

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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M/V *CONTI PERIDOT* COLLISION WITH

*

THE M/T *CARLA MAERSK* IN THE

*

HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL

*

MARCH 9, 2015

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Docket No.: DCA-15-MM-017

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Interview of: GALLO RONILLO PACHES

Thursday,
March 12, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: ROB JONES
Senior Marine Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

ROB JONES, Senior Marine Investigator
Deck Operations Group Chairman
National Transportation Safety Board

ERIC STOLZENBERG, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

BARRY STRAUCH, Ph.D., Supervisory Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CARRIE BELL, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board


U.S. Coast Guard Investigations

MIKE USHER
Board of Pilot Commissioners for
Harris County Ports

MIKE MORRIS
Houston Pilots Association

HENNING PULMER
BBG

DAVID BETTS
(On behalf of *Conti Peridot*-Liberia Flag)

DAVID ANDERSON
(On behalf of Maersk Tankers)

JOHN UNGER, Esq.
Royston Rayzor
(On behalf of Mr. Paches)

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1 I N T E R V I E W

MR. JONES: This is Rob Jones, Deck Operations Group chairman with the National Transportation Safety Board conducting an interview today with Ordinary Seaman Ronillo Gallo Paches --

MR. PACHES: Yes, sir.

MR. JONES: -- who was aboard the *Conti Peridot* with the -- involving the collision with the *Carla Maersk*. I'm going to go around the room for the party participants and ask they identify themselves and the group they're representing.

Coast Guard, Sector Houston-Galveston, Investigations Division.

DR. STRAUCH: I'm Barry Strauch with the NTSB in Washington, D.C.

MR. MORRIS: Mike Morris for the Houston Pilots.

MR. PULMER: Henning Pulmer, Bremer
Bereederungsgesellschaft from Bremen.

MR. UNGER: I'm John Unger at Royston Rayzor Vickery & Williams, and I'm the witness representative.

MR. JONES: Go ahead, the -- say your name and --

MR. PACHES: I'm Ronillo Gallo, ordinary seaman.

MR. JONES: Aboard?

MR. PACHES: On board of *Conti Peridot*, yeah.

MR. JONES: Okay.

MR. USHER: I'm Mike Usher on behalf of the Board of Pilot Commissioners for Harris County Ports.

1 MR. BETTS: David Betts, Liberian Ship Registry, flag
2 for the *Conti Peridot*.

3 MR. ANDERSON: David Anderson, I'm owners'
4 representative for Maersk Tankers.

5 MR. DAVIES: Bruce Davies with the U.S. Coast Guard
6 Investigations, Sector Houston-Galveston.

7 LT FRANSSON Peter Fransson with Coast Guard
8 Investigations.

9 MR. JONES: Okay, we'd like to start the interview now.
10 I just wanted to make sure you're aware you're being recorded and
11 you're entitled to representation.

12 MR. PACHES: Yeah.

13 MR. JONES: I see Mr. Unger with you. That's your
14 representative, and it's okay to record this interview?

15 MR. PACHES: Yes, sir.

16 MR. JONES: Okay. Okay, we'll start now.

17 INTERVIEW OF GALLO RONILLO PACHES

18 BY MR. JONES:

19 Q. I'd just like to ask some preliminary questions. How
20 long have you been an ordinary seaman?

21 A. I am three contract (indiscernible) three ordinary
22 seaman contract.

23 Q. This is days or --

24 A. No, no, no. Because ordinary seaman contract is not for
25 a year, but only month. But only -- must be only 3 years for the

1 ordinary seaman.

2 Q. You've been an ordinary seaman for 3 years?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Okay. That's the first you started sailing?

5 A. No, because first I'm cadet, and --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah. I'm three ordinary seaman's contract.

8 Q. Three ordinary seaman's contract.

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. And how long does each contract last?

11 A. Ten months and -- 10 months and, I think, 9 days, or --

12 Q. Okay, approximately. Okay.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And where did you get your seaman's documents, your

15 certificates?

16 A. In my company, sir.

17 Q. And what company and what country?

18 A. Philippines.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. And what was the company, or is that the country, just

22 the Philippines?

23 A. Yeah, it was Scanfield (ph.).

24 Q. Oh, Scanfield.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. And how long have you been with this company, this
2 *Conti*? How long have you been with the company that runs this
3 ship?

4 A. How long?

5 Q. Okay, how -- all right, let me try something else. How
6 long have you been on this -- on board this ship?

7 A. On board, sir.

8 Q. This trip.

9 A. No, no (indiscernible).

10 Q. This trip.

11 A. Okay. Six months.

12 Q. Six months?

13 A. Yeah, 6 months.

14 Q. Okay. And before you were on this ship, were you on
15 this ship before that 6 months?

16 A. Yeah. Coming 6 months, I guess I 6 months now. On
17 March 25, 6 months.

18 Q. Okay. All right. And have you been into Houston
19 before?

20 A. Not yet. No, no, no.

21 Q. This -- first trip into Houston?

22 A. My first trip in Houston.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. (indiscernible) been in America last year
25 (indiscernible).

1 Q. All right. And where did the ship come from before it
2 came to Houston? Where was your last port?

3 A. Last port? In Korea.

4 Q. Korea? Okay. So you sailed from -- the *Conti* this last
5 trip sailed from Korea --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- to --

8 A. To Houston.

9 Q. -- to Houston. All right. Came through the Panama
10 Canal?

11 A. Panama Canal, yeah.

12 Q. Okay. And you were ordinary seaman the entire time?

13 A. Yeah, ordinary seaman.

14 Q. All right. What watch are you on?

15 A. What, sir?

16 Q. What's your watch schedule, your duties?

17 A. My job, sir?

18 Q. Yeah. Well, your hours. What hours? What watch?
19 Midnight?

20 A. Twelve to 4:00, my duty.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Two times? Twelve to 4:00, and then noon to 1600; 4 on,
24 8 off?

25 A. And midnight, 12:00 to 4:00, yeah.

1 Q. Okay. And what do you --

2 A. Noon to 4:00 and midnight, 12:00 to 4:00 morning.

3 Q. Right.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And what do you -- what do you do? What are your duties
6 as an ordinary seaman?

7 A. Yeah. I'm watch keeping, sir, for the ordinary seaman
8 and --

9 Q. Do you do lookout?

10 A. I look out there, yeah.

11 Q. Underway, when the ship's underway? Do you steer? Do
12 you do the helm?

13 A. No, because I'm ordinary seaman, sir.

14 Q. Okay. So on the day the accident happened, where were
15 you?

16 A. In the bow, in the forward bow with the bosun.

17 Q. All right. And how long had you been on the bow?

18 A. After go inside, I'm here in the bow with bosun.

19 Q. But how long were you up there on the bow? One hour, 2
20 hours?

21 A. Me?

22 Q. Yes.

23 A. Because first for the -- 2 hours.

24 Q. Two hours?

25 A. I think, because I work in the -- in forward in bow for

1 the lookout.

2 Q. Okay. So before the accident, you had been up on the
3 bow for 2 hours?

4 A. Before the accident?

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. Yes, yes, yes.

7 Q. What was -- tell me about what you were doing up there
8 and tell me what you remember about the accident. Before the
9 accident, up to the accident.

10 A. Yes, because I'm -- and I'm the forward, sir, I tell the
11 (indiscernible) that the vessel -- when first vessel is coming in
12 the (indiscernible). I saw the car ship. When it coming, car
13 ship, first I saw, and next the *Carla Maersk* (indiscernible).

14 Q. The ship --

15 A. I saw the ship and the *Carla Maersk* about 500 meters
16 when coming to collision. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. How was the -- how was the visibility? Was it
18 the same? Tell -- describe the visibility. How far could you
19 see?

20 A. Because the ship -- the ship -- the ship, *Carla Maersk*,
21 I saw in the -- 500 meters.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Yeah, the visibility, because I saw the ship coming in
24 the -- for the *Peridot* in the 500 meters.

25 Q. Okay. Before, you mentioned a car ship, a car carrier

1 you saw first go by. Did you or the bosun, do you call the
2 bridge?

3 A. Yeah, I call bosun because I lookout for the -- I see
4 the car ship first, car ship.

5 Q. And what do you do when you see the car ship?

6 A. Bosun only lookout -- me and bosun.

7 Q. Okay, well --

8 A. We can call the bridge.

9 Q. But how?

10 A. Radio.

11 Q. Radio?

12 A. Yeah, yeah.

13 Q. The man on watch, you call, or the captain?

14 A. Captain.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Master.

17 Q. All right. Eat with -- each time you see a vessel go
18 by, you call the bridge?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Okay. And who has the -- who has the radio, you or the
21 bosun?

22 A. Bosun.

23 Q. Okay. Did -- you say you saw 500 meters, approximately,
24 the visibility?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Was it -- was it better before, was it worse, was it the
2 same? Foggy. Did it get worse or better?

3 A. First, I saw the car ship -- fog, much fog because maybe
4 the ship coming. And I saw another ship coming and I saw that our
5 ship (indiscernible) and next the *Carla Maersk*, so not totally fog
6 and then because of 500 meters, I saw ship coming, the ship.

7 Q. Okay. While you're up there on the bow, what else did
8 you see or hear?

9 A. Said -- I'm there in the bow because I saw the ship.

10 Q. But before the collision, what else did you hear? While
11 you're out -- you're the lookout. What else did you see? What
12 else did you hear? You hear whistles?

13 A. Yeah, whistles.

14 Q. Where do you hear the whistles?

15 A. In the *Maersk*, one.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And the ship, the *Peridot*.

18 Q. Your ship whistle?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Where did the whistle blow? From the bow or the bridge?
21 The horn.

22 A. Bow, bow.

23 Q. From the bow?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Okay. Now, when you see the *Carla Maersk*, tell me what

1 you did as you start seeing the *Carla Maersk* come into view. What
2 did you do next? What did you see?

3 A. After the -- before the car vessel, I saw the *Carla*
4 *Maersk* coming, about 500 meters, and very fast, very fast. And a
5 state of shock, sir, because this is first time, you know, this is
6 first time --

7 Q. Sure.

8 A. -- in my company, this collision.

9 Q. Yeah, Gallo, just take your time and just tell -- just
10 relax. Just tell us what you can remember.

11 A. Yeah, yeah, sir.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. This -- and, yeah, I saw very fast. And make near --
14 about 15, 10 meters after in the starboard, and make -- in middle
15 of the ship.

16 Q. All right.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Where were you when the ships collided?

19 A. Because after this, captain call to the radio and go in
20 starboard side, but I saw -- I saw -- I saw on the starboard side.
21 But -- and ran for the step of the -- and go to the cargo hold
22 number one (indiscernible) because I didn't so (indiscernible).

23 Q. Okay. So you were running down the stairs --

24 A. Yes, yes.

25 Q. -- as the ships struck?

1 A. And go -- run in cargo number because (indiscernible)
2 go.

3 Q. Okay. Did you feel the hit? Did it knock you down?
4 Were you holding on?

5 A. Because after this, after --

6 Q. Collision?

7 A. Yeah, collision, he run, it run, but no -- I run, but
8 no -- I fell in the cargo hold number one. I fell in cargo number
9 one when it happened, for to collision.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Did the -- did you hear anything on the radio? Did the
13 captain say to drop the anchor or did you -- what did you hear?

14 A. Yeah, captain -- because bosun have radio, and after
15 this, captain tell drop anchor.

16 Q. After or before collision?

17 A. After.

18 Q. After collision?

19 A. Yeah, after collision.

20 Q. All right.

21 A. After collision.

22 Q. Did the --

23 A. And --

24 Q. When you went running --

25 A. When the vessel --

1 Q. After it pulled away?

2 A. Yeah, not -- when the vessel -- after it pulled away --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- captain call -- captain call because there's
5 dangerous to drop anchor. I don't know what happen because bosun,
6 I met in the cargo hold, but call drop anchor.

7 Q. Okay, when you went down the ladder to cargo hold number
8 one, where was the bosun?

9 A. Because me, he said my own safety to -- bosun is coming
10 down because me, I'm on my (indiscernible) because the bosun to
11 the radio captain tell about go to the starboard side and go to
12 starboard side and come down. I don't know, bosun maybe in the --
13 or forward bow.

14 Q. Up on --

15 A. Yeah, on the bow, yeah.

16 Q. Where the anchor is?

17 A. Yeah, yeah.

18 Q. And that's it -- that's two deck, the anchor windows?

19 A. Yeah, yeah.

20 Q. And come down one deck to the cargo hold number one?

21 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

22 Q. Okay. So you're not -- bosun may have stayed up there?
23 He might have still been up there when it hit, or did he come down
24 at the time of collision? Bosun up on the forward deck or down in
25 cargo hold number one?

1 A. I saw bosun step in the -- step around cargo number one.

2 Q. Okay. And after the collision now, the ship has
3 collided, you pulled away a little bit and you told -- the captain
4 tells to drop the anchor. What do you do next? What happens
5 next?

6 A. Next, I go in the forward after collision, pull away.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. I go to forward because bosun call me to drop anchor
9 because captain call the radio and drop anchor. Bosun make --
10 open the brake.

11 Q. Open the brake?

12 A. (Indiscernible).

13 Q. Let go the anchor. And what happened after? Do you
14 stay up there? Do you come back inside?

15 A. No. I'm staying the forward --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- with bosun and other crew.

18 Q. For how -- and for how long did you stay up there and
19 what did you see or what happened next?

20 A. I tell about -- bosun tell captain for the hole, and
21 makes the hole in the bow.

22 Q. Hole?

23 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

24 Q. Okay. Your bow?

25 A. Yeah, yeah.

1 Q. Your ship's bow?

2 A. (Indiscernible).

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I don't know because all crew going there in the bow

5 after this collision.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. After the collision, your ship, you pull away, bosun

9 drops -- you drop the anchor.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. What happened to the *Carla Maersk*?

12 A. The *Carla Maersk* make whistle.

13 Q. Whistle? Signals?

14 A. Yeah, yeah, both.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yeah, because I hear. I hear.

17 Q. Did the *Carla Maersk* move away from you?

18 A. Yeah, move away. Yeah.

19 Q. Could you still her?

20 A. What's that?

21 Q. Could you still her through the fog, or did she move

22 away too far?

23 A. Because I go to forward, we move away. After this

24 collision, move away.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And go to (indiscernible) move away, to see what
2 happened to --

3 MR. JONES: Okay. All right. Thank you. That's all I
4 have right now. Lieutenant -- I'll turn it over to the
5 Lieutenant.

6 [REDACTED] All right, good morning.

7 MR. PACHES: Good morning, sir.

8 [REDACTED]:

9 Q. I just have a couple quick questions. Before you
10 went -- before the incident, while you were up -- while you were a
11 lookout, did you see any lights out there? Any aids to
12 navigation, ATON lights flashing while you were in transit?

13 A. Yeah, I saw the two buoy on the starboard side and port
14 side.

15 Q. You saw two lights?

16 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah, yeah.

19 Q. Starboard side and port side?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. And what was the vessel in reference to these lights?
22 Was the vessel in the channel? Was it in the middle of the
23 channel? So you saw -- you said you saw two lights, right?

24 A. (indiscernible) the vessel *Maersk*, after go near to the
25 *Conti Peridot*, after on starboard and in the middle in the ship.

1 Q. Okay. But you -- before that, did you see lights before
2 the collision or after the collision, the aids to navigation
3 lights? Do you recall while you were on lookout, are you -- does
4 the bosun mention to the -- to the master, "Hey, you know, aids to
5 navigation, I have this buoy here." Are there any questions about
6 that from the bosun in regards to the aids, to the lights that you
7 see while you're transiting the channel or is there --

8 A. I saw the buoy. I saw the buoy, but I don't know
9 because I'm still in shock, sir, but I -- my eyes look for the
10 ship.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. But I saw the buoy. I saw the buoy. Two buoy,
13 starboard side then port side after coming.

14 Q. Okay. All right. Now, you said they dropped the
15 anchor. The order to give -- drop anchor, do you recall which
16 anchor that was asked to be dropped? Was it port anchor,
17 starboard anchor, drop anchors? Do you remember if --

18 A. When the *Maersk*, the *Carla Maersk*, when far away and
19 then so drop anchor, but no drop anchor.

20 Q. I'm sorry, after the incident. I'm referring now after
21 the incident, after the collision, when the -- after you -- after
22 the collision. After the vessels collided, you said the master
23 gave the order -- gave the bosun an order to drop anchors,
24 correct?

25 A. Yes, yes. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Okay. Do you recall which anchor he wanted to drop,
2 or -- the port side, starboard side?

3 A. Starboard side.

4 Q. Starboard side anchors? Okay.

5 A. I didn't understand very your (indiscernible).

6 Q. My apologies. I'll slow down.

7 A. I'm Philippine, sir.

8 Q. I understand. Okay.

9 A. Sorry for the cannot understand.

10 Q. No, no, no. That's -- I -- I'll try to slow down there.

11 All right. Now -- and if you can clarify for me, you said you
12 were on the bow approximately 2 hours before the incident. Is
13 that correct? Were you there 2 hours? So the incident happened
14 at approximately 12:30? What time did you arrive on the bow?

15 A. Sir, not exactly 2 hours for in the bow because I'm no
16 watch in my hand.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I mean, approximately one hour, 2 hours.

19 Q. You were on the bow.

20 A. Because no -- I'm standing on the bow because captain
21 already send the two guys lookout for the bow after going inside.

22 Q. Okay, so you relieved two guys for the transit --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- inbound?

25 A. Yeah, yeah.

1 Q. Okay. So you said approximately one and a half hours --

2 A. (Indiscernible).

3 Q. -- maybe 2 hours.

4 A. Yeah, yeah, sir.

5 Q. Okay. Now before that, did you rest well? Were you
6 well rested before you went to the bow? Were you rested? Were
7 you -- did you sleep well?

8 A. No, no, no sleep. No, no.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Because I'm up in the bow.

11 Q. Before you went to the bow, before the -- before you
12 went to the bow to relieve the other gentleman, the hours before
13 that, did you sleep well? Did you -- let me see, how can I --
14 let's see. Did you have a good night's sleep?

15 A. Yeah, yeah, I go back to sleep, yeah.

16 Q. You were feeling well? You were not tired?

17 A. Yeah, yeah.

18 Q. You were not --

19 A. Yeah, yeah, sorry.

20 Q. -- not under any --

21 A. Yeah, yeah.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I understand, yeah. I'm sorry, sir.

24 [REDACTED] All right. Thank you.

25 MR. JONES: Okay Morris?

1 MR. MORRIS: No questions (indiscernible).

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions at the moment.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions, thank you.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, no questions.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions.

6 MR. JONES: Well, that puts the pressure back on me.

7 This is Rob Jones again with the Safety Board.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Rob?

9 MR. JONES: I'm sorry. Dr. Strauch?

10 DR. STRAUCH: I have no questions.

11 MR. JONES: Okay. Thank you very much. Just give me a
12 minute here, Carlo (sic). I just want to think if I've covered
13 what I needed to cover with you.

14 BY MR. JONES:

15 Q. You had the midnight to 4:00 watch, 12:00 to 4:00.

16 A. Twelve to 4:00.

17 Q. That's your seagoing watch?

18 A. My duty, sir.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. So on the trip from Korea, that -- you had that watch
22 all the way around, midnight to 0400?

23 A. No, sir, because I was just the AB for the 12:00
24 midnight and --

25 Q. No, for -- at sea. Not -- let's -- not by the

1 collision, at sea, underway from Korea to Houston, you had the
2 midnight watch?

3 A. No, no, sir.

4 Q. You didn't? I thought that's what you said.

5 A. My duty officer (indiscernible) -- when underway, you
6 mean?

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. Yeah, my duty officer in the bridge and a duty AB.

9 Q. What times?

10 A. Underway Korea, in -- 12:00 to 4:00 in morning.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. How about the afternoon?

14 A. Afternoon. What do you mean, sir? Me?

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. Yeah. It work in the -- because the cargo hold -- we
17 work in the --

18 Q. Day work?

19 A. Yeah, day work, yeah, also.

20 MR. JONES: Okay. All right. That's all I have. Thank
21 you very much for your time.

22 MR. PACHES: Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

23 MR. JONES: All right. This concludes the interview.

24 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: M/V *CONTI PERIDOT* COLLISION WITH
 THE M/T *CARLA MAERSK* IN THE
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 MARCH 9, 2015
 Interview of Gallo Ronillo Paches

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-15-MM-017

PLACE: Houston, Texas

DATE: March 12, 2015

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

Trevy Thomas
Transcriber