

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of:

ALLISION WITH STATEN ISLAND
FERRY TERMINAL MAINTENANCE
PIER AT ST. GEORGE'S,
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK BY THE
FERRY ANDREW J. BARBERI on
OCTOBER 15, 2003

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DCA-04-MM-001

Thursday,
October 16, 2003

Staten Island Ferry Terminal
St. George, Staten Island, NY

INTERVIEW OF:

ANDREW COVELLA

PRESENT: BILL WOODY
MORGAN TURRELL

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TURRELL: I will have him say his name and spell it for the record and please acknowledge this is being recorded.

MR. COVELLA: Andrew Covella, A-N-D-R-E-W, C-O-V-E-L-L-A.

MR. TURRELL: Could you just one more time?

MR. COVELLA: Yes, C-O-V-E-L-L-A.

MR. TURRELL: And this is being recorded, you are aware.

MR. COVELLA: I understand.

MR. TURRELL: Thank you.

Captain Covella, how old are you?

MR. COVELLA: Fifty six.

MR. TURRELL: Fifty six. And how long have you worked for the Staten Island Ferry?

MR. COVELLA: Twenty years.

MR. TURRELL: Can you please describe your duties as assigned to the Staten Island Ferry?

MR. COVELLA: I am a captain onboard the Andrew J. Barberi, 1:30 to 9:30, or any boat that is assigned to that shift.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. And are you regularly assigned to that ship, is that what you would consider your most normal --

1 MR. COVELLA: I bid that for an entire year,
2 from June until June of next year.

3 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And how -- Excuse me for
4 just a moment.

5 (Pause.)

6 MR. TURRELL: How long have you worked in the
7 industry? Before the ferries, the 20 years with the
8 ferries, had you ever did anything before that?

9 MR. COVELLA: I was in the United States Navy.

10 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

11 MR. COVELLA: Twenty two years active duty --

12 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And can you tell us a
13 little bit about how it came about that you were not
14 onboard the vessel on Wednesday? I understand you are
15 regularly assigned. Can you tell us tell a little bit
16 about Wednesday, what happened, where you were?

17 MR. COVELLA: Well, actually Monday, I took my
18 daughter's car to the repair shop and I met Richie
19 Smith there on Monday morning. He had a car problem,
20 himself, an electrical problem. That was on Druid
21 Avenue, Gemini Automotive. They have an electrical
22 specialist in Staten Island. My daughter's timing belt
23 went and it cost me \$600.00. He had a little switch or
24 something that was, and I told him I had a toothache.
25 I was going to the dentist right after the car. Well,

1 it turned out a little bit more than a toothache, but,
2 I seen Richie and his wife was waiting for him, he was
3 dropped his car off and Laurie was in the car and I
4 waved to her.

5 And I went to the dentist right after I
6 dropped my daughter's car off. And he filled my tooth
7 in the front and I told him this hurts over here, Doc.
8 And he told me, aw, you just need a cleaning. He
9 couldn't see this. I mean, it was out like that. So,
10 he missed it down here. And I went back the next
11 morning, I was scared, because my face was out like
12 that. And he recommended that I go see a surgeon and
13 I had the name already who I wanted to see. And I
14 went to see the surgeon and he cut me that morning. It
15 was a bad infection. I was on antibiotics but, they
16 were the wrong type. He did a culture, and it came
17 back yesterday, and he came me the right antibiotics
18 and the swelling started coming down. And I was out
19 the whole week except for today when I came down here.

20 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

21 MR. COVELLA: I mean, I could barely drive my
22 car, it was in -- and I couldn't talk or --

23 MR. TURRELL: And did you report to your
24 employee that you were out for medical reasons?

25 MR. COVELLA: Yes, I did. I called every

1 morning to let them know the status of my illness and
2 then I would, I just brought them a note on the
3 surgery.

4 MR. TURRELL: Who do you normally contact in
5 that situation? Who was here to contact?

6 MR. COVELLA: Well, we call the main office,
7 it is either Richie Loman, or Anthony Lowman, George
8 Aslin.

9 MR. TURRELL: They are in the personnel
10 office?

11 MR. COVELLA: They are personnel.

12 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And so you have been out
13 with, with your --

14 MR. COVELLA: Abscess tooth.

15 MR. TURRELL: The abscessed tooth and normally
16 when you are home on sick leave or sick time, is it
17 normal for you to communicate with the company about
18 other matters, do they confer with you or call you and
19 say, hey, you know, discuss matters of business when
20 you are not, or do they just leave you alone?

21 MR. COVELLA: It depends. If, if they are
22 curious of when I am coming back. Sometimes we have a
23 personnel shortage, you know, we only have 20 captains.
24 They have to do their job, too, and plan ahead.

25 MR. TURRELL: Sure.

1 MR. COVELLA: I don't remember anybody calling
2 me to ask me the status, because I let them know in
3 advance, you know, to prepare them, that I won't be in
4 today or tomorrow.

5 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And do they ever discuss
6 with you the assignment of temps to the ship or who
7 they are going to replace you with? Is that ever
8 discussed with you, "Oh, that is okay, Captain, so and
9 so will cover you", have they ever mentioned about who
10 is going to cover your position?

11 MR. COVELLA: No, we could almost predict who
12 is going, we know the shifts, so we can almost predict
13 who can cover and who can't.

14 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

15 MR. COVELLA: They are strict with the 12 hour
16 rule.

17 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So, to your knowledge, if
18 you had gone to work, who your assisting captain would
19 have been?

20 MR. COVELLA: It would have been Richard
21 Smith.

22 MR. TURRELL: Have you ever worked with Mike
23 Gansas?

24 MR. COVELLA: Yes, I have.

25 MR. TURRELL: And how long have you known Mike

1 Gansas?

2 MR. COVELLA: Oh, boy, since he started. One
3 of the finest men I know. Mike is totally
4 professional, so is Richie Smith. I am shocked with
5 this whole situation. I will not believe anything else
6 that Richie passing out at that wheel. I will not. I
7 was so happy to have him as my assistant captain. I
8 was relieved from June, when he came onto my job until
9 this week, I was glad that he was my assistant captain.
10 I thought I got lucky. And I really believe it. I
11 will believe nothing else but him passing out at that
12 wheel, nothing.

13 MR. TURRELL: So, can you tell us, Captain,
14 what the normal routine is from the start of the ship,
15 for a captain and assistant captain. Just take us
16 through what the normal routine is, in the wheel house,
17 from your perspective as captain? What the normal
18 routine is starting the ship through the end of the
19 ship?

20 MR. COVELLA: Well, I am relieving, both
21 engines are running, while I am relieving a captain who
22 had the boat all morning. If there is any problems, he
23 would inform me, you know, look out for this gauge, it
24 is tacking or you know, maybe the air pressure was
25 making noise, whatever, any problems with the boat, he

1 would let me know. He would also let me know the
2 running slip in New York would be two, three or one.

3 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

4 MR. COVELLA: Heads up.

5 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

6 MR. COVELLA: Then I would report to the wheel
7 house, my side. Make sure that every personnel were
8 onboard, check with the mates and to make sure we have
9 running lights, that everybody gets their assignments.
10 It is tough to sign in on a hot boat, you know, you
11 only have a few minutes, so, when the deck hands report
12 for duty, they say I am here, the mate will tally up,
13 okay, we have our people. He will let me know or if we
14 are fully manned, calling the engine room, everybody
15 fully manned. I will check my radars, call New York
16 Traffic, tell them we are departing. Make a security
17 call. Make sure there is no one in front of me, or --
18 And we set a course for New York.

19 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Now in the transit, what
20 is the normal compliment of people in the wheel house
21 during the transit?

22 MR. COVELLA: We are pretty demanding about a
23 lookout. The lookout has to come up by a certain
24 point. Sometimes we start the boat wait for him if
25 necessary. Or we will make an announcement, you know,

1 we sort of know who is number one, two, three, so, we
2 will call him by name. The assistant captain will
3 take a little time to make sure that everybody is
4 signed in and we do have personnel onboard, do his
5 paperwork, and report to the New York wheel house and
6 observe.

7 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So when he is observing,
8 what is his duties as observer, what would he assist
9 you with?

10 MR. COVELLA: In clear weather, not much.

11 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

12 MR. COVELLA: Just heads up.

13 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Now that you said the
14 ferries are strict about the locality or your policy is
15 you make sure the lookout is up there.

16 MR. COVELLA: Yeah.

17 MR. TURRELL: And --

18 MR. COVELLA: That is the most important
19 person in the wheel house.

20 MR. TURRELL: Is there another rule of thumb
21 about the assistant captain being there also for any
22 length of time or in other words, what I am trying to
23 get at is there a rule about where the captain and
24 assistant captain should be during transit?

25 MR. COVELLA: Not normally. It is a good

1 idea to have both personnel in there, but, it is not
2 adhered to strictly. I mean, we do have other duties
3 that to be attended to.

4 MR. TURRELL: Can you tell me about those
5 duties?

6 MR. COVELLA: There are entries in the logs,
7 accident reports, passengers cutting themselves, we
8 have to fill out an extensive paperwork, you know, get
9 names and --

10 MR. TURRELL: Where are these reports filled
11 out, where would the assistant captain --

12 MR. COVELLA: Usually in the Staten Island
13 wheel house with the mate or deck hand who is --

14 MR. TURRELL: So, I mean, you mean, the
15 opposite wheel house of, of --

16 MR. COVELLA: Well, it depends on which way
17 you are going.

18 MR. TURRELL: Right. But, in the non, the
19 wheel house not being used. Okay.

20 MR. COVELLA: Well, yeah, I guess so, yeah.

21 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

22 MR. COVELLA: So there is no interference.

23 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So, it is not unusual
24 then, not abnormal for the, during the transit that the
25 captain and assistant captain not being in the wheel

1 house together during the transit? There is a period of
2 time where the captain or the assistant captain may not
3 be there.

4 MR. COVELLA: Actually, I set a policy with me
5 and my last, after 9/11, they upgraded the security to
6 red and we have worked out a plan where we would stay
7 separated. And I had to trust them, I was more
8 concerned about a terrorist takeover than anything
9 else. I wanted to protect the vessel so terrorists
10 didn't take over the ship and ram it into a gas barge.

11 MR. TURRELL: Yes.

12 MR. COVELLA: This came into my mind, you take
13 a chance on a small bump, which we all do, but, I set
14 that up with the chief engineer. We have a procedure
15 we are going to follow. They will not get an active
16 boat.

17 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So, you had a policy that
18 you try and stay, the captain and assistant captain
19 stay separated or able to assume as captain role and
20 the other pilot house --

21 MR. COVELLA: That is right.

22 MR. TURRELL: At a moment's notice.

23 MR. COVELLA: Moment's notice, he can, that
24 was my, I don't know what other captains, I didn't
25 discuss it.

1 MR. TURRELL: In your, in that scheme of
2 things, how would you turn over control, would you have
3 to page that person to --

4 MR. COVELLA: No, I have a secret code that I,
5 I wish I don't have to discuss.

6 MR. TURRELL: No, you don't.

7 MR. COVELLA: I have a code where if I know
8 that we are being taken over hostile, I am going to
9 switch the, we will switch, parallel it down to the
10 engine, only it will not come up to me under any
11 circumstances.

12 MR. TURRELL: Right, right.

13 MR. COVELLA: Unless the code word is broken.

14 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So --

15 MR. COVELLA: Am I brave enough with a gun at
16 my head, not to disclose, I don't know, but this is the
17 procedure we are going to follow.

18 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And so, who, who knew
19 about this, this rule, policy, how formal was it, first
20 of all and who knew about it?

21 MR. COVELLA: Well, I don't know about the
22 entire department, I guess each captain would have his,
23 his own secret way of protecting the vessel. This was
24 mine during, you know, high times of alert and we would
25 use extra caution, separate ourselves. So, you know,

1 they couldn't get us both.

2 MR. TURRELL: And who, who --

3 MR. COVELLA: Most --

4 MR. TURRELL: -- else was in the scheme, you
5 said you and the chief engineer?

6 MR. COVELLA: That knew the secret password?

7 MR. TURRELL: No, know the password, but the,
8 this policy of separation, who, what other captains or
9 mates were aware of this?

10 MR. COVELLA: Well -- Richie, he would be my
11 regular engineering.

12 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

13 MR. COVELLA: He would be --

14 MR. TURRELL: So, obviously the other captains
15 would know about this policy as well, right, the other,
16 being separated from the other captains, the other
17 assistant captains would know about this policy?

18 MR. COVELLA: On other vessels?

19 MR. TURRELL: On your vessel, the people you
20 work with.

21 MR. COVELLA: Well, if we were on the high
22 state of alert, I would tell them, you know, if
23 necessary, you know, then you stay there, and you do
24 this, if anything, give them instructions on what to
25 do.

1 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

2 MR. COVELLA: And Richie knew what to do in
3 case of a takeover, also.

4 MR. TURRELL: Okay. What kind of training do
5 you normally put the crew through during a work tour?

6 MR. COVELLA: We have a regular fire and boat
7 drills, once a week. We put them through a good
8 training in different security scenarios, rescue
9 scenarios. We have had, I just started explosions on
10 different decks, what we would do.

11 MR. TURRELL: On the security scenarios.

12 MR. COVELLA: Yeah. Different terrorists,
13 mostly terrorists scenarios.

14 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

15 MR. COVELLA: And we were going to get a
16 trauma training from one of our deck hands, Steve
17 Burnomal(ph), he was an EMT for about 15 to 20 years
18 before he came to us.

19 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

20 MR. COVELLA: And he was going to give
21 everyone instructions during our fire and boat drill
22 how to tend to trauma like this happened, which would
23 have been really helpful.

24 MR. TURRELL: The Staten Island Ferry
25 organization, do they have a formalized training

1 system?

2 MR. COVELLA: We have been going to first aid
3 and CPR, yeah.

4 MR. TURRELL: And what can you tell me about
5 the, we didn't get a chance, the Group didn't get a
6 chance to go up to the controls, and the maneuvering,
7 propulsion controls of the vessel, in your own words,
8 can you describe to us, in your experience, the
9 propulsion controls and your experience with them?

10 MR. COVELLA: All RPMs done off of two
11 throttles that have air pressure, and you have to hit a
12 button that will bring up the air pressure to about 100
13 pounds. And then, without that air pressure, you
14 don't have any throttle.

15 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

16 MR. COVELLA: No RPMs. You have forward and
17 reverse pitch on the starboard side, that you would use
18 on your -- you can do either lever individually.

19 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

20 MR. COVELLA: You have a forward and reverse
21 wheel, which would rotate a disk that is mounted
22 vertically. And you would walk the boat sideways or
23 reverse, very responsive.

24 MR. TURRELL: Compared to the other vessels in
25 the fleet.

1 MR. COVELLA: Yes.

2 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Norman or the --

3 MR. COVELLA: Norman or -- It has its
4 problems, too, but once you get used to it, and it is
5 very responsive. I mean, safety features we have bells
6 that, emergency steering, and propulsion. Should
7 anything happen to those controls, we can ring the cow
8 bell and the engine room will take control and answer
9 our bells from the --

10 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

11 MR. COVELLA: Do you want radar and radios?

12 MR. TURRELL: No, we will stick with the
13 propulsion controls for the moment.

14 MR. COVELLA: All right.

15 MR. TURRELL: The, how, in your experience
16 does the propulsion and maneuvering controls, are they
17 easy to manipulate, are they easy to control, the
18 actual controls, themselves, are they easy to move the
19 ship, does it take awhile?

20 MR. COVELLA: I am not following your
21 question. Easy to --

22 MR. TURRELL: Are the controls ergonomically
23 suitable for the task?

24 MR. COVELLA: Well, I have been doing it for
25 18 year, I am just used to it. I don't know if they

1 are --

2 MR. TURRELL: Is there anything perhaps you
3 would like corrected on those controls that you find,
4 that has caused you some impediments to your operation?

5 MR. COVELLA: No, I wouldn't change much on
6 the boat.

7 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Do you know of any other
8 captains that you work with, who perhaps do have a
9 complaint or did anyone express, gosh, I wish something
10 was better or worse or something?

11 MR. COVELLA: No, the cow bell used to stick
12 up and hit us in the leg all the time, but, that was
13 changed. That is about the only thing that really,
14 maybe the air throttles might be over too far, you have
15 got to stretch.

16 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

17 MR. COVELLA: But, otherwise, the gauges could
18 have been a little illuminated a little better. I hope
19 the new boat illuminate a little better where we can
20 see them at night.

21 MR. TURRELL: Ordinarily for the person
22 controlling the vessel, there seems to be no structural
23 problems. There seems to be adequate for the task.

24 MR. COVELLA: Yes.

25 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And have you in your

1 experience, when you saw Captain Smith and Captain
2 Kansas operating the controls, do they ever have any
3 difficulty maneuvering the vessel?

4 MR. COVELLA: No, Richie Smith was probably
5 the most experienced on the board. He has been there
6 the longest than anybody.

7 MR. TURRELL: And Captain Kansas?

8 MR. COVELLA: He is experienced, too. Well,
9 trained boatman. I had no problem at all with him.

10 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And I am not going to ask
11 you to speculate too much, but putting yourself on the
12 bridge, approaching Staten Island, at the KV buoy, what
13 is the expectation, you are traveling south to the
14 terminal, you are at the KV buoy, what has maneuvering,
15 if you are the maneuvering person, the first on the
16 comm, what are the actions that are you taking at this
17 point?

18 MR. COVELLA: Well, midway of the KV buoy
19 would start, you would take a few RPMs off the
20 throttles, just so the boat don't shake when you are
21 passing.

22 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

23 MR. COVELLA: And, you know, when you back on
24 that boat, it shakes a little and vibrates. And you
25 take a few RPMs off. And that is when people are, that

1 starts the chain reaction that people start walking
2 forward, we are coming into the slip. They could be
3 half asleep, as soon as they hear the throttle, they
4 get up and get moving forward.

5 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

6 MR. COVELLA: You steer straight forward to
7 the run in slip, and adjusting to wind and tide,
8 whether you are -- or just dropping in, you set up an
9 approach, proper approach for that day and tide and
10 wind. And then you try to make a nice soft landing.

11 MR. TURRELL: Does the vessel adjust well to
12 tide and wind conditions? Does it usually --

13 MR. COVELLA: Upon the first shot, no, you
14 have to make constant adjustments.

15 MR. TURRELL: Those adjustments are easy to
16 make.

17 MR. COVELLA: Every single landing is
18 different for the entire year. You have wind, tide,
19 moon, different things affect it, rain, the water that
20 comes out of the kilns has an effect on it. So each
21 landing is different. It requires boatmanship to dock
22 a vessel.

23 MR. TURRELL: The adjustments that are made on
24 the tiller and controls, to adjust for the wind and
25 tide, is the vessel -- making those adjustments?

1 MR. COVELLA: Yes.

2 MR. TURRELL: And so, okay, so you throttle
3 back, this starts the chain reaction, you wind up
4 adjusting for wind and tide. Take me through the rest
5 of the docking procedure.

6 MR. COVELLA: I go into the slip, the boat is,
7 you try to keep it in the center of the ship. The
8 Barberi you can, you keep it in the center so you don't
9 bounce off the pylons. The power boats are a little
10 more difficult. Once you remove the power, you are at
11 the mercy of the wind and tide on your stern. So you
12 try to give them a soft landing. And the way they are
13 axis are designed, to take an impact. The people
14 usually stand up and -- Midway into the slip you make
15 sure you are going in a safe and reliable speed, where
16 you will be able to back the boat. The Barberi --
17 they usually stop when you demand them to.

18 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So, in a normal transit
19 from Manhattan to Staten Island in the afternoon, at
20 the three o'clock time frame, how long typically does
21 the transit from Manhattan to Staten Island take, total
22 transit time?

23 MR. COVELLA: Twenty, 22 minutes, 23 minutes,
24 depending on the traffic.

25 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And how long does it take

1 normally to digress from the KV buoy to the dock?

2 MR. COVELLA: About a few minutes. Not long
3 at all.

4 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

5 MR. COVELLA: Two, three, well, closer --

6 MR. TURRELL: Well, you throttle back, you are
7 the KV buoy, you send a helmsman down to prepare it, at
8 this point, is that correct?

9 MR. COVELLA: I guess it would be two minutes
10 then.

11 MR. TURRELL: Two minutes.

12 MR. COVELLA: Yes.

13 MR. TURRELL: And can you tell me, in your
14 best estimate, what your speed of the transit would be
15 from departure to KV, and KV to the dock? The speed of
16 transit --

17 MR. COVELLA: I guess it would be 14, 15
18 knots. With the tide, maybe 16 knots.

19 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And from the KV into the
20 dock?

21 MR. COVELLA: Well, it would depend how fast
22 you want to -- That speed was five that day, you have
23 inbound and outbound traffic. Sometimes you have got
24 to go a little faster, you don't want to get caught in
25 the -- So, that, under normal circumstances, with no

1 traffic, you would probably cut back 75 percent pitch.

2 And then as you are getting closer to the slip, you
3 cut back 50 percent and gradually to 25 percent. And
4 then you could probably take the mid slips at 25
5 percent pitch.

6 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So, at KV buoy, you are
7 going from less than 100 percent pitch, back to 75
8 percent pitch.

9 MR. COVELLA: Yes.

10 MR. TURRELL: And also driving back on the
11 RPMs a little bit.

12 MR. COVELLA: Not all the time, no, I just, I
13 throttle down on the RPMs first. That slows the vessel
14 down enough to give you, you know, a safe speed and
15 then you start drawing, between halfway to KV buoy and
16 the slip.

17 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

18 MR. COVELLA: You want to do a little backing
19 to make sure that it is there.

20 MR. TURRELL: Right.

21 MR. COVELLA: That you are going to get back.

22 So, I take, I take the propulsion back to make sure
23 our system is working.

24 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

25 MR. COVELLA: To make a quick check. I teach

1 my ACs that, you know, to make sure you are checking
2 the gauges. We have had problems with that boat
3 before.

4 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

5 MR. COVELLA: You want to make sure the
6 propulsion is doing what you calling for.

7 MR. TURRELL: In the past, we know there has
8 been some incidents with this class of vessel and can
9 you tell us what you know about those prior -- and what
10 you know of those incidents?

11 MR. COVELLA: No, I don't know. Are you
12 aware of Mark passed away, I don't his last name.

13 You want to know the problems with --

14 MR. TURRELL: Well, the past propulsion --

15 MR. COVELLA: We were coming into St. George,
16 and my assistant captain says, hey, something is not
17 right with the boat. That was Richie Burges, Richie
18 Burges, he is retired now. And one of the propulsion
19 was full ahead, while the other one was full to stern.
20 So, it was sort of working against each other.

21 Between -- start the boat, just a little impact. We
22 called the engineering department. What happened was
23 there was a little, a little gear had popped out --
24 system. It wasn't, I don't know what the unit was
25 called.

1 MR. TURRELL: Okay. It was a mechanical
2 problem.

3 MR. COVELLA: It was a mechanical failure. But
4 the machinist came on, he tightened it down, and she
5 was operating, operating good for awhile. And then it
6 happened again. And they went over it again, made
7 sure that it wouldn't pop out again.

8 MR. TURRELL: Can you tell me roughly when you
9 think this was?

10 MR. COVELLA: 1995.

11 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And since that second
12 correction, do you know of any other problems with --

13 MR. COVELLA: Yeah, I don't recall, it was
14 awhile, but, I -- It wasn't my, it wasn't my shift. It
15 was my day off, maybe, and I had found out that the
16 boat, you know, slammed into the apron and bridge and
17 caused some damage. Thank God nobody was killed. And
18 I don't know, I guess, it was taken out of service.
19 Repad, the doors were repadded. They put a new part
20 in, I don't know how far it went. But, I was assigned
21 to another boat --

22 MR. TURRELL: And I just want to point this
23 out, you have a relative working for the --

24 MR. COVELLA: Yes, I do.

25 MR. TURRELL: And what is his name and job?

1 MR. COVELLA: I have two, one is a captain,
2 Chris Covella and the other one is a chief engineer,
3 Charles Covella.

4 MR. TURRELL: You make sure no one mistakes
5 you for the --

6 MR. COVELLA: Yeah, they do that with our
7 union dues.

8 MR. TURRELL: Okay. If you were on the bridge
9 and you experienced a propulsion difficulty, what would
10 be your first course of action?

11 MR. COVELLA: What type of propulsion, the
12 boat won't stop?

13 MR. TURRELL: Let's just say you, the
14 propulsion is, the engine controls are not responding
15 and you are making an approach, what would be your
16 first course of action, or what steps would you take,
17 if you are experienced some difficulty in your --

18 MR. COVELLA: Well, there are different
19 scenarios, steering or propulsion, because this has
20 happened to me, I am extremely cautious. I do thorough
21 checks before docking the boat.

22 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

23 MR. COVELLA: I want to make sure that this
24 boat is going to stop. So, I double check everything,
25 make sure we are going to stop. If there is a problem,

1 I am going turn the boat out. I am not going to turn
2 towards the slip. Now, if you do it too close, you are
3 not going to be able to turn it out. The boat will
4 turn -- I would try to turn it out and then contact the
5 engineer, and then meanwhile trying to stop the boat,
6 and evaluate what is going on.

7 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Have you ever done that,
8 stopped and turn the boat?

9 MR. COVELLA: No. No, I haven't had, I have
10 stopped the boat and checked things, to make sure that
11 the systems and all of that. But, I haven't had,
12 thank, God, to turn it out.

13 MR. TURRELL: Okay. I am going to turn it over
14 to some of other party members here. And I thank you.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you don't know a
16 policy set by the Ferry which requires the captains,
17 assistant captains to both in the wheel house?

18 MR. COVELLA: At all times. No.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: At all times.

20 And count the terrorist -- the way you have
21 changed what is in the inside terrorists measures, that
22 you do different than what is --

23 MR. COVELLA: I am, I have been trying to keep
24 it secret. I don't want the whole world to know. For
25 some reason, word gets out that --

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes. Would you, when
2 you told, like was Richie, Richie Smith the first
3 assistant captain you told, you guys should split up
4 all the time or did you do that before then?

5 MR. COVELLA: No, no, no, I am not even sure
6 that Richie was in on this. This was before Richie,
7 this was with George -- and we were on high alert, very
8 high alert.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Did you let the office
10 know you were doing it?

11 MR. COVELLA: No, I am not sure. I am not
12 sure.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Have you ever, when she
14 is hooked up, when she is -- have you ever spun around?
15 Have you ever tried to turn her?

16 MR. COVELLA: In an emergency, yes.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. --

18 MR. COVELLA: Complete turn.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You --

20 MR. COVELLA: I guess you could, a boat
21 length, a boat length.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That is all.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You were only off just
24 last week, since Sunday?

25 MR. COVELLA: No, I have had been on vacation,

1 too.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, you were on
3 vacation.

4 MR. COVELLA: Vacation two weeks and then this
5 hit me on Monday. I was suppose to report back Tuesday
6 afternoon.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So this is your third
8 week --

9 MR. COVELLA: Yes.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

11 MR. COVELLA: Today would be three weeks.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When you are driving
13 the boat back and forth, are you normally sitting or
14 standing?

15 MR. COVELLA: Well, I am sitting most of the
16 time, until docking.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You have a good view
18 out the window sitting?

19 MR. COVELLA: Yes, we have nice high chair.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And the lookout
21 usually sits where?

22 MR. COVELLA: He would be on the port side, on
23 your left side. There is no, he could be on either
24 side that he feels like, but the stool is on the left
25 side. There is a little bit more room over there.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When you, if you are
2 making a normal trip from Manhattan to Staten Island,
3 and the AC has got the controls, what do you normally
4 do?

5 MR. COVELLA: As soon as I turn the boat over
6 to him?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, you turn over the
8 boat, press for power.

9 MR. COVELLA: Well, it depends on the weather.
10 If it is clear weather, I will walk on the top and I
11 will go into the Staten Island end, sit down or let him
12 steer. They are going to be the future captains when I
13 retire. If it is a new guy, I will help them out and
14 teach them whatever I can. And especially on safety
15 procedures. I expect them to bring the boat in at a
16 moderate speed in the slips. I give them two shots.
17 If they don't listen to me in two times, he is off the
18 boat.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, with Captain Smith,
20 you generally don't interfere too much with his --

21 MR. COVELLA: Richie Smith is one the best on
22 that, I am shocked, I really am.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So in your normal trips
24 with him, you would come over, sit down.

25 MR. COVELLA: Just talk. I had a real

1 relaxing time with Richie. It was a break for me.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And you are past
3 experiences with Mike Gansas.

4 MR. COVELLA: Oh, thoroughly professional. I
5 mean, the man takes care of his health and you know, he
6 is a fine gentleman. Safety conscious. He cares. He
7 cares.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How about the mates
9 that are normally assigned with you, on this boat?

10 MR. COVELLA: Bobby Rush and Dave Hyde.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What is their
12 relationship with Mr. Smith?

13 MR. COVELLA: What do you mean by --

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Everybody get along
15 pretty well?

16 MR. COVELLA: Yeah. Sure. Yeah. They
17 actually like working for me, I believe. Moderate to
18 mean, you know, I am not crazy, I treat everybody with
19 respect, but I am stern. And it is a nice relaxing day
20 for everybody. Nobody is under tension that they have
21 to over please the captain. Just do your job, and they
22 do. And we have no problems.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That is all I have.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have no questions.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Captain, you said you

1 don't know what happened, maybe the Captain passed out
2 at the wheel.

3 MR. COVELLA: Yes.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are you aware of him
5 having any problems, any kind of --

6 MR. COVELLA: Well, I read that, you know,
7 blood pressure pills, he never informed me, I didn't
8 know.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Mike Gansas, did
10 he ever work under you as the pilot assistant?

11 MR. COVELLA: Yes, he did.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How long ago?

13 MR. COVELLA: Well, my gosh. I can't be
14 certain of the dates, but, I used to work vacations. I
15 have been on this job now for almost a year, on the
16 13930 ship. But, when I did vacations I worked with
17 just about everybody, you know, I was assigned to
18 different boats, vessels, ships. And I would work with
19 Mike two weeks at a time.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: On those occasions when
21 you worked with Mike, would you --

22 MR. COVELLA: No, he was the assistant captain
23 then.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He was the assistant,
25 you were the captain.

1 MR. COVELLA: Yeah, yeah. I had total
2 confidence in him. He was ready for captainship. As a
3 matter of fact, he should have been a captain years
4 ago, why he didn't take it, I don't know, but he had
5 his master's license for a long time.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And during that time,
7 did you guys ever split, were you always in the wheel
8 house together or before you changed the policy, were
9 you always together in the wheel house during the
10 transits? That was the policy.

11 MR. COVELLA: Every trip? Not every trip.
12 No, if I had confidence in the man and I had to do
13 other tasks, inspect something. Sometimes we had
14 passengers who where their -- got caught or --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And did you get
16 involved with that person or the mates --

17 MR. COVELLA: The mates would do it first. We
18 would have fights. I had one inspect. I would tell
19 them, hey, you know, the AC, I am going to go down, you
20 know, make sure that the lookout stayed, that he had
21 someone there. And I would see what was going on. A
22 little concerned about the passengers. That is our
23 living and it is our priority to make sure the
24 passengers are safe.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So your security plan

1 is to protect --

2 MR. COVELLA: Only on red alerts. When the
3 elevation was high. Now that we are at a lower level,
4 I have relaxed that. But, our plan is still in effect,
5 but we don't have to be separated, you know, all the
6 time.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. But, who would
8 you communicate that to, at the beginning of the ship,
9 you would, if we were in red alert, the staff?

10 MR. COVELLA: Yes. I would tell the assistant
11 captain right away and the chief. Don't forget the
12 password, you know, our procedure and the Chief and I
13 would work on it, you know, he understood, too. I
14 actually was teaching the marine engineer how to steer
15 boat. If the assistant captain and I was killed, and
16 they had to steer the boat to get it back in the slip,
17 I taught the marine engineer during the drill how to
18 steer the boat and it was enlightening to him, too.
19 They would, well, you are all Americans, I mean.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We don't need any
21 specifics, you can tell us generally.

22 MR. COVELLA: Yeah, they would come up with
23 secret and take over the vessel and steer it. Or they
24 can communicate by radio to the engine room and the
25 chief downstairs can, you know, with the hand held

1 radios, tell them how to do it. I did it on bells.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What about the mate,
3 are they capable of steering the boat or jumping in on
4 an emergency situation and steering the boat?

5 MR. COVELLA: They, I never, well, I never
6 encountered where they would need to, because they have
7 other tasks to do. And I want them patrolling, you
8 know, to prevent certain things. So, I never required
9 the mates to really practice steering. We have quite a
10 few deck hands who will, you know, take some wheel
11 time. You need wheel time to get a license, upgrade a
12 license or to get a license. And I would teach them,
13 not to dock, I never let anyone dock.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you know if any
15 other captains who have a plan, had their own alert?

16 MR. COVELLA: I never discussed it with
17 anybody.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You don't know if
19 Gansas had any --

20 MR. COVELLA: I don't know, I have no idea.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

22 MR. COVELLA: I couldn't say. I have been
23 out, I had, I have been out for three weeks now. I
24 worked two weeks and I was on vacation another two
25 weeks prior to that. And I haven't been here in three

1 weeks, so I haven't seen Mike. Richie, I seen Monday
2 and the prior Monday we hung out the whole day almost,
3 went to Lowe's, he brought a table from me I brought
4 from Roger Levin, a former AC, and I couldn't use it.
5 It was just a big oak table, but it was beautiful.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Just quickly.
7 Just go over the plan, the basics of the plan. You
8 had a code word between you and the chief engineer
9 regarding transferring the power.

10 MR. COVELLA: Right.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The boat couldn't be --

12 MR. COVELLA: No, I -- I switched the power
13 out right away. The engine room has the power. Now to
14 get it back --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He has to, okay.

16 MR. COVELLA: He has to contact me personally.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And that is with
18 the code red.

19 MR. COVELLA: If the vessel isn't just
20 drifting, there is a procedure we are following, do you
21 need me to disclose --

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, no.

23 MR. COVELLA: Okay.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And the second part of
25 that plan was with the two captains, captain and the

1 AC.

2 MR. COVELLA: Well, that was --

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Not to be in the pilot
4 house.

5 MR. COVELLA: That was my idea, you know, if
6 they are going, they don't really need me. They could
7 probably learn how to steer a ferry boat off the
8 Internet today. So, we would be killed instantly.
9 That is why I wanted to get the power out of there. I
10 don't want them ramming it into a gas barge.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And that was strictly
12 for when the alert --

13 MR. COVELLA: High, high alerts or when we
14 felt something was suspicious. There was some times I
15 felt where I, I do see passengers coming on. If I was
16 suspicious that day, I would activate the plan.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Otherwise then for the
18 most part the captains, both, belonged together in the
19 pilot, unless they had to leave, like you said to
20 handle a fight, a dispute.

21 MR. COVELLA: Yeah.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Both captains, normally
23 would be together.

24 MR. COVELLA: Yeah.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: In the wheel house.

1 MR. COVELLA: Not required to tenuously, but
2 occasionally we do leave.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But, there is a reason
4 for leaving.

5 MR. COVELLA: Yeah.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Thanks.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is your password the
8 same as -- Is your password the same as the Staten
9 Island Ferry password --

10 MR. COVELLA: No. No.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No more on that.

12 MR. COVELLA: Yeah. It is not even a pass,
13 it is a procedure that we are going to follow. Nobody,
14 unless he talks to me personally, or the assistant
15 captain, you are not getting that power back. I
16 thought it was a good policy, maybe I am wrong, I don't
17 know, but I am the captain of the vessel, responsible
18 for X amount of people at any time of the day.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, that is --

20 MR. COVELLA: I am not going to lose my boat
21 as a ramming thing.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We don't expect you to
23 disclose it. You have already told us.

24 MR. COVELLA: Okay.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And --

1 MR. COVELLA: I would like you all be aware,
2 too, we do, we are human beings, we are Americans and
3 we are going to protect our passengers and citizens.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That is great. And
5 like you said, 6,000 people onboard.

6 MR. COVELLA: At times, yeah.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We appreciate that.

8 MR. WOODY: You mentioned, sorry --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Go ahead.

10 MR. WOODY: You leave the bridge sometimes
11 when there is an altercation or --

12 (End of tape one.)

13 MR. WOODY: How about, when you are making a
14 landing, would you ever be off the ship, I am not
15 saying the security measures, I am just talking about a
16 routine thing, when you have a passenger is hurt or,
17 would you ever evacuate, be off the stern during a
18 landing?

19 MR. COVELLA: Yeah, sure.

20 MR. WOODY: You would.

21 MR. COVELLA: It depends who the assistant
22 captain was. If you have confidence in that man, which
23 Richie Smith being the captain for 10 years, of course,
24 I was so glad to have him there. There is nothing like
25 it. I was happy to have him as my assistant captain.

1 MR. WOODY: I mean, other such cases that he
2 would be alone in the power house, by himself?

3 MR. COVELLA: Certain times he could be.

4 MR. WOODY: But, I am talking about --

5 MR. COVELLA: Not necessarily, I would make
6 sure that there would be a lookout and --

7 MR. WOODY: At certain times the lookout goes
8 down have other duties to --

9 MR. COVELLA: That, that I would like to see
10 changed, that the lookouts should not have any other
11 duties. Of course, you know, it has been that way for
12 100 years now, where the lookout does perform certain
13 tasks and has to go down, a little early, which
14 shouldn't be.

15 MR. WOODY: You wish he could be, this would
16 be a case you would have the lookout when the vessel
17 would moor.

18 MR. COVELLA: That would be so much better.

19 MR. WOODY: Okay. And your security
20 procedures, I am just curious. You mentioned three
21 names, these are people in the office or are they
22 people in, on the --

23 MR. COVELLA: On the vessel.

24 MR. WOODY: On the vessel.

25 MR. COVELLA: Itself.

1 MR. WOODY: Okay.

2 MR. COVELLA: I am not even sure if the office
3 knows about it. I am sure it has got around, you know,
4 because we do rehearse it.

5 MR. WOODY: And --

6 MR. COVELLA: People on overtime might, they
7 don't the secret, but --

8 MR. WOODY: This small item that popped out,
9 and you lost control of the, was this a wayside
10 problem?

11 MR. COVELLA: Yes, it was.

12 MR. WOODY: Okay.

13 MR. COVELLA: It was some type of leverage
14 switch.

15 MR. WOODY: Okay.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- it was a control --
17 the unit did what it was told to do, it was the control
18 telling it to do things it wasn't suppose to be telling
19 it to do.

20 MR. WOODY: -- the controls --

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No --

22 (Pause.)

23 MR. WOODY: Okay.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Driving the boat, all
25 he knows is the --

1 MR. WOODY: Pneumatic system, you explained.
2 Pneumatic system.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Electric, electric,
4 anything, hydraulics are aboard, the electronics are --

5 MR. WOODY: What is this air thing, your air
6 pressure, though?

7 MR. COVELLA: For the throttle.

8 MR. WOODY: For the throttle.

9 MR. COVELLA: RPMs.

10 MR. WOODY: Okay. That is for the --

11 MR. COVELLA: That has nothing to do with,
12 well, it has something to do with the propulsion, but,
13 it depends on how fast the boat would be in motion.

14 MR. WOODY: Okay. I think all my questions
15 were answered.

16 Oh, three o'clock, that is all passenger load
17 you have on the vessel at that time, three o'clock from
18 Manhattan. Would you say half of the passenger load,
19 two thirds or whatever?

20 MR. COVELLA: Well, she is starting to build
21 up, about four o'clock it starts to build up a little
22 heavy.

23 MR. WOODY: Three o'clock, three o'clock run.

24 MR. COVELLA: Yeah, that is --

25 MR. WOODY: Would it be 50 percent or over 50

1 percent?

2 MR. COVELLA: No, less than 50 percent.

3 MR. WOODY: Less than 50 percent.

4 MR. COVELLA: Yeah. It is a light load.

5 MR. WOODY: Light load.

6 MR. COVELLA: Depending on how many tourists,
7 weather conditions.

8 MR. WOODY: Okay. That is all I have in the
9 way of these kind of questions.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You mentioned when you
11 do a release, the two captains are passing information
12 back and forth between each other, any mechanical
13 problems, a squawk sheet sort of mentality passing off
14 any problems with the performance of the ship. Is
15 there a formalize procedure for that --

16 MR. COVELLA: No.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

18 MR. COVELLA: No, nothing formal. It is just
19 professional courtesy.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What can you tell me
21 about any safety management system that is in place,
22 your impressions of safety management?

23 MR. COVELLA: As far as --

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is there a safety
25 management program in place at the Staten Island

1 Ferries?

2 MR. COVELLA: Oh, yeah, we have, sure, if I
3 was to call the port office and say I am having trouble
4 with the throttles, they put the boat down right away
5 and will fix it.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: In general, though, the
7 safety management system is comprised of say how many
8 manuals, are there any written procedures in place, how
9 do document it?

10 MR. COVELLA: Yeah, we have to, if there is a
11 problem with the boat, we have to fill out a UIR or
12 accidents, we have to --

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What is the UIR?

14 MR. COVELLA: Unusual incident report.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

16 MR. COVELLA: And then we will put a work
17 order in.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And --

19 MR. COVELLA: Or we will personally go to the
20 port office and say this is, this is having a problem,
21 this is having a problem.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Is there a
23 procedure in place for making recommendations for
24 improvements? You mentioned one about the throttles
25 were too far away or the lookout going down below. Is

1 there a process for you to make these recommendations
2 to the Staten Island Ferry, besides verbally telling
3 someone?

4 MR. COVELLA: You mean a written, formal --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Suggestion box.

6 MR. COVELLA: Suggestion box.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So you don't actually
8 have to tell the port office, personally, you just
9 either an e-mail or some form you fill out saying I
10 would like to see the following safety things changed?

11 MR. COVELLA: Well, I guess we could do that.
12 Good suggestions to the port captain.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

14 MR. COVELLA: If you had a problem, talk to
15 Pat Ryan or John Bowman.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And --

17 MR. COVELLA: Everybody wants to see a smooth
18 running vessel.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right. Now the
20 procedures for the Staten Island Ferries, themselves,
21 procedures for loading passengers, operation underway,
22 emergency procedures, where are those documents?

23 MR. COVELLA: Where are they documented?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is there a manual for
25 you to --

1 MR. COVELLA: Yeah, we have a manual.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you describe that
3 manual, how it is set up, how many chapters or sections
4 or just off the top of your head?

5 MR. COVELLA: Quite a bit.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

7 MR. COVELLA: Different safety procedures, DOT
8 would like to see us follow.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And where is
10 that manual normally kept?

11 MR. COVELLA: We have them all over. We might
12 have one on the boat, I am not sure if it is there now
13 or I know I have one personally at home.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. How much training
15 does the Staten Island Ferry provide to you as a
16 captain, person in command, are there any specialized
17 training courses that you take, crowd control, ship
18 handling?

19 MR. COVELLA: As a captain or --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: As a captain or the
21 deck officer, or as an employee in general.

22 MR. COVELLA: They give us training, you know,
23 on different procedures, and we have first aid, CPR,
24 cleanup, if you want to get involved with it. There
25 are training programs. -- informally asked for.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And they seemed
2 to be receptive in --

3 MR. COVELLA: Yes.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Now what license do you
5 currently hold?

6 MR. COVELLA: Inland Master, with several
7 extensions.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And you have
9 several pilot --

10 MR. COVELLA: I have complete -- North River
11 up to Washington Bridge, East River up to Execution
12 Locks.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is that also -- or is
14 that something in your experience, other ferry
15 operators have that level of mileage or is it more the
16 ferries require?

17 MR. COVELLA: The DOT --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: These three extensions
19 that you have, is that required for all the officers?

20 MR. COVELLA: On the Staten Island Ferries?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

22 MR. COVELLA: Yes. It is, if you are going to
23 become permanent. They have made exceptions when you
24 just need the upper bay. But, you won't get the job
25 unless you have the proper pilotage.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Did you go through the
2 STCW training, the basic safety training and some of
3 the other Coast Guard required, STCW courses?

4 MR. COVELLA: No, I didn't take that.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you have any
6 knowledge of any other deck officers or captains taking
7 those courses?

8 MR. COVELLA: Some of them that are young and
9 feel that it is going to be mandatory. I happen to be
10 a few years out of retirement. I don't know if it is
11 going to be required, but when they do require, I am
12 not going to be working anymore.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And can you just tell
14 briefly about the VHF radios on the bridge, normally
15 what VHF channels do you operate on?

16 MR. COVELLA: Channel 13, 14, and 19.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And who are listening
18 to those, what is --

19 MR. COVELLA: Well, Channel 13 is all the
20 ships in the local area.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

22 MR. COVELLA: Channel 14 is the vessel
23 traffic.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

25 MR. COVELLA: And Channel 19 is our --

1 channel, which we share with another company, that
2 don't speak English.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Is there
4 anything you would like to add or make us aware of or
5 any suggestions or recommendations and questions that
6 you would like to --

7 MR. COVELLA: Well, if you can get us our own
8 separate channel, that would be appreciated. I don't
9 think in our emergency situation, we have to wait for
10 another oil barge transfer fuel or something. We
11 should have priority over --

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: A house channel.

13 MR. COVELLA: Sure, I wish we would have, I
14 mean, this is a major operation. Moving a million
15 people a year. We should have our own house channel.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

17 MR. COVELLA: Clear communications, not
18 waiting for anybody and there is no, no interference
19 with our communication.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is this something --

21 MR. COVELLA: Of course, they are also
22 listening to our scenarios.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do the other captains
24 expressed the same view?

25 MR. COVELLA: I think so.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Anymore, do you think
2 we should talk to the --

3 MR. COVELLA: The only one is Richie Smith. I
4 am thoroughly convinced he passed out. It is the only
5 explanation I can give you.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

7 MR. COVELLA: Whether it is medical, I am
8 shocked. I am shocked with this whole situation. And
9 I have been praying for him and his family and dead and
10 injured. It is beyond belief. It is something we, it
11 is our nightmare, what happened.

12 MR. TURRELL: Well, thank you for your time
13 and if there is no other --

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: One other thing, work
15 orders, you mentioned the work orders. Do you do all
16 the work orders for repairs on the boat?

17 MR. COVELLA: Me, personally?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

19 MR. COVELLA: No. The assistant captain or
20 the mate or I could do, anyone in the department can.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can do it. Okay.

22 MR. COVELLA: If it is something related to
23 gates or wind -- down on the main deck, the mate will
24 fill out --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- takes

1 responsibility.

2 MR. COVELLA: He might ask me to sign it and I
3 will sign it, but, he will do the initial filling out.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

5 MR. TURRELL: Actually, our human performance,
6 Bill Woody, is going to ask you a few questions.

7 MR. WOODY: We always ask this, it is just a
8 custom that we do. We are always interested in the
9 mariner's health and what they are doing.

10 Do you have any, are you under a doctor's
11 care? I know you have the mouth right now, being to
12 the dentist, but before this happened, were you under,
13 did you have prior abscesses, for example?

14 MR. COVELLA: Prior abscesses?

15 MR. WOODY: Right, to --

16 MR. COVELLA: No, this is the first time it
17 ever happened to me.

18 MR. WOODY: Okay. Did you have any previous
19 problems or treatment of physician, say for the past
20 year?

21 MR. COVELLA: That would impair my
22 performance. Nothing, nothing that mentally that
23 would, no. I am, I keep myself in pretty good shape.

24 MR. WOODY: Okay.

25 MR. COVELLA: And I am healthy.

1 MR. WOODY: Are you taking any medication such
2 as for blood pressure, any diabetes --

3 MR. COVELLA: No.

4 MR. WOODY: -- or anything like this?

5 MR. COVELLA: No, thank God, I have no
6 illnesses.

7 MR. WOODY: No, you don't take any
8 medications.

9 MR. COVELLA: No. I haven't had a drink of
10 alcohol in 18 years. I will not drink or take any
11 drugs at all.

12 MR. WOODY: Okay.

13 MR. COVELLA: Now he gave me pain killers and
14 I didn't even get the prescription filled for fear that
15 it would show up in the blood testing. Or I didn't
16 want it to interfere with my --

17 MR. WOODY: Last question we have, do you wear
18 glasses when you are on the job?

19 MR. COVELLA: I have reading glasses. I need
20 them for reading.

21 MR. WOODY: Not for distance.

22 MR. COVELLA: No, just close. In your age,
23 that is the second thing that goes.

24 MR. WOODY: And you had sleep and rest. Do
25 you have a normal time you go to bed at night,

1 typically during the week when you are working?

2 MR. COVELLA: I love to go to sleep.

3 MR. WOODY: What time do you retire?

4 MR. COVELLA: I, well, when I am working 1:30
5 to 9:30, as soon as I get home, I will shower, or
6 wash, brush my teeth and hit the hay.

7 MR. WOODY: Okay. And this would be getting
8 home like 11:30 or 12:00, something like that.

9 MR. COVELLA: On some nights. Other nights it
10 is early, I get home 10 o'clock, 10:30.

11 MR. WOODY: Okay. So you would be in bed
12 around 11 or 11:30 than probably.

13 MR. COVELLA: Oh, the latest, yes.

14 MR. WOODY: The latest. And what time do you
15 typically get up in the morning?

16 MR. COVELLA: Depending upon if I have to do
17 something. But, normally --

18 MR. WOODY: If you are going to go into work
19 at 1:30.

20 MR. COVELLA: Seven, seven o'clock.

21 MR. WOODY: Seven o'clock.

22 MR. COVELLA: Yeah.

23 MR. WOODY: Okay.

24 MR. COVELLA: I like seven o'clock.

25 MR. WOODY: As I say we are always interested

1 in just sort of maybe a little sample of how people
2 regard their health and how they are resting and
3 things, that is why we have to question you.

4 MR. COVELLA: Yeah, no, I understand that,
5 sure. When you have an important --

6 MR. WOODY: Thank you very much.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The last question, does
8 the Staten Island Ferries requires physicals for their
9 employees?

10 MR. COVELLA: Require, well, the Coast Guard
11 requires an annual physical.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

13 MR. COVELLA: Yeah.

14 MR. TURRELL: I have no other questions and
15 that concluded the interview. And I thank you for your
16 time. And there maybe some other questions in the
17 future and we may ask you for a follow up interview, I
18 just want you aware of that. And this interviewed is
19 recorded. Thanks very much.

20 MR. COVELLA: All right.

21 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)