

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of: \*

M/V COSCO BUSAN/BRIDGE ALLISION \*

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA \* Docket No.: DCA-08-MM-004

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: CDR PAT DeQUATTRO

Wednesday,  
 January 30, 2008

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to  
 notice, at 8:50 a.m.

BEFORE: CRYSTAL THOMAS  
 National Transportation Safety Board

## APPEARANCES:

CRYSTAL THOMAS

National Transportation Safety Board

PAUL STANSEL

Hazardous Materials Accident Investigator

National Transportation Safety Board

LT ROBIN ELLERBE

Coast Guard Legal

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:50 a.m.)

MS. THOMAS: It's January 30th, 8:50 a.m. This is Crystal Thomas with the National Transportation Board. Today we're going to be interviewing Commander Pat DeQuattro. We'll go around the room and say who is here today.

MR. STANSEL: Paul Stansel (ph.) with the NTSB.

CDR DeQUATTRO: Pat DeQuattro, Coast Guard Chief of Response here at Sector.

LT ELLERBE: Robin Ellerbe from Coast Guard Legal.

MS. THOMAS: Okay. Are you aware that you're going to be recorded today?

CDR DeQUATTRO: Yes, I am.

MS. THOMAS: And do you have a problem with that?

CDR DeQUATTRO: I do not.

## INTERVIEW OF CDR PAT DeQUATTRO

BY MS. THOMAS:

Q. Okay. Can we just go over a little bit your role and responsibilities, your title, specifically?

A. Sure. I'm Chief of Response -- Chief of the Response Department here at Sector San Francisco, and so my responsibilities include responding to all Coast Guard missions within Sector San Francisco's area of responsibility, including the Environmental Response, Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement, Homeland Security of Response, enforcement for Special Marine

1 Events and Security Operations and such.

2 Q. Okay. And what is your background and experience?

3 A. Twenty years in the Coast Guard. I've been on three  
4 ships, Coast Guard cutters. I've also been assigned to a Coast  
5 Guard tactical law enforcement team and a couple of staff  
6 tours. And I've also been trained as a civil engineer.

7 Q. Okay. And what kind of experience do you have with  
8 oil spill response?

9 A. My year and a half at Sector here as Chief of  
10 Response has been the majority of my specific environmental  
11 response.

12 Q. Is this -- is this the first large oil spill you've  
13 dealt with?

14 A. Yes, it is.

15 Q. Okay. On the day of the accident, when did you  
16 receive initial notification?

17 A. I received initial notification from Captain Uberti  
18 at approximately nine o'clock as we were walking to -- on --  
19 Island, we're walking to an inspection for one of our units.  
20 He had just received word.

21 Q. And what did he tell you?

22 A. He had asked if I heard yet, and then he said we're  
23 going to have a conference call at 9:30 in which we would  
24 verify response actions and initial notifications were being  
25 made. And we said -- so we cut our inspection visit short and

1 came back here to the command center.

2 Q. Who was all involved in the conference call?

3 A. The conference call was held up in the command  
4 center. Captain Uberti, Captain Swatlan, myself, Steven Boher  
5 (ph.), Jessica Snyder, Lieutenant JG Jessica Snyder, and Chief  
6 Mosley from IMD, and Lieutenant Commander Eric Arex Avanni who  
7 was on leave called into that also I believe.

8 Q. Did you say Avanni?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And what was discussed during the conference  
11 call?

12 A. We discussed the initial reports coming from the  
13 motor vessel, the pilots, what the command center -- all the  
14 information the command center had received thus far. And we  
15 also discussed the initial actions from the Sector.

16 Q. And what were the initial actions that were  
17 instructed to be taken place?

18 A. I mean, when the allision was reported, so  
19 notifications were made to Sector departments, Cal. Trans and  
20 also Steven Boher rattled off the list of what he had done thus  
21 far for actions. Captain Uberti directed that we get a  
22 helicopter up as soon as possible and a small boat on scene to  
23 verify the report and determine what exactly we're dealing  
24 with. It was very obvious here on this island that fog was  
25 very thick that morning. So we're dealing in an environment

1 with reduced visibility. So from my prospective, the response  
2 prospective, it's very important to get Coast Guard  
3 investigators on scene to determine exactly what we're dealing  
4 with because it was -- it was not visible.

5 Q. So what was -- what were your orders? What was your  
6 role? What were you supposed to do to coordinate this  
7 response?

8 A. Ensure that we're activating Coast Guard elements to  
9 respond as necessary, and that's respond in a search and rescue  
10 capacity, respond in an environmental response capacity and  
11 respond to determine what exactly we're dealing with. So it's  
12 kind of turning the switch on.

13 Q. Okay. What is -- how is your position related to the  
14 Incident Management Division? How -- does that fall within  
15 your department?

16 A. It does.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yes, I have two divisions within my department. One  
19 is Enforcement, and that's the enforcement of Coast Guard  
20 missions. And the second is Incident Management Division,  
21 which, as you know, is environmental response.

22 Q. Okay. So during the response of the accident, where  
23 were you located?

24 A. For majority of time, in the command center.

25 Q. Okay. And who was in the command center with you?

1           A.    Lieutenant JG Steven Boher was the Command Duty  
2   Officer.   Lieutenant Junior Gray John Shooddy came in to assist  
3   Lieutenant Boher.   Captain Uberti was in and out of the command  
4   center.   Captain Swatlan was in initially and then out.   He had  
5   some other meetings to attend to.   And the four plus watch  
6   standers, including Lieutenant JG Anya Hunter, public affairs  
7   officers.   It's very much an active -- it's kind of the nerve  
8   center for the sectors, so a lot of folks coming and going.

9           Q.    Okay.   Who did you send to respond to the accident?

10          A.    We tasked station San Francisco to provide a small  
11   boat, and we sent two pollution investigators out with the  
12   small boat to begin to develop our awareness of what it was we  
13   were responding to, to attempt to verify what it was.

14          Q.    So they were sent out to verify -- to just take all  
15   the pollutions?

16          A.    Assess, verify and determine -- develop a  
17   recommendation how to best proceed.

18          Q.    And who were the two PIs that you sent out?

19          A.    It was MST2 Anderson and MST3 Eaton.

20          Q.    What was their experience level as pollution  
21   investigators?

22          A.    Well, they're qualified here in -- I don't have the  
23   records in front of me but moderately experienced for Anderson  
24   and Eaton was the newer of the two.

25          Q.    Okay.   When they arrived at the ship, did they report



1 back to you or who were they reporting back to?

2 A. No, they were reporting back to Lieutenant Jessica  
3 Snyder and Chief Mosley.

4 Q. And how were they reporting, by cell phone or by  
5 radio?

6 A. By cell phone. I would say the direction as to who  
7 specifically to respond, Chief Mosley manages with Snyder's  
8 assistance, but manages the rotation of pollution  
9 investigators. So I did not say, send so and so and so and so.  
10 I said, let's verify we're sending two pollution investigators  
11 out, that duty rotates amongst -- we call it the bullpen of  
12 pollution investigators. So --

13 Q. Okay. When Mosley and/or Snyder receive reports back  
14 from the pollution investigators, did they notify you of what  
15 they heard?

16 A. They would call it in to Steven Boher or run up a  
17 message to Lieutenant Boher.

18 Q. So Mosley or Snyder would report to Boher?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And then what would --

21 A. To Boher or one of his watch standers there.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So I was not answering phones necessarily. I was  
24 trying to stay one level separated so we could develop the  
25 picture as to what we were responding to.

1           Q.    Okay.  And when Boher or somebody in the command  
2 center would get that information, was it their -- who would  
3 they -- what was their role?  Who would they pass it on to?

4           A.    They would brief myself, Captain Swatland, while he  
5 was still here and also Captain Uberti.

6           Q.    What observations were reported to you?  What of the  
7 pollution investigator's observations that they called back  
8 were reported to you and when?

9           A.    Well, they reported back that they were at the bridge  
10 abutment and there was damage, we were -- visibility was very  
11 poor, there was a trail of oily product from the abutment  
12 towards anchorage seven, and they followed that trail with a  
13 41-foot small boat to the Cosco Busan, which was in Anchorage  
14 Seven at that point.  When they got there, the spill from the  
15 gash was down to a trickle, the vessel was listing, as we later  
16 found out, it had shifted fuel.  So it was not actively  
17 leaking.  And then they requested and received permission to go  
18 on board and begin to interact with the crew and begin to  
19 investigate the situation.

20          Q.    Do you know about what time they boarded the ship?

21          A.    I can look at the chronology here and tell you, yes.  
22 I don't know off the top of my head, or I don't remember I  
23 should say.  At 9:47 the PI team, the pollution investigation  
24 team, was given permission to board the Cosco Busan.

25          Q.    Okay.  Upon boarding the ship, what were their

1 initial -- are you aware of their initial actions? What they  
2 did? Who they talked with?

3 A. Yes, it was reported that they talk to the chief  
4 engineer, experienced great communications difficulties given  
5 the difference in languages. The crew was Chinese. And  
6 attempted to determine the quantity of fuel, the type of fuel,  
7 the whole list of investigative questions to assess the  
8 situation.

9 Q. What names would they use to determine the type and  
10 quantity of fuel? Would they rely on the chief engineer to  
11 tell them that?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. Were they able to determine the type and  
14 quantity of fuel?

15 A. They were able to determine the type of fuel, yes,  
16 and quantity took some time.

17 Q. What were the difficulties with obtaining the  
18 quantity?

19 A. Several. One, language. Second, the extent of the  
20 damage and that the sounding tubes were damaged and the  
21 traditional easiest method, most efficient method of  
22 determining, using the sounding tubes was not applicable in  
23 this case.

24 Q. When the pollution investigators were told that the  
25 sounding tubes were bad, did they report that information back?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. To Mosley?

3 A. Yes, at 9:45.

4 Q. Oh, so before they boarded?

5 A. Yes, they could see through the gash in the tanks  
6 that there was damage to the sounding tubes.

7 Q. So they could see that from the outside?

8 A. (No audible response.)

9 Q. Okay. And then the chief engineer confirmed that for  
10 them?

11 A. (No audible response.)

12 Q. Okay. Once they -- once that information was  
13 reported back to Mosley and then up the chain of command to the  
14 command center and then got back to you, what were your -- what  
15 was your interpretation of the problem?

16 A. The problem was we had a 100-foot gash in a 900-foot  
17 ship and reduced visibility, and we needed to determine and  
18 verify how much product was out there, as well as determine  
19 from Cal. Trans whether the bridge was going to fall down and  
20 determine if anyone was injured in the process. So that was,  
21 yes, one of the issues we needed to get to the bottom of.

22 Q. Okay. Is -- if the sounding tubes were bent, does  
23 that indicate that there was a breach in the fuel tank? Is  
24 that an automatic indicator, or is there other reasons that the  
25 sounding tubes could have been bent?

1           A.    I wouldn't -- I wouldn't know.  If the tank wasn't  
2   punctured, I think it'd be impossible to determine if the  
3   sounding tubes were installed incorrectly.  If they were  
4   somehow damaged and never corrected, that would be kind of  
5   inside the tank, so you wouldn't know that.

6           Q.    Okay.

7           A.    Does that answer your question?

8           Q.    I'm just trying to figure out if -- if there was a  
9   report that the sounding tube was bent, is that an automatic  
10   sounding tubes are bent, we must have had a breach in the fuel  
11   tank or sounding tubes are bent, we can see inside the fuel  
12   tanks.  Is that a good indication that fuel has been spilled or  
13   a good indication that there could be a good quantity of fuel  
14   spilled or just you wouldn't know because --

15          A.    I guess you wouldn't know because if the tanks empty  
16   and you know the sounding tubes are bent, you still don't know  
17   if any fuel has leaked.

18          Q.    Was Captain Uberti made aware that the sounding tubes  
19   were bent?

20          A.    Yes, he was.  I do not know at what time.

21          Q.    As far as the report, I believe it was around 9:35,  
22   the pollution investigators reported, like you said, 100 foot  
23   by, I think they said 12-foot gash.  Did you receive that  
24   information?

25          A.    Yes.

1 Q. Did you make any assessment of that information? Did  
2 it appear that it was a larger spill or no, based on the size?

3 A. No, the -- that tells me the initial report that the  
4 vessel had brushed against the fendering system gives a new  
5 definition to the word "brushed." But I -- no, we're going to  
6 verify quantity of any spill. We're going to verify that  
7 product is observable to our folks. Since this incident, we've  
8 had two other bridge allisions and one ferry run aground. In  
9 each case, our process is to launch a small boat with pollution  
10 investigators or launch a helicopter because we're going to  
11 verify. And that is the standard process we're following and  
12 that's what I was tracking. We need to get our folks there to  
13 determine what it is.

14 Q. Okay. And as far as the report back of 146 gallons,  
15 was that, again, reported to Mosley from -- or Snyder?

16 A. Yes, from the pollution investigators on scene to,  
17 yes, Mosley, Snyder, to the command center.

18 Q. And then to -- to you?

19 A. Both. To myself, Captain Uberti and then it was also  
20 reported up our chain of command to Coast Guard headquarters.

21 Q. Okay. So at that point you had received information  
22 that they had followed a trail of oil, that there was a 100-  
23 foot gash in this vessel, the sounding tubes were bent and they  
24 reported 146 gallons. How much confidence was there in that  
25 number based on the observations that were reported from the

1 PI?

2 A. Confidence on whose behalf?

3 Q. Confidence on that number. Was the Coast Guard  
4 confident in the 146-gallon figure?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Why not?

7 A. Because that wasn't reported by a Coast Guard  
8 official. We're going to try -- we're going to digest the  
9 initial report. We're going to trust and verify as we do in  
10 every case.

11 Q. Who would be the Coast Guard official to report the  
12 figure? Who are you looking to report it to be confident in  
13 the number? Who could you have sent out to?

14 A. In this case we sent marine investigators out to the  
15 case, and then we all sent a state marine technician to assist  
16 in the verification and quantification.

17 Q. Okay. And I want to talk about that. I just want to  
18 jump back real quick and then I want to get into all that. The  
19 146 gallon -- 146 gallons, how did the pollution investigator  
20 say that he got that number?

21 A. The chief engineer shifted fuel to the non-damaged  
22 tanks and deducted the quantity that was shifted versus what he  
23 initially had in the damaged tanks and calculated he was  
24 missing 146 gallons.

25 Q. Okay. And the pollution investigator explained this

1 to his -- to whomever he reported it to?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. Within the command center, after you received  
4 this information, was there any talk about the figure and did  
5 it seem small, did it seem large?

6 A. Given the extent of the damage to the ship and to the  
7 fendering system and the gash, it certainly seemed awful small.

8 Q. Okay. So then from there -- so you said it seemed  
9 small. So is this at the point where you decided to send out a  
10 marine inspector and investigating officers?

11 A. Actually, the marine inspector and the investigating  
12 officer, so two different elements there.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Are going to respond to any marine casualty.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So they actually receive notification when Mr. Boher  
17 was making those notifications before the conference call. And  
18 so when there's a marine casualty, a ship running a ground, a  
19 ship in a barge bumping into a bridge, they're going to conduct  
20 a marine casualty investigation. So they're activation was not  
21 contingent upon an initial report of 140 gallons, it was upon a  
22 report that an allision had occurred.

23 Q. What division or department are the investigating in  
24 or the marine safety inspector in?

25 A. The investigating officers are in prevention, the



1 prevention department, as are the marine inspectors.

2 Q. So whose job would that be to send them out? Who  
3 would activate them?

4 A. Well, it was the command center making notifications.  
5 And similar to our pollution investigators, they'll have folks  
6 on call to respond.

7 Q. Who chose -- who was their supervisor? Who chose to  
8 send these particular people to the scene?

9 A. Commander Drew Wood is the prevention department  
10 head. You'd have to speak to him as far as who --- folks are  
11 standing duty, so who made that specific selection, I do not  
12 know.

13 Q. Okay. Do you know how many people he activated?

14 A. I believe he sent two out there but --

15 Q. Two investigating officers?

16 A. Yeah, a marine investigator and an investigating  
17 officer.

18 Q. I know this isn't your area, but are you aware of  
19 what their role would be?

20 A. Well, the IO is to begin the marine casualty  
21 investigation and the marine inspector is going to determine  
22 the extent of the damage to the vessel and relay those  
23 assessments back to the sector commander.

24 Q. To the sector commander?

25 A. Yes, through the command center.

1           Q.    Okay.  Would they have any dealings with the chief  
2 engineer or be involved in the assessment of how much oil was  
3 released or anything like that?

4           A.    Yes, they will certainly have interactions with the  
5 chief engineer.  They can have -- be involved in the  
6 quantification estimate.

7           Q.    Are they required to be involved in the -- or they  
8 just can be involved?  I'm just trying to understand how they  
9 work.  I'm not that familiar with them, so sorry.

10          A.    Yes, they can be involved.  Are they required to be  
11 involved?  Well, it depends on the situation.  If there's a --  
12 if they're the only person available to do it, then they  
13 certainly would be cast to.  In this case we had the OSPR  
14 technician who was determined to be the most experienced in  
15 this case.  Once we determined -- given the difficulties our  
16 pollution investigators were encountering in determining the  
17 quantity that the OSPR rep was the most capable and he was  
18 already here in sector, so he could best get us an accurate and  
19 timely estimate.

20          Q.    Okay.  Now, the OSPR person, I believe that was Roy  
21 Mathers, right?

22          A.    Yes.

23          Q.    Who decided -- who decided to send him out?

24          A.    That was -- we had set up a unified command, so  
25 Lieutenant Rob Roberts was here at sector.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And between Rob, Chief Mosley and Jessica Snyder.

3 And you know who Lieutenant Rob Roberts is, right, he's with  
4 the State?

5 Q. Yes, I spoke with him last time. I met him. So it  
6 was -- they decided to send out the OSPR person because they  
7 felt he was most qualified?

8 A. Yes, and he was here.

9 Q. Oh, and he was here. Yes, that's very convenient.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And then I heard that they sent a Coast Guard person  
12 with them?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Do you know who that was?

15 A. I do not.

16 Q. What role would that Coast Guard person had served?

17 A. Two assist in the ongoing quantification effort and  
18 provide communications and transportation, anything else to  
19 facilitate an expeditious quantification effort.

20 Q. Would that be a pollution investigator or --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Oh, it would be a pollution -- okay. Who could I ask  
23 to find out who that person was?

24 A. Jessica Snyder --

25 Q. Okay.

1           A.    -- should have that.  I don't have the IMD notes in  
2 front of me.

3           Q.    Okay.  Yeah, that's fine.  I can ask her.  Okay.  Do  
4 you know what time, around what time, it doesn't have to be  
5 exact, OSPR was sent out?

6           A.    What time?

7           Q.    OSPR was sent to the vessel to do their assessment?  
8 Was the pollution investigation team still on board at that  
9 time?

10          A.    Yes.

11          Q.    Okay.  And did the two-person pollution investigation  
12 team who was on board, did they have any interaction with OSPR  
13 or were they told to come back or what was their role?

14          A.    They overlapped and I'm not -- I'm not aware they  
15 were directed to come back.

16          Q.    Okay.  So you're not aware of their interaction with  
17 OSPR?

18          A.    I am not -- I was not -- I was on the vessel and at  
19 this point I was in the command center.

20          Q.    Okay.  Did you go out on the water at all?

21          A.    I did, yes.

22          Q.    Who did you go out with?

23          A.    I went out with Captain Swatland, Lieutenant  
24 Commander Shawn Ryan and Commander Kevin Bruin.

25          Q.    Do you know around what time?

1           A.    Around one, one o'clock.

2           Q.    And what were the conditions at that time as far as  
3 the weather, fog?

4           A.    It was -- excuse me, the fog continued to be patchy,  
5 and so we had had a couple of instances where we'd get some  
6 sunshine over here, but we were awaiting for a Coast Guard  
7 helicopter to pick up Captain Uberti. Unfortunately, that did  
8 not come. But it was a situation where beginning at the 9:30  
9 conference call, we were waiting. I'm going to say at that  
10 point we got the report that the helicopter couldn't launch,  
11 but by 10:30 we were anticipating the helicopter landing right  
12 out here really at any minute to pick up Captain Uberti and do  
13 an assessment. And so then we got fogged in again and all that  
14 stuff. So it was about one o'clock. And I can get the exact  
15 time in the log here. We left Captain Uberti back here because  
16 he was going to get picked up in a helicopter. We went out on  
17 a Coast Guard small boat to assess the situation on the water.  
18 And so it was still foggy at that point. There was just  
19 ribbons of white pollution bubbles or turbulence in the air --  
20 excuse me, in the water. But the most striking indication that  
21 there had been a spill was a smell of oil in the area of not  
22 only the abutment and the damaging fender system in that -- but  
23 also as we followed the track between the abutment and at that  
24 point Anchorage Nine because the vessel had shifted down.

25          Q.    So there was a smell of fuel from the bridge down to

1 Anchorage Nine?

2 A. A smell of fuel, yes.

3 Q. Okay. And you just mentioned bubbling?

4 A. Yes, just ribbons in the water, so there's -- with  
5 turbulence there's always some indication what your currents or  
6 doing, things like that.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. But there were ribbons of bubbles, just narrow, thin  
9 ribbons but that was just a little unusual.

10 Q. Okay. Was your path just to go to the bridge and  
11 then down to Anchorage Nine, or did you go elsewhere to look  
12 for fuel?

13 A. That is it, the bridge abutment and Anchorage Nine.

14 Q. Okay. About how long were you on the water?

15 A. About an hour.

16 Q. About an hour?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. At this time while you were on the water, were  
19 there any other Coast Guard boats out on the water doing  
20 assessments?

21 A. We had the Coast Guard cutter turn that was on scene  
22 with the Cosco Busan enforcing a safety zone, so keeping other  
23 vessels away from it. And we had, through the course of the  
24 day, various Coast Guard boats going back and forth running  
25 folks back and forth from the scene and also assisting with the

1 safety zone and security zone around the abutment.

2 Q. Were there any Coast Guard boats sent out strictly to  
3 assess the situation, Angel Island, Alcatraz, any of the  
4 Pierre's, anything like that?

5 A. No, the initial response was to get our -- so the 41  
6 footer that took the pollution investigators out was doing that  
7 but that was at the abutment to the vessel in Anchorage Seven.  
8 At that point our boats were -- were not searching for oil in  
9 the fog. They were -- they were running back and forth the  
10 different investigators that were trying to support the  
11 response.

12 Q. Okay. So their role was more transportation and then  
13 also enforcement?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. So not assessment?

16 A. Exactly.

17 Q. Besides the pollution investigator boat?

18 A. Yes. Our standard technique is to do that assessment  
19 with a helicopter.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. From a small boat on the water, it is very  
22 difficult --

23 Q. Sure.

24 A. -- to see what's in the fog, what's directly in front  
25 of you, never mind to determine the scope of anything in water.

1 You just don't have a height of eye.

2 Q. When you came back in about an hour later, so maybe  
3 around two o'clock or so --

4 A. Yes, 2:00, 2:30.

5 Q. -- was it still foggy?

6 A. It was -- at that point it was -- it was foggy on the  
7 west side, so near Anchorage Nine, but it was lifting. We got  
8 back over here and it was -- it was clear. So -- excuse me --  
9 we returned here and Captain Uberti was still here. And my  
10 first question is, I thought you were up in the helicopter.  
11 And he was quite irritated, but the helicopter still could not  
12 launch. They were experiencing at this point an engineering  
13 casualty that prevented it from launching now that the  
14 visibility was lifting and so Captain Uberti got on the small  
15 boat and went out to do a similar assessment.

16 Q. Okay. So the helicopter not being able to land was  
17 due to mechanical difficulties?

18 A. Well, initially due to visibility.

19 Q. Okay. And then --

20 A. And then once the fog was lifting and the helicopter  
21 was launching from SFO, San Francisco International, which is  
22 where the air station is. So once the visibility had increased  
23 so that you can safely conduct a mission, they experienced an  
24 engineering casualty, which further delayed the aircraft from  
25 being launched.



1           Q.    Okay.  Were there any other helicopters that could've  
2   been attained or was that the only one?

3           A.    That's the only Coast Guard helicopter.

4           Q.    Okay.  That's the only one.  Okay.  So at that point  
5   what -- did he go out on the water then?

6           A.    Yes.

7           Q.    On the same boat you came back on?

8           A.    Yes.

9           Q.    Who did he go out with?

10          A.    I believe -- well, he went out by himself aside from  
11   the crew of the small boat.

12          Q.    What -- did you confer with him when you returned  
13   about your observations out there, and what did you tell him?

14          A.    Very briefly.

15          Q.    And what did you tell him?

16          A.    Confirmed that, yes, the fendering system was pretty  
17   badly damaged.  The ship was in Anchorage Nine damaged but not  
18   leaking.  The gash activated shifted fuel was five to eight  
19   feet above the water line, which was a good thing so that water  
20   was not intruding in nor was pollution coming out.

21          Q.    Okay.  And do you know about how long he was out  
22   there on the water?

23          A.    I would say an hour, hour and a half.

24          Q.    And was his route from the bridge to Anchorage Nine  
25   as well?

1           A.    I do not know.

2           Q.    Okay.  But he didn't tell you that he was going out  
3 to do any sort of assessment, he was just --

4           A.    So -- my understanding was that he was going to do  
5 the exact same thing.  He's going to assess the damage to the  
6 vessel, and I believe look at the bridge abutment and fendering  
7 system but I'm not sure.

8           Q.    Were there any helicopters that were able to get  
9 off -- not Coast Guard helicopters but any helicopters that you  
10 saw flying overhead?

11          A.    I did not see them overhead.  I have since seen the  
12 logs from the two ESTRS (ph.) that talked about their response  
13 helicopters launching mid afternoon to begin help -- helping to  
14 direct on-water skimming operations.

15                   UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER:  ESTRS, sir?

16                   CDR DeQUATTRO:  Yes, ESTRS, response organizations.

17                   BY MS. THOMAS:

18          Q.    MSRC and NRC?

19          A.    NRC, yes.

20          Q.    Yeah, okay.  Okay.  So is it your -- is it your job  
21 when these observations come back to do any sort of assessment  
22 on them?  Or whose job would that be to do assessment of  
23 information that comes back?

24          A.    Assessment of information?

25          Q.    In terms of determining the quantity of the fuel

1 spill. Is there a certain person whose job that would be in  
2 the command center or in the area when the observations came  
3 back that, okay, based on this -- based on this, I don't know,  
4 this doesn't sound right? Is there anybody whose job that is  
5 or -- specifically?

6 A. No. My job in response and for all of Coast Guard  
7 missions is to assess the situation, ensure we're applying the  
8 appropriate Coast Guard resources to safely perform the mission  
9 and to effectively perform the mission, again, whichever  
10 mission that may be. And recognize if we need to call  
11 additional resources or use the right tool for the right -- the  
12 right job.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And do that in safe manner.

15 Q. Okay. When did you hear that the quantity of fuel  
16 spilled had gone up to 58,000 gallons?

17 A. At about five o'clock at the first unified command  
18 meeting, which happened in this room.

19 Q. So when that quantity came in, how did actions change  
20 or did they change?

21 A. They did not. Like I said, it was about five o'clock  
22 so we were -- the sun had already gone down so we were ceasing  
23 operations for the day. And so the rough plan for the next day  
24 was to launch helicopters as soon as we could, to determine the  
25 extent of the pollution work was and then efficiently employ

1 both our on-water skimming vessels and collection recovery  
2 techniques.

3 Q. Does the Coast Guard do any sort of recovery  
4 operations?

5 A. No, not normally.

6 Q. Okay. Can they?

7 A. Yes, the cutter Aspen, which is here, which was in  
8 Los Angeles at the time, has a VOSS system for collecting oil,  
9 a Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System, and the Pacific Strike  
10 Team has some skimming capabilities.

11 Q. What was the VOSS again?

12 A. Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System.

13 Q. But that wasn't used?

14 A. It was not. The ship was down in Los Angeles or  
15 southern California. It was not an option to use. Although we  
16 did consider tasking it to come up the next day, so on Thursday  
17 the first day at the incident command post.

18 Q. But it wasn't brought up?

19 A. It was not brought up. It was determined through a  
20 tactics meeting at the unified to command to be not the right  
21 tool. We already had a whole bunch of skimming vessels from  
22 NRC and MSRC on scene and there was -- it was not -- it was  
23 determined to be not the right tool for this case.

24 Q. Okay. And what about -- what equipment did you say  
25 the Pacific Strike Team had?

1           A.    Yes.  They have some small skimming boats or punts, I  
2    think they call them, which are shallow draft, and some  
3    skimmers.  But nothing of the size or capability as to what the  
4    ESTRS were already providing.

5           Q.    So they would be for more smaller, local --

6           A.    Shallow water, exactly, those type things.  We ended  
7    up using them later on, day three, is what I would guess.  But  
8    we did use them.  But at this stage of the response when we are  
9    trying to focus on the product that had just escaped, we were  
10   looking to get it in its concentrated form and just put these  
11   skimming vessels in booms to collect it in the most efficient  
12   manner as possible before it had a chance to get around the  
13   bay.

14          Q.    Where were -- where were the -- this equipment, the  
15   Pacific Strike Team's equipment located?

16          A.    In Novato, California, so Marion County.  It's up the  
17   coast.

18          Q.    Okay.  Do you know about how many of those boats they  
19   have?

20          A.    I do not have that offhand.

21          Q.    Did you have any interaction with OSPR, specifically  
22   Roy Mathers, the one who was doing the calculation?

23          A.    Not with Roy, no, not until the unified command  
24   meeting in this room that night.

25          Q.    Do you know if he had relayed the information back by

1 cell phone to sector command or anybody?

2 A. Through sector command?

3 Q. Uh-huh.

4 A. I'm not aware of that.

5 MS. THOMAS: Okay.

6 Paul, did you have any questions?

7 MR. STANSEL: Yeah, just a few.

8 BY MR. STANSEL:

9 Q. Paul Stansel with NTSB. Commander DeQuattro, are you  
10 aware of or did you have any indication of any false reporting  
11 of the amount of the spill of the 146 gallons?

12 A. No, I'm not aware of false reporting. I believe we  
13 can, at this point, say it was inaccurate report. But in  
14 the -- from my line of work it's -- often times the initial  
15 report is inaccurate. We had a surfer in distress yesterday,  
16 so we launched a Coast Guard helicopter and a Coast Guard small  
17 boat and it was kelp in the water.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It's the nature of our business.

20 Q. But you didn't -- or you're not aware of any -- any  
21 intentional false reporting of that?

22 A. I'm not aware of any intentional false report.

23 Q. Okay. The focus of the pollution investigators  
24 looking at the amount of the spill and they determined that 140  
25 gallons, were they concerned about the total potential amount

1 of the spill, was there any discussion about how large were  
2 these tanks, what could be the potential amount that was  
3 spilled that day?

4 A. I think it's safe to say we're all concerned about a  
5 hundred-foot gash in the side of the ship. In such a large  
6 ship, the potential was for not only additional damage that was  
7 not visible but for the max quantity of those tanks, I mean, it  
8 could've been much worse.

9 Q. Was there a determination as to what that figure was?

10 A. No, not early on. Again, it is difficult, with  
11 language barriers and all, to determine what the max potential  
12 of those tanks -- because you have the size of the tank and  
13 then what was the quantity, and we did not have that  
14 information flowing into the command center.

15 Q. Was somebody trying to find that out?

16 A. Yes, but I would say from my prospective, we did not  
17 do that -- I did not -- we did not get that information quickly  
18 enough. We did not share that information quickly enough.

19 Q. Okay. This smaller amount that was reported, did  
20 that have any affect whatsoever on the level of the initial  
21 response as far as mobilizing units to the scene?

22 A. No, it did not.

23 Q. It did not. As far as interaction with the locals,  
24 the sheriff's department, the local fire department, did --

25 A. SFPD, the police department?

1 Q. Right. Did you have any contact with them?

2 A. I did. The one call I had that morning was at  
3 approximately ten o'clock and it was with Sergeant Danny Lopez  
4 from the San Francisco Police Department. And Danny had called  
5 the command center and offered assistance of his marine unit.  
6 Danny is the supervisor of the San Francisco Police Department  
7 Marine Unit. And he offered assistance and I said, yes, we're  
8 sending boats out to establish and enforce a safety zone around  
9 the vessel and a security zone around the bridge abutment, and  
10 if he had a vessel he could spare, we would surely appreciate  
11 that.

12 Q. And did he -- did he sent one out?

13 A. Yes, he did.

14 Q. What did he do? What did his unit do?

15 A. They -- well, what I understand is they went out on  
16 scene. They determined -- we were very worried about the  
17 press. This was already on the local news via helicopters and  
18 camera crews and all, so we were really worried about press  
19 folks getting out there before or during our investigation, so  
20 we wanted to keep folks away and just have a presence to  
21 enforce the established zones. So they went out. I do not  
22 know how long they were out there, but they determined that  
23 there was not a lot of boating public. This is kind of out of  
24 the beaten path. There's some ferries that come through there  
25 but most of the ferries are north and west here by Alcatraz and



1 run the Vallejo and also it's -- it was fortunate that we did  
2 not get the on-water attention that we were concerned about.

3 Q. How many units did they deploy?

4 A. I believe it was just one.

5 Q. Okay. And did they have any role to play in helping  
6 to quantify the spill or locate pockets of oil or anything like  
7 that?

8 A. No. When I talked to Danny the next morning at the  
9 command post, he said that they got out there, figured out  
10 there was no boats and they didn't see a bunch of oil. And --  
11 have you seen the computer model that Noah did for the spill?

12 MS. THOMAS: Yes.

13 CDR DeQUATTRO: But the way it shifted down and then  
14 kind of shifted over and hit the waterfront and so similar to  
15 our response assets, hindsight, we're looking back and saying  
16 if you were there, you really wouldn't see a big piece of it  
17 because it went south on us and then moved to the west and hit  
18 the waterfront. And so his guys -- this is Danny telling me  
19 after the fact -- were surprised to begin getting the reports  
20 along the San Francisco waterfront later. But once they were  
21 on scene, they didn't see much at all. But they were not  
22 assisting in the quantification effort.

23 BY MR. STANSEL:

24 Q. And they had no role to play in the pollution  
25 response other than the security of the area?

1           A.    I would say the role they played was to go out and  
2   help us enforce the zones that were established.

3           Q.    What about the fire department, did they launch a  
4   boat?

5           A.    Not that I'm -- they did not launch a boat early on.

6           Q.    I believe we were later notified that they went out  
7   in the afternoon, but I am not aware that they have any  
8   pollution response capabilities and during the course of this  
9   day did not, you know -- was not considering them a factor in  
10   responding to this.  What role would they normally play in an  
11   incident like this?

12          A.    Would the San Francisco fireboat play?

13          Q.    Right.

14          A.    In an environmental response effort?

15          Q.    Or an allision with the bridge.  Would it be search  
16   and rescue?

17          A.    Yeah.  I mean, we use the fireboats for marine  
18   events.  They're part of our Neptune Coalition, which is the  
19   local stakeholders, if you will, around the bay, so the  
20   counties and cities on west side, east side, north side.  And  
21   so we would use them to -- for awareness and enforcement of  
22   zones.  For fleet week, which is in October of each year, we'll  
23   have a safety zone, which is a big box in the center of the  
24   bay, and they will help us keep folks out and also respond if  
25   there's a search and rescue case.  They may have emergency

1 medical technicians on board, that type of thing. So we do  
2 work with them. In a bridge allision, they could certainly  
3 pull folks out of the water if it was search and rescue. They  
4 could help us enforce the safety or security zone if that was  
5 needed. But I would say that they do not normally respond to  
6 bridge allisions or vessels aground from emergency  
7 environmental response prospective. The other missions they  
8 do, yes.

9 Q. Are you aware of any written memorandums of  
10 understanding with the local government with the Coast Guard,  
11 is there anything like that?

12 A. No. I'm not -- I'm not aware of any current  
13 memorandums, MOUs or MOAs, that articulate roles and  
14 responsibilities for all of our missions. I'm not aware.

15 Q. Do the -- do any other agencies within local  
16 government, specifically the City of San Francisco, have they  
17 ever participated in drills or planning for incidents such as  
18 this?

19 A. Yes, I would say the San Francisco Police Department  
20 are one of our bedrock partners when it comes to responding;  
21 SFFD, the fire department, also. So they're active members of  
22 our Neptune Coalition, which meet here monthly. And actually,  
23 we were meeting that day, the morning of this incident.  
24 Normally the meeting is at ten o'clock in this room. So we  
25 were fortunate. And OSPR also plays a very active role in that

1 organization. So short of having MOUs and MOAs, what we have  
2 is actually the participants, the players, who operate these  
3 vessels and some aircraft. But, I mean, they're always working  
4 with us. So although it's not formalized, it's a working  
5 partnership. And so, I mean, we'll -- and that's on both  
6 sides. San Francisco is very active but other events happen on  
7 the other side, North Bay and South Bay and all. We have a very  
8 active partnership.

9 Q. What about -- and specifically with environmental  
10 response, agencies such as health and environmental officials?

11 A. San Francisco Health and Environmental?

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. I'm not aware of, during my time here, any  
14 participation.

15 Q. Okay. Was there -- the day of the allision was there  
16 any other contact with local officials concerning the reported  
17 quantities or where oil was showing up?

18 A. I would say Captain Swatland, Captain Dave Swatland,  
19 the Deputy, was at an event at the ferry plaza that afternoon,  
20 which is Pier One in San Francisco. So he also participated in  
21 several conference calls with San Francisco city officials. I  
22 was not in on those calls, so I would defer to Captain  
23 Swatland. But we were attempting to keep folks up to speed as  
24 we knew the information.

25 Q. Are any San Francisco officials, are they on any

1 contact list or are they to be notified in the vent of a  
2 particular type of incident or -- such as this? Would they  
3 normally had been notified in any different way then they were?

4 A. You said San Francisco city officials?

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. No. Our -- in this case specifically the fact that  
7 we had the San Francisco Police Department respond to the  
8 incident as well as we ensured that the state OES was notified.  
9 And the process would be OES notifying the counties.

10 Q. Right.

11 A. And so an efficient manner of communications, we did  
12 not have San Francisco city officials on a separate checklist  
13 or contact list.

14 Q. Now, the fire department contacted the Coast Guard  
15 and wanted to know whether they were needed for their response  
16 or did the Coast Guard contact the police department?

17 A. I under -- I was not in on those communications. I  
18 understand that the fire department found out because the  
19 Neptune Coalition was meeting here, and then called into the  
20 Coast Guard to offer assistance. But I was not --

21 Q. And the police, they called in the Coast Guard?

22 A. I am aware of that directly because I took that call  
23 from Sergeant Lopez.

24 Q. And what time was that?

25 A. Approximately ten o'clock.

1 MR. STANSEL: Okay. I don't have anything else.

2 MS. THOMAS: I think that's about all I have. Did  
3 you have anything else that you wanted to add that you think  
4 could help us with our investigation?

5 CDR DeQUATTRO: No. I would say on that board there  
6 is where we got Roy Mathers estimate of 58,000 gallons, which  
7 is what you already know. But it was in this room it was  
8 briefed and then we -- to a group of the unified commanders,  
9 probably 25, maybe 30 folks in here so that the ESTRS had come  
10 in. So we were building our picture as to what everyone was  
11 seeing because in limited visibility, I mean, no one had the  
12 big picture. They were -- the ESTRS were passing information  
13 up to their supervisors. Chief Mosley, Jessica Snyder, Rob  
14 Roberts were trying to collect the quantification information  
15 and feed it to our command center. And I would assume Rob was  
16 feeding his organization, OSPR. But it was only at this  
17 meeting where we could get everyone together that we could  
18 really try to paint the full picture of what it was we were  
19 dealing with, what initial quantities were being recovered and  
20 what the quantification effort had resulted in.

21 BY MR. STANSEL:

22 Q. Okay. Oh, I do have one -- the Neptune Coalition, is  
23 there a list of who is all involved with that? Is that  
24 something I could find on the Internet or --

25 A. We have a -- I can get you an overall list. And as

1 far as the attending members that day, there was not a sign-in  
2 sheet, and I'm pretty sure that the meeting did not take place  
3 or it was a very abbreviated meeting. But having been up in  
4 the command center, I don't know my attendees unless it's a  
5 special subject point. But I can get you a list of who are  
6 Neptune Coalition coordinator believed was there before  
7 everyone kind of went their separate ways to figure out how  
8 they could help and start calling their own agencies.

9 Q. Okay. Yeah, that would be great.

10 A. Okay.

11 MS. THOMAS: All right. Thank you very much for your  
12 time. We appreciate it.

13 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled  
14 matter 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:           M/V COSCO BUSAN/BRIDGE ALLISION  
                                  SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA  
                                  Interview of CDR Pat DeQuattro

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-08-MM-004

PLACE:

DATE:                       January 30, 2008

was held according to the record, and that this is the  
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been  
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Myrel Williams  
Transcriber