of texts from that day, but if there's
17 anything, maybe, that relates to departure or
18 weather, maybe you might bring that to our
19 attention?

20 MS. THOMPSON: I don't believe there
21 is. The last one that she sent is that, "We're
22 heading out, and it's my bedtime. Talk to you

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1 in email. Good luck with tomorrow," because I
2 was moving. But that's -- it was nothing about
3 weather.

4 MR. YOUNG: Nothing mentioned?

5 MS. THOMPSON: Nuh-uh.

6 MR. YOUNG: Did you hear anything at
7 all during any of your communications about a
8 bunch of Polish people working on the ship?

9 MS. THOMPSON: No. I was going to
10 say this. I would always ask her, when she'd
11 come back, how many people are really working on
12 your ship? Because I was always curious. She'd
13 say about 27. So when the report said 33, I'm
14 like that's wrong. There's never that many on
15 board. Never has she -- she's never mentioned
16 Polish people. She would really -- she would
17 mention something like that, so I was surprised
18 by that, as well. She spoke of a Filipino --
19 was I talking to you -- she spoke of a Filipino
20 lady that she absolutely adored that was on the
21 ship that used to do the bathrooms and stuff.
22 She adored her. That's the only one. I'm like

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1 she's not from Poland. I was surprised by that
2 report.

3 MR. YOUNG: No mention of what they
4 were doing or anything about any changes they
5 were making to the ship because they were going
6 to --

7 MS. THOMPSON: Widening or -- maybe
8 that was on the new one, that they set up the
9 things wrong for the containers, but they were
10 doing something, fitting -- fixing something so
11 it can be ready for Alaska. That's all.

12 MR. YOUNG: On El Faro?

13 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, and having to
14 repair something on the new one because they did
15 it wrong. I remember that.

16 MR. YOUNG: I'm all set.

17 MS. BELL: I do have a question just
18 relating to one of these messages. Someone had
19 passed away on the ship. Do you remember when
20 that was? Are these dates -- I wasn't sure if
21 these dates were --

22 MS. THOMPSON: (Simultaneous

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1 speaking) ago. No, some of them are -- I tried
2 to include the years. That was, I believe, a
3 year ago.

4 MS. BELL: She mentioned something
5 about the poor conditions on the ship.

6 MS. THOMPSON: That was slight
7 sarcasm and some truth (Simultaneous speaking)
8 irritation.

9 MS. BELL: Did she ever talk about
10 that? What did she say about the living
11 conditions, specifically? She said the air and
12 the living conditions.

13 MS. THOMPSON: That was basically
14 it. I would never press a lot to know more.

15 MS. BELL: Was that just something
16 she said once, or was that something that she
17 did have --

18 MS. THOMPSON: No, she would say it
19 often.

20 MS. BELL: -- concern about?

21 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, she would say it
22 often, so we would just kind of take it as ha,

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1 ha, and never think to press for any situation
2 like this and what you would need to remember.

3 MS. BELL: I don't think I have any
4 other questions.

5 MR. CURTIS: [REDACTED]

6 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
7 with the Coast Guard, just to follow up. Did
8 she ever talk about how the ship handled in the
9 weather?

10 MS. THOMPSON: Yes, but I'm not
11 going to remember anything specific.

12 MR. [REDACTED] Did she say that -- do
13 you just recall if the ship rode well in rough
14 weather?

15 MS. THOMPSON: I guess I -- it
16 wouldn't be a yay or nay either way. It was
17 just the -- they'd be rocking or whatever, but
18 she would be like, "Yay, I got through, yee
19 haw," but not specifically what you're looking
20 for, I think.

21 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, did she ever
22 mention when they -- I know this is details, but

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1 did she ever mention when the ship got underway
2 from Jacksonville it was listing?

3 MS. THOMPSON: To me, no.

4 MR. [REDACTED] No? How about -- one
5 of the things is that there was another company
6 called Horizon Lines. They went out of business
7 a couple years ago. As a result, the only ships
8 that were running down to Puerto Rico were the
9 El Yunque and the El Faro. Did she mention they
10 were picking up more cargo, heavier loaded,
11 anything like that?

12 MS. THOMPSON: Nuh-uh, she did not.

13 MR. [REDACTED] How about how much
14 they were driven to stick with the schedule?

15 MS. THOMPSON: No, it would just be
16 on internally, just what she was experiencing,
17 not company wise what they were keeping up with
18 that she spoke to me about.

19 MR. [REDACTED] This lovely Filipino
20 lady, was she on there all the time, or --

21 MS. THOMPSON: I think hers was five
22 months on, five months off.

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1 MR. ██████████ This is kind of a
2 funny question on a ship, but did she ever
3 mention cowboys?

4 MS. THOMPSON: No. Cows, but no.

5 MR. ██████████ Okay. Because they
6 have a crew that goes along to take care --

7 MS. THOMPSON: She has said that, to
8 take care of the circus animals, but she never
9 said anything about cowboys.

10 MR. ██████████ Did she say anything
11 about them?

12 MS. THOMPSON: No, just that --
13 occasionally, but she didn't say there was
14 livestock on this particular trip.

15 MR. ██████████ Then just finally, I
16 asked you about the weather, but did she ever
17 say we were out at sea in this storm and
18 something in -- not propulsion equipment or
19 steering, but the weather broke something, like
20 it broke out some windows or lifeboats or
21 knocked some containers over or anything like
22 that?

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1 MS. THOMPSON: No.

2 MR. [REDACTED] Okay, thanks to both
3 of you.

4 MR. YOUNG: One last question, just
5 my second to last question. We do it all the
6 time. This is Brian Young with the NTSB. We've
7 asked you a ton of questions. It's just areas
8 that we may have had some concern in. Is there
9 any other information that you might have, or
10 any other areas that we haven't asked you about,
11 or anything else in that envelope that you may
12 have that may shed some light on this
13 investigation?

14 MS. THOMPSON: (Inaudible.) I can't
15 think of anything.

16 MS. MOWREY: She said something
17 about one of the trips and something about the
18 cargo. I'm trying to recall that, too, and if I
19 do, I'll let somebody know because it was a
20 frustration that she had -- I don't know if it
21 was the weight of the cargo. I'm not sure, so I
22 can't say anything, but if I think of it, I'll

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1 let you know.

2 MR. YOUNG: Would that have been in
3 an email, maybe?

4 MS. MOWREY: No, everything she did
5 to me was just talking.

6 MR. YOUNG: Just talking?

7 MS. MOWREY: Yes. It was just right
8 after she got back from whatever trips. It was
9 kind of a close call feel, something happened,
10 but it turned out okay, and it was something
11 about the cargo, but (Inaudible) remember.

12 MR. CURTIS: You have our contact
13 info. If there's anything that does come up,
14 say if you're looking through your Facebook
15 pages or text messages or emails or pictures of
16 anything on the ship, maybe you would forward
17 them to us or Katy just to try to help us out
18 because we're trying to get every bit of
19 information we can. A few pictures may not seem
20 that important to you, but if there is something
21 in the background that we could see, it might
22 really open our eyes to something cargo wise

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1 (Inaudible) pictures of the containers.

2 MS. MOWREY: My son was there, too,
3 so my son might have talked (Inaudible) he might
4 remember.

5 PARTICIPANT: He was aboard the
6 ship?

7 MS. MOWREY: No, just having the
8 conversation with Danielle.

9 MS. BELL: I have one second last
10 question, too. Do you --

11 PARTICIPANT: Just identify yourself
12 (Inaudible).

13 MS. BELL: Oh, sorry, Carrie Bell,
14 NTSB. Do you know if anyone had resigned
15 recently or was fired from the ship? Do you
16 know of any --

17 MS. THOMPSON: Not that I can easily
18 recall. I don't remember her talking about
19 that.

20 MS. BELL: Okay, thank you.

21 MR. CURTIS: That's it? [REDACTED]

22 MR. [REDACTED] I was just going to

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1 say, Korinn, the comment you made about the
2 weight issue, that might be an important piece
3 of information for us, so it would be really
4 great if you get back to us. Even if you can't
5 recall it, just make sure you let us know that I
6 couldn't come up with anything, so we close the
7 loop on that.

8 MS. MOWREY: Okay, yes, I will --

9 MR. [REDACTED] Thank you. Thank you
10 very much.

11 MEMBER KRAMER: -- I'll talk to my
12 son (Inaudible).

13 MR. CURTIS: Norrie, Korinn, I think
14 we've asked all the questions we have for you.
15 We certainly appreciate you taking the time
16 today, but I will open it up to you, just before
17 we close out here, any questions you have for
18 all of us or areas of concern we may not have
19 gone to (Inaudible) open it up so we can answer
20 your questions or cover any bases we didn't get
21 to.

22 MS. THOMPSON: I can't think of

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1 anything at the moment, unless you can.

2 MR. CURTIS: Thanks again. This
3 concludes the interview. I certainly appreciate
4 you taking the time today. We know it's
5 difficult, but it really helps out in our
6 investigation, so thank you much.

7 (Whereupon, the above-entitled
8 interview was concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Interview of Korinn Mowrey & Norrie Thompson

DATE: 11-04-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 60 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



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