

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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 IN RE: :
 :
 THE EL FARO INCIDENT OFF THE: NTSB Accident No.
 COAST OF THE BAHAMAS ON : DCA16MM001
 OCTOBER 1, 2015 :
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INTERVIEW OF: TIM NEESON, PORT ENGINEER

Thursday,
 October 8, 2015

Jacksonville, Florida

BEFORE

JON FURUKAWA, NTSB
 MIKE KUCHARSKI, NTSB
 BRIAN YOUNG, NTSB
 [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard
 JIM FISHER-ANDERSEN, TOTE Services
 PATTY FINSTERBUSCH, TOTE Services
 LOUIS O'DONNELL, ABS
 [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard
 AL SHEPHERD, ABS
 KEVIN STITH, TOTE Services
 [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard

PRESENT ON BEHALF OF THE INTERVIEWEE:

GIL FELTEL, ESQ., Tanner Bishop

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 (8:50 a.m.)

3 MR. YOUNG: Okay, we're recording. Good
4 morning, it's 0850 on Thursday, October 8th. This is
5 Brian Young, the Engineering Group Chairman with the
6 National Transportation Safety Board, we're in
7 Jacksonville, Florida.

8 We are conducting the interview of TOTE Port
9 Engineer Tim Neeson, and we'll go around the room and
10 introduce ourselves all present at the interview.

11 MR. O'DONNELL: Louis O'Donnell, Assistant
12 Chief Surveyor, ABS Americas.

13 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard.
14 I'm with the Engineering Group.

15 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard
16 with the Operations Group.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Good morning. Mike
18 Kucharski, NTSB, Group Chairman for Operations.

19 MR. STITH: Kevin Stith with TOTE Services
20 with the Operations Group.

21 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard
22 with the Survival Factors Group.

23 MR. FURUKAWA: John Furukawa, NTSB, Survival
24 Factors Group.

25 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: Patty Finsterbusch, TOTE

1 Services, Survival Factors Group.

2 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: Jim Fisker-Andersen of
3 TOTE Services with the Engineering Group.

4 MR. FELTEL: Gilbert Feltel, Counsel for Mr.
5 Neeson, Tanner Bishop Law Firm.

6 MR. NEESON: Tim Neeson, Port Engineer for
7 TOTE Services.

8 MR. YOUNG: And could you just spell your
9 name for the record, please?

10 MR. NEESON: Timothy Neeson, N-E-E-S-O-N.

11 MR. SHEPHERD: Al Shepherd with the ABS,
12 American Bureau of Shipping Management Systems
13 Certification.

14 MR. YOUNG: Okay, very good. Thank you,
15 Tim, for being here today. We appreciate your
16 assistance. If you would just start out the interview
17 and just give us a little bit of your background, your
18 maritime training and experience and how you ended up
19 as the Port Engineer for this company.

20 MR. NEESON: Well I graduated from
21 California Maritime in 1976. I worked on the
22 Mississippi Queen Riverboat and I worked for Avondale,
23 or not Avondale, but Boland Marine.

24 I worked for MSC, Military Sealift Command,
25 for four years. I worked out of the hall with MEBA out

1 of Tacoma/Seattle area. I sailed a lot to the Far
2 East. I sailed steam and motor at my chief, diesel and
3 steam.

4 I've sailed to motor and steam. I was the
5 permanent chief on the Horizon Lines Hawaii, which was
6 the SeaLand Hawaii originally before they sold two or
7 three times.

8 I retired in 2005 and I got bored so I went
9 back to work. So I've been with TOTE, SeaStar for two
10 years now, almost two years, since November of two
11 years ago.

12 So I was a Port Engineer with SeaLand 20
13 years ago in Tacoma for about a year and that's when
14 they were going through the company transition and they
15 were downsizing and I was the new guy so I went back to
16 sea.

17 So I decided to go back to port engineering.
18 I liked port engineering. It's a good job. So I threw
19 my resume out there and they called me up and I went to
20 work.

21 MR. YOUNG: So November of '13 you started?

22 MR. NEESON: Yes, right.

23 MR. YOUNG: And as a port engineer for TOTE
24 what are your job responsibilities and description,
25 what's you day-to-day activities?

1 MR. NEESON: Well my day-to-day is I'm
2 assigned to a ship, or actually two ships, we have the
3 El Faro and the El Yunque, and originally it was the El
4 Morro. The El Morro was scrapped so they broke out the
5 El Faro, and my job is to ensure day-to-day operations,
6 maintenances, regulatory compliance, make sure they get
7 their supplies.

8 We keep an eye on the budgets, we okay their
9 purchases and make sure they're not ordering anything
10 frivolous. We bring the vendors aboard. If we have
11 repairs we contact whatever vendor is required,
12 electrical, mechanical, welders, whatever is required.

13 Like on the bridge we get the intake
14 (inaudible), take care of the bridge equipment, make
15 sure they are certified. We deal with ABS on a regular
16 basis to make sure we are in compliance, keep the
17 certifications up to date, and also shipyard periods
18 that we arrange where are the vendors get the seals
19 (inaudible) propellor, and all that, spares for the
20 shipyard ready to go, paints.

21 So we are a full service for the ship
22 basically. We deal with the captain and the chiefs and
23 the crew. We help them out any way we can within
24 reason.

25 MR. YOUNG: So are you solely the port

1 engineer for the El Faro or are you also port engineer
2 for the El Yunque?

3 MR. NEESON: Well I work with another
4 gentleman, Bill Weinbecker, and Jim was also at one
5 time a port engineer. We would shift the load
6 depending on who was doing what at the time, so we
7 share that, but my primary is the El Faro.

8 MR. YOUNG: And would you say you've been
9 the primary port engineer for El Faro since you started
10 with TOTE or has that been --

11 MR. NEESON: Well the El Faro wasn't here
12 when I first got here, like I say the Morro was here.
13 So when the Faro broke out and came to Jacksonville I
14 took over for it, well Jim was with me also on that.

15 So we shared the load and eventually I was
16 the primary lead on it.

17 MR. YOUNG: And what's the timeframe on
18 that, when the El Faro came to Jacksonville?

19 MR. NEESON: March of last year. They were
20 tied up in Baltimore.

21 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: We broke it up.
22 Sorry, this is Jim Fisker-Andersen. We broke it up and
23 took it straight to dry dock from Baltimore.

24 MR. NEESON: Yes, and that was what,
25 February? February or March something like that.

1 MR. YOUNG: 2014?

2 MR. NEESON: Yes.

3 MR. FISKER-ANDERSEN: The last dry dock
4 service was completed in December 2013.

5 MR. NEESON: Oh, December, okay.

6 MR. FISKER-ANDERSEN: And we broke it out
7 the end of November, December, from Baltimore.

8 MR. NEESON: Oh, so -- Okay. So then you
9 went to the shipyard for --

10 MR. FISKER-ANDERSEN: Correct. This is Jim
11 Fisker-Andersen.

12 MR. YOUNG: Okay. So --

13 MR. NEESON: So since January of '14.

14 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And were you involved
15 with the shipyard in the Bahamas?

16 MR. NEESON: No.

17 MR. YOUNG: No. Okay, before we get into
18 the ship and the duties and the responsibilities with
19 the ship, we'd like to just focus in on some of the
20 vendors, especially the vendors that were aboard the
21 ship last week before they sailed, the five Polish.

22 Is there a scope of work for the work that
23 they were performing aboard the ship available?

24 MR. NEESON: A written scope, I'm not sure.
25 Jim, did you have a written scope or just assist as

1 directed? We hired welders and electricians basically.

2 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: Correct.

3 MR. NEESON: I think they had two
4 electricians and five machinist, welders.

5 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: Correct.

6 MR. NEESON: So their job was to assist our
7 project engineer, it was Jeff Mathias, who is a chief
8 engineer on the Great Land, which was the Tacoma/Alaska
9 run, so he was familiar with the setup for these ships
10 in the Tacoma/Alaska run, which the El Faro was not
11 configured for.

12 So he was in the process of returning it
13 back to its old configuration. So we were basically
14 returning it back to original condition.

15 MR. YOUNG: And what does that entail? I
16 mean what's the difference between the ship where it
17 actually sits here in Florida as compared to being on
18 the Alaska run?

19 MR. NEESON: Well they basically stripped
20 all the Alaska stuff off. They have davits on the main
21 deck, forward, port, and starboard, up by the bough,
22 the big davits they use for lifting the ramps, you guys
23 are familiar with ROW ROW, they pick these large ramps
24 up, they have the huge davits, you had four winches for
25 each set of ramps to actually, two for lifting the ramp

1 and two for tightening it in and pulling it into place.

2 So you had two forward, there's one on the
3 second deck which is more like outriggers, it's not
4 really a davit, and then on the port side center there
5 was a full-size davit up on the spar deck, but the spar
6 deck was removed in a conversion. Was that in 2006,
7 the conversion?

8 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: I don't know.

9 MR. NEESON: Anyway, the spar deck was
10 removed so we just had the bane deck (phonetic) only,
11 so we davit on the port center, foundations would have
12 to be re-engineered, which we had Herbert Engineering
13 as our naval architects working on those drawings for
14 reconfiguring the foundations, supports for the davits,
15 and the winches.

16 In the main deck they put container supports
17 all the way across the main deck, there's like 130
18 beams going across which distribute the load in the
19 container stacks, which we have to remove in order to
20 make it ROW ROW.

21 So right now the ship was configured as, the
22 main deck was load-on/load-off with container cranes
23 where they stack the boxes. The second deck and below
24 were configured for roll-on/roll-off and they would
25 just use the aft or starboard ramp to bring the boxes

1 on and off with the trucks, and automobiles would go
2 down below.

3 So all the material on the main deck would
4 have to be removed. They had breezeways, we had boxes
5 in there that the crew were using for storage, those
6 would've had to been removed, all the steel on the main
7 deck would be scraped off to flush so the trucks could
8 drive.

9 All the refer outlets, they were on the main
10 deck set up for -- Each hatch would have to be moved
11 because it would be in the way of the trucks, so they
12 would be moved.

13 We'd need a couple more winches on the port
14 side for the Alaska run on the main deck for, they call
15 them ice winches since they get along side the dock up
16 there and the ice builds up, starts pushing the ship
17 away from the dock, so we ordered one new winch and we
18 were reconditioning an older winch to fill in those
19 positions.

20 Then all the de-icing systems that were
21 previously installed, half of it was removed. A lot of
22 the piping was on the spar deck supplying a glycol
23 system where they would heat the glycol and they had
24 the radiator plates, titanium plates that would be
25 under the deck all the way up to the bough where they

1 would heat the deck so the trucks wouldn't slide
2 around.

3 We also would have to open up the ramps. We
4 had ramps going down to the second deck from the main
5 deck in the forward center section of the main deck.
6 That was all that -- It had a hatch over that, that was
7 covered up, and then the containers now sit on there.

8 And there was also one just after the house,
9 somewhat on the port side center (inaudible) ROW ROW.
10 So we'd have to open that hatch, cover up, too, that
11 was covered over, plated over, so the main deck was
12 solid all the way across the top.

13 And down in the engine room they had removed
14 the Butterworth heater, which keeps the seawater for
15 pumping hot water into the condenser during ice
16 conditions and all the sea chest steam piping had been
17 removed, so we were in the process of re-hooking that
18 up.

19 So it was a lot of little things. I don't
20 see my worksheet to remember it all. It's a long list.
21 But the intake guys they were pulling a lot of wiring
22 at this stage in the game.

23 We had to run a new power supply for the
24 winches. We had four winches on the starboard center,
25 four winches starboard forward, four winches starboard

1 port, and four winches center port.

2 So there was power feeders running to all
3 those winches. The controllers would have to be hooked
4 up and then they were also running new refer power
5 supplies, cables, to new locations, which we have an
6 ABS-approved drawing for (inaudible) run and were in
7 the process of starting that.

8 And then anytime when the weather was
9 questionable they would work down in the engine room
10 hooking up piping for the glycol system and the
11 Butterworth heater, the main steam lines were all
12 missing, so they were targeting new steam piping.

13 And they also did a lot of little steel work
14 around the ship. I noticed they were doing some of the
15 handrails on the outside of the house that were looking
16 a little weak and our project manager, Jeff Mathias,
17 thought it would be prudent to renew these and we also
18 did the port running light.

19 The foundation was looking a little weak so
20 they, when things were a little slow they would fix
21 that. So they were putting in 12-hour days everyday at
22 sea. And to accommodate these guys working on the
23 second deck, most of this work was done on the second
24 deck, and the cargo operations would actually open up
25 slots for us, they would leave lanes open and we had

1 man lifts.

2 At one time we had three man lifts so these
3 guys could run cable and weld in the wire run stays.
4 But you need a man lift to get up in the overhead to
5 pull the stuff.

6 These cables are like an inch and a half in
7 diameter and they are thick, heavy, so you need a man
8 lift to get up there, a couple man lifts with guys
9 physically pushing this stuff. It's a lot of physical
10 work.

11 So that took quite a bit of time just
12 running cable and that's the gist of it, in other
13 words, just trying to convert the ship back to the
14 Alaska run and we were making pretty good progress I
15 thought.

16 MR. YOUNG: You've given us a very broad
17 picture, a very good description of what the extent of
18 the work, is there any sort of guidance or
19 documentation spelling all this out this out, to return
20 the ship back to Alaska service, any document or --

21 MR. NEESON: I have a work list.

22 MR. YOUNG: A work list. Because that's
23 something we would like to have brought to us
24 (inaudible) a work list.

25 MR. NEESON: I've got my computer in my car

1 if we need it or you want to worry about that later?

2 MR. YOUNG: We'll request that document.

3 MR. NEESON: That's fine.

4 MR. YOUNG: Yes. During all this work, I
5 know you've given us a lot, can you narrow it down to
6 what actual work was ongoing when the ship departed
7 Jacksonville on the 29th by the riding gang?

8 MR. NEESON: Well they had sent two
9 electricians home because they figured they ran as much
10 wire as they could at the time, so they were working in
11 the engine room targeting steam lines for the
12 Butterworth heater, that was their project.

13 They had just put the Butterworth heater in
14 place and just finished doing the foundation on it so
15 they were getting in the process of targeting steam
16 lines for the Butterworth heater and drain lines for
17 the condensate returns.

18 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And do you know what that
19 5-man crew consisted of? You said two electricians
20 went home, so --

21 MR. NEESON: Well these were all either
22 machinists or welders. I'm not sure exactly if there
23 was the three welders or two welders, I'm not sure. I
24 know they asked for at least two certified welders.

25 MR. YOUNG: And did you communicate recently

1 with the project manager, Jeff Mathias, about their
2 progress or about a day-to-day recap or what kind of,
3 you know --

4 MR. NEESON: He would send a weekly recap.

5 MR. YOUNG: A weekly recap?

6 MR. NEESON: Yes.

7 MR. YOUNG: And do you still have these in
8 your emails?

9 MR. NEESON: Yes, yes.

10 MR. YOUNG: Okay. So we would like to --
11 Again, we're trying to figure out exactly what they
12 were doing and the progress they were making.

13 MR. NEESON: Sure.

14 MR. YOUNG: And to your knowledge were they
15 doing any repairs or any modifications or any work on
16 any of the propulsion systems, such as the main
17 boilers, the main turbines, the turbo generators, or
18 the reduction gear?

19 MR. NEESON: No.

20 MR. YOUNG: I'm going to go around the
21 table, if there are any questions from the group on the
22 riding gang, if anyone while we have this thought going
23 on, starting on to the left, riding gang questions or
24 Alaska modification, that's what we were just talking
25 about.

1 MR. O'DONNELL: Yes, I think he summed it up
2 very well.

3 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

4 MR. O'DONNELL: Lou O'Donnell with ABS.

5 MR. [REDACTED] So on this voyage they were
6 working in the engine room, they weren't doing any work
7 in any of the cargo holds or would they have reason to
8 be in any of the cargo holds or enter them during the
9 voyage?

10 MR. NEESON: Not that I'm aware of.

11 MR. [REDACTED] So none of their cable runs were
12 being worked on or anything? Did any of the runs or
13 anything they were working on or welding on have
14 anything to do with any of the water (inaudible) bulk
15 heads, (inaudible) bulk heads or anything like that?

16 MR. NEESON: No. Second deck is a big open
17 deck.

18 MR. [REDACTED] Right, I understand.

19 MR. NEESON: You can see aft all the way
20 forward to the boatswain's locker, to the forward
21 focsle, so that's all open space. There is no --

22 MR. [REDACTED] All right. So they would have
23 had no reason to be transiting through the hatches into
24 the holds, cargo holds, or anything like that that in
25 there?

1 MR. NEESON: No, no, no.

2 MR. [REDACTED] The welders on board they were
3 working in the engine room, were they doing any of the
4 steel work on the second deck to remove the plating for
5 the ramps or prep for the foundations or anything up
6 there?

7 MR. NEESON: No, no.

8 MR. [REDACTED] All right.

9 MR. NEESON: Any of the work they were doing
10 was -- No structure work on the ship whatsoever. We
11 were saving that sort of stuff for the shipyards or the
12 lay period.

13 Eventually, like hooking up the Butterworth
14 heater they would have to tap into the steam system.

15 MR. [REDACTED] Right. But they had not done
16 that, they were --

17 MR. NEESON: No. Well that would have been
18 blanked off and it stays blanked. They were just
19 getting piping configured and then we got there we'd
20 have to have the certified welder do it and have the
21 ABS do an NED testing on it of some sort, whether they
22 x-rayed it or mag particle test it or whatever.

23 But whatever they wanted we would've hydro'd
24 it for them, but no work on the vessel systems
25 whatsoever as far as --

1 MR. [REDACTED] Thank you.

2 MR. NEESON: Yes.

3 MR. [REDACTED] I don't have any additional
4 questions.

5 MR. KUCHARSKI: Mike Kucharski, NTSB. As
6 far as the work assignments go, the project engineer,
7 Mr. Mathias, is it?

8 MR. NEESON: Yes.

9 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes. Could he assign other
10 work to them besides the scope of work that was
11 actually --

12 MR. NEESON: Yes.

13 MR. KUCHARSKI: He could, okay. And would
14 that go through the chief engineer? Would he ask them
15 to do work if they needed it for the (inaudible)?

16 MR. NEESON: Possibly.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Were there any penetrations
18 whatsoever from the second deck into the hold that is
19 associated with this project, any penetrations that
20 they were doing or planning on doing?

21 MR. NEESON: No, I don't believe so.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Did you keep any
23 lanes open on the second deck where any (inaudible) for
24 this on this voyage?

25 MR. NEESON: On this voyage?

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes.

2 MR. NEESON: I'd have to check. I'm not
3 sure.

4 MR. KUCHARSKI: For the benefit of the group
5 the lane is open so they don't stow cargo along that
6 side, okay.

7 MR. NEESON: As far as I know they weren't
8 going to do any, it was all going to be engine room
9 work this trip. We can check on that with our cargo
10 guys though.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: Great. And steel and any
12 winches or anything like that, the equipment that they
13 needed, was any of it stowed on board?

14 MR. NEESON: Yes, we did have eight of our
15 old winches.

16 MR. KUCHARSKI: And where were they stowed?

17 MR. NEESON: They were actually mounted on
18 the original foundations, so they were bolted down in
19 their original foundations.

20 MR. KUCHARSKI: So they're on the main deck
21 somewhere?

22 MR. NEESON: Second deck.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Second deck, okay. So the
24 original winches were never taken off, they were still
25 there?

1 MR. NEESON: We brought them back from the
2 warehouse.

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: I see.

4 MR. NEESON: The only thing they didn't do
5 is flush the foundations off. They left the
6 foundation, they unbolted them, took them ashore, but
7 they didn't flush the steel.

8 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, thank you.

9 MR. STITH: Kevin Stith with TOTE Services.
10 At the time do you remember how many man lifts or extra
11 equipment they had on the second deck?

12 MR. NEESON: We had one man lift.

13 MR. STITH: Just one man lift. I think
14 that's all the questions I had.

15 MR. NEESON: At one time we did have three
16 man lifts on there, but we got one to one since they
17 were making good progress on the cable pulling.

18 MR. STITH: Thank you.

19 MR. NEESON: Okay.

20 MR. [REDACTED] I don't have any.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Hi. John Furukawa, NTSB. So
22 the riding gang, was it in their work project going up
23 to Alaska to upgrade the open lifeboats, I guess one
24 had (inaudible) manually operated and the other was a
25 diesel operated lifeboat?

1 MR. NEESON: They had nothing to do with the
2 lifeboats.

3 MR. FURUKAWA: Was it going be a part of the
4 (inaudible) project?

5 MR. NEESON: No.

6 MR. FURUKAWA: Not at all, okay. That's all
7 I have.

8 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: I don't have any
9 questions.

10 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: No questions.

11 MR. SHEPHERD: No questions, thank you.

12 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And just before we move
13 off of that subject do you have anything else you want
14 to add with the whole Alaska run update, change,
15 anything else, any more information you could volunteer
16 to us?

17 MR. NEESON: Not at this time.

18 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

19 MR. NEESON: A lot going through my mind.

20 MR. YOUNG: Yes, I'm sure. So just to
21 review and recap what we will request is the work list,
22 that scope of work, as well as the weekly emails from
23 your project manager, okay. So we'll send an email --

24 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from the Coast Guard.
25 You had mentioned, I'm sorry, some plans that were

1 being approved or developed by (inaudible) or --

2 MR. NEESON: Herbert Engineering, yes.

3 MR. [REDACTED] Engineering, and also ABS?

4 MR. NEESON: Well they go through Houston.
5 The plans are sent to Houston and they review them.

6 MR. [REDACTED] What would be the percentage of
7 completion they would have on those plans? Are they
8 complete or are they --

9 MR. NEESON: The electrical ones are
10 complete, yes.

11 MR. [REDACTED] All right. Would that be
12 something that we could get?

13 MR. YOUNG: Yes, absolutely. We'll put a
14 request in for that as well. Herbert Engineering?

15 MR. NEESON: Herbert, yes.

16 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

17 MR. STITH: I've got one more question.
18 Kevin Stith with TOTE. Tim, at any time did you
19 receive any communications from the Chief or Jeff
20 Mathias or the Captain regarding the intended voyage
21 from Jacksonville to San Juan?

22 (No audible answer)

23 MR. STITH: Any concerns or anything?

24 MR. NEESON: No.

25 MR. STITH: Okay. Thank you.

1 MR. NEESON: No, I had dinner with them that
2 night before they sailed.

3 MR. STITH: Okay.

4 MR. NEESON: They sailed at 2000 and we eat
5 at 1730 and no concerns.

6 MR. STITH: Okay, thank you.

7 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard,
8 one follow-up question. Were you aware of any means
9 that the riders had to communicate with their company,
10 did they have their own SAT phone or any means of
11 communication?

12 MR. NEESON: I don't believe so. I think
13 they used the Captain's email if they needed it.

14 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

15 MR. NEESON: As far as I know they weren't
16 doing any communicating until they got into port,
17 either Jacksonville or San Juan, but I can't verify
18 that.

19 MR. [REDACTED] Thank you.

20 MR. FURUKAWA: John Furukawa, one follow-up.
21 The English of the riding gang, they were Polish
22 citizens --

23 MR. NEESON: Yes.

24 MR. FURUKAWA: How was their English
25 ability?

1 MR. NEESON: One was very good and the
2 others were kind of weak, so basically you had one
3 translator. The other guys knew a little bit.

4 MR. FURUKAWA: Thank you.

5 MR. YOUNG: All set with the riding gang,
6 okay. We'd like to now focus more into your role as
7 the port engineer, your relationship with the chief,
8 and your overall kind of interaction with the ship.

9 So you've already answered one of our
10 questions, that you had dinner with them the night
11 before they sailed, but how frequently do you
12 communicate with the ship and how frequently do you go
13 aboard the ship?

14 MR. NEESON: Well I go aboard the ship every
15 week. They come into port either Monday night or
16 Tuesday and I go aboard and sit down with the chief and
17 we go over business, whatever his concerns are, if he
18 needs repairs or something is coming up, he needs to
19 water wash the boiler or some other repair, steel work.

20 If he needs a vendor, you know, I arrange
21 that for him. So we just, we sit there for probably at
22 least a half hour every port stay just to discuss
23 business and then I go up and I see the Captain also,
24 check with him and see if he any concerns about
25 anything.

1 And I usually run into the chief mate and
2 talk to him and see if there is anything like
3 lifesaving equipment that needs to be checked out or
4 purchased or serviced, things like that. So I always
5 see them every week.

6 MR. YOUNG: The chief that you deal with,
7 chief engineer, and, of course, I am asking most
8 questions about engineering, we understand he has been
9 aboard the ship since August and if you've seen him
10 every week, were any issues with propulsion systems
11 brought to your attention that there was any concern
12 with any sort of problems with the boilers or the main
13 engines?

14 MR. NEESON: The main engines are fine, the
15 boilers are, they've been water washing them, which is
16 fine. We did have a problem with the port boiler
17 economizer where they had to put jumpers in.

18 When the tubes get real thin at the top they
19 start leaking and they end up, one took out another and
20 another, so we ended up putting seven jumpers in the
21 economizer on the port boiler about a month ago.

22 And we brought down Wallischeck Engineering,
23 who does boiler work, to do a survey before the dry
24 dock period so we could do boiler work in the dry dock
25 and some of the water wall tubes were starting to bow

1 just a little bit and our surveyor had no major
2 concerns about that.

3 He said we could run that way for awhile,
4 but eventually we would have to change it out but there
5 was no immediate concern with that. We were planning
6 on changing those out in the shipyard or the lay period
7 after the shipyard.

8 MR. YOUNG: Do you recall when this survey
9 was done of the boiler?

10 MR. NEESON: About a month ago.

11 MR. YOUNG: About a month ago, okay. Was
12 there a written report?

13 MR. NEESON: Yes.

14 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

15 MR. O'DONNELL: Lou O'Donnell from ABS, just
16 a clarification. Was that the Wallischeck surveyor ABS
17 surveyor?

18 MR. NEESON: Wallischeck.

19 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay, thank you.

20 MR. NEESON: We did have ABS come down and
21 inspect the, do the hydro on the economizer, so they
22 saw that it was tight, you know.

23 MR. O'DONNELL: Yes, okay.

24 MR. NEESON: So that was Jamie (phonetic).

25 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay.

1 MR. YOUNG: And could you just describe for
2 everybody what is entailed with water washing a boiler?

3 MR. NEESON: Now first of all definitely you
4 have to secure it, cool it down. They take out the air
5 registers so they can get inside the furnace.

6 I didn't actually watch them, how they do
7 it, but you can pressure wash it. You blast the carbon
8 off the screen tubes basically and the super heater
9 bank and make sure it's clear.

10 They could also do the economizer. You can
11 open up the access door to the economizer and wash it
12 down and then they drain it out and we have a company
13 that has a vacuum truck and they suck out the
14 wastewater and have it processed ashore.

15 MR. YOUNG: And how frequently is that?

16 MR. NEESON: About every three months it
17 seems like they would do that. We were doing that,
18 leaving San Juan, where they enter San Juan, secure one
19 boiler, has permission from the Coast Guard to leave on
20 one boiler so they could water wash, because they
21 didn't need full speed coming north because of the
22 schedule so they could maneuver out on one boiler.

23 They would have two tugs, you know, and one
24 tug backup to ensure safety in the harbor and once it
25 got out they'd have it water washed and then they'd

1 button it up and fire it up and put it online.

2 So that was a normal thing for both ships.
3 The Yunque and the Faro.

4 MR. YOUNG: What kind of speed can the ship
5 make on one boiler?

6 MR. NEESON: I'm not sure. Sixteen?

7 MR. STITH: Sixteen. Kevin Stith, 16 knots.

8 MR. NEESON: Yes, I was thinking 16.

9 MR. STITH: It's like full ahead, you know
10 what I mean.

11 MR. YOUNG: Was there any work being done on
12 the boilers during the stay in Jacksonville?

13 MR. NEESON: No.

14 MR. YOUNG: Okay. The ship left with two
15 boilers operational?

16 MR. NEESON: Yes.

17 MR. YOUNG: Do you receive the boiler water
18 chemistry reports that are completed on the ship?

19 MR. NEESON: They're on the daily log down
20 in the corner of the log sheet, yes.

21 MR. YOUNG: And is that sent into the office
22 every day?

23 MR. NEESON: Not every day, no.

24 MR. YOUNG: Every week?

25 MR. NEESON: Every month.

1 MR. YOUNG: Every month?

2 MR. NEESON: Yes.

3 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

4 MR. NEESON: We're making copies of the
5 daily log right now.

6 MR. YOUNG: Okay. So that's the normal
7 engineer's daily log that they keep and at the end of
8 the month they send it into you?

9 MR. NEESON: Yes.

10 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Or probably walk it over,
11 right, in Jacksonville?

12 MR. NEESON: Yes. Well I pick it up when I
13 go see the chief.

14 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

15 MR. NEESON: We get the yellow sheet, the
16 carbon copy of the main engineering log. We keep that
17 on record.

18 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Trying to stick with the
19 boiler, any questions about the boiler, we can go
20 around the room now if anyone else has any boiler
21 questions.

22 MR. O'DONNELL: No further questions here.

23 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.

24 Just to be clear there was, on this departure, or the
25 departure from Jacksonville or from Puerto Rico there

1 were no issues at all stated with either one of the
2 boilers?

3 MR. NEESON: No, none.

4 MR. [REDACTED] They were 100 percent. And
5 historically was there any loss of propulsion or loss
6 of the boiler plant at any time in the last, in the
7 history --

8 MR. NEESON: No.

9 MR. [REDACTED] -- that you know of at sea that
10 they had a loss at all ever?

11 MR. NEESON: Not that I'm aware of.

12 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

13 MR. NEESON: I'm surprised there hasn't been
14 actually, you know, because steamships are not really
15 meant to do these little short runs on and off all the
16 time, it's tough on boilers.

17 But these plants were very well maintained.
18 I don't know if you guys have been aboard, but the
19 engine room was very well maintained. It's beautiful
20 for an old ship like that, it was like impressive. So
21 it --

22 MR. [REDACTED] Was there any time at sea when
23 they needed to shut down the boilers for maintenance,
24 do like a, had alarms or any type of --

25 MR. NEESON: Where they lost a boiler?

1 MR. [REDACTED] Right.

2 MR. NEESON: Not that I am aware of.

3 MR. [REDACTED] Or they needed to do a controlled
4 shutdown or anything to do any type of maintenance
5 (inaudible)?

6 MR. NEESON: The only shutdowns that I know
7 of due to hand hole gasket leaks and stuff, they would
8 do that in port.

9 MR. [REDACTED] All right.

10 MR. NEESON: Nothing at sea.

11 MR. [REDACTED] What type of automation did they
12 have with these boilers? What were the (inaudible)?

13 MR. NEESON: That's a good question. It's a
14 combination of --

15 MR. PETERSON (phonetic): Was that the --
16 Norris's.

17 MR. NEESON: Dick Norris's.

18 MR. PETERSON: That was Norris's
19 (inaudible).

20 MR. NEESON: Yes, this is --

21 MR. PETERSON: Nortech?

22 MR. NEESON: Norcom.

23 MR. PETERSON: Well that's what he is now,
24 but I think it was Nortech at that time.

25 MR. NEESON: Oh, maybe.

1 MR. PETERSON: Yes.

2 MR. NEESON: And we have, our electrical
3 guru, his name is Dick Norris. He built the board, its
4 automation.

5 MR. [REDACTED] And was there a history of alarms
6 or logs or how was that recorded in the engine room
7 when they had any type of alarm, anywhere in the engine
8 room, not just the boiler, but if they had any alarms
9 was there a --

10 MR. NEESON: Well they don't have an
11 automated alarm sheet like probably the newer ships
12 where they have a daily --

13 MR. [REDACTED] All right, nothing like that.

14 MR. NEESON: No. The engineers would keep,
15 any kind of a questionable alarm would go in the log
16 book on a --

17 (Simultaneous speaking)

18 MR. NEESON: The watchstanders would write
19 it down if there was something that was, you know, out
20 of the ordinary.

21 MR. [REDACTED] So outside of what's in the log
22 book there would be no way to electronically capture an
23 alarm (inaudible) anything on the ship?

24 MR. NEESON: No, no, no.

25 MR. [REDACTED] All right. That's all I have.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. [REDACTED] (Inaudible) questions.

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: Do you cover the saltwater
4 type of systems separately from the (inaudible)?

5 (No audible answer)

6 MR. STITH: No questions.

7 MR. [REDACTED] No questions.

8 MR. FURUKAWA: John Furukawa, NTSB. So were
9 there any safety concerns with the boiler?

10 MR. NEESON: No.

11 MR. FURUKAWA: Not for the El Faro, okay.
12 How long was the El Faro laid up when the boilers
13 buttoned up and all that before, you know, she came
14 back in service?

15 MR. NEESON: I'm not sure of the exact date,
16 but it's like two years.

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Two years. And where was
18 she?

19 MR. NEESON: Up at Baltimore.

20 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And she came back in
21 service in December?

22 MR. NEESON: Of '13, yes.

23 MR. FURUKAWA: December of '13, all right.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: No questions.

1 MR. FISKER-ANDERSEN: No questions.

2 MR. SHEPHERD: No questions, thank you.

3 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard,
4 one follow-up question, please. Were you present at
5 the last hydro when they did the boiler, watered the
6 hydro?

7 MR. NEESON: No, I wasn't.

8 MR. [REDACTED] You weren't.

9 (Simultaneous speaking)

10 MR. NEESON: For the economizer?

11 MR. [REDACTED] Not for the economizer, for the
12 main boiler for the tubes, the hydro (inaudible)
13 system?

14 MR. NEESON: No, no. They wouldn't do that
15 in the yard most likely.

16 MR. [REDACTED] So you weren't there for that?

17 MR. NEESON: I was not.

18 MR. [REDACTED] And do you know when that took
19 place?

20 MR. NEESON: No, I don't.

21 MR. [REDACTED] All right. Or if there were any
22 issues as a result of the hydro?

23 MR. NEESON: If there were issued they'd be
24 resolved.

25 MR. [REDACTED] Right. Was there any as a result

1 to the hydro?

2 MR. NEESON: I'm not aware of any.

3 MR. [REDACTED] You're not aware of any, okay.

4 MR. NEESON: That I recall.

5 MR. [REDACTED] Thank you.

6 MR. YOUNG: Okay, it's Brian Young with the
7 NTSB again. Going into the boiler operation, are you
8 familiar with the automation that Dick Norris built as
9 it comes to shut downs and safety features and what
10 will shut that boiler down?

11 MR. NEESON: Well it would be high water, or
12 high, high water, low, low water, loss of force draft
13 fan, loss of fuel pressure.

14 MR. PETERSON: Flame scanner.

15 MR. NEESON: Flame scanner, yes, loss of
16 flame. That's about it.

17 MR. YOUNG: Do you know on the high, high
18 and the low, low is there a time delay or what the time
19 delay is?

20 MR. NEESON: There might be a five or ten
21 second for rolling purposes. I'm not sure. I don't
22 know that answer.

23 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

24 MR. NEESON: But normally you get a little
25 delay in there due to if the ship's rolling that way

1 it'll compensate for that roll.

2 MR. YOUNG: Right, right. Is Dick Norris a
3 TOTE employee?

4 MR. NEESON: No, he's a vendor.

5 MR. YOUNG: He's a vendor, okay. And when
6 was the last time that this system was tested, all the
7 shutdowns?

8 MR. NEESON: We did that in San Juan for the
9 ABS. It was for one of the continuous machinery
10 surveys like 12 months ago. I can't remember the date.

11 MR. YOUNG: Any issues, any failures?

12 MR. NEESON: No.

13 MR. YOUNG: No?

14 MR. NEESON: No. No, they go through the
15 shutdowns and check everything.

16 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Again, I was kind of
17 going through some of the critical pieces of machinery
18 in the engine room to try to get a history of it and
19 see if we can kind of narrow it down, what propulsion
20 failure there was out there.

21 Moving to the turbine set and reduction
22 gear, any issues, any reports of any failures over the
23 last, during your time as port engineer with the main
24 engines of the El Faro?

25 MR. NEESON: None, none.

1 MR. YOUNG: None. Does your company conduct
2 oil analysis of the lube oil in the reduction gear?

3 MR. NEESON: Yes.

4 MR. YOUNG: Any issues?

5 MR. NEESON: No, actually it's good.

6 MR. YOUNG: It's good.

7 MR. NEESON: It's clean.

8 MR. YOUNG: Okay. How often are those
9 samples taken?

10 MR. NEESON: I'm not sure exactly, what,
11 every three months, six months?

12 MR. PETERSON: Well we have a 3-month cycle
13 and a 6-month cycle and I believe those are on the 3-
14 month, yes.

15 MR. NEESON: Three months, yes.

16 MR. YOUNG: And are you aware of any
17 shutdown systems for the reduction gear set that were
18 tested recently?

19 MR. NEESON: There is no shutdowns for the
20 reduction gear itself.

21 MR. YOUNG: Lube oil system, I'm sorry,
22 (inaudible) lube oil system.

23 MR. NEESON: No.

24 MR. YOUNG: No, okay. Turbo generators,
25 again, over speed trips, any concerns with their

1 operation, testing, if you can give us any background
2 on maintenance performed or any issues again with the
3 generation of the electrical power?

4 MR. NEESON: Well the generators were
5 tripped when they did the automation testing for the
6 boiler controls. They go through the main switchboard
7 to do the reverse power relay test, over speed on the
8 generators, and all that passed. So there's no
9 problems that I am aware of.

10 MR. YOUNG: All right. Is there a backup
11 diesel generator aboard or only the emergency
12 generator?

13 MR. NEESON: Just the emergency generator.

14 MR. YOUNG: Okay. How is that started,
15 battery, hydraulic?

16 MR. NEESON: Battery.

17 MR. YOUNG: Battery. Do you get a record of
18 the battery reports in AMOS?

19 MR. NEESON: I don't know. I've never
20 looked at it.

21 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And are you aware of any
22 issues with the emergency generator maintenance wise?

23 MR. NEESON: No. Actually we do a monthly
24 test and it's been fine. There was a little leak on
25 the cooling manifold on the exhaust manifold that the

1 chief had fixed, put new gaskets in that was all, just
2 very simple.

3 MR. YOUNG: An exhaust leak?

4 MR. NEESON: A little coolant leak, very
5 small, but it was noticeable.

6 MR. YOUNG: All right.

7 MR. NEESON: So he had ordered the gaskets
8 and replaced those.

9 MR. YOUNG: What's the timeframe on that?

10 MR. NEESON: That would be about two months
11 ago.

12 MR. YOUNG: Were there any other vendors
13 aboard this ship the day of departure or day before
14 while they were in Jacksonville doing any other
15 maintenance other than the Polish riding crew?

16 MR. NEESON: Well there was Jeff Mathias,
17 their project supervisor, but, no.

18 MR. YOUNG: Nobody else?

19 MR. NEESON: I think we had Harding on
20 board. Harding, they are the representatives for the
21 lifeboat davits. They were doing the clutches.

22 MR. YOUNG: Okay. No vendors working in the
23 engine room?

24 MR. NEESON: No, not in the engine room.

25 MR. YOUNG: Okay. All right, I'm going to

1 pass around for machinery questions, such as we were
2 just talking about with the generator sets, the
3 emergency generator. Anybody?

4 MR. O'DONNELL: No further questions on the
5 machine, just on the lifeboats. You had Chad Harding
6 onboard?

7 MR. NEESON: Yes.

8 MR. O'DONNELL: Were the clutches for the
9 winches or --

10 MR. NEESON: Yes.

11 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. Okay, thank you.

12 MR. NEESON: In their previous survey they
13 said they were a little bit noisy. They still
14 functioned, but --

15 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay.

16 MR. NEESON: So we went ahead in the
17 interest of safety ordered new ones and we had them
18 installed.

19 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. So Lou O'Donnell,
20 again, from ABS. So clutches and brake pads were
21 (inaudible) the winches?

22 MR. NEESON: Yes.

23 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay, thank you.

24 MR. NEESON: So those were renewed and
25 tested.

1 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay, thank you. No further
2 questions.

3 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.
4 On the Chad Harding they would've provided you a report
5 for that, installing the clutches?

6 MR. NEESON: I think so, yes. I don't know
7 if I have it, but they should have it.

8 MR. [REDACTED] Was it onboard the ship or was
9 that done (inaudible), would there be a breaker --

10 MR. NEESON: I think it was on the ship. I
11 don't know. I'd have them --

12 MR. [REDACTED] Chad Harding would have them?

13 MR. NEESON: They would have it, yes.

14 MR. [REDACTED] All right, thank you. So was
15 there anything you would consider a hazardous condition
16 in the engine room recently?

17 MR. NEESON: No. I can't think of anything,
18 no.

19 MR. [REDACTED] All right.

20 MR. [REDACTED] You had stated that you do a
21 monthly test on the emergency generator, can you
22 describe the scope of that test to us?

23 MR. NEESON: It's actually quite simple.
24 The chief engineer goes in the emergency generator room
25 and calls down at the engine room and has them trip the

1 feeder to the emergency switchboard and that senses the
2 loss of power and it takes about 15 seconds, fires up,
3 and is on the line and then they run it for two hours
4 and then they reverse the situation and trip it offline
5 and put the main power back on, on the emergency.

6 MR. [REDACTED] So during this test is it under a
7 low, an electrical --

8 MR. NEESON: Yes, it has the, the emergency
9 circuits are on the generator.

10 MR. [REDACTED] And on those circuits are you
11 ever running the equipment that's on the circuit, for
12 example, the power pump?

13 MR. NEESON: Yes.

14 MR. [REDACTED] You actually run the power pump
15 while --

16 MR. NEESON: Well we don't put any
17 additional equipment on it, but it does -- Like the
18 lube oil pumps and so forth and the fuel pumps are on
19 the emergency circuit.

20 MR. [REDACTED] And running while the test is
21 being performed?

22 MR. NEESON: Yes.

23 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you.

24 MR. [REDACTED] Nothing further.

25 MR. KUCHARSKI: No.

1 MR. STITH: Kevin Stith with TOTE, one
2 question. Do you know if Chad Harding was working on
3 both davits or just one?

4 MR. NEESON: Both.

5 MR. STITH: Okay. Very good, that's all.

6 MR. [REDACTED] No questions.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: No questions.

8 (Off microphone comments)

9 MR. YOUNG: Okay, change gears a little bit.
10 Brian Young with the NTSB again. Your relationship
11 with the chief, how long have you worked with this
12 chief engineer who was aboard the ship?

13 MR. NEESON: I guess Rich was on there when
14 they first came around, right?

15 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: I don't remember.

16 MR. NEESON: I think he was --

17 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: This is Jim Fisher-
18 Andersen. I don't remember.

19 MR. NEESON: I think he had been there since
20 the ship broke out.

21 MR. PETERSON: Rich had been there since the
22 --

23 MR. NEESON: Ship broke out.

24 MR. YOUNG: So he's been a permanent chief
25 engineer?

1 MR. NEESON: Yes, he's --

2 MR. PETERSON: No, as chief. He started out
3 as the first.

4 MR. NEESON: First.

5 MR. PETERSON: Yes, first.

6 MR. YOUNG: So how many trips has he made as
7 chief?

8 MR. PETERSON: I'm not sure. It's been --
9 He's got a lot of time under his belt though.

10 MR. NEESON: I'd say at least a year, right?

11 MR. PETERSON: Yes, at least a year.

12 MR. YOUNG: So when the ship left Baltimore
13 after the lay up he was first and then at some point
14 was promoted to chief?

15 MR. PETERSON: This is Lee Peterson. I'm
16 not sure. We'd have to look back on the personnel
17 files to verify that.

18 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

19 MR. PETERSON: And that's something you're
20 going to want?

21 MR. YOUNG: Yes, we'll get from HR I guess.
22 I just --

23 MR. PETERSON: Yes.

24 MR. YOUNG: How frequently do you
25 communicate with the chief on email?

1 MR. NEESON: Normally he would send me a
2 request for something, but I don't actually go out to
3 him unless -- It was normally he contacts me that he
4 requires some service or something done.

5 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Had you received any
6 email communication from the chief after departure on
7 the 29th?

8 MR. NEESON: No.

9 MR. YOUNG: Phone calls from him?

10 MR. NEESON: No.

11 MR. YOUNG: Okay. The chief before him when
12 they changed out in August, was he a regular chief or -
13 -

14 MR. NEESON: Yes.

15 MR. YOUNG: He was. Which chief has more
16 experience?

17 MR. NEESON: Jim Robinson (phonetic).

18 MR. YOUNG: He's the?

19 MR. NEESON: The other chief.

20 MR. YOUNG: The other chief.

21 MR. NEESON: He was on vacation.

22 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And so you have a senior
23 chief and say a secondary chief who would be the
24 senior?

25 MR. NEESON: Well we don't use that A Team,

1 B Team thing, but Jim Robinson has more experience.

2 MR. YOUNG: Okay. More experience, okay.

3 Who evaluates the chief engineers in your office?

4 MR. NEESON: It would be me.

5 MR. YOUNG: You. Have you ever evaluated
6 the chief -- What's the chief's name who is aboard the
7 chief now?

8 MR. NEESON: Rich.

9 MR. YOUNG: Rich?

10 MR. NEESON: Yes.

11 MR. YOUNG: And his last name?

12 MR. NEESON: Pusatere.

13 MR. YOUNG: What's that?

14 MR. NEESON: Pusatere.

15 MR. YOUNG: Pusatere?

16 MR. NEESON: Yes.

17 MR. YOUNG: In your last evaluation of Chief
18 Pusatere what was his overall rating?

19 MR. NEESON: It was good. We don't have a
20 written evaluation.

21 MR. YOUNG: There's no written evaluation?

22 MR. NEESON: No.

23 MR. YOUNG: Would you classify him as
24 competent?

25 MR. NEESON: Yes.

1 MR. YOUNG: Yes. Have you ever had any
2 issues with the chief in terms of performance or
3 communication?

4 MR. NEESON: No, he's been very good.

5 MR. YOUNG: All right. Any other questions,
6 going around the room, about the chief engineer as seen
7 to the port engineer?

8 MR. O'DONNELL: None.

9 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.
10 You stated that you had emailed communication with the
11 chief engineer on the voyage, was there anybody else on
12 the ship that you had communication with, the master or
13 (inaudible)?

14 MR. NEESON: No, it was actually quiet,
15 nothing.

16 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. And for work and
17 maintenance on the boiler did the chief engineer
18 normally supervise that? Was it done by third parties
19 or was it done by the crew? What was most of the
20 maintenance --

21 MR. NEESON: Most of it was done by the
22 crew.

23 MR. [REDACTED] By the crew?

24 MR. NEESON: Yes.

25 MR. [REDACTED] Were there third parties that

1 worked in the engine room? I mean, obviously, there
2 is, but I mean who were they and were there --

3 MR. NEESON: The only --

4 MR. [REDACTED] -- any recent third-party work
5 that took place in the --

6 MR. NEESON: On the boilers?

7 MR. [REDACTED] On the boilers or any other
8 equipment, the permanent reduction or anything?

9 MR. NEESON: Well the only work that was
10 done was the jumpers put on the economizer. That was
11 done by a local company here, Jacksonville Machine and
12 Repair. They have the certified welders and they're
13 good all around mechanics and fitters. So they did the
14 work on that, but that's it though, no main engine
15 work.

16 MR. [REDACTED] No other work on the (inaudible)
17 equipment or anything?

18 MR. NEESON: No.

19 MR. [REDACTED] No. Thank you.

20 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast
21 Guard. So you said that you didn't hear from the chief
22 engineer while underway on this particular voyage. Is
23 it common for you to get email traffic or anything from
24 them while they're underway --

25 MR. NEESON: Not really. Not really.

1 MR. [REDACTED] -- or do you handle it all
2 when they come into port?

3 MR. NEESON: Normally, yes. On occasion
4 there is something that he requires, but very little.
5 They're pretty self-sufficient.

6 MR. [REDACTED] Right. And do you have a
7 counterpart in San Juan that interacts with them while
8 they are there?

9 MR. NEESON: No. No.

10 MR. [REDACTED] They wait until they come back
11 to Jacksonville (inaudible)?

12 MR. NEESON: Right. They'll communicate
13 with me. Now the other chief engineer he'll call me on
14 a cell phone and just give me a heads up on what's
15 going on, just to let me know, just checking in.

16 MR. [REDACTED] But not while underway?

17 MR. NEESON: Not underway, no.

18 MR. [REDACTED] When they get back in --

19 MR. NEESON: They get in cell phone range --
20 No, no real, no communications. Very little.

21 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you.

22 MR. NEESON: You know, once a week I ask for
23 fuel oil requests for the, you know, bunkers, how much
24 bunkers they need, stuff like that.

25 MR. KUCHARSKI: No questions.

1 MR. STITH: No questions.

2 MR. [REDACTED] No questions.

3 MR. FURUKAWA: Hi. John Furukawa, NTSB.
4 You said there were no written evaluations for the
5 chief engineer?

6 MR. NEESON: Right.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: Does anybody in the company
8 do a written evaluation for the chief engineer?

9 MR. NEESON: Not that I am aware of.

10 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. But if someone in the
11 company did do one would it be you or --

12 MR. NEESON: It would probably be me, yes.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Have any like chief
14 engineers been removed for cause or fired before?

15 MR. NEESON: Not that I am aware of, not
16 since I've been with the company.

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Because is there any
18 company requirement for a paper trail for (inaudible)?

19 MR. NEESON: Well if there was you'd have
20 the, you know, the verbal, the written, the final, and
21 then the termination.

22 MR. FURUKAWA: Yes.

23 MR. NEESON: So that's pretty standard
24 through all industry.

25 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So if the chief

1 engineers do fine it's all verbal, it's only when there
2 is problems that (inaudible)?

3 MR. NEESON: Well I mean if there is a cause
4 for a verbal, I mean it's, but there hasn't been any
5 verbal or written that I am aware of. I haven't seen
6 any problem with these guys. They're good.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: Free of the chief engineer,
8 any other system engineers?

9 MR. NEESON: No, they're all, they've been
10 fine.

11 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay, thank you.

12 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: No questions.

13 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: No questions.

14
15 MR. SHEPHERD: No questions, thank you.

16 MR. YOUNG: Brian Young with the NTSB, just
17 following up. Was this Chief Pusatere's first trip as
18 chief or had he made other trips before as chief?

19 MR. NEESON: Well he's made many trips as
20 chief.

21 MR. YOUNG: Many trips, okay. And how often
22 was a second chief aboard to run the riding gang, is
23 that a normal procedure or is that --

24 MR. NEESON: No, this was strictly for the
25 conversion.

1 MR. YOUNG: For the conversion, okay.

2 MR. NEESON: The other chief, Jeff Mathias,
3 had the experience and the ship's setup knowledge to do
4 the project.

5 He knew where the old piping was, all the
6 stuff that was removed he knew what belonged where,
7 where we don't have that experience, we didn't know, so
8 he was the right man for the job.

9 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

10 MR. PETERSON: I can add on that. Jeff had
11 sailed the ships up to Alaska, so he had a -- He wasn't
12 currently working for our company, but he was brought
13 on as a contract.

14 MR. YOUNG: Oh, okay. A (inaudible)?

15 MR. PETERSON: Yes.

16 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

17 MR. PETERSON: Is that right?

18 MR. NEESON: Correct.

19 MR. YOUNG: So while we are focusing down on
20 the engine room, we've talked about the boiler, the
21 TG's, the emergency generator. We understand no one
22 was aboard the ship doing any, any vendors doing any
23 maintenance.

24 Any of the auxiliary machinery, are you
25 aware of any issues or problems or reports of any

1 failures or any concern with any of the other systems
2 throughout the engine spaces?

3 MR. NEESON: None. None.

4 MR. YOUNG: Okay. When it comes to the
5 maintenance and the preventative maintenance system we
6 understand you run AMOS?

7 MR. NEESON: Yes.

8 MR. YOUNG: And there should be daily,
9 weekly, monthly jobs, work orders as they call them?

10 MR. NEESON: Right.

11 MR. YOUNG: Are there any jobs in there that
12 are outstanding that would affect the ability for the
13 ship to carry out her --

14 MR. NEESON: Not that I am aware of.

15 MR. YOUNG: Do you as a port engineer do
16 any, my company used to call it a QMR, quarterly
17 maintenance check, do you do a check on the status of
18 the work orders to see which are complete and which are
19 outstanding?

20 MR. NEESON: No.

21 MR. YOUNG: No. Do you know if there are
22 any outstanding jobs that have not yet been completed,
23 work orders?

24 MR. NEESON: I'm not aware of it.

25 MR. YOUNG: Okay. For the chief engineer --

1 Who orders parts on the ship, is it the chief or the
2 first?

3 MR. NEESON: The chief.

4 MR. YOUNG: Chief. Do the purchase
5 requisitions go through you?

6 MR. NEESON: Yes.

7 MR. YOUNG: You. After they go through you
8 what is the next evolution in ordering parts?

9 MR. NEESON: I forward it to our purchasing
10 department and put out a request for quote and they go
11 through the vendors and find out what's the best price
12 and then they get a price and they send it back to me
13 for approval, I approve it, and then they go ahead and
14 purchase it and deliver it to the ship.

15 MR. YOUNG: We have requested the list of
16 purchase orders, purchase req's, just to kind of get a
17 sense as to what the ship has been ordering and what
18 parts they're looking for.

19 MR. NEESON: Yes.

20 MR. YOUNG: Okay, just so you know. In the
21 purchase orders, to your recollection, do you remember
22 any parts ordered for critical machinery that were
23 ordered to effect any repairs, again, on the boilers,
24 the engines, the TG's, we're looking to sort of track
25 what kind of parts the ship has been ordering?

1 MR. NEESON: No, I can't think of anything.

2 MR. YOUNG: No. What are most of the
3 purchase orders ordered for from the engine department?

4 MR. NEESON: Usually it's consumables, just
5 day-to-day stuff, wrenches, rags, lube oil, and WD-40,
6 that kind of stuff.

7 MR. YOUNG: Is there a process if there are
8 critical machinery parts needed that these purchase
9 req's could be identified and expedited?

10 MR. NEESON: Yes. We have a request for
11 quote and then we also have an urgent request for
12 quote. So I puts out the flag to purchasing that let's
13 get this right away.

14 And then I can do a follow-up call, I mean
15 if we need it like tomorrow or tonight I can call them.
16 I can go right to the vendor, circumvent our purchasing
17 a little bit if need be to get it going. We got to get
18 the ship out and we get her out, you know.

19 MR. YOUNG: So no issues with the whole
20 purchasing system? If you need something quickly you
21 can get it?

22 MR. NEESON: Yes.

23 MR. YOUNG: Okay. When it comes to the
24 maintenance side of the house if there is a work order
25 out for any of the engineers aboard the ship do they

1 have the ability to defer the work order if they can't
2 complete the project in AMOS?

3 MR. NEESON: I don't think so. No, there's
4 a set date there.

5 MR. FISKER-ANDERSEN: I don't know.

6 MR. NEESON: Okay.

7 MR. FISKER-ANDERSEN: This is Jim Fisker-
8 Andersen.

9 MR. YOUNG: I'm sorry?

10 MR. FISKER-ANDERSEN: This is Jim Fisker-
11 Andersen. I don't know the answer either.

12 MR. NEESON: I don't believe so, but I'm not
13 an expert at AMOS.

14 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Is AMOS a new system
15 relative to your company or has it been here for
16 awhile?

17 MR. PETERSON: AMOS was brought on to the
18 company just for the purchasing module in 2011. They
19 ran both the AMOS for purchasing and the MMS for the
20 maintenance side of it.

21 But the EL Faro had AMOS put on while she
22 was out on the, I'm kind of going back now, remember
23 she had AMOS put her when was the Northern Lights, so
24 she has had the system on her for many years, whenever
25 they first initiated it back there.

1 So for the whole life that she's been with
2 SeaStar she's had AMOS.

3 MR. YOUNG: Can you give me the ballpark
4 date as to how far back that would be?

5 MR. PETERSON: Well when did they bring it
6 around?

7 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: I have no idea.

8 MR. NEESON: When it was converted?

9 MR. PETERSON: No, when it was brought
10 around. Yes, when it was converted, when it was
11 brought around to the (inaudible).

12 MR. NEESON: Was that like in Mobile or --

13 MR. PETERSON: Yes, (inaudible) --

14 MR. NEESON: Was that 2006?

15 MR. PETERSON: That sounds about right.

16 MR. NEESON: 2006, we got stretched.

17 MR. PETERSON: Yes, well, no, no, no, the
18 stretch --

19 MR. NEESON: When we converted.

20 MR. PETERSON: -- for the taking off the
21 spar deck.

22 MR. NEESON: Yes, I think that was '06.

23 MR. YOUNG: So the maintenance of the ship
24 should have been recorded in AMOS since about 2006?

25 MR. PETERSON: Yes, but we can verify that,

1 but I'm not sure about that date. It may have been
2 within a couple years of that (inaudible).

3 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

4 MR. NEESON: Yes, been there a while.

5 MR. YOUNG: Okay. So going around the room,
6 AMOS questions, purchasing, and maintenance,
7 preventative maintenance systems.

8 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.
9 Was there at the -- Currently is there anything
10 deferred on any of the critical equipment as far as
11 preventative maintenance goes, you guys are going in
12 the shipyard next month or something?

13 MR. NEESON: Not that I am aware of, no.

14 MR. [REDACTED] Nothing deferred on --

15 MR. NEESON: No.

16 MR. [REDACTED] Any overdue maintenance in AMOS
17 that you are aware of?

18 MR. NEESON: Not that I'm aware, no.

19 MR. [REDACTED] That's all I have.

20 MR. [REDACTED] No questions.

21 MR. KUCHARSKI: Mike Kucharski, NTSB. Did
22 the deck department repairs, maintenance, AMOS-related
23 items, and also requisitioning go through you?

24 MR. NEESON: Some of it, yes.

25 MR. KUCHARSKI: What some?

1 MR. NEESON: Well all of it I guess, yes.

2 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Just to be clear, so
3 all the --

4 MR. NEESON: Because I hire the vendors for
5 them, they're purchasing goes through me.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. So that includes both
7 the vendors for repairs and --

8 MR. NEESON: Yes.

9 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

10 MR. STITH: No questions.

11 MR. [REDACTED] No questions.

12 MR. FURUKAWA: John Furukawa, NTSB. For the
13 parts ordered can you recollect any survival or safety
14 gear?

15 MR. NEESON: Well we did order the clutches
16 for the davits with Harding, it's now Harding and not
17 Chad Harding anymore, so they changed, but we had the
18 CO2 system and on the firefighter equipment which was
19 done near a month ago for their annual.

20 You know, they go through everything, smoke
21 detectors and CO2 bottles and CO2 banks, and that's all
22 up to date.

23 MR. FURUKAWA: Thank you.

24 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: No questions.

25 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: One comment. This is

1 Jim Fisker-Andersen. I just received confirmation that
2 we have all the data from AMOS pulled in a file and
3 we're passing that up through to you (inaudible)
4 shortly.

5 MR. YOUNG: Thank you.

6 MR. STITH: I do have one question. This is
7 Kevin Stith from TOTE, just because I was chief mate
8 there. Do you know if they received the lifeboat drain
9 balls that were ordered?

10 MR. NEESON: I don't know.

11 MR. STITH: Oh, okay.

12 MR. YOUNG: While we have not only the port
13 engineer, but some of the other marine folks in here,
14 this is Brian Young again with the NTSB, if we could
15 get a little bit of a background on two major events
16 throughout the ship's history, one is the stretch and
17 one is the convert.

18 It seems like we have been referring to
19 these two issues awhile ago. Can someone, either Tim
20 or Lee, explain the stretch and also the convert and
21 then maybe a chronological which happened first and
22 when it happened?

23 MR. PETERSON: I'm going to have to
24 (inaudible) off on exact dates, and I can get those for
25 you.

1 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

2 MR. PETERSON: But when Totem Ocean Trailer
3 Express, they had two ships in service up there, they
4 brought the Northern Lights, which used to be the San
5 Juan, I think, excuse me, it was on the Puerto Rico
6 service, and their other ships had, the Great Land had
7 been stretched.

8 The Westward Venture came out at that size,
9 but this one had to be stretched to match those ships
10 and these ships originally had a spar deck on them,
11 which is an additional deck above the main deck that we
12 see today.

13 So they removed the spar deck. I'm sorry,
14 not for this stretch. So that was, as part of that,
15 cut the ship in half, float it out, put a mid-section
16 in, and that was pretty much it for this stretch before
17 it went into service for Totem (inaudible).

18 The ships that SeaStar had originally, the
19 El Morro and the El Yunque, which is the one we are
20 going to see tomorrow.

21 MR. YOUNG: Go ahead and speak up.

22 MR. PETERSON: Oh, I'm sorry.

23 MR. O'DONNELL: Lou O'Donnell with ABS. To
24 confirm your dates --

25 MR. PETERSON: Yes?

1 MR. O'DONNELL: The stretch was completed on
2 1 May 1993.

3 MR. PETERSON: That sounds right.

4 MR. O'DONNELL: And that was in Mobile.

5 MR. PETERSON: Mobile, Alabama, right.

6 MR. O'DONNELL: And give me just a moment.

7 The last major mod, 27 February 2006 I think it was
8 completed.

9 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: That sounds right.
10 Are you able to comment on those?

11 MR. NEESON: I'm going to make a point of
12 clarification, too. I believe the ship was the Puerto
13 Rico and they also put the spar deck on in Mobile at
14 the stretch.

15 MALE PARTICIPANT: Yes.

16 MR. PETERSON: Okay.

17 MR. NEESON: Did you --

18 MR. PETERSON: Yes, I'm thinking they
19 already had -- We can pull up pictures of that.

20 MR. NEESON: Okay.

21 MR. PETERSON: I don't know if it was
22 included with that. But in any event so then in 2006
23 to match the other ships, the other two ships
24 originally had spar decks on them and when Matson took
25 them over they removed the spar decks and turned them

1 into the roll con configuration that we have now to put
2 the containers on main deck.

3 So 2006 it was when the Northern Light was
4 brought around to become the El Faro. She was
5 converted to match those other ships to the same
6 service.

7 MR. YOUNG: Okay. So to recap, in '93 you
8 cut her in half and stretched her. Do you know where
9 about in the ship it was actually cut?

10 MR. PETERSON: Mid-ship.

11 MR. YOUNG: Mid-ship?

12 MR. PETERSON: Yes.

13 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And then they added a
14 spar deck at that point as well?

15 MR. PETERSON: We've got to clarify that.

16 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

17 MR. PETERSON: If [REDACTED] remembers if that's
18 the case.

19 MR. KUCHARSKI: Sorry, I was -- No.

20 MR. PETERSON: Yes.

21 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes, but we'll let you
22 clarify that.

23 MR. PETERSON: Yes. Well I found pictures
24 of it, so we can just take a look at it and see
25 (inaudible).

1 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And then in '06 was a
2 major conversion, removed the spar deck and then it
3 changed names to the El Faro?

4 MR. PETERSON: Right.

5 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Just for clarification.

6 MR. PETERSON: And that was when all the,
7 what do you call the cross beams?

8 MR. NEESON: Transverse beams.

9 MR. PETERSON: The transverse beams were
10 added on to the main deck to hold the containers.

11 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: You can see those on
12 the El Yunque tomorrow.

13 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

14 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: I think they're
15 identical.

16 MR. PETERSON: Yes.

17 MR. YOUNG: Okay, great. We appreciate all
18 your help in explaining a lot of these issues. A lot
19 of the reports we see are saying that the ship lost
20 propulsion out there and from what we understand
21 everything was in decent shape.

22 We don't know whether the weather caused
23 that or it didn't make it through based on her speed to
24 get through the weather.

25 Do you have any ideas, and I know I'm asking

1 you for your opinion, but any ideas of any sort of
2 machinery failure that could've affected the vessel or
3 any ideas just running through your mind?

4 MR. NEESON: Well the only thing I can think
5 of is if the ship was in severe weather and it was
6 pounding and getting knocked around hard by the waves
7 it may have tripped maybe a main breaker or knocked a
8 pump out.

9 The boilers could've tripped out due to
10 high, low water just sloshing around. Now that's
11 severe rolling though, that's an extreme condition.
12 There's a lot of ways to lose the plant, so you could
13 speculate all day.

14 MR. YOUNG: Right.

15 MR. NEESON: I mean just pick a system and
16 say it went down and then it took everything else with
17 it. And it's a balanced plant, so you lose one item
18 you could end up losing the whole thing quickly.

19 So to me it sounded like it happened pretty
20 quickly, but I really don't know. I just don't know.
21 There's no clue from the message the Captain sent.

22 MR. YOUNG: Do you know the angle that the
23 emergency generator is able to run, what the list, what
24 the maximum list angle is?

25 MR. NEESON: No, I don't. But I've been on

1 ships that rolled 35 degrees and the generator still
2 ran. I don't know what the severe angle is for that.

3 MR. YOUNG: What's the make of that
4 emergency generator?

5 MR. NEESON: Detroit Diesel. I don't what
6 the (inaudible) is?

7 MALE PARTICIPANT: I think it's GE.

8 MR. NEESON: Yes, I think so. Yes, you're
9 right, GE.

10 MR. YOUNG: And for the setup of this ship
11 were there two turbo generators?

12 MR. NEESON: Yes, Terry Turbine.

13 MR. YOUNG: And the boilers, two boilers,
14 how many burners were in each boiler?

15 MR. NEESON: Three.

16 MR. YOUNG: And were they automated
17 somewhat, where they were lighting off each other or
18 did you have a fireman standing by?

19 MR. NEESON: They have ignitors.

20 MR. YOUNG: They do have ignitors.

21 MR. NEESON: Retractable ignitors.

22 MR. PETERSON: They have an automated system
23 for the purge and if you hit the button then it takes
24 it to the purge cycle and (inaudible).

25 MR. NEESON: Yes.

1 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And what was the pressure
2 they were running on the boilers?

3 MR. NEESON: Nine hundred.

4 MR. YOUNG: Nine hundred psi.

5 MR. O'DONNELL: One quick question, Lou
6 O'Donnell with ABS. This is a cross compound at double
7 reduction main propulsion system?

8 MR. NEESON: Yes.

9 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay, thank you.

10 MR. YOUNG: Let's go around the room with
11 any general questions if anyone has anything.

12 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.
13 Just to kind of close the loop on all the machinery and
14 everything, there was nothing that you know of wrong
15 with the steering system, (inaudible) steering
16 compartments or any ongoing or compartments outside of
17 the engine room, is there any issues?

18 MR. NEESON: No. Everything was in good
19 shape that I'm aware of. It's well maintained.

20 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

21 MR. KUCHARSKI: Mike Kucharski, NTSB. Did
22 you work with the chief mate at all on the El Faro? I
23 mean do you have any relationship, a working
24 relationship?

25 MR. NEESON: Well I would sit there and talk

1 to him maybe five minutes during their port stay if he
2 had concerns about whatever. Like, you know, if they -
3 -

4 MR. KUCHARSKI: How long did you know the
5 chief mate?

6 MR. NEESON: Not very long. He was the
7 relief guy.

8 MR. KUCHARSKI: I'm sorry?

9 MR. NEESON: He was relief chief mate.

10 MR. KUCHARSKI: Relief chief mate, okay.

11 MR. NEESON: I've seen him sail on the ship
12 before, you know, just casual conversations. I didn't
13 really know him that well.

14 MR. KUCHARSKI: So you don't know how long
15 he had been on the ship?

16 MR. NEESON: Well I think he had been there
17 two weeks aboard this cycle.

18 MR. KUCHARSKI: About two weeks on the ship.
19 For the cycle, so has he been with TOTE before?

20 MR. NEESON: Yes. I've seen him on that
21 ship months ago as a relief and he was sitting relief
22 again.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did TOTE have an engineering
24 SOP or anything in the SMS about engine room setup in
25 heavy weather, anything different from heavy weather

1 than normal operation?

2 MR. NEESON: No, not that I'm aware of.

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: Are you aware of any loss of
4 propulsion at all from the lube oil system to the main
5 reduction gear?

6 MR. NEESON: No.

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: The (inaudible) alarms to
8 the holes, did anybody talk about that?

9 MR. NEESON: No.

10 MR. KUCHARSKI: And if they got an alarm
11 function that was just put in log book if they did?

12 MR. NEESON: I would believe so. They
13 should.

14 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did you review their log
15 sheets when they came to shore?

16 MR. NEESON: No.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Who reviewed their log
18 sheets, anybody?

19 MR. NEESON: No. I would sit and talk with
20 the chief. If he had any questionable items we would
21 go over that whenever --

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. So you're not aware
23 of any safety ISM audits or anything looking over log
24 books or anything like that?

25 MR. NEESON: No.

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did Intech, and did I get
2 that right, I-N tech?

3 MR. NEESON: Yes.

4 MR. KUCHARSKI: Do they do all of the
5 electronic and communication gear on the bridge or did
6 you have a separate contractor?

7 MR. NEESON: Well their only communications
8 would be through the captain with emails to their
9 company. There wouldn't be any --

10 MR. KUCHARSKI: No, repairs, too? I mean
11 did you have a provider for doing any of the electronic
12 work if you needed work on one of the, or to change out
13 a piece of equipment, GMDSS Suite or anything like
14 that?

15 MR. NEESON: Oh. We would use IMTECH, I-M -
16 -

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: I-M, okay.

18 MR. NEESON: They are like Radio Holland.

19 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: They were Radio
20 Holland.

21 MR. NEESON: They are Radio Holland.

22 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: This is Jim Fisher-
23 Andersen.

24 (Simultaneous speaking)

25 MR. KUCHARSKI: As opposed to INTECH?

1 MR. NEESON: INTECH was the laborers, the
2 Polish laborers.

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, correct, I-N. So they
4 took care of all the electronics and communication gear
5 of the, bridge related?

6 MR. NEESON: Yes.

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: Any many condenser problems?

8 MR. NEESON: No.

9 MR. KUCHARSKI: No re-tubing or anything
10 like that?

11 MR. NEESON: No.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Was there any access to your
13 recollection from the hold anywhere into the engine
14 room, a watertight door where you could go in from --

15 MR. NEESON: Yes.

16 MR. KUCHARSKI: What deck was that on, do
17 you remember?

18 MR. NEESON: Third deck, port side. Was it
19 the third deck or -- Yes.

20 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: It was the control
21 flat in the engine room I believe.

22 MR. NEESON: Yes.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: So we've got the second deck
24 and then the third deck, next deck down?

25 MR. NEESON: Yes.

1 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: Correct.

2 MR. KUCHARSKI: And can we ask --

3 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: Sorry, this is Jim
4 Fisker-Andersen for clarification.

5 MR. KUCHARSKI: That's all right. Could we
6 also get a paper copy of the GA (phonetic) plans for
7 future interviews so we could just, a general
8 arrangement maybe we could show (inaudible)?

9 Was there also an access from the Number 2
10 deck aft, into aft to steering?

11 MR. NEESON: Yes.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: And there's a watertight
13 door there?

14 MR. NEESON: Yes, there's like a man shack,
15 a watertight door and then you can walk down.

16 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, thank you. Did you
17 regular interface with the master of the vessel? When
18 the vessel came in did you sit down, have any kind of a
19 meeting, a short meeting with the master?

20 MR. NEESON: Every time, yes.

21 MR. KUCHARSKI: Every time you did?

22 MR. NEESON: Yes.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. And can you recollect
24 your discussion with Captain Davidson on the --

25 MR. NEESON: Actually, we didn't have much

1 to discuss. It was mostly about he payroll. He would
2 discuss payroll and I'd ask him if he had anything
3 coming up and he didn't have any concerns about --

4 MR. KUCHARSKI: And so you spoke to him also
5 at dinnertime, you had dinner?

6 MR. NEESON: Yes.

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: No discussion about the
8 weather or anything like that?

9 MR. NEESON: None.

10 MR. KUCHARSKI: If he had concerns about the
11 weather or leaving, or leaving late, would he come to
12 you with those or if not who would he go to?

13 MR. NEESON: Well he could -- That's a good
14 question, yes. Normally he would come to me, but when
15 he sent out his message I was not copied in on his
16 message, so I don't know why he went that direction.

17 Well we do have an emergency condition plan
18 and I don't know why I'm not on that list, but --

19 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. So I understand,
20 there is a port captain for SeaStar also that
21 interfaces on re-operations type [REDACTED]

22 MR. NEESON: Yes. His name is Don [REDACTED]
23 He does the cargo loading and he interfaces with the
24 captain as far as, you know, loading of the ship,
25 stresses, GM.

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: So if there were weather
2 concerns for a particular trip would he just discuss
3 that -- Well, irrespective of the cargo, say
4 scheduling, if you were scheduling leaving on time or
5 delaying or anything like that, would he normally go
6 through you or would he go through Don [REDACTED]

7 MR. NEESON: He would go through Don
8 [REDACTED]

9 MR. KUCHARSKI: The deck log, the carbon
10 copies, you mentioned the engine room had a log book
11 and the carbon copies went ashore.

12 MR. NEESON: Yes.

13 MR. KUCHARSKI: Did the deck log carbon
14 copies go ashore also?

15 MR. NEESON: I didn't deal with those, I
16 don't know.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Who would've dealt with
18 those?

19 MR. NEESON: I don't know.

20 MR. STITH: This is Kevin Stith, TOTE
21 Services. The second mate separates the deck log and
22 he passes it around to the captain which he sends them
23 ashore at the end of the month, usually the following
24 month.

25 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay.

1 MR. STITH: They usually give about a week
2 after the month is over to make sure all entries have
3 been properly made and then after that, so probably
4 around mid-month the deck log gets submitted to the
5 office.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, Kevin, do you know who
7 they went to?

8 MR. STITH: We use a form, a transmittal
9 cover letter to track that, and those go to the
10 Operations Department.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: That's it. Thank you.

12 MR. STITH: Kevin Stith, TOTE Services. The
13 access hatch, the personnel access hatch on the second
14 deck that leads down, that also leads to a common
15 girder or alleyway, does that also lead to the engine
16 room that other way?

17 It leads to a flat where you can either go
18 into the steering gear room or --

19 MR. NEESON: Oh, along the -- Yes. Yes,
20 there is a --

21 MR. STITH: So the access hatch not only
22 leads to the steering gear room --

23 MR. NEESON: It goes (inaudible) cargo hold.

24 MR. STITH: Okay.

25 MR. NEESON: And parallels, it's along the

1 skin of the ship.

2 MR. STITH: Okay.

3 MR. NEESON: Yes.

4 MR. STITH: That's all I have.

5 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Coast Guard. Do you
6 know how many groups (phonetic) they had onboard the
7 ship?

8 MR. NEESON: As far as I know they had one
9 on each side of the bridge wing.

10 MALE PARTICIPANT: No.

11 MR. NEESON: No, there's just one?

12 MR. STITH: Kevin Stith with TOTE Services.
13 Just one, 406 megahertz EPIRB. They had two search and
14 rescue rescue responders.

15 MR. NEESON: Oh, search, okay, that's right.

16 MR. [REDACTED] Are these GPS enabled, do you
17 know?

18 MR. STITH: As far as I know they transmit
19 the name of the ship and I'm not sure if they transmit
20 its location.

21 MR. [REDACTED] They're not enacted with the GPS?

22 MR. STITH: No.

23 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So one (inaudible)?

24 MR. STITH: Yes.

25 MR. NEESON: And the life raft and boats

1 should have one also, right?

2 MR. STITH: No.

3 MR. NEESON: They don't have EPIRBs?

4 MR. STITH: No, just one 406 megahertz
5 EPIRB.

6 MR. NEESON: Okay.

7 MR. FURUKAWA: John Furukawa, NTSB, just
8 general questions. Okay, let's see. You mentioned
9 that the chief mate would let you know if he had any
10 requests concerning lifesaving equipment.

11 Was there any concern that you can recollect
12 from the chief mate or any other chief mate on the El
13 Faro?

14 MR. NEESON: No.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: No.

16 MR. NEESON: The only thing we talked about
17 in the last conversations was general maintenance
18 things.

19 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And you mentioned that
20 the clutches were done for the gravity davits, the
21 lifeboat?

22 MR. NEESON: Yes.

23 MR. FURUKAWA: Can you talk to me about that
24 again, what was done and why?

25 MR. NEESON: The clutches are made to

1 maintain the speed of the boat as they are lowering the
2 boat by gravity. The brake band fits around it and --
3 Well, in a survey done by Harding at our annual
4 inspection, they said they were kind of noisy.

5 So in order to not take any chances with the
6 boats we purchased new ones and had them installed. So
7 Harding installed them and did the checks on them. The
8 inboard, the starboard boat was done, I think right as
9 they dropped the boat the crew tested it as they were
10 leaving Jacksonville, because you want to do that, they
11 didn't want to drop it on the dock.

12 In case you have a failure you don't want to
13 drop your \$200,000 lifeboat on the dock, so you drop it
14 over the water and it worked fine. So that should be
15 logged as tested.

16 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And when was that?

17 MR. NEESON: That was a week ago I believe,
18 ten days ago.

19 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And that was the
20 starboard lifeboat.

21 MR. NEESON: So that would be, what, the
22 31st or the -- The starboard lifeboat, yes.

23 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Was any work done on
24 the port side?

25 MR. NEESON: Yes, they did the same thing on

1 the port, but that was boat was tested at the dock
2 because you're outboard in the river.

3 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. So both had their
4 clutches replaced on the gravity davits. Anything done
5 to the brakes?

6 MR. NEESON: They had brake band material
7 with them. I don't know if they replaced them or not.
8 They may not have needed, but they did have brake band
9 material with them, I did see that.

10 MR. FURUKAWA: And that's something they
11 could do onboard themselves?

12 MR. NEESON: Well they had Harding do it.

13 MR. FURUKAWA: And who is Harding?

14 MR. NEESON: Chad Harding, they are the,
15 they do all the services for the lifeboats and the
16 davits. They are standard throughout the industry.

17 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Was the stretch, was
18 the cut made around Number 3 hole?

19 MR. NEESON: Could be. I'd have to have the
20 ship's drawing to verify that, I don't know.

21 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. In the designated
22 person ashore's interview it was mentioned that a
23 scuttle had popped open on Number 2 deck, the first
24 time, and the second time he said the scuttle had blown
25 open.

1 Is there any explanation of how a scuttle
2 could, you know, pop open or be blown with them?

3 MR. NEESON: I can't think of any. I mean
4 it's a pretty heavy manhole cover. To have it pop up
5 would take a lot of pressure, a lot of pressure.

6 MR. FURUKAWA: There is a scuttle status
7 forward in the main passageway, any issues with them?

8 MR. NEESON: Not that I am aware of.

9 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay.

10 MR. STITH: Kevin Stith with TOTE Services.
11 That was the watertight door --

12 MR. FURUKAWA: Oh, the watertight one.

13 MR. STITH: -- aboard, not for the scuttles.
14 Only for the cargo watertight doors.

15 MR. FURUKAWA: Is there any status for the
16 scuttles that you know?

17 MR. STITH: No, status board for that.

18 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And the status for the
19 scuttles would be, you know --

20 MR. STITH: There is an indicator light. I
21 believe on that light it was either illuminated or not
22 illuminated as opposed to having an open or a closed
23 (inaudible).

24 MR. FURUKAWA: That's for the watertight
25 doors?

1 MR. STITH: Yes.

2 MR. FURUKAWA: But for the scuttles anything
3 that you know other than the signs?

4 MR. STITH: None. Nothing other than the
5 signs.

6 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. And the signs I am
7 referring to was the (inaudible).

8 MR. STITH: Yes, either personnel, you know,
9 or no personnel.

10 MR. FURUKAWA: Okay. Thank you very much.

11 MS. FINSTERBUSCH: No questions.

12 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: No questions.

13 MR. SHEPHERD: I have a question about the
14 riding crew, is it a good time --

15 MR. YOUNG: Introduce yourself.

16 MR. SHEPHERD: Oh, I'm sorry, Al Shepherd,
17 American Bureau of Shipping Management Systems
18 Certification. Is this the proper time to ask about
19 the riding crew? (Inaudible) so far, sorry.

20 MR. YOUNG: Sure, go ahead.

21 MR. SHEPHERD: (Inaudible). So you had the
22 riding crew on board, obviously, as related to this
23 preparation (inaudible) I mean for the Alaska run?

24 MR. NEESON: Yes.

25 MR. SHEPHERD: And when you have a riding

1 crew onboard that's mostly run through you?

2 MR. NEESON: Yes.

3 MR. SHEPHERD: (Inaudible) the riding crew
4 onboard?

5 MR. NEESON: Yes.

6 MR. SHEPHERD: So you had the riding crew
7 onboard for this time, but did you have riding crew's
8 onboard commonly or is it just related to this?

9 MR. NEESON: I have had riding crews on
10 previous occasions for repairs that were beyond the
11 scope of the crew, like if we needed any certified
12 welder or something that they would --

13 MR. SHEPHERD: All right. So it's not a new
14 thing to have a --

15 MR. NEESON: Well it's not uncommon. We
16 don't normally do it, but on occasion we do.

17 MR. SHEPHERD: Right. Now you might not be
18 the right person for this question, but what
19 precautions, because the riding crews go through you is
20 why I'm asking you, but what precautions or what
21 measures are in place when you have a riding crew
22 onboard, what type of precautions do you have to take
23 as far as -- You're not understanding the question,
24 right?

25 MR. NEESON: Your question is as far as --

1 MR. SHEPHERD: Yes, what --

2 MR. NEESON: -- instructions to the riders?

3 MR. SHEPHERD: Right, right.

4 MR. NEESON: We have an instruction, a
5 safety instruction booklet where they review --

6 MR. SHEPHERD: Okay. Okay, so you have a
7 published document?

8 MR. NEESON: Yes. The chief engineer goes
9 through all the safety things to --

10 MR. SHEPHERD: Okay. And then their
11 assignments for --

12 MR. NEESON: When they get their lifeboat
13 assignments or life raft assignments they get their
14 life jacket and survival suit.

15 MR. SHEPHERD: Right.

16 MR. NEESON: And that's all assigned and the
17 captain or the mate would go through that with them, so
18 they become a crew member basically.

19 MR. SHEPHERD: All right. So how long were
20 they onboard?

21 MR. NEESON: These guys have been onboard
22 for a couple of months.

23 MR. SHEPHERD: Oh, okay. So -- Okay.

24 MR. NEESON: So they were familiar with the
25 ship.

1 MR. SHEPHERD: Okay, very good. Thank you.

2 MR. NEESON: Sure.

3 MR. O'DONNELL: Lou O'Donnell, one more
4 quick question. The watertight door you referred to on
5 third deck port to the engine room or engine control
6 (inaudible), is that a quick acting door on hinges or
7 is a sliding watertight door?

8 MR. NEESON: I think it's a hinged door, I
9 believe.

10 MR. STITH: I think it's got two dogs, you
11 know, hinged on one side. Kevin Stith with TOTE
12 Services. Hinged on one side and like two dogs on the
13 other.

14 MR. NEESON: Individual dogs.

15 MR. STITH: Yes, it's something like that.

16 MR. O'DONNELL: Does it have an operator and
17 wheel?

18 MALE PARTICIPANT: Is it a quick acting or -
19 -

20 MR. NEESON: No.

21 MR. STITH: It is not quick acting.

22 MR. O'DONNELL: It's just a lever?

23 MR. STITH: It's manual dogs. We'll see on
24 the El Yunque.

25 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. Thank you.

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Mike Kucharski, one follow-
2 up question. I saw on eagle.com the class ABS
3 classification society website that there were two
4 notations for reduced scantlings on the vessel.

5 MR. NEESON: Yes.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: Are you familiar with those
7 and can you elaborate?

8 MR. NEESON: About the 500,000 load bearing
9 is that what you are talking about?

10 MR. KUCHARSKI: Well it just says "reduce
11 scantlings." There were two notations, one for a deck
12 and one for, I'm not sure if it's a hull or what the
13 item is.

14 MR. NEESON: I'm not quite sure where. That
15 can be verified here.

16 MR. O'DONNELL: Lou O'Donnell with ABS.
17 We're going to provide information to the NTSB. That
18 information is contained on mid-ship's drawings and the
19 actual notation is a record comment as we call it at
20 ABS.

21 It's reduce scantlings based on conversion
22 control and it was reduce scantlings in certain areas
23 in the construction of the vessel.

24 MR. KUCHARSKI: And so --

25 MR. O'DONNELL: We will provide, those

1 details will be in the mid-ship drawing, which we'll
2 get to you today.

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: Mid-ship, okay.

4 MR. O'DONNELL: Yes.

5 MR. KUCHARSKI: So it's in the mid-ship
6 area?

7 MR. O'DONNELL: Yes, yes, yes. Also there
8 was scantling reassessments and those also will be
9 provided to you.

10 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. STITH: Kevin Stith, TOTE Services. Do
12 you know after they renewed the clutches on the
13 lifeboat davit winches the test method that they used?

14 Did they just lower the -- Was it an
15 operational test or do you know if they did like a
16 dynamic winch brake, you know, lower and drop the
17 brake?

18 MR. NEESON: I think they used the three
19 drop method.

20 MR. STITH: Okay. Very good, thanks.

21 MR. NEESON: They lower it ten feet, they'd
22 slam the brake on, lower it another ten feet, slam the
23 brake on.

24 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.
25 During that test would they have added any additional

1 weight to the boats to simulate a full lifeboat?

2 MR. NEESON: We did that test when we did
3 the steel work on the davit where they actually
4 replaced the steel, which was just done a month before.

5 MR. [REDACTED] So that was before or after the
6 brake work?

7 MR. NEESON: Before.

8 MR. [REDACTED] Before the brake. After the
9 brake work they just did a --

10 MR. NEESON: An operational test, yes.

11 MR. [REDACTED] Operational test, okay. A couple
12 of follow-up things, can you just describe to us in
13 your words or characterize what you believe the safety
14 culture is like at TOTE throughout the organization?

15 MR. NEESON: What I see it's very good. I
16 mean we keep up with it. The latest safety devices we
17 buy. There is the man overboard on a device that picks
18 up men that fell over the side and for a lifeboat
19 retrieval.

20 There is an expensive little gizmo that
21 somebody came up to make it pull, you know, lift a body
22 up onto the boat. Now we had, you know, we go ahead
23 and purchased that so we have it. I mean it's -- We
24 stay up with it and all the equipment is good
25 equipment.

1 I don't see any problems with the safety
2 philosophy of the company whatsoever. They are very
3 safe.

4 MR. [REDACTED] And to follow along with that,
5 can you also characterize how you feel what the
6 relationship is between the crews of the ships and the
7 management? Is that a good working relationship
8 between the two?

9 MR. NEESON: I would say so. I mean SIU,
10 which is the unlicensed people, you know, if they have
11 any problems they'll bring their agent in, their SIU
12 agent, branch representative, if they have any beefs
13 about something.

14 But as far as beefs on the ship they go to
15 the captain or the mate and very little problems. It's
16 usually about money, payroll. Other than that they are
17 pretty good.

18 MR. [REDACTED] Thank you.

19 MR. YOUNG: So what we're going to do is
20 review all the documents, and I know we hit you with a
21 lot of questions, but a lot of our information and
22 further questions will result of us looking through the
23 AMOS system, the maintenance, the purchasing, the --
24 Oh, one last question pertaining to the document is do
25 you receive the turnover notes from the engineers as

1 they swap out?

2 MR. NEESON: Yes.

3 MR. YOUNG: You do?

4 MR. NEESON: I get an email.

5 MR. YOUNG: Okay. This is something we'll
6 be looking at, too, is to see what the engineers do and
7 record in their notes. Is it a standard form?

8 MR. NEESON: No, just a letter.

9 MR. YOUNG: No, just a letter.

10 MR. NEESON: Just a handwritten letter by
11 the chief, or an emailed letter.

12 MR. YOUNG: And will it describe what
13 transpired throughout his rotation?

14 MR. NEESON: Well anything that comes to,
15 out of the ordinary that needs the next chief's
16 attention.

17 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And, again, after we look
18 through all this we'll have a much better handle on the
19 operation of the ship from the engine department and we
20 may wish to sit down again after we're a little further
21 educated on your operation.

22 But we appreciate all of your information.
23 Is there anything you feel that we haven't asked you.

24 MR. O'DONNELL: Brian, are we going around?

25 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Go around, I'm sorry. I

1 guess we're not done yet.

2 MR. O'DONNELL: The watertight door that
3 goes from the Number 3 hole to the engine room you said
4 it's not a hydraulic door it's a --

5 MR. NEESON: A manual.

6 MR. O'DONNELL: Manual. When that's open
7 and closed is that indicated on the passageway in the -
8 -

9 MR. NEESON: No. No.

10 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. Was that an add-on?
11 Was that original, built that way, or was that added on
12 at some time?

13 MR. NEESON: I have no idea.

14 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay.

15 MR. PETERSON: I'm sorry, I was (inaudible),
16 what --

17 MR. O'DONNELL: There is a watertight door
18 that goes from Number 3 hole into the engine room, it's
19 not a hydraulic door, it's a --

20 MR. PETERSON: Yes, I know what you're
21 talking about.

22 MR. O'DONNELL: Right.

23 MR. PETERSON: It's been there as long as I
24 remember.

25 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay.

1 MR. PETERSON: I don't know, but that's not
2 much of an answer for you, but I don't know if that was
3 an add-on or not?

4 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. Are there any other
5 doors, watertight doors, that are not indicated on that
6 status board?

7 MR. NEESON: I would think the forward
8 focsle --

9 MR. YOUNG: Can you say your name, Lee?

10 MR. PETERSON: Yes, Lee Peterson.

11 MR. NEESON: I think the access door to the
12 forward focsle there is no indicator light on that.

13 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. And is that also a
14 manual one?

15 MR. NEESON: Yes.

16 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. Were there any plans
17 to put a status light?

18 MR. NEESON: No.

19 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. I just heard you say
20 something about steel work being done on the davit, can
21 you describe what kind of, why, and what was done?

22 MR. NEESON: Sure. The davit has a big c-
23 shaped arm basically and when the boat comes down on
24 rollers it sits on these little flat bar pads and the
25 flat bar pads were getting thinned out from age and

1 weather and the Coast Guard and ABS felt they were,
2 needed to be replaced, so they replaced them, inserted
3 them.

4 And there was some pitting along the big c-
5 channel that the rollers roll in on the davit, it was a
6 little thin, so those were repaired also. Structurally
7 it didn't bother the structure, but it just, it needed
8 to be changed out.

9 It was beyond -- They have limits of how
10 much steel wastage is allowable and it was beyond the
11 allowable limit, so we replaced it.

12 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. And I understand you
13 are retired? You are a retired merchant mariner,
14 correct?

15 MR. NEESON: Yes.

16 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. How many years did
17 you sail them?

18 MR. NEESON: Twenty-eight.

19 MR. O'DONNELL: Twenty-eight. And you
20 sailed as chief engineer?

21 MR. NEESON: Yes.

22 MR. O'DONNELL: Were you sailing vessels
23 with open lifeboats like this one?

24 MR. NEESON: Yes.

25 MR. O'DONNELL: Have you also sailed on

1 vessels with enclosed lifeboats?

2 MR. NEESON: Yes.

3 MR. O'DONNELL: Can you describe the
4 difference between the two, the two boats and
5 (inaudible)?

6 MR. NEESON: Well they're basically the same
7 except the enclosed boat has a fiberglass shell over
8 the top of it to keep the sailors out of the weather
9 and it has windows, a few little windows, an access
10 door, but other than that the hull of the boat is the
11 same.

12 MR. O'DONNELL: Okay. Thank you.

13 MR. NEESON: And the boat I was familiar
14 with was launched by davits. It was not one of the
15 stern launched ones. It was --

16 MR. O'DONNELL: One of the audible launch --
17 (inaudible).

18 MR. NEESON: Yes.

19 MR. O'DONNELL: Yes.

20 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.
21 Chief, on the Number 3 hold as you know they had stated
22 they had taken on some water in that hold, how would
23 they de-water that hold --

24 MR. NEESON: Was it that hold? Or do we
25 know what hold it was?

1 MR. [REDACTED] Number 3 hold is what we think --

2 MR. NEESON: Okay.

3 MR. [REDACTED] Any of the holds --

4 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: This is Jeff Fisher-
5 Andersen. That was on the --

6 MR. NEESON: On the referral for --

7 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: -- call from the
8 captain I believe --

9 (Simultaneous speaking)

10 MR. NEESON: I never saw the transcript.

11 MR. FISHER-ANDERSEN: -- water in the three
12 hold.

13 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, he stated he water in the
14 Number 3 hold.

15 MR. NEESON: Okay.

16 MR. [REDACTED] How would he de-water, what
17 method would they use to de-water that hold and any
18 pumps that were used to de-water that hold can you tell
19 us what the rate or the capacity of it would be?

20 MR. NEESON: I don't know the exact rate
21 offhand, but they are, what, 25 gallons a minute.

22 MR. STITH: This is Kevin Stith with TOTE
23 Services.

24 MR. NEESON: I don't know.

25 MR. STITH: I got to asked a question on the

1 El Yunque and the two bilge and ballast pumps that we
2 have on the El Yunque have an 850 gallon per minute
3 capacity.

4 MALE PARTICIPANT: Eight?

5 MR. STITH: Yes.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: I'm going to ask a follow-on
7 question. Are they on an emergency switchboard?

8 MR. NEESON: Yes.

9 MR. KUCHARSKI: The bilge and ballast pumps
10 are?

11 MR. NEESON: Yes.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Sorry, Mike
13 Kucharski.

14 MR. NEESON: Now in the cargo holds they
15 have what you call a rose box and you have a float
16 switch in the rose box that indicates that you have
17 water in there. So once that alarm goes off they know
18 to get the pumps going.

19 MR. KUCHARSKI: So generally speaking are
20 the cargo holds kept clean and free of dunnage and you
21 think that could have --

22 MR. NEESON: Yes, yes.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: -- clogged up that rose box?

24 MR. NEESON: Well those particular holds had
25 automobiles in it, so there was no debris.

1 MR. PETERSON: Nothing.

2 MR. KUCHARSKI: And does the use of those
3 pumps require any type of manual spool piece or a cross
4 connect or anything in the engine room in order for
5 them to operate those pumps simultaneously?

6 MR. NEESON: No, they're ready to go. They
7 just open the valve and push the start button.

8 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

9 MR. STITH: Kevin Stith, TOTE Services. On
10 the second deck do you know of any other watertight
11 openings to the engine room, other than the hatches
12 that lead down into the, towards the steering gear?

13 MR. NEESON: Well you have the house access,
14 fore and aft. We have a ladder that goes up.

15 MR. STITH: Is there anything else on that
16 deck that leads directly into the engine room?

17 MR. NEESON: There is an access for the
18 Butterworth heater, a little soft patch, but that's not
19 a --

20 MR. STITH: Okay.

21 MR. NEESON: That's buttoned up, that's
22 semi-permanent.

23 MR. STITH: Okay, thank you.

24 MR. YOUNG: So, again, we appreciate your
25 time. We will look through all the documentation.

1 It's just after 10:30 and we'll go off record, but
2 thank you so much for coming in and answering all our
3 questions and we appreciate your help.

4 MR. NEESON: Okay.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

██████████ El Faro Incident
Accident No. DCA16MM001
Interview of Tim Neeson
Jacksonville, FL

DATE: 10-08-15

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 110 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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TABLE OF CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW FOR

TIMOTHY NEESON
 TAKEN ON
OCTOBER 8, 2015

Page Number	Line Number	Current Wording	Corrected Wording
4	1	at my	as
6	21, 21	up	out
8	21	bough	bow
8	23	ROW ROW	ro ro
9	10	bane	main
9	20	ROW ROW	ro ro
10	25	bough	bow
11	9	ROW ROW	ro ro
12	12	targeting	targeting
25	22	Wallischeck	Walashek
26	16, 18	Wallischeck	Walashek
31	7	hand hole	handhole
69	8	holes	holds
71	7	Any many	Any
72	17	regular	regularly
73	21	re-operations	operational
76	6	groups	Epirbs
94	21	25	25
96	19	a--	Normally used access

If to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEEDED. _____
 Initials

TIMOTHY NEESON

Printed Name of Person providing the above information

 Signature of Person providing the above information

11/10/15
 Date