

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of:                    )  
  )  
  )  
ANDREW J. BARBERI                    ) DCA 04MM001  
  )

New York, New York

Thursday,  
October 16, 2003

The above-entitled matter came on for the  
Interview of Panteleimon Koutsoulis, pursuant to  
Notice, at 4:00 p.m.

APPEARANCES:

For the National Transportation Safety Board:

BRIAN CURTIS

For the United States Coast Guard:

DAVE PARKER

For the New York City Department of  
Transportation:

SEAN MCDERMOTT

## I N D E X

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

4:20 p.m.

MR. CURTIS: Good afternoon. It's October 16, 2003 at 4:20 p.m. and we're here to interview the oiler on the Andrew J. Barberi, Mr. Pete --

THE WITNESS: K-o-u-t-s-o-u-l-i-a-s.

MR. CURTIS: The way we'll do the interview, first we'll all go around and identify ourselves and our affiliation and then we'll go around the table asking questions regarding the accident. We'll go around once and if need be, we'll go around again.

The intent of the investigation is not legal, it's to find out what happened in the accident from a safety standpoint, to hopefully prevent it from happening again and we believe you may possibly have some information that could help us in the investigation. If you're ready, we'll get started.

THE WITNESS: Yes, I am.

MR. CURTIS: Any questions you have before we get started?

THE WITNESS: No, not really.

MR. CURTIS: My name is Brian Curtis, I'm with the NTSB and I'm a Marine Engineering Accident Investigator.

MR. PARKER: Dave Parker with the Coast Guard

1 down here at Fort Wodsowich, Vessel Inspections,  
2 Inspection Branch.

3 THE WITNESS: Nice to meet you guys.

4 MR. CURTIS: Just state your name, Pete, for  
5 the record.

6 THE WITNESS: Say that again?

7 MR. CURTIS: Just say your name and your  
8 title.

9 THE WITNESS: Oh, okay. My title is Marine  
10 Oiler and my name is Pete Koutsoulis.

11 MR. MCDERMOTT: This is Sean McDermott,  
12 Staten Island Ferry DOT Engineering.

13 EXAMINATION

14 BY MR. CURTIS:

15 Q Pete, as I said, this is Brian Curtis. Your  
16 rating and what you have for documentation or  
17 licensing?

18 A I don't have a license. I do have the United  
19 States (inaudible) document.

20 Q Any rating documentation for oiler?

21 A No.

22 Q How long have you been employed by the DOT?

23 A Two years.

24 Q During that time it was always as oiler?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Which vessels have you worked on, all of them  
2 or pretty much one vessel?

3 A All of them.

4 Q So you've been on the Andrew J. several  
5 times?

6 A Yes.

7 Q What I'd like to have you do is I won't  
8 interrupt you, I'll just let you go through from when  
9 you relieved the watch, anything that happened  
10 abnormally during the watch and then once the accident  
11 occurred, what you felt, saw, smelled, heard and what  
12 you did once it did occur. Just go ahead.

13 A Okay. So you want me to describe whatever  
14 happened?

15 Q Yes, and you can start from basically when  
16 you relieved the watch.

17 A Okay. We came on board about I would say  
18 1:25. We did the first trip and for an hour, I spent  
19 -- I would say I spent about an hour to make my round.  
20 First I made my round through the engine room to make  
21 sure everything was running normal.

22 Then I went to the end, New York end and  
23 Staten Island end, to make sure also everything is okay  
24 with the propulsion systems over there and everything  
25 was fine everywhere, in the engine room and also in the

1 end.

2           We came back from the City I guess about  
3 2:25. We made -- then we made the 2:30 trip.  
4 Everything was normal, it was a routine trip as always,  
5 like every day.

6           On the way back to Staten Island I was in the  
7 control room and all of a sudden we felt and heard the  
8 hit. There was not really signs of anything,  
9 everything was normal, the sound of the engines like it  
10 is underway. It happened so fast, we almost fell off  
11 the chairs.

12           As soon as we hit something, we don't know  
13 what, the noise got worse and worse. Then the Chief  
14 said I want you guys to check all the compartments,  
15 check for any damages or flooding. I remember myself  
16 going to the (inaudible), the forward (inaudible),  
17 everything was fine there.

18           I went to the (inaudible) were the sewage  
19 tank is, everything was fine there. I checked the  
20 gauges, all the gauges for the main engines, everything  
21 was fine, we didn't lose power. Oil pressures were  
22 fine and I noticed in the middle of the engine room  
23 there's an access door, it's not a regular door, above  
24 the main engines. That door broke apart, so I guess --  
25 we had like dust in the engine room. I guess the dust

1 came in from that opening.

2 My next reaction was we didn't lose power,  
3 everything was running good, main engines, generators,  
4 everything. So my next reaction was to go to the exit.

5 As soon as I opened the engine room door to the main  
6 deck, what a mess.

7 I saw the bent steel beams, the port side of  
8 the vessel broken apart. Further down I saw a woman  
9 with no legs, alive and screaming and I went back to  
10 notify the Chief.

11 Personally, when I saw that mess I realized  
12 what happened. I realized we hit the dock. We didn't  
13 know that happened right away, so I said to my Chief  
14 everything looks normal, there is no flooding, sea  
15 water nowhere and the Chief said stand by here, make  
16 sure everything is okay, so I stayed down below.  
17 Pretty much that's it.

18 Q Okay. When you went up there above the deck,  
19 did Trevor go with you or were you alone at that point,  
20 when the Chief sent you out to look?

21 A I remember the other oiler was with me,  
22 Richard.

23 Q I'm sorry, the other oiler. Okay. Once you  
24 went back below in the engine room, what did you do  
25 down there, just stood by?

1           A     Yes.  Also we had -- because of the hit, we  
2 had a minor potable -- I guess, I think it was a  
3 potable water leak.

4           Q     Do you know what pipe that leak was coming  
5 from?  Where was it coming into the engine room?

6           A     Well, the potable water system is located on  
7 the same side of the impact.  I have the feeling -- I  
8 don't know, I have the feeling the potable water pipe  
9 was maybe the same level with the main deck or  
10 something like that.

11          Q     Was the water coming down into the engine  
12 room?

13          A     Yeah, but not anything major.

14          Q     Did you secure that or what did you have to  
15 do to stop that?

16          A     Not me.  I think the Marine Engineer secured  
17 the potable water system.

18          Q     Sound power phones, did you notice anybody  
19 speaking on those before the accident?  Do you know if  
20 they were working so they could converse with the  
21 bridge?

22          A     Yeah, everything was working.

23          Q     After the accident did you notice them having  
24 trouble with the phone power?

25          A     Yeah, we had no communication.



1 Q So the sound power phone wasn't working?

2 A No.

3 Q Do you know if that was with one pilot house  
4 or both of them?

5 A I'm not sure.

6 Q Your watch schedule, what do you have for a  
7 schedule, what days do you work?

8 A Yesterday was my day off. My regular boat is  
9 the JFK, but yesterday they called me early in the  
10 morning to cover for another guy on the Andrew J.  
11 Barberi.

12 MR. CURTIS: That's all I have right now.  
13 I'll turn over to Dave.

14 MR. PARKER: Dave Parker with the Coast  
15 Guard. I don't really have a lot to ask. You've  
16 covered most if not all of the questions I had in mind.

17 EXAMINATION

18 BY MR. PARKER:

19 Q Just to further clarify, there was no change  
20 of any conditions in the engine room up until the point  
21 that you actually heard the ship striking something?  
22 Everything was just as though you were on a normal run?

23 A Yes, it was a normal run.

24 Q No change in engine pitches, no change in  
25 engine noise?

1 A Nothing at all.

2 Q Nothing?

3 A Nothing at all.

4 Q So you could have been in the middle of the  
5 harbor, as far as you knew?

6 A Yes. We didn't know -- personally, I thought  
7 we hit something in the middle of the harbor.

8 Q It wasn't until you got up to the actual main  
9 deck when you saw that the side had been --

10 A Yes. Then I realized -- well, I realized, I  
11 saw the deck.

12 Q You were inside the control room you said?

13 A Yes.

14 Q So you didn't hear any alarms, no bells, no  
15 nothing?

16 A No nothing.

17 MR. PARKER: Okay. Thanks.

18 MR. CURTIS: Sean?

19 EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. MCDERMOTT:

21 Q Let me take a quick look at my notes, Pete,  
22 to make sure we covered everything.

23 A Yes.

24 Q This is Sean McDermott. Pete, would you have  
25 noticed or been aware when you started to hit and

1 started to hear the noise what the pitch unit was?  
2 Where you were positioned, were you by the console that  
3 you could have seen the meter tell you if the thrust  
4 was pushing you one way or the other? Did anybody  
5 comment on anything to tell you at that time what the  
6 propulsion unit was doing?

7 A I didn't see the thrust.

8 Q Okay.

9 A I didn't see the thrust, but I did not notice  
10 any changes of the speed of the engines. I can't  
11 believe it. After the hit still we didn't lose power,  
12 everything was normal. I still can't believe it.

13 Q Pete, you know, you work that boat regular,  
14 correct? Were you regularly assigned to that boat last  
15 bid or recently?

16 A Yes.

17 Q You worked it four days a week?

18 A Yes. I was there for nine months, I think.

19 Q So you know the sound of the engines,  
20 correct? When somebody is pushing it a little bit  
21 faster or if they're going a little bit slower?

22 A Oh, yes. Sure.

23 Q How would you characterize the sound of the  
24 engines when you were going across that day on that  
25 trip? There wasn't anything that you would have noted

1 that it was hot or anything or that it was being  
2 pushed, the sound?

3 A The sound was normal, like the sound is  
4 underway.

5 Q And you don't think he was pushing it in any  
6 way at that time, trying to go fast, make up a little  
7 time? It didn't sound like he was going fast, right?

8 A No. No. Everything was absolutely normal.  
9 Perfect.

10 Q Do you recall after you hit if you got any  
11 alarms? At first when you hit or real close to that  
12 time did any alarms go off? I know it might be hard to  
13 remember.

14 A Well, after the hit, the only problems we  
15 had, two problems: one was the minor -- the small  
16 potable water leak and the other was also we had an air  
17 leak from the air receivers.

18 Q The starting air?

19 A The starting air, yes. That alarm went off.  
20 The starting air -- main engines starting air  
21 pressure. I checked, everybody checked the receivers.  
22 The receivers were fine, both compressors. There was  
23 an air line broken somewhere, we don't know where. I  
24 don't know, I was trying to trace the system, but --

25 MR. CURTIS: There's an air line on the end

1 of the boat there.

2 MR. PARKER: The deck air, right?

3 MR. MCDERMOTT: This is Sean McDermott.

4 There is an air line on the end of the boat.

5 MR. PARKER: That comes from the starting  
6 system?

7 MR. MCDERMOTT: It would be station air.  
8 That's it.

9 MR. CURTIS: Well, I guess that's all we  
10 have, Pete. I appreciate your time today. The time  
11 now is 4:40 p.m. and this concludes the interview.

12 I want to thank you for coming in today and  
13 helping us out.

14 THE WITNESS: No problem.

15 (Whereupon, at 4:40 p.m. the interview was  
16 concluded.)

17