UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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

New York, New York

Friday,
October 17, 2003

The above-entitled matter came on for the Interview of Sean McDermott, pursuant to Notice, at 1:45 p.m.

APPEARANCES:

For the National Transportation Safety Board:

BRIAN CURTIS

For the United States Coast Guard:

DAVE PARKER

For the New York City Police Department:

MICHAEL DIBENEDETTO

I N D E X

P R O C E E D I N G S

1:45 p.m.

MR. CURTIS: Good afternoon. It's October 17 at 1:45 p.m. We're here to do an interview with Sean McDermott of Staten Island Ferry Service, DOT. His title is --

THE WITNESS: Civil Service title is Chief Marine Engineer.

MR. CURTIS: -- Chief Marine Engineer. We've been through the ground rules of the interview previous to this. I just want to remind Sean that this isn't a legal investigation, we're not here to lay blame to a parties or persons, we're just here to hopefully find out what caused the accident and hopefully not to have it happen again.

We'll go around the table and identify ourselves, who is in the room, then we'll begin the questioning. I'm Brian Curtis with the NTSB, Marine Engineering Accident Investigator.

MR. PARKER: Dave Parker with the Coast Guard, Vessel Inspections.

MR. DIBENEDETTO: Detective Mike Dibenedetto with the New York City Police Department.

THE WITNESS: Sean McDermott, Staten Island Ferry, New York City DOT.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. CURTIS:

Q Okay, Sean, to being with, how long have you been employed by the DOT?

A Since March of 1984.

Q A quick scenario or overview of what, when and where with those jobs through the years?

A I came on board in 1984 as a Marine Engineer, a provisional appointment. In 1986 I was promoted to Chief Engineer and have served as a Chief Engineer since that time. I have served on the vessel, I have served as a Port Engineer and am currently working as a Project Engineer on the new ferry construction, but I also assist from time-to-time engineering personnel at the facility here. Assist where needed.

Q So you're basically Monday through Friday or weekends?

A I am Monday through Friday from usually 6:00 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon. Currently two weeks a month I go out to Wisconsin to the shipyard to perform inspections on the new vessels and work with the design team.

Q Regarding the accident, how did you find out about it? How were you notified?

A I guess it was somewhere around 3:25, I know

it was that time because I was getting ready to finish up for the day and just as I was wrapping up things on my desk, I got a phone call from Ralph McKenzie to quickly come out to the end of the pier, B-2 South.

I hung up the phone, ran downstairs, not aware of what had occurred and when I looked down to the end of the pier I had seen the Barberi now adrift. Well, it looked like she was adrift.

At this time I was looking at what would have been the -- if the New York end is the bow, I was looking at the starboard side, the second that had not been damaged. I was not aware of what had occurred at that time.

Then at that time I had gotten to the end of the pier and I had seen the tug boat had come along side and was assisting the vessel, no lines on board, but it was just pushing it clear, so I did not know if they had any propulsion.

Then at one point I recognized that I saw a wash from the stern and I had seen that she was under her own power. I could then look across and I had seen that the pier was damaged, the sections in the water, and then I just saw the vessel proceed over to 5 Slip in Saint George.

I then went over to 5 Slip and boarded the

vessel and I went directly down below to the engineering space. I did not see anything on the deck, other than from what was now the New York end of the boat to the engine room door. I then went directly down below to inspect the engineering space and see what conditions there were down below.

Q Who did you see down there?

A In the control room at that time was Marine Engineer Kevin Douherty. At this time I could look down the deck and I had seen that there was considerable damage, but when I saw Trevor, I could see in his face as soon as I entered the control room, that he was quite flushed and he said that things were bad.

I asked him if he was okay, he was alright. I asked him where everybody was at that time. I can recall looking at the board just to see what the status of the plant was and everything looked normal at that time, quite briefly. I asked him if everything was okay with the plant, he said yes.

I asked him if anything had happened in engineering space at that time and he said no. I recall asking if there was any communication with the bridge at any time to say that there was any problem and he said no, there was no communication down below.

Then at that time I had observed that the

compressed air pressure was low, I think they had an alarm. I looked up and I saw both air compressors were running. By this time some other people from the shore side gang had come on board the vessel, so I took over -- at that time I kind of took over the watch, not in an official sense, but I told Trevor that I would take care of things. I saw that he was troubled.

As people came down, I directed them to check the air compressor, just to take a quick walk around, check the status of the plant, check the generators, see if everything was okay down below.

Q Did he say where the others were, whether they were in the engine room or had gone top side at that point?

A I believe they were up top side. Something tells me that I saw Charles Covella, Charlie Covella, Chief Covella, up on the main deck.

The other Oilers, I remember at some point seeing Pete Koutsoulias I believe down below, but at that time I had had other Marine Oilers that were on board the vessel that were assisting.

Q So you didn't assist with the injuries?

A I did not go top side.

Q Regarding the vessels, how many classes are there and how many vessels in each class?

A I'll start with the oldest vessels, which are the Kennedy Class. They were put into service in 1965. There are three vessels in the Kennedy Class, they are diesel/electric, carry approximately 3,500 passengers.

The next class of vessel is the Barberi Class, put into service I guess in 1981, I'd have to clarify that, but it was the early '80s, 6,000 passengers.

Q How many are there of them?

A There are two vessels in that class, the Barberi ferry boat, Andrew J. Barberi and the ferry boat Neuhaus. The Barberi was delivered first and the Neuhaus came into service some time after her. She's direct drive diesel.

Q I'm sorry, the direct drive diesel are the --

A The Barberi Class, as far as the propulsion system.

Q Okay.

A They carry 6,000 passengers and then the next vessel to come into the fleet was the Austin Class. She carries approximately 1,500 people, 1,400, something around that. She is also a direct drive Voyt propulsion.

Q What did you call it propulsion?

A Voyt. She's similar to the Barberi. It's a

smaller unit, but she's Voyt, again 1984, somewhere around there she was put into service. She's strictly used at this time for night service, the Austin Class.

Q How many Austin Class?

A Two vessels. She normally runs from 11:00 at night until 6:00 in the morning.

Q The names of those in the Austin Class?

A The Alice Austin and the John Noble. She's 207 feet long, the Barberi is 310 and the Kennedy is 294. All of them have -- Kennedy has a beam of 69 feet and the Barberi has a beam of 70 feet,

Q The Austin?

A I'd have to check on that.

Q The names of the Kennedy Class?

A The John F. Kennedy, the Herbert H. Lehman and the American Legion.

Q Later I'll get the spec sheet on horsepower and all that.

A Yes. I'd use the COI and go by that. The Barberi and the Kennedy draw somewhere in the range of 15 feet, roughly. That's a safe number on the draft. The Barberi and Kennedy about 13, the Austin I guess somewhere around 8 feet.

Q That's a total of seven vessels?

A Correct. And of course they reminded me

yesterday of the Cosgrove.

Q We won't count that, since it's really --

A It's not a passenger carrier per se. We've never had a complaint yet.

Q Employees, as far as new hires, what is the criteria or the screening process for crew members, engineering?

A Engineering space, beginning with the Chief Engineer, he would be required to have U.S. Coast Guard documentation for Chief Engineer. I guess it's near coastal or inland waters. I would say Chief Engineer is inland waters/near coastal. That would be in terms of the minimum requirements.

The Marine Engineer at this time is considered an Assistant Engineer.

Q Whose requirement is?

A It's an inland water designation, it's not the full Third Assistant. I would have to check on that, but it's the inland water title that they have now.

Q Okay.

A The Marine Oilers, they are non-certified, non-documented, but in order to be employed they would have to have a minimum of two years of experience to be hired.

Q Is that processed through your office, the hirings?

A Unless it is a civil service position, it is done through the in-house personnel and the hiring is done through the Ferry, yes.

Q Getting into the maintenance systems now, you don't have an SMS system per se, but what do you have for your maintenance organization record keeping?

A We have a database which is a system which is Paradox, it's a Microsoft system that was developed during the '90s and it tracks all of our maintenance and repair records by vessel. It also tracks it by of course the date, who had submitted the record and by trade. It gives a description of the work that was performed.

We also track the work that is performed during the annual inspection and repair periods. Once a year normally the vessel comes out for annual inspection and there is also documents in the system that provide -- to show the work that was performed.

Q Does it kick out like preventative maintenance, upcoming maintenance due or just --

A No, it's not an active system in terms of that respect. It is done as a manual type of thing where we keep track of the 500-hour services that are

performed in the preventative periods, the oil hours, the oil changes. These types of things we keep in a manual type basis, in terms of by paper.

Q And those are kept --

A Those are kept through the Port Engineer's Office.

Q By vessel?

A This is by vessel, yes.

Q On that sheet it has basically what was done last so you can tell what is due next?

A That's correct.

Q If the vessel had a problem, say a propulsion problem, a small propulsion problem, how would you know about that? Say it's just a small problem, how would that go through the system?

A Of course if it was on the vessel, the engineer would of course be aware of the problem. If it was a minor problem that could wait, say a gauge was not operating, it wasn't a safety concern, he would fill out what we call a work request form if it wasn't a priority and the work document would then be filled out by the Chief Engineer.

On that form you would explain what the problem was and he could -- instead of just describing what the problem was, he could offer some

troubleshooting or direct what might be done.

That form then comes out to the Port Engineer. The Port Engineer sort of assesses it and prioritizes it. The Port Engineer then brings the document down to the facility where it would be given to Ralph McKenzie, the Deputy Director of Engineering. A copy would also be given to be used for the database entry on this record system and then that document would be brought to the morning repair meeting which is held at 8:00 in the morning.

At the morning meeting a copy would be presented to the trade that would be responsible for effecting the repairs and then that document would be discussed at the repair meeting in terms of what was needed.

Q Then it's processed.

A Right.

Q So the crew themselves don't do too much maintenance, it's mostly the repair shop here that does the vessel maintenance?

A The preventative maintenance, given the oil change hours, fluids, that would be done by the crew, but in terms of the mechanical side, preventative maintenance in terms of if there's some sort of internal mechanical work that would be done, that would

be done by in-house trades.

Q Okay.

A Just to clarify, you said if there was a propulsion problem, if there was something --

Q Yes. Say it's a major issue.

A If there is a safety concern, the Chief Engineer or through the pilot house would, via radio or land line if he went to the dock office, he would immediately notify the Port Engineer's Office.

Q Has a safety concern been issued yet or no?

A No. It's almost like instead of -- you're not going to submit a document, you're going to perform a verbal communication to the shore side personnel.

Q Oh, okay.

A That would probably be the Port Engineer or it could come directly to Ralph McKenzie. At that time the Port Engineers would assess the problem and immediately the trades would be notified that there was a problem and often as soon as the vessel arrives, there are personnel standing by on the dock to take a look at the problem and assess what needs to be done.

If there is a serious enough problem at that time, the Chief Engineer or the judgment on board or if we feel that there is a problem enough that the Coast Guard ought to be notified, a 2692 has to be developed

and sent in, but the Chief Engineer or the Engineer on the vessel would make the determination whether the vessel could continue to operate.

Q The 2692, what's the criteria for your facility operation to submit a 2692 to the Coast Guard?

A I'm not going to speak for the Department because I'm not at the waterfront right now, I don't know what the relationship is, but certainly any time there is a loss of power, any mechanical failure or if there is any situation that results in an injury or again, if there is any major problem, machinery loss problem or damage the Coast Guard would be notified by a 2692.

A 2692, I think currently they fill it out and they actually fax it over to them. In addition, sometimes they will call the duty desk and inform them that they have a problem, so there is sometimes often verbal communication as well.

Q How long have you had the Paradox system in place? Has it been there a while?

A I'm going to guess some time around -- it was certainly in place by the mid '90s.

Q And the Paradox system is housed in the facilities here?

A It's in the building here, yes. And it's

also accessible by the Port Engineers through the local area network that we have in-house.

Q Regarding this vessel particularly and past propulsion problems, are you familiar any?

A I am.

Q Those were?

A The ones I was directly involved with, back in '91 I was a Port Engineer at the time and we had what turned out to be a bad connection in one of the connection jacks that are used on the system and it resulted in a steering command which at this time was -- I can't recall which end of the vessel.

It was only one end of the vessel and what was happening was that during maneuvering conditions, whichever propulsion was affected, you would get a steering command, which means a port or starboard. It was not a thrust problem, it was a steering problem and that caused it -- at that time the vessel was docking in New York and they got this false signal and it caused the vessel, the aft section of the vessel to go towards the Coast Guard facility that's there now and it hit their pier.

There was some structural damage, there was a small hole punched on the Staten Island end of the vessel.

Q No injuries?

A No, there were no injuries. There was another period when I was just the Chief Engineer on the vessel, at that time they were approaching Staten Island, there is a control rod that is attached to the unit that actuate the -- in this case it was thrust, this time on the New York end, and there was a linkage that had slipped and it resulted in that unit, that New York end propulsion unit from going to the stop, it continued to go ahead and on that occasion there they hit the dock hard, excessively hard.

I believe there were some injuries in that case. It was severe enough, the damage to the vessel, the aprons had come into the doors on the saloon deck, it was obvious he had pushed the bridge out.

Q There may have been injuries on that one?

A Not serious.

Q When was that?

MR. PARKER: Was it in '85?

THE WITNESS: In '85.

MR. PARKER: What was the matter there?

THE WITNESS: That was a slipped linkage. That is what I can recall, Dave, as far as being --

MR. PARKER: It was a while ago. I vaguely remember that one too.

BY MR. CURTIS:

Q So it hit the dock?

A That's right.

Q What did it do for damage?

A The saloon deck doors were damaged. The damage was to the saloon deck doors, the aprons had come up onto the boat and had damaged the doors. That was the only two events that I can remember.

Q Regarding these two particular propulsion units, were they on the vessel from new make? Were they original?

A Yes, they are. They're original equipment.

Q Are you aware, have they had a major overhaul?

A The Barberi Class Voyt propulsion units were overhauled in late 2001, I believe, some time in the period mid to late 2001, because she was out of service and she came back into service in 2002. Meaning that the turntables were dropped, all the blades were replaced and actually the turntables had shown some erosion due to the salt water service and new tables were replaced.

At that time, that means all the internals, including the gears, all the bushings and bearings were inspected. A lot of that equipment was replaced.

Q Was there a service report we could possibly get from that?

A I will see what we can do as far as that, yes.

Q But the overall condition, they didn't find any major wear problems or anything?

A No, that's correct.

Q Have there been any significant modifications to the unit over the years or is it pretty much as new make?

A It would be new make, no modifications. The only overhaul that was done on the control side was back in '95. In 1995 all of the control elements, meaning the controls up in the pilot house, from the steering wheels, on the control side not on the mechanical side, all of those controls, meters, meaning the indicators, pitch meters, indicators, all of the actuators from the pilot house were overhauled with many new parts replaced and that was done on both the vessels, both propulsion. I kind of remember the '95, '96 period as far as that occurring between the two vessels during their shipyard availabilities.

Q Other than those --

A Other than the upgrades, there have been no modifications or upgrades to the unit and it was all

the same material, manufacturer's parts that were returned to the unit. I'm not aware of any changes.

MR. CURTIS: I guess I'm going to stop for now and give the others a chance. Go ahead, Dave.

MR. PARKER: Dave Parker with the Coast Guard.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. PARKER:

Q I just wanted to expand on some of the things you were talking about.

A Sure.

Q Problem reports and work orders, for instance. If you had something that was reported as a derangement of equipment or machinery, is there a program in place or a procedure in place here with the organization that would follow up on insuring that that was actually corrected, that whatever the problem was that was reported was actually carried through to completion?

A Yes, there is. There is a -- once the -- I guess you'd break it down by vessel record, this Paradox system. On that same form, in addition to identifying the vessel and what the problem is, it also shows its status. It also shows its priority and then if something is not completed or if there has been a

work order done, there is that information that would show on it the follow up work where the job was completed.

The foreman, on the bottom of the sheet he would also show I believe some record of what the corrective action was at the time, what work was done.

Q If a job was planned or requested by a boat to be done, does this reporting system kick out an overdue list? Say if within your job you say you're going to fix this by Wednesday and Wednesday has come and gone and it hasn't been fixed yet. Does it flag it and say wait a minute, we haven't finished something?

A Every day at the meeting the Deputy Director who chairs the meeting, he has the status of each piece of equipment, any job work order and he would be privy to what job was not completed, what remained on the list and he would address it at that time to show why hadn't it been done.

Q So he keeps overall track of the big picture?

A That's correct. In addition, on a daily basis that trade foreman also has a list of jobs that he would have and that record is updated, so at the meeting they would go down the list and check off which jobs are completed and then that is fed back into the system to show that the jobs were completed. So the

foremen as well get a record of each job that they have tasked to them.

Q And that would be for everything that's requested of a boat then, right?

A That's correct.

Q Do you know if there's anything like that around for the Barberi for like the past week or so?

A I have given the National Transportation Safety Board for the last 30 days for the vessel, I have given a list of --

Q Oh, you did already. Good. That was that work order stack?

A It was a work order pack, which would show that database and how it's formatted.

Q Okay. So it will give an idea of what was planned for that particular boat?

A That's correct, any work orders that were submitted.

Q Okay.

A I should note that any outstanding or remaining items that are deferred to a future time, they are also recorded whether that would be done during the shipyard period, so we also have a list of items that would come at a later time, so they are scheduled for that longer availability.

Q Planned for future work?

A That's correct.

Q For NTSB's sake, the previous Coast Guard reports, which is similar to -- quite a few companies do self-inspection programs, that would refer to your self-inspection program?

A Correct.

Q Could you expand on that, what is that all about and how to you verify the condition of the vessel? Like you say it's in a certain condition, how is it verified that it's actually in that condition?

A On a quarterly basis we go through U.S. Coast Guard quarterly inspections. Approximately two weeks to a week and a half before that is scheduled with the Coast Guard the crew on the vessel is given a form from the Port Office and it lists all of the items on each piece of equipment, the safety items that would be inspected during that quarterly inspection.

Then what the crew is tasked to do is to go to each piece of equipment or unit that's identified and perform the inspections. Such as on the main engines, the alarms would be tested as far as low lube oil pressure, there would be inspections for the high speed, on the generators similar types of inspections, on the boilers there would be inspections as well, as

far as all the safety shut downs.

There is inspections of the fire fighting equipment, all the safety equipment, so it's broken down by --

Q Steering and maneuverability?

A The steering and maneuverability is also performed, but it also is performed on a weekly basis by the crews. They also do what we call a steering drill and their fire and boat drill on a weekly basis.

But during the pre-Coast Guard inspection they would also test what we call the backup steering systems, including the telegram, sound powered phones.

So that crew that is assigned to the vessel, meaning the different watches coordinate their efforts and as they go through the items, they document what kind of condition it's in, whether it's satisfactory and passed the test.

Then once that is done, that is held on the vessel during the Coast Guard inspection and is reviewed by the Coast Guard.

Q Just to clarify, this boat was due for a quarterly two days ago, on the day of the accident or the day following the accident or something like that, right?

A The day following the accident. I did not

directly see the inspection, but I know that there was a report that had been -- this pre-Coast Guard list, report, was on the vessel. It had been performed and the document had been completed and I believe that has been submitted. We have a copy I think that's available, I'm not sure if it's been forwarded to NTSB.

Q The 2692, I just wanted to add also that for navigational issues, if something was impacting the vessel for navigation problems, radars, radios, anything that would have to do with maneuvering through the port, the port is a vessel traffic service port, so anything has to do with 33 CFR requirements for navigation would also come under 2692 issues.

A That's correct. Often times the Captain, even during that period when he might have a problem, he would also notify vessel traffic. What Dave has stated is true and I overlooked it, but there would be communication out to the Coast Guard as well.

Q If this is an after hours item, there would be a verbal report, followed up in the morning by a faxed copy of the 2692.

A That's correct. There would be a call to the duty desk after hours.

Q What I didn't get from you, though, is it's pretty clear what you do during work days, normal

working hours for reporting of problems and handling problems, but what do you have in place for after hours?

It's a 24-hour operation, so if something happens after the normal business hours are over, what would be in place to support the vessel and the crew at those times if there was a problem on the boat?

A All of the supervisory personnel have both pages and Nextels and if there is -- during after hours if there are any problems or safety concerns that need to be addressed immediately, one of the supervisory personnel is called, normally it would be either Captain Ryan or Ralph McKenzie.

They would be informed of the problem, they would immediately notify the support trades that might be needed to assist with the problem. Those personnel -- the supervisors of each trade are provided with Nextels and beepers and pages as well. They would be called in and once on site, there would be the normal follow up and repair as we would do during the day.

If it was immediate, we would take the vessel out of service and perform the repair. If it was something that could wait, if it wasn't a safety concern, then it would be done after the vessel came out of service and that could be during the midnight

hours, when the vessel is not normally running. It could be repaired before the vessel is returned to service in the morning.

Q Like the military has a duty section, you folks also have crews on call around the clock?

A That is one of the responsibilities, as far as the supervisory personnel, yes.

Q Then the last would be for ranking or prioritizing issues. Is that largely left up to the reporting person, whether it be the Master or the Chief Engineer of the vessel?

A It would be done by either Ralph or the Port Office, whether it was safety concern -- any safety concerns would be given an "A" priority, meaning that it would be done immediately. I would have to check on the grading system. "B" would be sort of a normal scheduled item during the next tie up period and "C" would be sort of -- I'm not sure if "B" is drydock and "C" is indefinite, I'd have to check that status.

But it's left up to the -- by the engineer reviewing the document.

MR. PARKER: Thanks.

MR. DIBENEDETTO: Mike Dibenedetto.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. DIBENEDETTO:

Q I just want to clarify, the quarterly inspection, was it done on? Was it completed?

A The pre-Coast Guard inspection was completed. As Dave had pointed out, because she had the accident, the next day would have been the normally scheduled quarterly.

Q All right. Going back to when you first got on the boat and you took over the watch from Mr. Gherardi, after you took over the watch how many people were actually in the engine room with you?

A At first went I went down the only person in the control room at that time was Trevor.

Q That's it?

A Yes.

Q How many people were supposed to be in there at that time?

A At that time there was -- well, assigned to the crew there are four people. Now, when I went to the control room I did not go through the entire engine room. I was only -- I had walked from the main deck and I had gone directly into the control room.

Trevor was the only one in the control room at the time. The other personnel that I had seen, I'm not sure if they were in the engine room or if they were on the main deck.

Q Okay.

A But I should point out that I was not there as soon as a vessel hit the dock. I had stopped up here, I had made some calls just to make sure as far as who had been communicated to as far as the problem. I would not say that -- it might have been ten minutes after the vessel had finally come up along side the dock that I had finally gone down below.

Q Did you see Pilot Smith at all, at any time?

A No, I did not.

Q Did you see Captain Gansas?

A I did not.

Q At no time?

A No.

Q Afterwards did he go to the hospital, do you know?

A No. I was not privy to anything as far as what was going on top side.

Q The boat was already docked when you went in?

A It was docked and the propulsion system was operating normally up against the bridge.

Q And they kept that going?

A We kept that going for some period of time, I would say probably for at least an hour, an hour and a half we kept the boat units going and then at some

point the fire department was going down in the shaft alley on the Staten Island end and because they were going down the shaft alley, I'm not sure if we lost lighting, but there was a safety concern, so we shut down the shafting, so they secured the Staten Island end and they remained on the New York propulsion system.

Q Was there still a lot of passengers when you boarded the Barberi?

A You know something, I could not tell you. I did not observe --

Q You just went straight to the engine room?

A I just went straight to the engine room.

Q What time do you figure it was, since you were notified around 3:25?

A I would say probably ten minutes after it occurred. I came up to the office here, she was going around to the slip. I came up here, so I got down there ten minutes after she --

Q Somewhere around 3:25?

A Somewhere around there, yes. By then the fire department was coming down the hill and emergency services.

Q You were on there before the emergency personnel?

A No. They were moving through there too.

Q Did you see anybody else that was supposed to be in the crew besides Mr. Gherardi?

A I saw Charlie Covella up on the main deck. I remember seeing Charlie. Some time later I remember seeing Pete Koutsoulias, I think he came down below.

Q At any time did you go up top side to the pilot houses, either/or?

A No. I did have communication with the pilot house. I had communication at one point, I think it was Captain Ryan at that time that I had called or the pilot house had called me.

Q Did they call you on the sound phone?

A It was on the sound phone. It was on the sound powered phone I had gotten the call.

Q Captain Ryan, he wasn't part of the crew was he, for that day?

A No, he was not. It might have been concerning the propulsion unit on the Staten Island end and because of the wind conditions, I think I was wondering whether we could shut down the Staten Island unit, but because there was concern with the --

(Telephone Interruption.)

MR. DIBENEDETTO: Mike Dibenedetto again.

BY MR. DIBENEDETTO:

Q When you spoke to Captain Ryan, he was up in the pilot house?

A Yes. I had had communications with the bridge and I think it was about the propulsion system. I think I was just wondering if I could shut down the Staten Island end, but they said because of the wind conditions, they would prefer to keep them running.

At some point, when like I said, the fire department wanted to go down the shaft alley, we called the pilot house. They had put lines out on the bow, they shut that Staten Island end down and we maintained propulsion on the New York end.

Q For how long?

A For as long as I was around we kept the New York end going.

Q Do you have a time frame? I figure you were in there for quite a while.

A At some point I came back down here, because I was looking for drawings. At that time everything was being handled on the boat, so I came back over here and started going to see what prints we could have immediately.

I had some difficulty, I couldn't get up in our records room because that goes through the store room, so I would have to check with -- I think it was

Ed Mattigan (phonetic) that was on board. He was down below at that time. I'm not sure when they shut down the entire plant.

Q To your knowledge, maybe Captain Ryan would be the first person in the pilot house that you spoke to? You didn't speak to anybody else prior to that in the pilot house?

A No.

Q Your first communication was through the sound phone, sound powered phone with Captain Ryan and he wasn't part of the crew. Where was he before the accident, do you know?

A You know something, I can't recall.

Q What's his first name?

A Pat Ryan.

MR. DIBENEDETTO: Okay. That's it.

MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis again.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. CURTIS:

Q While we're right there, so probably Captain Ryan would have been the one that secured the Staten Island end propulsion? That was after 90 minutes, ballpark?

A You know something, I can't recall who it was that I was communicating with at that time. I can't

recall. I think it will come to me, but I'm not real clear on that right now, if it was Pat Ryan or if it was some other Captain up there top side.

Q Would those times be reflected in the engineering log?

A At that point I don't know if we were keeping a log of the events.

Q Normally as they come across, what percentage of thrust do they use in transit across, do you know?

A Normally he will pull out of the slip, apply full thrust and do whatever steering that he needs to do, so you're looking at both propulsion units at thrust, 100 percent thrust, and what they'll do is normally they'll operate the engines at about 750 rpm and whenever they need to make any kind of speed adjustment to get a little more speed of the vessel, they'll sometimes then maneuver the engine speeds, 760, 775, so they will vary their speed actually by the engine speeds. Normally they'll maintain the thrust.

Then it really is the discretion of the Captain, in terms of his operating, what he's comfortable with doing. Sometimes some people will come around the KV buoy or some time after that down below, but you'll normally see someone start to back off on the thrust to some degree below 75 to start

reducing the speed.

Then at some point normally you'll see sometimes the thrust come back to zero or minimum, some small amount, and then observing down below you'll just start to see some stern power.

Q Do you hear that noise when you diminish thrust?

A You hear the corresponding -- as you change thrust, you're changing the load on the engine, so you'll have a corresponding load change, which results in a sound change. Certainly when the engine speed changes you can hear it.

Q You say you go from 750 to 770, that's not an appreciable speed change then.

A No, it's not. It's not. That's normally within the normal operating range for the --

Q So primarily, for all intents and purposes, it's a constant speed drive.

A They are constant speed drive, yes. They're designed to maintain a constant speed and you vary the pitch on the blades to maneuver.

Q The sound power phone weekly tests and the propulsion tests, is that logged or is it a paper they fill out? Is it documented?

A I wouldn't say the sound power phones are

documented, but I personally -- I'm not sure what the engineers would do, but it might be customary when you did an EOT test that you would log an EOT test and emergency steering test. Those tests would be logged or should be logged.

The reason I say that is because the sound powered phone is sort of the normal daily operation. Some of these other emergency items would not be a daily item that's tested, so if you did it weekly, you would log that you had tested the telegraph and the emergency steering. Those items you would log.

Q And on the Andrew J., previous, in the recent past, communications wise there were no reports of problems with their communications systems?

A No.

Q That you're aware of?

A No. But again, I'm not privy to the daily operations. I didn't hear of any larger problem.

Q Just one last area. As far as engineering personnel procedures and their responsibilities, is there a book or a guidance manual for what each one is responsible for and what they should do in the event of a casualty? Is there an operating manual for that?

A There is not an emergency manual. There is a document that lists the tasks and standards and duties

of an engineer and that's included in people's annual evaluation and performance. That is one of the formal documents, as far as the duties and responsibilities.

Q Would it be possible to get a copy of that?

A Sure.

MR. CURTIS: Okay, Sean, that's all I have. Dave?

MR. PARKER: I am also done. Thank you, Sean.

MR. DIBENEDETTO: One more question, Sean.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. DIBENEDETTO:

Q The pilot staffing, the pilot house staffing, are you familiar with that?

A Yeah.

Q Do they have a mandate of how many people are supposed to be in there or where they're supposed to be at the time?

A The vessel itself has what we call the COI, the Certificate of Inspection, and that's the mandated manning level for the vessel, it's established by the Coast Guard. Any other I would not be the one to speak of in terms of who was in where at what particular time.

MR. DIBENEDETTO: Okay. Thanks.

MR. CURTIS: That's all I have. Thank you, Sean.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

MR. CURTIS: The time is a quarter of 3:00 and this concludes the interview of Sean McDermott. Thank you, sir.

THE WITNESS: No problem. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 2:45 p.m. the interview was concluded.)