

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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IN RE: :

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THE EL FARO INCIDENT OFF THE: NTSB Accident No.

COAST OF THE BAHAMAS ON : DCA16MM001

OCTOBER 1, 2015 :

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INTERVIEW OF: ERIN SNYDER, BOILER INSPECTOR

Tuesday,

October 13, 2015

Via teleconference

BEFORE:

BRIAN YOUNG, NTSB

LOUIS O'DONNELL, ABS

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard

This transcript was produced from audio

provided by the National Transportation Safety Board.

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

2 (No time provided.)

3 MR. YOUNG: Sorry to rush you, Lou
4 (Simultaneous speaking).

5 MR. O'DONNELL: No, just something I had to
6 deal with.

7 MR. SNYDER: This is Erin.

8 MR. YOUNG: Hi, Erin, this is Brian Young
9 calling. I'm with the National Transportation Safety
10 Board.

11 MR. SNYDER: Yes, sir, how are you?

12 MR. YOUNG: Good. How are you? I really
13 appreciate you taking the time today to talk with me.
14 If you've got a minute, I just want to let you know
15 what we're talking about and who's here and just give
16 you a few bits of information, okay?

17 MR. SNYDER: Yes, sir.

18 MR. YOUNG: As part of the investigation of
19 El Faro, the NTSB was called in, and we are doing a
20 safety investigation. That's all we're doing. We're
21 not blaming anyone or putting any liability on anybody.
22 All we want to do is get the facts to see what
23 happened. As part of it, we're trying to talk to
24 anybody who had been aboard the ship somewhat recently.
25 We understand that you and your company had done some

1 boiler work. We would just like to talk to you and see
2 what work you did on the ship, what people you dealt
3 with, and what the condition of the ship was. That's
4 all we're going to limit this discussion to, okay?

5 MR. SNYDER: Okay.

6 MR. YOUNG: In the room with me, we have a
7 party [REDACTED]
8 for the investigation. The Engineering party consists
9 of a member from the Coast Guard, a member of the ABS,
10 and a member of TOTE. TOTE's not here right now. He's
11 in another meeting. We have you on speaker, the three
12 of us. Everyone's going to identify themselves, and
13 we're going to record the conversation, so that we can
14 get it transcribed, so there's no errors or omissions
15 in what you've said. That will be available to you in
16 writing. Sound good?

17 MR. SNYDER: It does.

18 MR. YOUNG: Okay, thanks. We'll go around
19 the room again. My name's Brian Young, and I'll give
20 you my contact information after this, in case you have
21 any reason or wish to contact me, okay?

22 MR. SNYDER: Okay.

23 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Good afternoon, Erin. This is
24 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm with the U.S. Coast Guard and here
25 supporting the NTSB Engineering team.

1 MR. O'DONNELL: This is Louis O'Donnell,
2 Assistant Chief Surveyors, Americas. I'm here
3 supporting the NTSB as part of the Engineering group.

4 MR. SNYDER: Okay. Pleasure to meet you,
5 gentlemen.

6 MR. YOUNG: Likewise. Again, we really
7 appreciate it. I know you're busy; you've got other
8 things going on. Just to make sure I've got this
9 right, how do you spell your name?

10 MR. SNYDER: It's E-R-I-N, and my middle
11 name is Eugene, E-U-G-E-N-E, and the last name is
12 Snyder, S-N-Y-D-E-R.

13 MR. YOUNG: Can you just tell us who you
14 work for and what your job responsibilities are?

15 MR. SNYDER: I work for Jacksonville Machine
16 & Repair. We're a full inside/outside machine shop and
17 do various steel repairs, as well as pumps and valves
18 and whatnot. Basically, anything to do with
19 (Inaudible) shipping industry, we try to help them out
20 as much as we can with it.

21 MR. YOUNG: Obviously, your job has brought
22 you, either once or a few times, aboard the El Faro.
23 Could you tell us a few bits of information as to what
24 projects you may have been working on on the El Faro?

25 MR. SNYDER: The most recent one was the

1 boiler, the economizer (Inaudible) repairing some tubes
2 for them and various (Inaudible) lines, structural
3 (Inaudible) and stuff like that. All of it's always
4 been under the instruction of a chief engineer or a
5 board engineer (Inaudible) representatives.

6 MR. YOUNG: The last visit you worked aboard
7 the ship, do you remember what boiler it was that you
8 worked on for the economizers?

9 MR. SNYDER: I believe it was the port
10 forward.

11 MR. YOUNG: While you were aboard the ship
12 the last time, did you notice anything beyond the
13 economizer that seemed like it was in bad maintenance
14 shape or any issues or concerns that was brought to
15 your attention safety wise from any of the crew
16 members?

17 MR. SNYDER: No, sir.

18 MR. YOUNG: Were you only working on the
19 economizer section, or did you do any other work inside
20 the boilers?

21 MR. SNYDER: Just the economizer section.

22 MR. YOUNG: As we understood it, some
23 jumpers were put in?

24 MR. SNYDER: Yes, sir, jumpers.

25 MR. YOUNG: Were they put in using welding

1 equipment?

2 MR. SNYDER: Yes, we welded them in. We cut
3 them out and welded them in. They furnished the new
4 jumper pipes.

5 MR. YOUNG: Do you need to carry any special
6 welding certifications to do this type of work?

7 MR. SNYDER: Yes, I do. It'd be a
8 Chrome-Moly welding cert.

9 MR. YOUNG: You said Chrome-Moly?

10 MR. SNYDER: Yes, sir.

11 MR. YOUNG: Again, the real reason we're
12 really talking to you is just if anyone had mentioned
13 anything to you saying they were concerned about the
14 condition of the ship, or if you had seen anything
15 broken down and bandaged up?

16 MR. SNYDER: No, everything seemed to be in
17 good working condition, as far as I can tell. I'm not
18 a boiler maker. I just actually do what they tell me
19 to do, and that's it.

20 MR. YOUNG: Understood. We're not expecting
21 you to survey the entire ship.

22 MR. SNYDER: I understand.

23 MR. YOUNG: Just in the small area of the
24 ship you were working on, just your impression and what
25 guys were talking to you about.

1 MR. SNYDER: Yes, definitely. Everything
2 seemed to be in good working condition. I have ridden
3 the ship myself several times.

4 MR. YOUNG: You have? Is that somewhat
5 recently, or is it many, many moons ago?

6 MR. SNYDER: Last year, I believe, and years
7 -- within a five or six-year period I've ridden it
8 probably a couple dozen times.

9 MR. YOUNG: If you could remember maybe the
10 last time you rode it, or most recently, do you
11 remember ever having to go to an abandon ship drill?

12 MR. SNYDER: Yes, every time we were
13 indoctrinated, and they would tell us to muster
14 station, what lifeboat we needed to go to. We actually
15 did a drill with the crew. They were insistent on
16 that. We all just had to do that. Stop whatever
17 you're doing. They'd give you prior notice when the
18 drill was and went through everything with us.

19 MR. YOUNG: That's great. Do you remember,
20 at any time, during any of these drills, if the
21 lifeboats were ever lowered down to, say, the
22 embarkation level?

23 MR. SNYDER: Yes, I believe they were. They
24 were lowered down. They slow the ship down, and they
25 hang them over the side.

1 MR. YOUNG: That's great. Do you ever
2 remember, too -- and I know this is going way back --
3 at sea, did they ever steam with one boiler, or do you
4 remember both boilers being online?

5 MR. SNYDER: I'm not sure.

6 MR. YOUNG: No, that's great that you rode
7 the ship and remembered some of that information.
8 That's great. I'm done with my questions. I'm going
9 to pass you around to the Coast Guard, and then the
10 ABS, okay?

11 MR. SNYDER: Okay.

12 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I have no questions for you.
13 Thank you very much.

14 MR. O'DONNELL: Good afternoon, Erin. This
15 is Lou O'Donnell, with ABS. You mentioned you did some
16 work on steam lines and structure angles. Was that
17 recently?

18 MR. SNYDER: The steam lines were recently,
19 and the angles, it's been a while since we've done any
20 angles or structural repairs.

21 MR. O'DONNELL: With the steam lines, can
22 you remember was it low-pressure steam, bleed steam,
23 heating steam? Was it something minor, or was it
24 anything that might have been (Simultaneous speaking)?

25 MR. SNYDER: They were drain lines, stuff of

1 that nature. Then the Chrome-Moly ones we did on the
2 boiler were high pressure. They actually (Inaudible)
3 and everything, the chief did.

4 MR. O'DONNELL: When you say the ones on the
5 boiler, is that above and beyond what you did on the
6 economizer, something else?

7 MR. SNYDER: That's what I'm talking about,
8 on the economizer (Simultaneous speaking).

9 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. The structural
10 angles, were these in ballast tanks, side shell, deck?
11 Can you remember -- I know this is probably going way
12 back, and you've probably done a million jobs.

13 MR. SNYDER: Yes, they were just at various
14 locations on the deck. They were (Inaudible) per ABS,
15 I believe. I forget who the surveyor was that
16 (Inaudible).

17 MR. O'DONNELL: So it was as directed by
18 ABS?

19 MR. SNYDER: As directed by ABS, and I was
20 working with Jeff Mathias (Phonetic), one of the
21 gentlemen that was on the vessel. He was actually the
22 chief engineer at the time.

23 MR. O'DONNELL: That's all the questions I
24 have. Thank you very much for taking some time to talk
25 to us this afternoon, Erin. I really appreciate it. I

1 know you're a busy guy.

2 MR. SNYDER: Yes, sir. Thank you very much
3 (Simultaneous speaking) the whole situation.

4 MR. YOUNG: That's great. This is Brian
5 Young for my last question. When you were aboard the
6 ship the last time, did you notice any of the riding
7 gang, the Polish workers aboard the ship?

8 MR. SNYDER: I did see them. I spoke with
9 them Tuesday, right before -- Monday or Tuesday, before
10 it sailed, we were out there surveying some work with
11 engineers, and I spoke with the Polish guys. We said
12 hello, shook their hand.

13 MR. YOUNG: Do you know, I don't know if
14 they discussed with you, but the areas that they were
15 working in? Were they working --

16 MR. SNYDER: No, I wasn't sure exactly where
17 they were working. I was focused on what we had to do.

18 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Just in that
19 conversation, were you able to communicate with them in
20 English?

21 MR. SNYDER: Yes, they said hello to me in
22 English, just brief conversation (Inaudible).

23 MR. YOUNG: So you were around the ship area
24 the Tuesday, the day before they sailed?

25 MR. SNYDER: Yes, sir.

1 MR. YOUNG: Were you aboard the ship?

2 MR. SNYDER: Yes.

3 MR. YOUNG: Was that in Jacksonville?

4 MR. SNYDER: In Jacksonville. We were
5 (Inaudible) stuff we were going to add to the ship we
6 were working on.

7 MR. YOUNG: Okay. But were you involved
8 with anything with the boiler that day?

9 MR. SNYDER: No, nothing with the boiler.

10 MR. YOUNG: Did you go to the engine room?

11 MR. SNYDER: I did not.

12 MR. YOUNG: Okay, great. I don't have any
13 other questions, unless you have anything else to add
14 that may spark any memories that could help us figure
15 this thing out?

16 MR. SNYDER: No, not that I can think of.

17 MR. YOUNG: Okay, I'm going to secure the
18 recording.

19 (Whereupon, the above-entitled interview was
20 concluded. No time provided.)

21

22

23

24

25

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Z**0****1**

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: El Faro Incident
Accident No. DCA16MM001
Interview of Erin Snyder
teleconference

DATE: 10-13-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 14 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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