

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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

Interview of: LAURIE BOBILLOT

Wednesday,  
November 4, 2015

Teleconference

BEFORE:

BRIAN YOUNG, NTSB  
 BRIAN CURTIS, NTSB  
 CARRIE BELL, NTSB  
 KATY CHISOM, NTSB  
 MIKE KUCHARSKI, 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. [REDACTED] Hi, Laurie. My name's

3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm a civilian marine casualty  
4 investigator for the United States Coast Guard.  
5 I live down in [REDACTED] I'm working with  
6 the human performance group -- human factors  
7 group, as well as kind of sitting in from the  
8 nautical operations side of the investigation  
9 team.

10 MS. BOBILLOT: (Simultaneous  
11 speaking.)

12 MS. BELL: Hi, this is Carrie Bell.  
13 I'm also part of the NTSB team. I am the human  
14 performance group chairman. We are looking at  
15 decision making and relationships among the crew  
16 and things of that nature.

17 MS. BOBILLOT: Okay.

18 MR. YOUNG: Hi, this is Brian Young.  
19 I'm part of the engineering group. I'm a  
20 graduate of New York Maritime, and I went to sea  
21 for 25 years with the American Maritime Officers  
22 Union. I'm going to be looking into the

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 propulsion systems aboard the ship. Thank you  
2 very much for your time.

3 MS. BOBILLOT: Thank you, sir.

4 MR. YOUNG: Mike?

5 MR. KUCHARSKI: Hi, good afternoon,  
6 Ms. Bobillot. My name is Mike Kucharski. I'm  
7 with the NTSB. I'm nautical operations group  
8 chairman. Like Brian, I went to sea for 24  
9 years and was actually master on the Northern  
10 Lights before she became the El Faro. Deep  
11 condolences. Thank you for participating.

12 MS. BOBILLOT: Thank you, sir.

13 PARTICIPANT: Before we get started,  
14 Laurie, just a little more of my background,  
15 just so you know. I grew up in Rockland, went  
16 to school in Rockland, went to Maine Maritime  
17 Academy and actually sailed under the American  
18 Maritime Officers for 23 years, just so you have  
19 that background of the history of who's actually  
20 involved in the investigation.

21 I'd like to lead off just with a  
22 little bit about who the NTSB is. We're a

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 federal agency that's not under the DOT or any  
2 other umbrella. We don't have enforcement  
3 authority for regulations, but I think our  
4 impact comes from the recommendations that we  
5 eventually develop to hopefully prevent these  
6 accidents from recurring again.

7 In this accident, we've been on  
8 scene, as you know, down in Jacksonville. We  
9 spent a week and a half there interviewing many  
10 folks in the area, collecting information. That  
11 went on for about a week and a half. Since  
12 then, we've been working with the U.S. Navy,  
13 with their supply salvage folks, to get out  
14 there and locate, which we have, the El Faro  
15 hull. Also, the second part of that mission is  
16 to find and retrieve the VDR, if possible. From  
17 the press release, you've seen that the bridge  
18 deck and the deck below that, which actually --  
19 those decks actually hold the voyage data  
20 recorder -- were not attached to the vessel, so  
21 we're continuing our search in the vicinity of  
22 the hull that we might find that component and

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 hopefully retrieve the voyage data recorder.

2           Going forward, once we've finished  
3 up some follow-up interviews -- and we certainly  
4 appreciate your participating today, and if you  
5 don't mind, we'd like to record this as a way of  
6 capturing all the information you might provide,  
7 and that will eventually be -- the transcription  
8 of this interview will reside in a public  
9 docket. Obviously, we'll redact any personal  
10 information, but it will, in several months,  
11 reside on a public docket, on a website, under  
12 the NTSB.

13           The end product, possibly even a  
14 year down the road, just to give you a fair  
15 assessment of the time frame, we will produce a  
16 report, which will contain findings of the  
17 investigation, as well as the probable cause of  
18 the accident, and finally, recommendations that  
19 we would distribute to the proper organizations  
20 or entities where they might in some way  
21 mitigate the chances of such a recurrence of a  
22 tragedy such as this. That's kind of who we are

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 and what we're doing here. Before we get to the  
2 group chairman to do the interview questions, if  
3 you have any questions for me, I would be glad  
4 to take those up front.

5 MS. BOBILLOT: Okay. Well, one  
6 question is -- I don't know how far that little  
7 submarine there is looking for the deck of the  
8 ship. You can only go by media, so everything's  
9 got to be taken with a grain of salt. I do know  
10 that some of the debris and everything had  
11 floated about 100 miles away from the last known  
12 destination of El Faro. I was wondering if that  
13 submarine thing is going to go as far as that,  
14 or are they going to stay pretty close within  
15 the vicinity of the vessel?

16 PARTICIPANT: We've identified an  
17 area around the vessel, it's about, I believe,  
18 10 by 15 miles, roughly, where -- the hull was  
19 actually located in the center of that location.  
20 So the ROV and the sonar search, we've done some  
21 video work of the hull, but where we found that  
22 the top two decks were sheared off, which would

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 have held the VDR, the voyage data recorder,  
2 we're actually going back to the sonar scans to  
3 search more in that area surrounding the hull in  
4 hopes of finding those decks that would have  
5 held the VDR. We're expanding the search a  
6 little bit to realistic plans to where it may  
7 have fallen in relation to the ship. We've done  
8 some video work. We'll do some more on the hull  
9 itself or the condition of it, but we are also  
10 returning to do more sonar work to try to locate  
11 that wheelhouse.

12 MS. BOBILLOT: Are we, as the family  
13 members, going to be privy to these photos, if  
14 you will, probably not now, but at a later date?

15 MS. CHISOM: Hi, Laurie, this is  
16 Katy. That's a really good question. We're  
17 actually working with the Navy and our IIC, the  
18 Investigator in Charge, who is on the ship, to  
19 try to get some images and video that we can  
20 release. As soon as we have something, I will  
21 notify you and the other family members, so that  
22 you'll have an opportunity to see it before it

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701



1 goes public.

2 MS. BOBILLOT: Okay.

3 MS. CHISOM: Okay?

4 MS. BOBILLOT: Yes, thank you.

5 PARTICIPANT: Anything else, Laurie?

6 Glad to entertain your questions now. I know  
7 you're busy, too.

8 MS. BOBILLOT: After last night's  
9 report with the wheelhouse and everything coming  
10 apart from the vessel, that was kind of a shock  
11 to me. You're talking -- I know with the bridge  
12 and everything, but are you talking the whole  
13 white part of that vessel coming off, or just  
14 the bridge and the immediate second level to it?

15 PARTICIPANT: Right, so the house --  
16 the super structure, if you will, consists of, I  
17 believe, four or five decks. I'm not sure  
18 exactly how many. The parts that were sheared  
19 off and are missing actually are the navigation  
20 bridge, the very top level, and the one  
21 immediately underneath it. Of course -- not of  
22 course, but the voyage data recorder was

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 actually physically mounted on top of the  
2 navigation bridge, where navigation work is  
3 conducted. So it's connected to that. But yes,  
4 it wasn't the entire white section, the super  
5 structure. It was two of those four or five  
6 decks that were sheared off, and that's what's  
7 missing.

8 MS. BOBILLOT: Okay, that's what I  
9 was thinking. Please excuse my ignorance, but  
10 this black box. I know it's the last  
11 communications that were happening on the ship,  
12 but is it like a recorder, like if Danielle was  
13 talking to the captain type thing, is that what  
14 it's recording, or is it just stuff that they're  
15 trying to send as a message to the rescue squad,  
16 if you will?

17 PARTICIPANT: That's a very good  
18 question. It's what they refer to as a  
19 simplified VDR. What this would capture, in  
20 totality, would be -- first of all, it would  
21 capture the rough navigational data, speed,  
22 course, heading, some radar -- every 15 seconds,

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 it would record a radar image. That's all good  
2 information. But more importantly, it would  
3 actually house contained -- record the last 12  
4 hours of communications on the bridge.

5 Essentially, there are microphones embedded in  
6 the overhead on the bridge, captures all  
7 conversations. It would've captured all those  
8 conversations for the 12 hours previous to  
9 losing power, but it also has a small battery in  
10 it, which allows it to capture any conversations  
11 and navigational information for two hours post  
12 losing power.

13 It's designed to work down to 20,000  
14 feet, which we're in less than 20,000 feet.  
15 We're around 15,000 feet. The pinger, which we  
16 never detected the pinger, was designed to go 30  
17 days. The challenge now is to find that  
18 wheelhouse section, if we can, to get the voyage  
19 data recorder back.

20 MS. BOBILLOT: Okay. That's all I  
21 can think of for right now (Inaudible).

22 PARTICIPANT: No, that's totally

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 understandable and all great questions. I'm  
2 going to turn it over now to the investigative  
3 team who'll be asking the questions. We'll  
4 start with Brian Young, our engineering  
5 investigator. Go ahead, Brian.

6 MR. YOUNG: Good afternoon, Laurie.  
7 Thank you again for your time. If you don't  
8 mind, maybe you could just start out with maybe  
9 giving us a little bit of an idea of how much  
10 and how long Danielle had been employed aboard  
11 the ship, how many trips she had made?

12 MS. BOBILLOT: She was on the El  
13 Morro, the sister ship to the El Faro, for  
14 several years. Then when they decommissioned  
15 the El Morro, she went right over to the El  
16 Faro. To be honest with you, I don't know how  
17 many exact trips she's done on the El Faro, but  
18 it was -- I want to say at least -- it's  
19 whenever they decommissioned the El Morro, she  
20 went right over there. She had her ten weeks  
21 off, and then went right over to the El Faro.

22 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Was it a pretty

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 steady rotation, ten weeks on/ten weeks off, on  
2 the El Faro?

3 MS. BOBILLOT: Yes, absolutely.

4 MR. YOUNG: Did she work a lot with  
5 Captain Davidson?

6 MS. BOBILLOT: Yes, she did some.  
7 The captain's rotations are a little different  
8 than the other officers. I think they have the  
9 ten weeks, but they're not always the exact same  
10 ten weeks as what Danielle would have done.  
11 They overlap from captain to captain.

12 MR. YOUNG: Do you know how her  
13 relationship was with Captain Davidson? Did  
14 they get along all right or --

15 MS. BOBILLOT: Boy, I hate to answer  
16 that one. Oh, my God. She didn't care for the  
17 man. I will say that. But she respected him  
18 because he is the captain. A lot of times, she  
19 would say to me that he was in his stateroom  
20 quite a bit, more so than she felt should have  
21 been. But that's all she -- she really didn't  
22 want to go too much into details with me. She

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 was like my mother more than my daughter. She  
2 always tried to protect me from all these things  
3 that could happen out at sea. But she did not  
4 care for him very much, no.

5 MR. YOUNG: I think a lot of us who  
6 have gone to sea don't tell everybody the whole  
7 story all the time when we're out there.

8 MS. BOBILLOT: Oh, I know.

9 MR. YOUNG: How about some of the  
10 other captains that may have been on there? Did  
11 you ever get any feedback on, say, some of the  
12 relief captains or --

13 MS. BOBILLOT: I'm trying to think  
14 of some of the names. On the El Faro, she had  
15 some captains that she liked very well, like  
16 Captain Pete, but I don't know if he went on the  
17 El Faro or not. The only reason I know of  
18 Davidson is because just before she left, she  
19 said to me, "Oh, I've got to ship out with him."  
20 I said, "Everybody's got their faults. Just  
21 kind of suck it up and accept it for what it  
22 is." She goes, "Yes, I know, Mom." That was

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 it. That's the only reason I know it was  
2 Davidson. I'm not sure what the other captains'  
3 names are.

4 MR. YOUNG: We did have some of the  
5 most recent names as an Axelson, and then there  
6 might have been a Chief Mate Thompson. Those  
7 are some of the names we've heard.

8 MS. BOBILLOT: No, I'm not familiar  
9 with those names.

10 MR. YOUNG: We do know, and we  
11 appreciate, that you had forwarded an email that  
12 Danielle sent to you saying we were heading  
13 right into a hurricane. Did you receive any  
14 other emails a little before or any time after  
15 that, or any pictures recently, or any other  
16 communication that indicated that may have been  
17 en route towards the hurricane, or maybe trying  
18 to head away from it?

19 MS. BOBILLOT: No, that was the only  
20 one. I've had some other ones two-three days  
21 before. No, the only ones that I know was sent  
22 during that time frame would be the ones that

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 Norrie Thompson received and Jessie Thompson.  
2 They're sisters. I have not been privy to those  
3 emails. They didn't want to forward them to me,  
4 so that's why I got you guys involved, so you  
5 guys could retrieve them from the girls. I did  
6 try to -- I checked my email when I got it, and  
7 then I tried to send her an email back saying,  
8 "Please be careful, love you, Mom." That  
9 particular email did not go through. I kept  
10 getting things from Global saying still trying  
11 to send the email (Inaudible) send it. So at  
12 that time, I imagine the ship had lost all  
13 communications, obviously.

14 But I will say Danielle always said  
15 to me, "If you ever write on this email, keep it  
16 pretty much professional, Mom, no jokes, no  
17 nothing, no pictures. This is a professional  
18 ship's email. We can't receive stuff like that,  
19 and no attachments." As far as her writing to  
20 me on her private email, I never received  
21 anything. It was strictly just the ship email.  
22 In relation to that email, I can say to you that

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701



1 she was talking to me in code.

2 We were both raised on the water.  
3 Her saying, "We are heading straight for the  
4 hurricane," that was a hint to me saying, "We're  
5 not supposed to be doing this." Anybody who's  
6 been out to sea knows that you divert going into  
7 a hurricane. You do not head straight into a  
8 hurricane. There's Part 1 for me.

9 Then Part 2 was her saying, "Give my  
10 love to everyone." She never -- I'm sorry. She  
11 never, ever ended her emails that way. It was  
12 always, "Talk to you later," or the initial D,  
13 obviously for Danielle, never love, never, and  
14 certainly not on the ship's email. (Inaudible)  
15 email, she knew that they were heading for big  
16 trouble. That was her way of telling me see you  
17 later. I'm so sorry.

18 MR. YOUNG: No, we really appreciate  
19 you giving us this insight because that really  
20 tells a much better story than just reading the  
21 black and white. That insight that you know, as  
22 a mom, is a huge help to us.

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 MS. BOBILLOT: Like I said, she  
2 always tried to be professional whenever can be.  
3 That email was about as personal as she would  
4 ever -- as she ever got on that. That was  
5 definitely a hint, without throwing anybody  
6 under the bus.

7 MR. YOUNG: Understood. Do you  
8 remember about what time it was that you  
9 attempted to write back?

10 MS. BOBILLOT: I'll have to look it  
11 up, honey. I'm not sure. I think it's probably  
12 a couple hours later, but I'll double check on  
13 my emails myself, and I'll get back to Katy with  
14 that. Because the way I do that is on my phone,  
15 and I'm on my phone right now.

16 MR. YOUNG: No, I get it. I  
17 understand, thanks.

18 MS. BOBILLOT: I'll double check.

19 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Did you talk to  
20 Danielle at all while they were in Jacksonville,  
21 right before departure? Would there be a  
22 typical phone call to you?

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 MS. BOBILLOT: We were in the  
2 process of moving, but nothing was said about  
3 the hurricane. I don't even know if she knew  
4 about the hurricane at that point. It was, "I  
5 got to call the storage unit," blah, blah, blah,  
6 about where to store my items, that type of  
7 phone call. But no, absolutely nothing about a  
8 hurricane. The first and only thing I heard  
9 about the hurricane was that email that we were  
10 just talking about.

11 MR. YOUNG: How about over time -- I  
12 know she had been aboard the ship for a few  
13 trips. Was there any notice or any, say,  
14 communication that the ships were being  
15 overloaded or carrying much more cargo or trying  
16 to have heavier demands on schedules? Was there  
17 any talking about that?

18 MS. BOBILLOT: Absolutely not. No,  
19 the only thing that was discussed about the  
20 ship, she was excited because it was going to be  
21 going to get a refit so they could go to Alaska.  
22 She was excited about that. I know -- I don't

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 know if this is any help or not, but the El  
2 Morro, which is a sister ship, I do know that at  
3 some point, they were trying to patch up the  
4 hull -- the walls. When they took the rivet gun  
5 to it, it would just puncture holes right  
6 through the side, the bulkhead. I thought, "Oh,  
7 my God." That's the sister ship, meaning they  
8 should be pretty much identical and probably the  
9 same year period. Her and I would discuss that.  
10 I said, "I hope to heck she's a little sturdier,  
11 at least, than the El Morro." She would say,  
12 "Yes, me, too." That was it. She was very  
13 protective of me. I'm sorry, but she was. Like  
14 I said, with her to say that about the  
15 hurricane, going straight for it, that is so not  
16 Danielle. That was a final goodbye. That's  
17 what it was. Oh, shoot.

18 MR. YOUNG: We understood, too, that  
19 there was plans to bring that ship over to the  
20 Alaska trade. Do you know if there was any talk  
21 about Danielle going to one of the new LNG  
22 ships, or do you think she had plans to stay

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 with the El Faro?

2 MS. BOBILLOT: No, she was planning  
3 on going to the LNG. She was so excited about  
4 that, really excited.

5 MR. YOUNG: Do you know if that was  
6 something that the company had already made  
7 arrangements to have that transfer, or was there  
8 an interview process, and was she chosen?

9 MS. BOBILLOT: No, not at all. That  
10 is one of her biggest gripes was the lack of  
11 communication with TOTE. I said to her, "When  
12 are they going to take the ship over there for  
13 the refit, and when are you going to Alaska? Do  
14 you know the address?" She said, "I know  
15 nothing. The damn company is not telling us  
16 anything. I don't know the dates on anything.  
17 I don't know how many tours I'm going to be able  
18 to go to Alaska on. We know nothing, just that  
19 at some point, it's going to go in for a refit."  
20 That she was frustrated on. Maybe TOTE didn't  
21 know, in all honesty. Maybe they didn't know,  
22 but I would think they would.

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 MR. YOUNG: It sounds like they were  
2 trying to look for people to man these new  
3 ships. I don't know if you had heard anything  
4 through Danielle if there were any selections  
5 made for a captain or chief mate or any other  
6 positions on the new ships.

7 MS. BOBILLOT: Nothing. I don't  
8 know if this is relevant or not, but one of her  
9 engineers that was very good friends with her,  
10 Jimmy Robinson, he's going to be going on that.  
11 Is it because the El Faro is no longer a ship  
12 available for him? Is that why they're giving  
13 him a position as an engineer on there? That I  
14 don't know. I definitely would -- for your own  
15 records, I would definitely try to communicate  
16 with Jimmy. I think you might have already.

17 MR. YOUNG: Yes, we did. We talked  
18 to Jimmy. He's another Mainer. Everybody's  
19 from Maine.

20 MS. BOBILLOT: Well, you're darn  
21 tooting we are.

22 MR. YOUNG: You're darn tooting.

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 I'm right from Scarborough. I'm a Mainer, too,  
2 and so is our director, Brian.

3 MS. BOBILLOT: Yes, I know. I'm in  
4 good hands.

5 MR. YOUNG: I know. This is the  
6 nice part of Maine up here.

7 MS. BOBILLOT: Yes.

8 MR. YOUNG: I know you're a little  
9 bit limited on time, right, so (Simultaneous  
10 speaking).

11 MS. BOBILLOT: You're fine. I'm  
12 doing Danielle's second ceremony for here in  
13 Wisconsin, but I've got time. This is way more  
14 important than setting up pictures. Whatever  
15 you need for time, you've got it.

16 MR. YOUNG: We really appreciate  
17 that. I'm going to pass around some of the  
18 questions to the other individuals, but I was  
19 just checking -- I know Danielle was working on  
20 the bridge, and the way the mates communicate  
21 with the engineers, did you ever hear anything  
22 about -- from Danielle about the condition of

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 the engines or any problems she noticed with the  
2 boilers? Again, I know it's different between  
3 mates and engineers, and it's rare for the mates  
4 to talk about engine-related issues, but was  
5 there any case that you may have heard anything  
6 about propulsion, boilers, turbines?

7 MS. BOBILLOT: Nuh-uh, nothing. But  
8 like I said, her and Jimmy are good friends, so  
9 if she'd gotten any information, it would have  
10 been from Jimmy.

11 MR. YOUNG: Okay, thank you. I'm  
12 going to have our human factors, Carrie Bell,  
13 speak with you now, but thank you so much for  
14 your time with me.

15 MS. BOBILLOT: Thank you, dear.

16 MS. BELL: I have a few questions  
17 about when Danielle first started at TOTE. You  
18 said that she was on the El Morro for about how  
19 long before she went to the El Faro?

20 MS. BOBILLOT: For years. She's  
21 been shipping out for 11 years, I dare say, a  
22 good ten years, anyway.

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701



1 MS. BELL: With TOTE she's been --  
2 she's been with TOTE about that long?

3 MS. BOBILLOT: (Simultaneous  
4 speaking), yes, 10-11 years.

5 MS. BELL: I know it's been a long  
6 time since she started there, but do you know if  
7 she was interviewed when she first started  
8 working with TOTE?

9 MS. BOBILLOT: When she interviewed?

10 MS. BELL: Did she interview? Did  
11 they interview her? Did she go through a  
12 process to be hired?

13 MS. BOBILLOT: Oh, geez, I don't  
14 know. I thought it was with the AMO that she  
15 got the job. I can't say one way or the other,  
16 dear, I'm sorry.

17 MS. BELL: That's okay. Did she  
18 ever mention anything about any filed grievances  
19 or complaints or anything like that that any of  
20 the officers had filed with the union?

21 MS. BOBILLOT: No.

22 MS. BELL: Did she ever seem like

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 she was concerned about anything on the ship  
2 safety wise, any kind of performance with some  
3 of the crew members that she might have been  
4 concerned about that she'd mentioned?

5 MS. BOBILLOT: No. I know there was  
6 some sort of a scuffle between two guys on the  
7 ship one time because she was -- I don't want to  
8 say the ship's doctor, but one guy got a fat lip  
9 that was pretty bad from another guy, but I  
10 don't know what the heck that was all about.  
11 But that was on the El Morro. That wasn't on  
12 the El Faro.

13 MS. BELL: So she went to the El  
14 Faro around -- would you say around 2013?

15 MS. BOBILLOT: Yes, '13-'14, yes.  
16 She definitely did more time on the El Morro  
17 than the El Faro.

18 MS. BELL: You mentioned you guys  
19 would email back and forth. Did you only email  
20 on the ship emails while she was at sea? Did  
21 she ever email you personally, from her personal  
22 email account?

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 MS. BOBILLOT: Yes, sure she did.  
2 Yes, and she texted me. When they were in port,  
3 she'd text me because her phone is lousy  
4 anywhere she was at. We did a lot more texting  
5 than anything.

6 MS. BELL: Could she usually text  
7 you most of the time when she was out at sea, or  
8 were there certain times that she could not  
9 text, didn't have service?

10 MS. BOBILLOT: She couldn't text me  
11 when she was out at sea. She could only text me  
12 when she was in port, when there was actually  
13 satellite signal for a phone to pick up on.

14 MS. BELL: We learned from a  
15 previous interview that there was some  
16 contention between Captain Davidson and the crew  
17 related to some of the job opportunities with  
18 LNG ships, that he wasn't going to those ships,  
19 and there were some other people that were  
20 going. Did she ever mention any of the strains  
21 or the contention on board about any of the  
22 individuals related to that?

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 MS. BOBILLOT: No, not at all.

2 MS. BELL: You said that she didn't  
3 really care for the man, you mentioned. Were  
4 there specific instances of things that bothered  
5 her about him that you know of?

6 MS. BOBILLOT: No, that he stayed in  
7 his stateroom an awful long -- than she felt the  
8 captain should be. There wasn't much  
9 communication between the two of them. I have  
10 to remember some of the stuff she said. No,  
11 basically that he didn't come out on the bridge  
12 like he should -- like she felt he should, as  
13 far as communication wise between them. But  
14 that's about it, dear.

15 MS. BELL: Anything about if she had  
16 a concern that she would take to him, would she  
17 feel like he listened to her? Did she ever  
18 mention anything about whether her concerns were  
19 heard?

20 MS. BOBILLOT: She did not speak to  
21 him freely, like they were friends type thing.  
22 It was always very professional. He was harsh,

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 and he was very abrupt. That could be just his  
2 personality. Who knows? She wasn't as  
3 comfortable with him as she's been with some of  
4 her other shipmates. Let's say it that way.

5 MS. BELL: If she had concerns about  
6 something -- you mentioned that she said to you  
7 kind of in code that they were going into  
8 something they shouldn't be. Would that be  
9 something that she would feel comfortable  
10 telling him if she had a concern about that?

11 MS. BOBILLOT: What I think happened  
12 -- and this is really speculation -- I think,  
13 because she did the charting and all that, that  
14 she probably brought it to his attention. "Hey,  
15 Captain, you do know we're heading right for  
16 this damn hurricane?" Speculating, he probably  
17 said, "Yes, I'm aware of what's going on. I'm  
18 the captain. Just follow suit and just do it  
19 and follow my orders." Danielle would have done  
20 that. She would've followed orders.

21 But she wouldn't have gone down  
22 without a fight, either. She would have said,

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 "Okay, I'll do what I'm told, but I don't think  
2 it's right." But she wouldn't have plotted  
3 another route, if you will, because she felt  
4 that's what she should be doing. She would have  
5 just followed orders. That's the way the kid  
6 was raised. We're a military family. Whether  
7 you like it or not, this is how it's going to  
8 go, and you will follow our orders. That was  
9 put into her since she was a baby. I have no  
10 doubt she did what the captain told her to do.

11 MS. BELL: Did she ever mention any  
12 concerns about not getting enough sleep or  
13 taking any kind of --

14 MS. BOBILLOT: Oh, absolutely, yes.

15 MS. BELL: What did she say about  
16 that?

17 MS. BOBILLOT: Personally, I think  
18 it's standard out there. The kid loved her  
19 sleep, but it was -- she'd (Inaudible) and  
20 tired, absolutely. Hence, all the coffee she  
21 would be slurping down. It was nothing to hear,  
22 "Oh, I get to sleep for four hours, and I'm back

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 on the watch again." That was very common.

2 MS. BELL: Do you know if she ever  
3 voiced concern about that with the captain or  
4 the company?

5 MS. BOBILLOT: No, she would just --  
6 because that's what's expected of her. She  
7 wasn't going to be (Inaudible) on that one. She  
8 was just going to suck it up and do it. Once  
9 again, that's how the kid was raised. You suck  
10 it up and you do it.

11 MS. BELL: You mentioned that she  
12 drinks coffee, but does she take anything to  
13 help her sleep or help her stay awake that you  
14 know of?

15 MS. BOBILLOT: No, God, she was such  
16 a health freak. Her and her green celery and  
17 everything else. She had a juicer constantly  
18 going here at home. No, she was right against  
19 everything, to the point -- and this is kind of  
20 personal, but she wouldn't even take birth  
21 control pills because she didn't like any  
22 chemicals in her body, whatsoever, except

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1       caffeine.

2                   MS. BELL: I'm going to pass it  
3 along and let some other people ask questions.  
4 Thank you very much.

5                   MR. [REDACTED] Hi, Laurie, it's [REDACTED]  
6 [REDACTED] from the Coast Guard. Can you hear me  
7 okay?

8                   MS. BOBILLOT: Yes, dear.

9                   MR. [REDACTED] Okay, thank you. I  
10 just want to ask a couple of questions about  
11 things you've already said, and then I'll move  
12 on to some other questions. Do you know if  
13 Danielle was actually going to get an LNG job on  
14 one of the LNG-powered ships, or was it just  
15 speculation?

16                   MS. BOBILLOT: It was speculation  
17 because she never heard from TOTE on that for  
18 sure.

19                   MR. [REDACTED] Did she know of other  
20 individuals that were definitely going to get  
21 jobs on the new ships or the converted ships?

22                   MS. BOBILLOT: No, none of them knew

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701



1 anything because her and I discussed that. I  
2 said, "Do you know if the captain got --" she  
3 goes, "I know nothing." It was kind of the same  
4 thing when they went on the El Faro. She didn't  
5 know, basically, 'til the last minute that she  
6 was even going on the El Faro. The  
7 communication there is not very good, to say the  
8 least.

9 MR. [REDACTED] Just from dealing with  
10 Danielle, did you have an opinion about the  
11 safety culture on the ship?

12 MS. BOBILLOT: No. I know she did  
13 the lifeboat checks and all that, but no, safety  
14 wise, she never said, "Oh, geez, this ship's  
15 unsafe," or this is unsafe or anything. But can  
16 I add a little something on that?

17 MR. [REDACTED] Of course.

18 MS. BOBILLOT: This EPIRB business,  
19 that's really got me upset with the fact that  
20 this humongous damn ship, and you only have the  
21 one EPIRB. There's no EPIRBs on the  
22 individualized life raft, lifeboats, life

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 jackets. That, to me, seems really, really  
2 slacking. There's no backup in case something  
3 does screw up. Had these EPIRBs been on the  
4 lifeboats or the life jackets, the recovery of  
5 the ship might have been done a little sooner.  
6 I don't know when the EPIRB went off for a whole  
7 30 seconds when the sucker went off, and then it  
8 turned off. That, to me, (Inaudible) did come  
9 as a safety protocol to look into.

10 MR. [REDACTED] This is the NTSB's  
11 investigation, but all of this information -- as  
12 far as we know, the ship was in compliance with  
13 the requirements, but the NTSB will make safety  
14 recommendations from this investigation. The  
15 survival factors are a component of this  
16 investigation. Your point is well taken. There  
17 is an ongoing discussion about that fact.

18 MS. BOBILLOT: Good, just like the  
19 lifeboats being open -- open lifeboats, you  
20 might as well go out there with a dinghy.  
21 They're worthless in such a storm that it took  
22 on.

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1                   MR. ██████████ Did Danielle talk to  
2 you about the open-top lifeboats?

3                   MS. BOBILLOT: Just when she would  
4 do inspection. She'd send me pictures. This  
5 is, oh, my gosh, years ago. I'm like, "That is  
6 your lifeboat? It's open." She goes, "Yes,  
7 it's open." I'm like, "Well, let's hope you  
8 never get into some rough seas because you know,  
9 kid, you're screwed."

10                  She goes, "Yes, I know." We kind of  
11 matter-of-factly joked about it. Little did we  
12 know it's not a laughing matter anymore? Those  
13 lifeboats are worthless. You're just as good as  
14 having a life ring out there. But it was older  
15 ships. The El Morro was an old ship, 40 plus  
16 years old, just like the El Faro.

17                  Maybe when they were first built,  
18 those were state-of-the-art lifeboats, but you  
19 would think something like that should have been  
20 updated to those capsule-type lifeboats.  
21 Putting the lifeboats into the water, you have  
22 to have your sailors out there to drop them into

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 the water. Yes, good luck on that with these  
2 high seas. The whole backup system on that was  
3 a nightmare, I feel.

4 MR. [REDACTED] In our closing  
5 discussion here, you'll most likely be asked for  
6 any photographs that you might have. We'll talk  
7 about that towards the end. If you had them,  
8 that would be most helpful. Can you briefly  
9 talk about Danielle's view of her duties as  
10 second mate aboard the El Faro, in particular?

11 MS. BOBILLOT: (Inaudible) and  
12 everything else on the bridge, but when they  
13 were in port, she was always getting her hands  
14 dirty, too, helping. I think as a third mate,  
15 she did. Second mate, I'm not too, too sure  
16 about, but helping with the loading of the  
17 containers and everything that was below deck.  
18 Inspections of the lifeboats, life rafts, and  
19 all that she did.

20 I know one time, she sent me a  
21 picture -- this is a couple years ago, on the El  
22 Morro -- she was up on the mast doing something

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 up there. As a mother, that's the last type of  
2 picture you really want to see is your kid  
3 hundreds of feet up in the air, but she enjoyed  
4 all that. She truly, truly enjoyed shipping  
5 out. In fact, her last conversation with me  
6 was, "Mom, if I ever die at sea, that's where I  
7 want to be." Just adored shipping out.

8 MR. [REDACTED] Is it all right to  
9 continue, Laurie?

10 MS. BOBILLOT: Oh, of course. I've  
11 got to suck it up, as I would've told her.  
12 "Suck it up, Danielle." Okay, next question.

13 MR. [REDACTED] The ship went back and  
14 forth between San Juan and Jacksonville.  
15 Someone mentioned it was like on railroad  
16 tracks. Did she ever talk to you about a  
17 shipboard plan for -- June 1st we start  
18 hurricane season in the Atlantic. Did she ever  
19 talk to you about how things changed as they  
20 entered that time of year of June, as far as  
21 navigation of the ship or anything like that?

22 MS. BOBILLOT: Absolutely not, no.

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 She'd say, "It's hurricane season. We're going  
2 to have some rough seas." But that was it.  
3 That's the limit of it.

4 MR. [REDACTED] Did she ever talk  
5 about how the ship behaved in rough seas? I  
6 have a couple of questions about that.

7 MS. BOBILLOT: No, when she was on  
8 the El Morro, they were in a Category 1  
9 hurricane. That ship took quite a pounding, and  
10 that was just a Category 1. It was 40-degree  
11 pitches. She said she had to go airborne in  
12 order to go into her bunk. She goes, "I stood  
13 in the doorway and I remember it --"

14 She'd say when it was at a certain  
15 pitch, then she'd jump up and was literally  
16 airborne, went into her bunk, and tied herself  
17 down. That ship, the sister ship, could take  
18 quite a pounding. That I do have a few pictures  
19 on her Facebook page. I'm sure you have access  
20 to that, too. If you go under the album "A  
21 Ship's Life," you will see some of the  
22 containers that got bent up pretty bad on there

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 during that hurricane.

2 MR. [REDACTED] Did she say anything  
3 about -- if you're looking at a ship, the  
4 listing is where it will lean over to one side  
5 or the other. Did she discuss anything related  
6 to the characteristics of the ship listing?

7 MS. BOBILLOT: Nuh-uh.

8 MR. [REDACTED] No? How about -- I  
9 know we touched on it before, but anything  
10 related to stability problems with cargo loading  
11 or the heavy loads of cargo?

12 MS. BOBILLOT: No. She would  
13 mention, "We have a fully loaded ship," but not,  
14 "Oh, my God, we're over the amount of weight,"  
15 or anything like that. No, she never did.

16 MR. [REDACTED] Did she talk about --  
17 at one point, there was another shipping  
18 company, called Horizon Lines. They went  
19 bankrupt. As a result of that, I think TOTE  
20 started picking up more and more cargo. Did she  
21 say anything about -- you mentioned fully  
22 loaded. Did you mention, "Boy, we're taking

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 more and more cargo," or "Cargo loading has  
2 increased" or something like that?

3 MS. BOBILLOT: No, just that she was  
4 fully loaded. That was it. To me, that didn't  
5 mean a heck of a lot besides wow, the ship is  
6 full. As far as was it over full, like my cup  
7 runneth over type thing, no, she never mentioned  
8 that.

9 MR. [REDACTED] I mentioned the ship  
10 went back and forth to San Juan to Jacksonville.  
11 We know that there was a voyage in late August  
12 and Danielle wasn't aboard, but they took a  
13 significant -- the reason I ask this question is  
14 that she's the navigator for the ship. That's  
15 her duties. In August, after end of August, the  
16 ship took a voyage down the coast of Florida and  
17 cut through Old Bahama Channel, skirting north  
18 of Cuba into Puerto Rico. Did she mention that  
19 to you, know anything about that?

20 MS. BOBILLOT: No, not at all.

21 MR. [REDACTED] I think my final area,  
22 but the ship was on what they call a liner

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701



1 service. Scheduling was very important, times  
2 of arrival to San Juan and times of getting back  
3 to Jacksonville. Did she talk about any -- was  
4 there any pressure from anybody about the ship  
5 keeping to that schedule, since she was doing  
6 the navigation business?

7 MS. BOBILLOT: No. I do know they  
8 were on a strict schedule. They had to be out  
9 of port by a certain time in order to make it  
10 into port. They stuck by that pretty darn good  
11 and tight. As far as pressure, no. You have to  
12 be on a schedule, yes, that part, yes. Whether  
13 they were pressured into we don't care if  
14 there's a storm coming, you've got to go, that I  
15 can't say. I don't know.

16 MR. [REDACTED] Laurie, my last  
17 question. You had mentioned -- when we first  
18 started, we were talking about emails during the  
19 voyage. Then you mentioned there were emails  
20 prior to the voyage that may go back some time.  
21 Are you aware of any of those that might have  
22 anything that would help us in this

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 investigation that might talk about the schedule  
2 or navigation or storms or anything like that?  
3 Just in general, do you recall if there was  
4 anything like that?

5 MS. BOBILLOT: No, absolutely not.  
6 They were pretty lighthearted. The only time  
7 she ever mentioned anything about the storm was  
8 this last email, the one, "We're heading  
9 straight for the hurricane." That's the only  
10 time. Like I said before, she always tried to  
11 protect me.

12 She wouldn't say anything about  
13 we're heading into a storm or anything like  
14 that. If she would have said anything, it  
15 would've been, "Oh, wow, we had some rough  
16 weather," that type of thing, but never  
17 beforehand, like this last email, which is -- to  
18 me, that was a heck of a signal, "We're in deep  
19 shit, Mom." Excuse my French, but that's really  
20 what she was saying there.

21 MR. [REDACTED] Laurie, this is [REDACTED]  
22 again. Thank you very much. That's all I have.

1 MS. BOBILLOT: Thank you, and thank  
2 you for your time, sir.

3 PARTICIPANT: Mike Kucharski, you  
4 might go ahead and ask your questions.

5 MR. KUCHARSKI: Hi, Laurie. Just a  
6 couple quick questions about her duties. You  
7 said she didn't mention a lot about that, but  
8 was wondering if she said anything about weather  
9 maps or getting weather information in part of  
10 her duties?

11 MS. BOBILLOT: About getting maps?

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes, did she -- as  
13 second mate, I guess she told you -- did she say  
14 she was the navigation officer on there?

15 MS. BOBILLOT: Right, she would  
16 route the map, yes.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes, okay, so she'd  
18 draw the routes down on the charts. I guess she  
19 talked a little bit about that?

20 MS. BOBILLOT: Right.

21 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did she mention  
22 anything about weather information, the weather

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 information or weather stations, or anything  
2 that you can recollect that she talked about  
3 weather related?

4 MS. BOBILLOT: No. They had the  
5 radars and everything, and they knew what type  
6 of weather they were going into and everything.  
7 That would definitely decide which course they  
8 were going to take. That's why this whole mess  
9 right now just is shocking to me. When you  
10 think about it, she gave that email when there  
11 was still propulsion and everything on that  
12 ship, but they knew they had a hurricane they  
13 had to deal with. Why the hell did they go  
14 straight for it, instead of around it? Where's  
15 your plotting here? Your plotting should have  
16 been to avoid.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did she talk at all  
18 about the way the ship was run or the way it was  
19 navigated or anything relating to that?

20 MS. BOBILLOT: No, not at all.

21 MR. KUCHARSKI: Any questions or any  
22 thoughts about -- let me be specific. Did she

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 mention anything about maintenance, either in  
2 general about the ship, the way things were  
3 maintained, or anything related to her duties?

4 MS. BOBILLOT: No. I'm trying to  
5 recall some of our conversations, but no, not  
6 that I recall.

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Thank you  
8 very much for your time. That's all I have.

9 MS. BOBILLOT: I wish I was more  
10 help to you guys.

11 MR. YOUNG: This is Brian Young  
12 again, Laurie. You've been a tremendous help,  
13 and we appreciate all the extra information. I  
14 just have two follow-up questions. As I look on  
15 the Facebook page, did you say it was "A Ship's  
16 Life"?

17 MS. BOBILLOT: Yes, she's got  
18 different pictures. She loved to take pictures,  
19 so be forewarned, there's going to be a lot of  
20 pictures there. I believe it's under the  
21 albums. You go under "A Ship's Life." If you  
22 can't find it, like I said, I can't get to it

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 right now, but I will forward it over to Katy.

2 MR. YOUNG: That'd be great  
3 (Inaudible) be some good pictures, and same like  
4 [REDACTED] had said before, if you did have any  
5 previous pictures of the ship and there's a lot  
6 in the background, we may be able to see if you  
7 have a picture of a lifeboat or whatnot. Maybe  
8 we can work through Katy if there were any  
9 pictures that you might be able to forward to  
10 us.

11 MS. BOBILLOT: Right. No, I want to  
12 help as much as I can because it is quite a  
13 mystery, what happened. It's like what's the  
14 heck? I know some family members are not  
15 dealing with it as well as others, which is  
16 really sad. But it'd be nice to have some sort  
17 of understanding. We know we're not going to  
18 get them back, but it'd be nice to get some  
19 understanding of what might have happened to the  
20 ship, and can it be prevented for future  
21 sailors?

22 MR. YOUNG: That's exactly what the

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 NTSB's mission is, so people like you helping us  
2 really assists us in this investigation. One  
3 last question I had for you. Did Danielle have  
4 a mentor or best friend on the ship? Is there  
5 someone she confided in or seemed to get along  
6 with better than anyone else?

7 MS. BOBILLOT: Ishmael (Phonetic) is  
8 one of the (Inaudible) on the El Morro. I can't  
9 even pronounce his full name, but it's Ishmael  
10 something Gonzalez. He's a Puerto Rican who was  
11 a cook on the boat. They were very, very good  
12 friends, and Jimmy Robinson and her were very  
13 good friends.

14 MR. YOUNG: So it was good to be  
15 friends with the cook?

16 MS. BOBILLOT: Yes, and he's  
17 awesome. I got to meet him in September. He's  
18 really, really crushed over this whole thing.  
19 He's on the El Yunque. He's on there right now.

20 MR. YOUNG: A few times, you did  
21 refer to another ship, the El Morro, with -- I  
22 think Danielle may have reported that there were

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 possibly holes in the hull and all that. Just  
2 to clarify, were you talking about El Morro or  
3 El Yunque?

4 MS. BOBILLOT: El Morro.

5 MR. YOUNG: It was El Morro? Okay.

6 MS. BOBILLOT: Been on the El Morro  
7 and the El Faro, yes.

8 MR. YOUNG: But had never had any  
9 experience on El Yunque, correct?

10 MS. BOBILLOT: Right, correct.

11 MR. YOUNG: Okay, great. As far as  
12 engineering questions, I'm all set, and thank  
13 you so much for your time. We're going to pass  
14 it around one more time around us, and then  
15 we'll let you go.

16 MS. BOBILLOT: All right, dear,  
17 thank you.

18 MS. BELL: Hi, Laurie, it's Carrie,  
19 again. I just have a couple of questions. You  
20 mentioned that Danielle kept a photo album on  
21 her Facebook page. Do you know if she kept any  
22 kind of a journal or a diary or anything like

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701



1 that?

2 MS. BOBILLOT: No, I don't believe  
3 so. I tried to get to her email account, her  
4 private email account. She has two. Of course,  
5 I don't know the password, and I couldn't get  
6 into them. You guys, being the government,  
7 maybe you can. But as far as a journal, no.

8 MS. BELL: Would you be able to  
9 provide us with her email account address, if we  
10 might be able to do that, if you'd be okay with  
11 that?

12 MS. BOBILLOT: Sure, absolutely,  
13 ready to copy?

14 MS. BELL: Sure.

15 MS. BOBILLOT: It's nauticaldeckie,  
16 N-A-U-T-I-C-A-L-D-E-C-K-I-E, at hotmail.com.  
17 Then the other one is nautideckie, and that's  
18 N-A-U-T-I-D-E-C-K-I-E, at hotmail.com.

19 MS. BELL: Are either of those the  
20 email addresses -- you mentioned that you guys  
21 talked about the lifeboats and things like that  
22 in email previously. Are either of those

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 addresses what she used to communicate with you  
2 about that?

3 MS. BOBILLOT: No. We're talking  
4 several years ago on that, too, on the El Morro.

5 MS. BELL: Okay. Did she have a  
6 boyfriend or a significant other that might be  
7 someone we could speak with that could give us  
8 even some insight into her -- just other things  
9 that she might not have talked to you about, or  
10 that she's expanded on?

11 MS. BOBILLOT: No. She was good  
12 friends with Jessie and Norrie Thompson. Those  
13 are best friends.

14 MS. BELL: Okay, thank you.

15 MS. BOBILLOT: She might've said  
16 stuff to them, but as far as boyfriend  
17 boyfriend, no (Inaudible). I think probably  
18 Ishmael and Jimmy are going to be your best bet  
19 on finding out anything more than I can give  
20 you, as far as what she felt. She might've been  
21 more open to telling them about, "Oh, geez, this  
22 isn't safe, or this is ridiculous," whatever,

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 because they were on the ship, too. She might  
2 be more at liberty of saying stuff.

3 MS. BELL: And they might know the  
4 same people she knew, so it might be easier to  
5 --

6 MS. BOBILLOT: Absolutely.

7 MS. BELL: One last question. Do  
8 you know if anyone had been fired or anyone had  
9 resigned recently, in the last few months?

10 MS. BOBILLOT: No, not that I know  
11 of, no.

12 MS. BELL: Okay, that's all I've  
13 got. Thank you.

14 MS. BOBILLOT: Thank you.

15 PARTICIPANT: Laurie, again, we  
16 appreciate everything. What we're going to do  
17 is we're going to submit our contact information  
18 to you through Katy. Typically, we would hand  
19 you our business cards, but since we're doing  
20 this remotely, we'll type something up, so if  
21 you do have any further information or you have  
22 any questions for us, you'll have contact

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 information for all of us that were on this  
2 call.

3 MS. BOBILLOT: Okay, that would be  
4 wonderful, thank you.

5 PARTICIPANT: We'll have Katy  
6 forward that to you, since she's got all the  
7 proper contact info.

8 MS. BOBILLOT: Right. Like I said,  
9 I wish I was more help.

10 PARTICIPANT: You've been a  
11 tremendous help. For you to be able to give us  
12 all this extra information really, really  
13 assists us greatly. You can't know how much we  
14 appreciate this.

15 MS. BOBILLOT: Good. I appreciate  
16 you guys putting in all these long hours. I  
17 know it's not an easy task. It's hard for you  
18 guys, too, emotionally, I'm sure. Hang in  
19 there.

20 PARTICIPANT: Thanks.

21 MR. CURTIS: Laurie, thank you.  
22 This is Brian Curtis, again. We certainly

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 appreciate you taking the time. I know it's  
2 difficult, but the information you provide  
3 certainly helps us in many regards. I think  
4 that's all we have. If you have any concerns,  
5 certainly Katy's there, contact wise. We'll be  
6 in touch down the road. Anything else, Katy?

7 MS. CHISOM: No. Thank you, Laurie.  
8 I know today you have a lot going on, and we  
9 really appreciate you taking a little break away  
10 from the service setup and planning. We'll be  
11 thinking about you today as you have your second  
12 service. If you think of anything else, feel  
13 free to email me or call me. I will follow up  
14 with you most likely on Friday, okay?

15 MS. BOBILLOT: Oh, okay. That would  
16 be great. Is there any way I could get a copy  
17 or the email that Norrie and Jessie got from  
18 Danielle? Is there any way I could get a look  
19 at those, or is that privileged info?

20 PARTICIPANT: We'll get back to you  
21 on that, Laurie. I'm not sure I want to speak  
22 out of turn here, but certainly get back to you

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 on that. Thank you so much. If you have any  
2 other questions before we wrap it up here,  
3 certainly glad to take them.

4 MS. BOBILLOT: Okay. No, I'm all  
5 set.

6 PARTICIPANT: All right, thank you  
7 very much.

8 PARTICIPANT: Great, thank you  
9 again.

10 PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

11 MS. BOBILLOT: Welcome.

12 PARTICIPANT: Bye now.

13 MS. CHISOM: Bye, Laurie.

14 (Whereupon, the above-entitled  
15 interview was concluded.)  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Interview of Laurie Bobillot

DATE: 11-04-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 55 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.



**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS

1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701