

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FIRE AND GROUNDING OF THE

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RO-RO P/V *CARIBBEAN FANTASY* OFF

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Accident No.: DCA16FM052

SAN JUAN PUERTO RICO AT 0744

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ON AUGUST 17, 2016

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Interview of: NOE SOSA

Pier 15

Friday,

September 16, 2016

APPEARANCES:

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

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

MONOLO RODRIGUEZ, Esq.
Jimenez, Graffam & Lausell
(On behalf P&I for owners)

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Noe Sosa:

By LT [REDACTED]

4

I N T E R V I E W

(9:10 a.m.)

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2
3 LT [REDACTED]: All right. So this is the interview. Today is
4 16 September 2016. We're located on the pier next -- pier 15 next
5 to the *Caribbean Fantasy* ship. This is the interview for
6 Noe Sosa, who's the bosun. My name is Lieutenant [REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED]. If everyone around the phone can please state their
8 name?

9 MR. SOSA: Noe Sosa.

10 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Monolo Rodriguez, P&I for owners.

11 CDR COPELLI: Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED], U.S. Coast Guard.
12

INTERVIEW OF NOE SOSA

13
14 BY LT [REDACTED]:

15 Q. Okay. So, Bosun, I just have a few questions for life-saving
16 for the ship. What are your responsibilities with regards to all
17 life-saving equipment for maintenance?

18 A. For the maintenance, yes, I am in charge of together with the
19 safety officer. Whenever she require assistance to -- let's say
20 to greasing and operating or whatever, we need to inspect the
21 condition of the lifeboats and life raft, so I give assistance to
22 her. She is the one who keep the records of the maintenance of
23 the lifeboats and life raft.

24 Q. So it's only when she calls for assistance or are you on a
25 set schedule to inspect or check the lifeboats?

1 A. Actually what we did is we have a -- I mean, we have assigned
2 one guy every day for the greasing, whatever we need to do
3 maintenance of the davits, for example, rusty things on the ship
4 and painting to keeping -- so if we found some defective things
5 then we report to her whatever we need (indiscernible). Like
6 chock holes or wires, brake wires, things like that, so we report
7 to her. And when she has (indiscernible) regarding the things
8 that are -- that coming time to, for example, to greasing the old
9 wire, the old (indiscernible). So then she say, okay, we have to
10 do that.

11 Q. All right. And for your emergency duties, what is your
12 emergency duty for the ship?

13 A. Okay. One is the support to (indiscernible) report to the
14 bridge the list of my people.

15 Q. What list?

16 A. We are the -- the list, the preparation team.

17 Q. Okay. Continue.

18 A. Okay. And once they give us the order to prepare the boat,
19 we prepare the boat to bring to the embarkation deck, awaiting the
20 orders from the bridge. And once they give us the order to bring
21 it to the embarkation deck, we place the boat on the embarkation
22 deck. The order we receive from the bridge, from the captain or
23 whoever is in charge at the time of the drill or emergency.

24 Q. What types of items do you do to prepare a lifeboat for --

25 A. Actually items we don't need because they are all there. We

1 just need disconnect the boat, the power supply with the
2 batteries. We need to pull the plugs of the boat, release the
3 lashings, and that's it. To release the lashing of the boat, and
4 once they give us the order we bring it to the embarkation.

5 Q. Is there a checklist that you follow?

6 A. We have a checklist.

7 Q. And you use that in an actual emergency?

8 A. Yes, exactly. The checklist are all the time attached to the
9 boat. We never take it away. I mean --

10 Q. The checklist?

11 A. Yes, the bosun (indiscernible) that we took (indiscernible).

12 Q. Say that one more time.

13 A. The bosun tackers (ph.), the tackers of the (indiscernible).

14 Q. Tackers? I'm asking if there's a checklist that says
15 disconnect power supply, check?

16 A. No, no, no, we have no checklist.

17 Q. No checklist for that?

18 A. No. We never use a checklist.

19 Q. It's just all in your head?

20 A. Yes. We have all -- I mean, that's why we do the drill
21 weekly, so we keep the people training as what we need to do in a
22 real, real emergency. So before we do the drill -- I mean, when
23 we are in drill we explain the guys that I have in charge. Say
24 nine people are on my hand, so I explain to them you will do the
25 aft part of the boat, make sure that the plug is disconnected, the

1 (indiscernible) rope is in place, the lashing is properly just to
2 pull up the release, the emergency release. So another guy we
3 assign for to go inside to check the plugs, check the batteries,
4 all this stuff. Okay. That's why we have the drill. And we have
5 the pre-meeting, I mean, to explain them, to assign the people
6 where they have to go.

7 Q. The pre-meeting, so when you say assign people to what they
8 need to do, that's established at the time you release the
9 lashings, you remove the plug, or is it a designated person all
10 the time?

11 A. We -- that's (indiscernible) because we have the drill every
12 week, so they know actually where they go. So anytime in an
13 emergency they know where to go. Okay, guys -- let's say for
14 example let's prepare number 1 or number 2 boat. So everybody
15 they go up, up, up (indiscernible). They knows where to go. I
16 didn't have to say you go there, you go there, no. They know.

17 Q. Now so what if one of those -- one member from your lifeboat
18 preparation team does not show up, who fulfills their duties in
19 preparing the lifeboat?

20 A. Actually, actually we do it in couples, I mean, two guys
21 assigned in the same, in the same duty. So when we have the
22 drills we lowering mainly one side then. So they got two. For
23 example, we have two going up, two going (indiscernible) forward,
24 two inside. Then I stay down with the other two guys just in case
25 we need to assist the guys who are upstairs. If somebody doesn't

1 show up that's why we have a backup.

2 Q. So there's three lifeboats.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Do you have three different teams or is it one team and then
5 you split --

6 A. One team and then we split --

7 Q. -- it up?

8 A. Yeah, we split up.

9 Q. Okay. And so how many people do you split up per boat?

10 A. Let's say it will be three.

11 Q. Three people per boat?

12 A. Three people per boat, yes.

13 Q. And so they know all the items for each boat that need to
14 happen?

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. Okay. So in the actual -- do you normally keep the lifeboats
17 stowed with the plug removed?

18 A. Oh, always. Just in case water is going on boat when
19 raining, you know, so the waters don't (indiscernible) deck,
20 because we have the engines (indiscernible).

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So what we did is one guy assigned to --

23 Q. To put the plugs in?

24 A. -- to plugs, yes.

25 Q. And do they report back to you, yes, I did that?

1 A. Yes. Because I cannot remove the boat without to be sure
2 that everything is proper. That's why I'm underneath checking
3 what they did. So when the guy (indiscernible) say, okay, I'm
4 ready to be coming down. I'm ready, the forward, coming down.
5 Waiting only for the guys that are preparing the manual ropes in
6 the (indiscernible).

7 Q. On the day of the incident, the evacuation, do you recall if
8 there was any issues with the lifeboat preparation teams and
9 completing their assigned duties?

10 A. No, actually not.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. We was -- I mean, we wait for the captain to give us the
13 order for number -- what is the number -- what number do we got --
14 the one, the port side boat. And then when we ready I tell them I
15 stay with two guys there. The other two guys proceed -- three
16 guys proceed to the -- just waiting there to stand by to prepare
17 the other boats until the captain give the order, hey. They start
18 to embarking the passengers on the boat and (indiscernible) I be
19 at (indiscernible) at the same time, check again and check again.
20 So waiting for the orders of the captain to tell me, hey, let the
21 go the boats.

22 Q. Do you visually check everything after every -- after your
23 members have completed their tasks, do you check it or do you just
24 take their word we're good and then --

25 A. No, no, no, I check it. I check all things. I mean, when

1 the boat is on the embarkation deck.

2 Q. Is when you check it?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. So do you go inside every boat?

5 A. Every boat, yes, of course. Only number 3 boat is always
6 that keep the boat -- the plug in. Because actually this is a
7 rescue boat and this enclosed boat. It does not have like -- like
8 the other one, they have covers that -- removable covers. The
9 boat number 3 is --

10 Q. Did you check -- did you go inside lifeboats number 1 and 2?

11 A. Yes..

12 Q. And --

13 A. Before starting embarkation, yes, and before tell the captain
14 I'm ready too. I report to the captain, hey, I'm ready. We are
15 ready, we have the lifeboat on embarkation ready to be boarded.

16 Q. Okay. And you noticed the plugs were in?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. All right. So after the boats are ready to be launched, what
19 are your duties? Do you control the davit?

20 A. I control emergency -- the brake.

21 Q. The brake?

22 A. The brake.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I all the time on the brake.

25 Q. For all three lifeboats or just --

1 A. They don't lower the three boats at the same time. They
2 lower it one by one.

3 Q. One by one.

4 A. So they lower number -- port side first and then I run to the
5 other one. Because I'm in contact with the bridge, so they tell
6 me go to the next one and go to the next one.

7 Q. Okay. And did you notice any time issues with the releasing
8 of the hooks?

9 A. They had some issues downstairs. I didn't know why because
10 that was downstairs. I was upstairs.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So what I tried to not be damaged the boat -- tried to not
13 damage the boat. So I easing up on the brake.

14 Q. Ease the tension?

15 A. Yes, to release the tension. We don't have -- what is
16 (indiscernible) certain point that you cannot release anymore, you
17 need to hold, because if I release then come -- it detach the wire
18 from the, from the (indiscernible). So if we detach it from there
19 we are serious problem. So --

20 Q. When you lower the boat, are you lowering it from up top or
21 is the operator inside the boat?

22 A. We have the operator -- the operator is inside.

23 Q. The operator inside the boat is the --

24 A. Yes, um-hum.

25 Q. -- one that's actually lowering it?

1 A. Exactly. Because we have -- I don't know if you can see from
2 here. Do you see this moor in there -- the one (indiscernible)
3 look like that?

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. This is the one that they pull to release.

6 Q. And that's what they did in the emergency?

7 A. And I am the winch, checking the (indiscernible) don't be
8 stuck in -- you know, sometimes jumping up, so I look at that
9 (indiscernible).

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. There was no problem.

12 Q. Do you -- for drills do you -- have you been inside the
13 lifeboats to -- do you have any responsibilities inside the
14 lifeboat for a drill?

15 A. Just to check it to get ready to --

16 Q. Just to check it?

17 A. -- lower it.

18 Q. So you've never been inside a lifeboat releasing the hooks?

19 A. To release hooks. I was upstairs.

20 Q. Okay. How do you personally evacuate the ship?

21 A. By the --

22 Q. Through the slide?

23 A. -- slide.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I waiting for the captain, the last one, because I should go

1 to number 3, and I tell him I have to go to number 3, lifeboat
2 number 3. He told me no, you will stay, assign somebody else
3 because, because this is a -- I mean, he's the only one who has --
4 on the ship to run away -- to run -- for example, if we need
5 something in forward, we have to give one rope to the -- for the
6 (indiscernible). So he told me I couldn't go. He say, well, I
7 have to go to forward, give the rope and we stand by there.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And the same time, suddenly he told me, forget the rope and
10 drop the anchor because we are going close to the bank where we
11 crashed there. So -- and then after that I go, I go to him and he
12 told me, okay, time to go.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I was one of, let's say, 10 people to -- the last 10 people
15 who came down from the ship. After me was the captain with the
16 rest of the team.

17 Q. Okay. And then for lifeboat number 3, that was the last
18 lifeboat to be lowered. And I understand that there was issues
19 with the release hooks. So the operator, the lifeboat operator
20 asked you to raise back up, correct?

21 A. He didn't ask. He said -- I mean, he's reporting to the
22 captain that the people is getting nervous inside, the passenger
23 getting nervous. So we have run the emergency generator. And the
24 safety officer walked close by and I tell her, hey, the only
25 choice we have is to pick it up, because the boat can't be

1 released. So she say, pick it.

2 We just start to -- my intention was to bring (indiscernible)
3 up back to the stow position. But unfortunately the generator was
4 -- no more power is over -- it's not enough the power to pick up
5 the boat. So until the lifeboat was stopped, the electrician
6 tried to give me power to bring it, but he told me sorry, I cannot
7 do anything with it. I don't know. The contact or something
8 happened because he said the (indiscernible) is not for that type
9 of duty. It's only for give the essential light to the ship, I
10 mean what we need for emergency, not for (indiscernible) lifeboats
11 and things like because the motors are bigger and they suck plenty
12 power.

13 Q. Okay. All right. And so the raising of the lifeboat was to
14 -- the intention was to bring the boat back so to have the
15 passengers evacuate through the slide?

16 A. Exactly.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. To avoid what was happening, to bring the -- you know, it was
19 risky to do that. But unfortunately I think that -- I got to do
20 -- I was, I was -- I mean, I like to do it manually because I know
21 what the people is feeling inside.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. And to hear that the people are screaming, the people want --
24 they want to jump. The commander, the bosun was reported that.
25 And you hear that, you -- I mean, I try to do something but what

1 is trying to do nothing (indiscernible). And I tell him, hey,
2 tell them they are safe now, the boat is going nowhere. Because
3 the boat was banging, jumping (indiscernible) and, of course,
4 they're getting scared. And it's better to have it there, than
5 (indiscernible) somebody getting, how we say cuckoo and, you know.

6 Q. What type -- how did you remove the passengers from the
7 lifeboat?

8 A. It was coming one tugboat close --

9 Q. Tugboat?

10 A. -- close to the -- that boat is the Coast Guard, I think.

11 Q. Coast Guard?

12 A. Coast Guard boat is coming close to the, to the lifeboat and
13 then they bus from the boat to the Coast Guard boat. Because they
14 want to put one tugboat, but I think the Coast Guard vessel isn't
15 allow to do that, because it's (indiscernible).

16 Q. Did you see a tugboat?

17 A. There was approaching -- approaching one, but after that one
18 of the Coast Guard boat was coming closer and he go into the -- in
19 the direction of the lifeboat, so I think --

20 Q. Did you see a tugboat within contact --

21 A. No, no, no.

22 Q. -- with the lifeboat?

23 A. Just he was close.

24 Q. Close?

25 A. Close by. I was thinking that he is coming to help to do the

1 abandon with this boat, but after that we see the coming -- the
2 Coast Guard boat and they start to do their transfer from the
3 lifeboat to the Coast Guard ship.

4 Q. Okay. And do you have any duties or responsibilities
5 regarding the life rafts or the evacuation slide?

6 A. Actually --

7 Q. No?

8 A. We have assigning people to do that. I mean, these guys in
9 this case, there is an operator that was releasing the life raft.
10 In the life -- in the EMS (indiscernible) bring stuff up that
11 wasn't in that (indiscernible). Because it was here and he was
12 doing the EMS. I cannot do for myself in two -- two pieces, and
13 one piece here, one piece there.

14 Q. Okay. Okay. I think that's answered all the questions I
15 have for you. Do you have any questions for me?

16 A. No, actually no, I have no questions. I mean, what can I say
17 about nothing? What I can say is the only thing that we follow
18 what we have been training for. We tried to do our best in these
19 cases. I'm working on since 1990 and it's my first time that I
20 abandon one ship. Thanks God that everything was smooth, no
21 injuries we have. And you can have anywhere and anyhow dead
22 people we don't have, that's thanks God and we are here.

23 Q. Absolutely.

24 A. Yep. That is the only thing I have to say.

25 LT [REDACTED]: Okay. Well, thank you, Noe.

1 MR. SOSA: Okay.

2 LT [REDACTED]: I'm going to stop -- conclude the interview. It
3 is now 11:43.

4 (Whereupon, at 11:43 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE AND GROUNDING OF THE
 RO-RO P/V *CARIBBEAN FANTASY* OFF
 SAN JUAN PUERTO RICO AT 0744
 ON AUGUST 17, 2016
 Interview of Noe Sosa

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA16FM052

PLACE: Pier 15

DATE: September 16, 2016

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.

Elizabeth M. Cochran
Transcriber