

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY

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In the Matter of:

MAJOR MARINE ACCIDENT,  
DCA 03 MM 032

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May 31, 2003

INTERVIEW OF:

THORVALD BENJAMINSEN

The above entitled matter came on  
for hearing, pursuant to notice.

PRESENT:

TOM ROTH-ROFFY, NTSB  
BRIAN CURTIS, NTSB  
STEVE CMAR, NCL  
CHRIS OELSCHLEGEL, USCG

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2  
3 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Good morning. It  
4 is about 10:20 in the morning and it is the 31 of May  
5 2003. And we are here to interview for a second time,  
6 Mr. Benhaminsen, Second Engineer on the Norway.

7 BY MR. ROTH-ROFFY:

8 Q Sir, the reason why we have called you back  
9 is we understand that you have may, may have some  
10 additional information about your observations around  
11 the time of the explosion. Specifically, I understand  
12 that maybe you might have seen some, some individuals  
13 with some oil on them.

14 A No, I did not.

15 Q You did not.

16 A No. Everything was normal.

17 Q No, I am sorry, people, did you see any crew  
members with oil on them?

18 A No.

19 Q Around the time of the --

20 A No, no, no.

21 Q Either before or after the explosion.

22 A Definitely not. I remember very, very well  
23 where these people were, and it was just before the  
24 explosion. I remember as I looked my watch because I  
25 was thinking about the Immigration and I remember my  
26 watch was about, was six thirty. And when I came down  
27 to the engine room from the control room. And I was  
28 looking over my system, which I operate, just checking  
29 out that I was, and in order to, to hand it over to my  
30 successor. So, but just a brief, brief look.  
31 Everything was okay. And then I went to the boiler  
32 room, I did not look at -- then, but, maybe I was, a  
33 couple of minutes after. And then I saw, I saw Ramon,  
34 the stoker who had died yesterday. I saw him there  
35 with the boiler 22. And he was, he was de-slugging the  
36 dampers, it is routine operation. You have to do that.  
37 And I did not talk with him because he was busy doing  
38 this. And then I met also in the boiler room, I met  
39 Rosal with the boiler's pump in the boiler room. So,  
40 in the boiler's pump is between boiler 21 and 22.  
41 Because he was busy with the deballasting, because when  
42 we, the -- you know what I mean by --

43 Q Yes.

44 A That is when they are bilging, we had to  
45 deballast. So, that is also routine operation. Every  
46 Sunday. So I said goodbye to Rosal, and then I met the  
47 waterman, Sumalio. I met him in the, with the water  
48 tight door, water tight door, between aft stabilizer  
49 room and boiler. He had his clipboard, a clipboard --  
50 He was suppose to make the round. So, and it to read  
51 the counters for the water and some other things --  
52

1                   So, I don't know what the time was then, but  
2 it was -- before the explosion. And then I saw no one  
3 with oil on them. Nothing. So, when I said goodbye to  
4 Ramel, I went, proceeded forward to go to the engine  
5 and then I met Sumalio, the watchman in the forward  
6 auxiliary engine room.  
7                   So, I said goodbye to him, and took the  
8 elevator up and come up on deck, everything, the  
9 explosion come.  
10                  Q     You said you met Sumalio.  
11                  A     Yes.  
12                  Q     Could you spell that name?  
13                  A     S-U-M-A-I-L-O. So he was there on the only  
14 person down there who survived and that was because he  
15 was in the opposite direction of that, in the fore part  
16 of the engine compartment. He was between the, he was  
17 between the generators, diesel generators.  
18                  Q     All right, if you would continue on. You  
19 went and saw Sumalio.  
20                  A     Yes.  
21                  Q     And then you went up on deck and --  
22                  A     I went up, up, one deck, to the engine  
23 elevator. The Biscayne Deck.  
24                  Q     To the incinerator.  
25                  A     No, no, no, engine elevator  
26                  Q     Engine elevator.  
27                  A     Yes. And I took that elevator to Olympia  
28 Deck where I live.  
29                  Q     Okay. And then you took the elevator to the  
30 Olympia Deck and then what did you do?  
31                  A     Then I went straight out to get some air on  
32 the port side. Not far from my cabin, to get some  
33 air, I was, I was with -- what do you call it?  
34                  Q     Handrail. A handrail?  
35                  A     Yes, handrail, when you look, you are on the  
36 deck. You rest your hands and look out.  
37                  Q     Right.  
38                  A     Leaning over the rail, I looked at the sun  
39 rise. And then I heard some shaking, and the  
40 explosion. And I saw the black smoke.  
41                  Q     So you saw black smoke.  
42                  A     Yes.  
43                  Q     Did you also see steam or white smoke?  
44                  A     I can't really remember the white smoke,  
45 because when I saw black smoke, lots of it, because it  
46 is from -- all over. Then I knew that something  
47 terrible had happened down in the boiler room.  
48                         When I first heard, when I heard the  
49 explosion I thought something had crashed into the  
50 ship's helm from the shore side. Something big. But,  
51 when I saw the smoke I was, that something had happened  
52 in the boiler room.

1 Q So you definitely heard or felt the vibration  
2 before --  
3 A Yes, I did. I felt the vibration, yes.  
4 Q Before you saw the smoke?  
5 A I didn't look at the funnel, I was looking in  
6 the opposite direction when I heard the bang.  
7 Q Then what did you do after that?  
8 A After that I, my first thought was to come  
9 down and see what I could do. So, I met the Staff  
10 Chief Engineer.  
11 Q And what did you meet him?  
12 A In the, outside his cabin. We don't live far  
13 away from each other. So, I met him and the two of us  
14 rushed down to the control room. There was lots of  
15 water and it was dark and terrible. Lots of --  
16 everywhere.  
17 Q You went down to Biscayne Deck, which side  
18 did you go down?  
19 A We went down with the, where the elevator is.  
20 It is in the, in the center, no, wait a minute. It is  
21 on the starboard side, starboard side.  
22 Q As you were going down the starboard side on  
23 the Biscayne Deck, did you see any, any crew members  
24 that had been injured?  
25 A No. Didn't see anything. But, it was dark.  
26 It was, so my thought was to reach the control room,  
27 and see what we could do there. And when we came to the  
28 control room, everyone who was suppose to be there, was  
29 there, was there.  
30 Q And who were those people that were there?  
31 A It was Mr. Hoyland, it was Chief Engineer, it  
32 was Chief Electrician, and the First Electrician, who I  
33 can't recall was there. But, everything was dark, it  
34 was thick, it was alarms all over. And me and Staff  
35 Chief Engineer took, ran down to the -- to see if it  
36 was anyone we could save. There we found Rosal down in  
37 the -- He was conscious. And he was moaning, it was  
38 terrible, he could not see and he could not breathe, he  
39 said, all the time. And we managed to get him up in  
40 the control room. And I was sitting there besides  
41 Rosal all the time until the medics came and carried,  
42 gave him oxygen and carried him out.  
43 Q Exactly where did you see Rosal the first  
44 time?  
45 A In the, then, no, yes, it was behind, it is  
46 where the men usually stand in the aft engine room  
47 where we are suppose to be when it is standby. So, it  
48 is, if you go down from the control room to the burner  
49 room, you have to go through that. It is behind the  
50 water pumps. It is a big -- that you can go through  
51 with a, not a door, but a passage. In that passage we  
52 found Rosal. It was floor, a crate, laying down in

1 that rubber plate of the stair. It had been damaging  
2 the stairs with tremendous, it had been blown from the  
3 boiler room, I think.

4 Q And was he near that plate?  
5 A Yes, he was near that plate.  
6 Q About how far?  
7 A Oh, it was just by the plate, because when I  
8 come down, I remember I was, I was, not slipped on it,  
9 but it was something down there, that was not suppose  
10 to be there.

11 Q At that time were the lights out or --  
12 A Lights out completely. It was dark.  
13 Q Like at night.  
14 A And we had flashlights.  
15 Q Okay. Backing up in time, when you were in  
16 the control room, were the lights out or not or were  
17 they on?  
18 A Emergency lights, they are on.  
19 Q Are there no emergency lights in the aft --  
20 A Yes, they are, but maybe they were on, too,  
21 but it is not so very much effect, so we had to use the  
22 flashlights to see.  
23 Q Okay. You stated that it was completely dark,  
24 is it possible it really wasn't completely dark?  
25 A Maybe it was not, all completely dark, but I  
26 can't recall that. Because I was very stressed.  
27 Q Sure.  
28 A And all my, my mind was about Rosal. All my  
29 thoughts on him.  
30 Q When you saw Mr. Rosal, did he say anything  
31 to you about what had happened?  
32 A No, only about his pains.  
33 Q His pants?  
34 A Pains, pain.  
35 Q His pain.  
36 Did you see any oil on him?  
37 A Lots, he was covered in oil and the fuel oil,  
38 all over. He was badly, badly, badly, bad condition he  
39 was. Looks terrible.  
40 MR. CURTIS: Excuse me, Brian Curtis.  
41 I didn't get that. He was covered in oil or  
42 he was not covered in oil.  
43 MR. BENJAMINSEN: He was covered in oil,  
44 complete.  
45 BY MR. ROTH-ROFFY:  
46 Q You say he was completely covered in oil.  
47 A Yes.  
48 Q Did he have oil on his face?  
49 A Yes. But, his face is where you could see  
50 that, it was damaged because the skin, everything was  
51 starting, it was, he didn't have any lips. The tongue  
52 was burnt to nothing. It was white in his mouth.

1                   MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. Brian, if you would  
2 like to go on.  
3                   BY MR. CURTIS:  
4                   Q     Brian Curtis.  
5                   Just going through, he was covered oil, yet  
6 he was in the, he was found aft engine room.  
7                   A     Yes.  
8                   Q     First I would like to go back, just for my  
9 own clarification regarding fuel oil strainers.  
10                  A     Yes.  
11                  Q     When are they, are they changed at any  
12 particular frequency or as needed?  
13                  A     It is not, not my systems. I will not say  
14 anything about the routines. But, I think they have to  
15 change them frequently, and as needed. But, that is  
16 only my, my thoughts.  
17                  Q     You say frequently, could you just --  
18                  A     No, I cannot say anything about that because  
19 I am not working on that system. But, if it is needed  
20 to change it will be changed. But, I guess it is  
21 changed frequently to --  
22                  Q     Do you know, do you know if they had changed  
23 them that morning on your watch, or previous to it?  
24                  A     I can't answer that. I don't know.  
25                  Q     How could it, is it logged anywhere, or  
26 written down as a record, the last time the strainer  
27 would have been cleaned?  
28                  A     I guess so, but I am not sure about that.  
29                  Q     I am, but I guess so, that it is still, but  
30 it is the engineer who runs the system can answer that.  
31                  Q     And who would have changed over and cleaned  
32 the strainer?  
33                  A     Who do that?  
34                  Q     Yes.  
35                  A     I guess it is, it is system, the stoker on  
36 the system that they man the stoker or maybe, this is  
37 only guesses for me, so I cannot, I don't think it  
38 great that I answer, answer that, because it is just  
39 assumptions. You need to ask that system engineer, who  
40 runs the system about it.  
41                  Q     And the stoker on watch at the time was?  
42                  A     Ramon.  
43                  Q     Ramon.  
44                            Did you see Ramon after the explosion?  
45                  A     No. The last time I saw him was when I  
46 passed the boiler room and saw he was busy with the  
47 boiler 22.  
48                  Q     And just briefly, I may have missed it, but,  
49 when you saw Mr. Rosal before the explosion, his  
50 location?  
51                  A     His location was with the burners pump,  
52 between burner 21 and 22.

1 Q So, the only individual you saw covered in  
2 oil before or after the explosion would have been  
3 Rosal.

4 A After, after the explosion. So, before the  
5 explosion, everything was normal when I was there. So,  
6 that must have been, I don't know.

7 Q Just one more question. Regarding the, did  
8 the boilers have periscopes?

9 A No. No.

10 Q How do you check the clarity of the --

11 A It is, it is indicator, electronic device  
12 that you read. Not the periscope.

13 Q And were they functioning at the time?

14 A Yes, I guess so. But, yeah, I believe so.

15 Q When was the last time you would have checked  
16 those, that they were functioning, that they could look  
17 at them?

18 A It is better to take a look at the funnel,  
19 because it is television, it is a monitor down in the  
20 boiler room with the camera, camera. So, if anything  
21 is malfunctioning, the burners, for instance, you would  
22 see that, the smoke. So, it is best way to monitor.

23 Q Had you checked the analyzer that morning?

24 A The analyzer?

25 Q The monitor.

26 A Yes, we see the monitor. It is a television  
27 screen. So, if it is just slightly smoke, it will, it  
28 will be corrected. So, it is, it is all the time. So,  
29 the monitor is over the alarm screen. And the control  
30 room has the same view.

31 Q Okay.

32 A So, the control room and the boiler room has  
33 the same view.

34 Q And those monitors in the control room, they  
35 have no means of recording, they only monitor.

36 A They are only, they are just, they don't  
37 record a thing. I don't think so.

38 MR. CURTIS: Thank you, sir, that is all I  
39 have.

40 MR. OELSCHLEGEL: I don't have any questions.

41 BY MR. CMAR:

42 Q This is Steve Cmar.

43 Can you tell me, say like the last half hour  
44 before you left the watch, what was everybody doing?

45 A Oh, well, Ramon, the stoker was monitoring  
46 the burners. He was in the boiler room, where he is  
47 suppose to be.

48 Q That is Ramon Villaris?

49 A Yes. And Rosal was --

50 Q Before you leave him, that is all he was  
51 doing, he was doing nothing else, during the watch?

52 A He is suppose to be in, on the boiler room

1 floor.  
2 Q But, he had no other activities during that  
3 watch.  
4 A No.  
5 Q He was just, he wasn't working anything.  
6 A No, no, no, no.  
7 Q Okay. All right.  
8 A Just routine like cleaning all the dampers,  
9 for instance.  
10 Q Deslagging those dampers.  
11 A Yes, deslagging the dampers.  
12 Q Right.  
13 And how about Bernal?  
14 A He was doing what, he was just starting on  
15 his round. He is suppose to go and -- the tanks, read  
16 the compete test and --  
17 Q And Bernal, is he the waterman?  
18 A He is the waterman.  
19 Q And as the waterman and specifically on that  
20 watch, there was no other work he was doing, just prior  
21 to the casualty?  
22 A No.  
23 Q And you and Rosal were both the engineers in  
24 the engine spaces.  
25 A Yes.  
26 Q You both make rounds for the spaces.  
27 A Yes.  
28 Q Was Rosal doing any work prior to the  
29 casualty on any equipment?  
30 A Yes, he was deballasting.  
31 Q Just deballasting.  
32 A Deballasting.  
33 Q Nothing else.  
34 A So, when I left him, when I come down, again,  
35 he was looking at the meters on the, on that ballast  
36 pump in, between boiler 21 and 22. Everything was  
37 going very, very smooth.  
38 Q So, during the watch when you were on watch,  
39 the fuel strainers were never switched?  
40 A No, never.  
41 Q Never switched.  
42 A If that should happen, I would have known  
43 that.  
44 Q I am sorry, say that again, please.  
45 A If that was, should be done, I would have  
46 known that.  
47 Q You would have known.  
48 A Yes.  
49 Q Okay.  
50 A And the watch, the engineer that comes on,  
51 would have known it.  
52 Q Okay. I think I missed something previously



1 when you said just Ramon was deslagging.  
2 A Yes.  
3 Q Rosal was at the ballast pump.  
4 A Yes.  
5 Q Bernal was, oh, he was in the aft stabilizer  
6 room making rounds.  
7 A Yes.  
8 Q Okay.  
9 A He was with the clipboard.  
10 Q Clipboard.  
11 A It is in that, with the water tight door.  
12 Q Right.  
13 A I remember he had taken the clipboard out of  
14 the shelf and looking at it when I left him. We shook  
15 hands and said goodbye.  
16 Q What, how would the watch have reacted to a  
17 drastic steam pressure drop? How would they react to  
18 that?  
19 A If the steam pressure drops.  
20 Q Yes. How would they react to that?  
21 A Oh --  
22 Q Including the whole team down there, all of  
23 them.  
24 A It depends what the, what makes the steam  
25 pressure drop.  
26 Q Okay. Well, give me the various scenarios, if  
27 you would?  
28 A It is a bit difficult question. But, I  
29 guess, I guess shut down the boiler, the particular  
30 one, shut down the burners.  
31 Q Shut down the burners?  
32 A Yes, shut down the burners, if it was a  
33 leakage from the boiler -- make the steam pressure  
34 drop.  
35 And then you also have, we also have --  
36 burner -- that we cannot insulate the burner.  
37 Q Isolate the boiler.  
38 A Isolate the boilers.  
39 Q Okay.  
40 A If it is an emergency shutdown the burners.  
41 Q Okay. All of the fuel pumps are located on  
42 the starboard side, correct?  
43 A Yes.  
44 Q Right in a line there.  
45 A In the line, in the far starboard side.  
46 Q Okay.  
47 A And there we have the heaters.  
48 Q And the fuel heaters.  
49 A Yes.  
50 Q And the are right in a line, too?  
51 A Yes.  
52 Q Is there anything that you recall that done

1 to the fuel heaters during the watch?  
2 A No.  
3 Q Is there any work that would normally be done  
4 with the fuel heaters?  
5 A The only thing is to, and that happens from  
6 time to time, to adjust the temperature on the fuel  
7 oil, from time to time it happens that the temperature  
8 rises or go down, so then they have to open or shut, by  
9 pass.  
10 Q Did that happen say the half hour preceding  
11 the --  
12 A I can't recall that. But, that is routine.  
13 Q That is routine. So, that is not something  
14 that would have necessarily been recorded.  
15 A No, no, no, that would not be recorded.  
16 Q Okay.  
17 A That happens from time to time.  
18 Q I may be repeating questions and I am sorry  
19 if I am.  
20 A Yes.  
21 Q Any, any fuel pump problems that you are  
22 aware of with any of the pumps?  
23 A Not, not on that watch.  
24 Q Okay.  
25 A Not on that watch.  
26 Q Okay. Not on that watch, but, were there any  
27 problems prior?  
28 A Yes.  
29 Q Within the last previous few days?  
30 A Yes, there were problems with the fuel  
31 pressure on fuel pump 27, I think it was, that it was,  
32 what do you call it --  
33 Q Fluctuating.  
34 A Fluctuating, yes.  
35 Q Okay. Was that corrected?  
36 A Yes. That was corrected, that was corrected  
37 in the way that we can take the -- in manual and then  
38 take it back, out -- But, you would have to ask the  
39 assist.  
40 Q Ask whom?  
41 A The engineer who has assist.  
42 Q Okay.  
43 A Or the --  
44 Q Which engineer has the fuel pumps?  
45 A Huh?  
46 Q Which engineer has the fuel pumps?  
47 A The engineer who has everything regarding the  
48 boilers, is Nicolaisen, the second engineer.  
49 Q Nicolaisen.  
50 A He is the right person to ask about that.  
51 MR. CMAR: I don't have any more questions.  
52 Thank you.

1 BY MR. ROTH-ROFFY:  
2 Q Going back to that, following up on that same  
3 issue. The fluctuation of the pressure, is that the  
4 fuel pump discharge or was it the fuel pressure to the  
5 burners?  
6 A Discharger from the fuel pumps. But that did  
7 not happen in this particular time, that I recall it.  
8 It happened a couple of days before.  
9 Q And can you describe that fluctuation in  
10 terms of the range --  
11 A Yes.  
12 Q -- you know, from so many bars?  
13 A From, from 30 bars down to 25, I guess,  
14 something like that. But, not over 30 bars. It was,  
15 it was, it is suppose to be on 30 bar, but it was going  
16 down. From 30 bar to about, about from 25 to 30 bar.  
17 Q And could you describe how fast it was  
18 fluctuating?  
19 A Like this.  
20 Q Could you describe it in words, please? Five  
21 cycles per second, or two per second. Just so, you  
22 know, we can't record your hand.  
23 A Yes, maybe three cycles per second. But,  
24 that is just --  
25 Q A rough estimate, just a --  
26 A A rough estimate.  
27 Q Sure.  
28 And you said if you switched it to manual --  
29 A Manual, and then back to auto again, it was  
30 working satisfactory.  
31 Q And how long often would that problem come  
32 up?  
33 A Not too, very often.  
34 Q About once a day or --  
35 A No, no, no, no. It was, it was, I only  
36 recall that it had happened some days before.  
37 Q You only recall it happening this one time?  
38 A Yes.  
39 Q Now regarding the fuel oil heaters, you  
40 mentioned that the only thing you ever had to do with  
41 them was to sometimes the temperature would go out of  
42 range and you would have to either open or close the by  
43 pass.  
44 A Yes, yes.  
45 Q Was that the way you normally had to do it?  
46 Was that by pass always --  
47 A That was, that was the normal. That was  
48 normal, yes.  
49 Q Okay. So that temperature regulator didn't  
50 work at all, or it worked a little bit but not that  
51 well. You always had to maybe help it a little bit.  
52 A Yes, yes. That is true.

1 Q Okay.  
2 A That is my, what do you call it? What is the  
3 right word?  
4 Q Recollection.  
5 A My recollection about it.  
6 Q Okay.  
7 A The stoker used to collect this.  
8 Q The stokers would do it automatically.  
9 A Yes.  
10 Q The engineer would not necessarily --  
11 A If the engineer was there, he would do it. Or  
12 wait until the boiler -- and stoker fix it. It did not  
13 take a long time either, just five seconds or so.  
14 Q Okay. If you can recall, you mentioned the  
15 first time we talked to you, you said that you left the  
16 engine room, I believe after you engaged in jacking  
17 gear.  
18 A Yes.  
19 Q And then you returned, I don't recall, could  
20 you tell us approximately how long you were out of the  
21 engine room or what time you left and what time you  
22 returned?  
23 A Oh, I don't recall. I guess I was away for,  
24 I was only in the, I was in the control room. I guess,  
25 I was there for 10, yes, maybe 10 minutes, but, it is  
26 just my, I don't look at the watch.  
27 Q You were in the control room.  
28 A Yes.  
29 Q After you engaged the turning gear?  
30 A Yes.  
31 Q For 10 minutes.  
32 A About 10 minutes.  
33 Q And then you left.  
34 A And then I left the engine room and went down  
35 to look at the my system for last time, the operators  
36 down there and say goodbye to the, to the men there.  
37 Q Okay. So, I guess I misunderstood you the  
38 first time, I thought you had left to go take care of  
39 Immigration.  
40 A Yes, yes, but, I will do that afterwards.  
41 Q After you have said goodbye to the --  
42 A Yes, yes.  
43 Q Okay. I understand.  
44 A That is where I have to leave the watch to  
45 go, I was committed to do that.  
46 Q Okay.  
47 A I was permitted to leave the watch early.  
48 Q Okay.  
49 A So, after, after the standby.  
50 Q Okay.  
51 (Pause.)  
52 BY MR. ROTH-ROFFY:

1 Q Did you also close the main steam stops to  
2 the main engines or who did that?  
3 A Yes.  
4 Q You did that yourself.  
5 A Yes, I did that, it is routine, a standby  
6 routine. Before we engage the turning gear, we have to  
7 stop the main steam boiler.  
8 Q Did you also break vacuum on the main  
9 condenser?  
10 A No, no. The vacuum will be there all the  
11 time.  
12 Q Okay. And you mentioned that Mr. Ramon was --  
13 A He is deslagging at the dampers.  
14 Q And I believe the first time you talked to us  
15 you said he was on a ladder.  
16 A That is true.  
17 Q Do you know which burner he was deslagging at  
18 that particular time?  
19 A Because, the upper burner, I guess it is  
20 number five.  
21 Q Number five.  
22 A I guess so, but it is not, it is the upper,  
23 the burner that is on the highest level. You have to  
24 use a ladder to reach it.  
25 Q And I am sorry, I have forgotten, how long  
26 have you been assigned the Norway?  
27 A One year.  
28 Q One year only.  
29 A Yes.  
30 Q And has it been as a first engineer? I mean,  
31 I am sorry, as a second engineer when you, for the one  
32 year?  
33 A Yes.  
34 Q Okay. I think I have just one more question.  
35 Going back to Mr. Rosal, when you first found him,  
36 you said he was covered in oil.  
37 A Yes.  
38 Q And that he was also burned.  
39 A Yes.  
40 Q How did you, how do you know it was oil that  
41 the was, he had on him? Did you see it dripping off of  
42 him somewhere or --  
43 A It was completely covered.  
44 Q Is it possible --  
45 A Hair, everything.  
46 Q Is it possible that it was just burning that  
47 you saw rather than oil?  
48 A No, because I am very sure of that because  
49 when I was watching him in the control room, before the  
50 medic came, I was comforting him and talking with him,  
51 and I had, his neck was resting on my arm. And my arm  
52 was black with the burn and the fuel oil. I am

1 positive about that.  
2 Q So you had his head on your arm and you are  
3 black, your arm got black --  
4 A Yes, yes.  
5 Q Okay.  
6 A Completely. That was oil.  
7 Q Did he have it also on his shirt and pants?  
8 A It was very dark, so I can't remember where  
9 it was, but it was all over him, as far as I saw.  
10 Q Okay.  
11 A It was, I guess all, oil all over his body.  
12 Q Okay. And at any time did he tell you what  
13 happened?  
14 A No. Just moaning. And the only thing he  
15 said was "I can't see and I can't breathe. Give me  
16 air." The last, when he was laying down on the floor,  
17 he said all the time, give me air, give me air. I  
18 guess his lungs were burned.  
19 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: That is all I have. Brian/  
20 BY MR. CURTIS:  
21 Q Just two quick questions. Brian Curtis.  
22 Fuel pump number, that was number --  
23 A Twenty seven.  
24 Q Twenty seven and that supplied fuel pressure  
25 to --  
26 A To the 22, I am not quite sure, but I guess  
27 it is on the boilers on the port side, 22 and 24.  
28 Q And when you were having that problem, did  
29 you ever see the burner trip because of the  
30 fluctuation?  
31 A No, no, no. But, this was very rare, very  
32 rare.  
33 MR. CURTIS: Thank you. That is all I have.  
34 BY MR. OELSCHLEGEL:  
35 Q I just have, I mean, this question may have  
36 been asked already. Chris Oelschlegel with the Coast  
37 Guard.  
38 On this particular watch, the fuel oil  
39 strainers are not normally changed over on this watch  
40 and cleaned out, the strainer cleaned out.  
41 A No.  
42 Q Is that correct?  
43 A That is correct.  
44 Q Not on that particular watch.  
45 A That is correct.  
46 Q Okay.  
47 A But, this is, for the system, and the people  
48 who run the system. But, if it is needed, it has to be  
49 changed, of course.  
50 Q Right, right.  
51 A But, it was not done on my watch.  
52 Q And one other quick question is does the, and

1 this may have been asked previously as well, but does  
2 the Norway normally bunker in one particular take on  
3 bunkers or one particular spot on a routine basis, to  
4 your knowledge?  
5 A It is not in my knowledge.  
6 Q Not.  
7 A You have to ask the Chief Engineer about  
8 that.  
9 MR. OELSCHLEGEL: That is all I have.  
10 BY MR. CMAR:  
11 Q Steve Cmar, NCL.  
12 Just one point of clarification. Ramon was  
13 just laying there, top burner on which boiler?  
14 A The burner 22.  
15 Q Twenty two.  
16 A Boiler on the port side.  
17 Q And this is, again, we talked about this, you  
18 left the engine room, you were free to leave the engine  
19 room from the watch. You went to the control room.  
20 A Yes, to say, say goodbye to Mr. --  
21 Q And then you came back down to the engine  
22 room to say goodbye to everybody.  
23 A Yes, but I was also looking after the  
24 operating system I have.  
25 Q Okay. All right.  
26 A To see if everything was okay.  
27 Q And when you left the engine room went to the  
28 control room, were there about 10 minutes, went back  
29 down, and nothing had changed in what they were doing  
30 in that time?  
31 A Nothing.  
32 Q At that point you were, no red zone.  
33 A No, no, no.  
34 Q Okay. And then you left and went up to your  
35 cabin.  
36 A Everything was working quite normal when I  
37 left and that was just minutes, a couple of minutes  
38 before the blast, I think.  
39 Q Okay. Is there anything, once you have put  
40 the turn gear in, and the watch, are the same number of  
41 people still on watch?  
42 A Yes.  
43 Q Okay. And once the turning gear has been put  
44 in, do they go into a different routine or are there  
45 other things that they might be doing after the, after  
46 red zone and they are in port?  
47 A Yes.  
48 Q Could they start work on anything or is there  
49 anything planned to work --  
50 A Yes, the main thing is deballasting. We have  
51 to deballast. That is routine. We engage to turn the  
52 gear, we record the chief officer and -- starts

1 deballasting.  
2 Q Okay.  
3 A Start to deballasting, we do that.  
4 Q And that is Rosal?  
5 A That is the engineer who works, Rosal was  
6 doing that.  
7 Q Okay.  
8 (Change of tape.)  
9 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. We are resuming our  
10 interview of Mr. Benjaminsen. It is about seven  
11 minutes after 11 on the 31 of May 2003. And Stephen  
12 Cmar was asking his questions. Maybe you could reask  
13 the question, because I think it got --  
14 BY MR. CMAR:  
15 Q I will go back a bit just to make sure. I  
16 had asked you about Rosal, you said Rosal was doing the  
17 deballasting.  
18 A Deballasting, yes.  
19 Q And the other two individuals that were on  
20 watch, was there anything specific they had planned,  
21 any work that they had planned when they came in the  
22 port?  
23 A No, just monitoring, Ramon has to monitor the  
24 boilers due to being the stoker on watch, has to be in  
25 the boiler room.  
26 Q Okay. So nothing specific, no planned --  
27 A No plans.  
28 Q Or unplanned maintenance.  
29 A No, no.  
30 Q And I will ask this, as a routine when you  
31 come into port because you have, you have, the watch  
32 has changed and it is, you are not at sea, would that  
33 be a time when they might change strainers? Is it  
34 possible?  
35 A I don't know.  
36 Q You don't know. Okay.  
37 MR. CMAR: I don't have anything else.  
38 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay.  
39 BY MR. ROTH-ROFFY:  
40 Q Tom Roth-Roffy, again.  
41 I think we are almost finished with you.  
42 Thank you very much for being patient with us.  
43 Could you describe how you divided any of the  
44 watch duties with the other second engineer?  
45 A Yes. The watch, there are engineer, two  
46 second engineers and one third engineer is on this  
47 watch. So, it is one second engineer has to be in the  
48 control room. And the other second engineer has to be  
49 down in the engineering compartments, boiler room with  
50 the responsibility all over the place, the forward --  
51 And on this watch it was two engineer machine officers  
52 down there, a second engineer and a third engineer.



1 So, Rosal and I was leaving the watch, Mr. Rosal was in  
2 charge of the engineering compartments down there.

3 Q Normally when you stood watch with Mr. Rosal,  
4 how did you divide the watch duties? Would you cover  
5 the forward --

6 A No, we just covered, just agreed to, okay, I  
7 will go there, you will go there. So, it is not this  
8 is mine, or this is, it not like that.

9 Q So, when you agreed to that, you agreed that  
10 you would go in one direction, he would go in another  
11 direction.

12 A Yes, yes. That is --

13 Q On the round and --

14 A -- how it works. And when we are not on the  
15 round, we are suppose to be in the aft stabilizer room,  
16 or in the boiler. So, so, the engineer on watch can  
17 reach us if something they want us to do. The engineer  
18 in the control room. But, if we are not there, he will  
19 page us. We have a paging system that is covering all  
20 the engine spaces.

21 Q So on your rounds you would cover the whole  
22 machinery spaces, forward to aft?

23 A Yes.

24 Q And Mr. Rosal would do the same thing on his  
25 round?

26 A Yes. Yes, that is true.

27 Q And about how many rounds would you do during  
28 a four hour watch?

29 A Oh, it is, well, when we, when we take over  
30 the watch, you have, the first thing is you have to go  
31 down before the watch start, 10 minutes before, about.  
32 And then you talk with engineer who shall be relieved,  
33 if it is anything special. So, when he is leaving the  
34 watch, we have got all the information that is  
35 necessary. Then, then we start on our rounds. And if  
36 there are two engineers down there, some watches  
37 have -- so, it is, it shall be engineers who are down  
38 there, agrees where to go.

39 Q So you would make your rounds independently,  
40 you wouldn't go as a team?

41 A No, not as a team. And we are overlapping  
42 each other, too. So, if I start to go forward engine  
43 room, I will go everywhere, I will cover everything  
44 from forward to aft and he will cover everything from  
45 aft to forward, so we overlap each other.

46 Q I see.

47 A And it works very well to do it that way.

48 And of course, we do rounds during the watch,  
49 but very strict round when we take over the watch and  
50 various strict round before you go off the watch. But,  
51 all the times during the watch, we are in different  
52 places and looking things over.

1 Q Do you maintain any type of a log entry sheet  
2 or a data --  
3 A No.  
4 Q -- checklist or anything like that?  
5 A No.  
6 Q As part of your, you don't take readings on  
7 machinery?  
8 A No. The person who takes the readings, is  
9 the stoker on watch, he takes readings and writes down  
10 what the pressure is. And it is a watchman who is, the  
11 stoker, who is watching the diesel generators. He is  
12 taking down the data sheets, and it is the workman, so  
13 it is three data sheets that is written down during the  
14 watch. And these are given to the first engineer after  
15 the watch in his, so he can collect them. So, so, the  
16 sheets are in the ship.  
17 Q So, at the end of each watch, the data sheet  
18 is given to the first --  
19 A It is, it is in his --  
20 Q Okay. But is it for 24 hours or is it for  
21 four hours?  
22 A Four hours.  
23 Q Four hours.  
24 A And everything, and the data sheets from the  
25 water man is written down in the engine note. That is  
26 all counters, and, and the, shows how much oil is in  
27 there, sub main, for the -- and it is how much water we  
28 have produced and so on. And the, it is also written  
29 down from all the pressures, the temperatures from the  
30 fuel oil and everything, from them, controller, you  
31 take the values and write it down in there, and will  
32 note. So, everything is there.  
33 Q I would like to try to do as reconstruct your  
34 72 hour history, what you did, if you can remember,  
35 three days before the accident and also if you could  
36 help me try to reconstruct Mr. Rosal's history, his  
37 work, you know, how many hours of overtime he worked  
38 and so on. So, let's start with yours, maybe it would  
39 be easier that way.  
40 A Oh, this is a bit difficult to, about Mr.  
41 Rosal's whereabouts.  
42 Q All right, let's start with him, then, first.  
43 He stands watch with you four o'clock to eight o'clock  
44 in the morning and four o'clock in the evening.  
45 A Yes.  
46 Q Four o'clock in the evening to eight o'clock.  
47 A Yes.  
48 Q And when do you normally work your overtime?  
49 When does he normally work his overtime?  
50 A It is, used to be from after the breakfast,  
51 after getting, we go, been relieved, we go up, get  
52 breakfast, and then go down and take a --

1 Q So you would get relieved a little bit before  
2 eight or what time would you normally?  
3 A Oh, no, we have to be, go when we are -- So,  
4 eight o'clock.  
5 Q Eight o'clock is when you would leave the  
6 engine room?  
7 A Eight o'clock is when the watch is over.  
8 Q Okay.  
9 A Four to eight.  
10 Q Right, and then you would go, eight o'clock  
11 you would go up to breakfast.  
12 A Yes.  
13 Q And have breakfast for a half hour.  
14 A Yes.  
15 Q Forty five minutes.  
16 A Approximately 20 minutes or something like  
17 that.  
18 Q Okay. And then you would go back down and  
19 start --  
20 A Working on your system, yes.  
21 Q Okay. And Mr. Rosal's system was what, do you  
22 recall?  
23 A Mr. Rosal's system was the ballast system,  
24 the ballast pumps and the ballast tanks, everything  
25 concerning the ballast, the pumps and everything.  
26 Q And did he have any other system that he was  
27 responsible for?  
28 A No, only, only, each engineer has his system,  
29 it is only one system for each engineer.  
30 Q Okay. Let's just start from the morning of  
31 the accident, the four in the morning, did you work or  
32 do you know if Mr. Rosal worked overtime in the evening  
33 after you got off watch eight o'clock at night?  
34 A No, I don't think, it is not, it is not, we  
35 don't used to work. We work in the morning. If it is  
36 not anything special going on. -- with the systems,  
37 things like that.  
38 Q Okay. You don't know if Mr. Rosal had a  
39 problem with the ballast system on the night --  
40 A Not as I can recall.  
41 Q Is there any type of preparation work that he  
42 might have had to do before deballasting?  
43 A No. We do that on the watch, and it is an  
44 easy task. Just open a couple of valves and start  
45 deballasting.  
46 Q Was it Mr. Rosal's responsibility to ballast  
47 the ship as the fuel was being burned off? Did he have  
48 to do that?  
49 A No, no, no. It is not his responsibility.  
50 It is the engineer on duty's responsibilities. So, if  
51 he is, he will be given the order to start  
52 deballasting.

1 Q Okay. So whoever was on duty when it is time  
2 to deballast or deballast?  
3 A Yes, has to do it.  
4 Q Has to do it. And Mr. Rosal would not  
5 necessarily be the one to do it.  
6 A That is correct.  
7 Q Okay. And did you transfer ballast water  
8 every day as you burned off fuel underway?  
9 A No, it only, when we come into Miami on  
10 Sunday, we started to deballasting the ship and then we  
11 are starting to filling ballast from Tuesday. But that  
12 is not my watch.  
13 Q Okay. On Tuesday you normally would fill the  
14 ballast tanks.  
15 A Yes.  
16 Q How about any other days that you would take  
17 on ballast?  
18 A No, it is -- Oh, it is difficult for me to  
19 remember when. But, I guess it is Tuesday.  
20 Q Tuesday and maybe one more day or just only  
21 Tuesday?  
22 A Maybe one more day, but, they are not on my  
23 watch.  
24 Q Okay. And then when you arrive into Miami on  
25 Sunday morning, you would deballast.  
26 A We would deballast.  
27 Q Okay. Okay. So, let's back up -- I am sorry.  
28 A It is the chief officer who orders when to  
29 do, to ballast or deballast. We can't do anything  
30 about that without an order. So, the chief officer  
31 calls the control room and give the orders to start  
32 ballasting or deballasting. And then the control room  
33 calls down to the engineers on watch and give the  
34 orders to start ballasting or deballasting.  
35 Q Okay. Now, again, trying to reconstruct 72  
36 hours history of what was, you know, you and Mr. Rosal  
37 were doing. So you didn't work the evening before.  
38 A No.  
39 Q The day of the explosion. But, how about,  
40 so, you stood a watch from four o'clock in the evening  
41 to eight o'clock and you probably went to sleep then?  
42 A Went to shower and sleep or relaxing.  
43 Q All right. Do you know who Mr. Rosal would  
44 spend his time off watch with? Did he have a  
45 particular friend or --  
46 A Yes, I guess he and Valenzuela and Ferrer  
47 were close, close friends.  
48 Q With Valenzuela and who else?  
49 A Ferrer. Ferrer.  
50 Q Ferrer.  
51 A They were close, close friends. They were  
52 from the same place, both on the same, yes.

1 Q F-E-R-R-E-R.  
2 And what is Mr. Ferrer's job?  
3 A He was engineer.  
4 Q On which watch?  
5 A Third engineer on the watch before, on the  
6 third watch.  
7 Q And he was also close with, I am sorry, I  
8 didn't write it down?  
9 A Valenzuela. He is dead.  
10 Q Right.  
11 A But maybe more, but that I just remember  
12 these.  
13 Q Okay.  
14 A He was very, very respected, very, everybody  
15 liked him.  
16 Q Do you know if he was having any, any  
17 personal problems that he talked --  
18 A No.  
19 Q -- to you about?  
20 A No.  
21 Q Any problems with his family at home?  
22 A No. I don't think so. Rosal was a very  
23 straight person. He has a high morale person.  
24 Q His demeanor usually was he a very friendly  
25 person or quiet?  
26 A Very friendly, very friendly person.  
27 Q Outgoing or quiet?  
28 A He was a very nice person, smiling and nice  
29 and easy to talk with, everybody liked him.  
30 Q And on the day of the accident, how was his  
31 demeanor? Was he normal?  
32 A Yes, quite normal.  
33 Q You didn't see any, any problems that he  
34 talked to you about, or you didn't notice anything that  
35 he was depressed or anything like that?  
36 A No, no.  
37 Q Okay.  
38 A Not at all.  
39 Q Do you recall if he looked, did he look like  
40 he was well rested or tired?  
41 A He looked, he looked well rested. He was,  
42 everything was quite normal.  
43 Q All right, now going back in time just a  
44 little bit more, do you remember if he worked overtime  
45 on the day before the accident?  
46 A Yes, it is usual to work overtime. We are  
47 suppose to work two hours overtime each day.  
48 Q Okay. So you worked two hours.  
49 A Yes.  
50 Q That would have been Saturday, during the day  
51 on Saturday?  
52 A Yes, or less.

1 Q Okay.  
2 A So, that is a daily routine. After watch,  
3 you take your two hours, at least.  
4 Q Do you remember how many hours you worked on  
5 Saturday?  
6 A Again, I guess I worked two hours.  
7 Q Okay. Do you remember seeing him working on  
8 anything on Saturday?  
9 A Not that I can think of. I can't recall, but  
10 we have different systems.  
11 Q Sure, I understand.  
12 A I am working with my mine, he is, it is a  
13 vast space down in engine rooms.  
14 Q Sure. So you don't remember in the past  
15 week or so if he was having any problems with the  
16 ballast system?  
17 A Oh, I can't remember that.  
18 Q Okay.  
19 A I can't. Nothing unusual with the system as I  
20 can recall.  
21 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. I think that is all I  
22 have. Brian.  
23 BY MR. CURTIS:  
24 Q Brian Curtis.  
25 I just have one quick question, sir. I just  
26 want to get the number of the fuel pump that was  
27 supplying boiler 23 at the time of the accident.  
28 A One.  
29 Q Number one.  
30 A No, no, no, it was one, but I don't recall  
31 the name, the number. If I see it, if I see that  
32 display, I would say it was that number, I can't  
33 remember. So you have to --  
34 MR. CURTIS: I have no further questions.  
35 MR. OELSchLEGEL: No further questions.  
36 MR. CMAR: Okay. If I could follow on to that.  
37 BY MR. CMAR:  
38 Q What are the numbers of the fuel pumps?  
39 A We have four fuel pumps.  
40 Q And they have numbers, you mentioned 27.  
41 A Yes, 27, it is 25, 21, 22, but I am not so  
42 very sure. If you go to the control room, you will see  
43 that.  
44 Q Okay. And you said if you look --  
45 A It is four fuel pumps.  
46 Q Okay. And you said if you looked at the  
47 display you could tell which one was supplying it. Is  
48 there just four buttons across or something like that?  
49 A It is four, four pumps with two buttons.  
50 They come around in the high speed and in the low, low  
51 speed.  
52 Q Can you describe if you were thinking of the

1 display, could your mind could describe which one was  
2 on for that if there were four in a row or is that not  
3 something you can do?  
4 A I think it is better to ask another one about  
5 that.  
6 Q Okay.  
7 A For instance, you ask Nicolaisen about that,  
8 he will have, give you the correct answer.  
9 Q Okay. And last quick question, following  
10 that, you mentioned the first engineer receives the  
11 engine room data sheets, is that the first senior or  
12 junior?  
13 A Senior.  
14 Q Senior. Okay. That is all.  
15 A It is a data sheets for the boilers and for  
16 the diesel generators. I guess --  
17 MR. CMAR: Okay. That is all I have.  
18 MR. ROTH-ROFFY: Okay. Sir, I think we are  
19 done with you. Again, thank you very much for being  
20 patient and helping us and hope you have an enjoyable  
21 vacation under the circumstances.  
22 Okay. So the time is now 11:30 and that  
23 concludes our interview of Second Engineer Benjaminsen.  
24 (Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the interview was  
25 concluded.)