

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

SINKING OF THE FISHING VESSEL *

JEANETTE OFF THE COAST OF PAGO PAGO * Accident No.: DCA19FM010

DECEMBER 5, 2018 *

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Interview of: TINIFU VAILAINA
Fire Watch

Thursday,
December 6, 2018

APPEARANCES:

LT [REDACTED], Supervisor, Marine Safety Detachment
American Samoa United States Coast Guard

FRANK THOMSEN, Assistant Supervisor, Marine Safety
Detachment
American Samoa United States Coast Guard

ROY HALL, JR.
P&I

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:52 p.m.)

1
2
3 LT [REDACTED]: Okay. We're doing an interview with
4 Mr. Tinifu Vailaina?

5 MR. VAILAINA: Correct.

6 LT [REDACTED]: Vailaina? You are -- you were doing a fire
7 watch during the welding, and your position on board is the
8 seaman. We have Lieutenant [REDACTED], Frank Thomsen, and Mr. Roy
9 Hall, Jr. Today is -- it's 1552, December 6, 2018. We're here
10 doing the investigation of the fire and sinking of fishing vessel
11 *Jeanette*.

12 Just to let you know, this is being recorded. Do you
13 understand that it's being recorded?

14 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

15 LT [REDACTED]: Okay.

INTERVIEW OF TINIFU VAILAINA

16
17 BY LT [REDACTED]:

18 Q. Can you please tell us the story of where you were and
19 everything that happened from the beginning all the way to the end
20 while you were on board?

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. And take your time. Let's not rush -- yeah.

23 A. First of all, I went down there 8 o'clock because I am
24 chipping -- I use the chipping gun for chipping the rust from the
25 boat, you know. And I saw the guy -- these two guys, we work

1 together 1 week already. So he cut, cut the beam on the second
2 section of the -- because we finished the first one. The second
3 one, he cut. And nobody watch, so I use the chipping gun. After
4 that one, I go -- I told the guy, the engine room guy, is somebody
5 watching the -- because all the time, the chief like that, you
6 know? And because I am a deck guy, you know.

7 Then I -- then after that one, I told this guy, I go -- did
8 you knows the place you cutting the beam? And he say there is the
9 hallway. So I go up. I look around because we have a -- the
10 hallway, we have two, you know. I run from the bathroom all the
11 way, you know, from the storeroom. I come around in front of the
12 chief's room. When I come open my room, I say, okay, nothing
13 alarm for the fire alarm because the -- our room, we have a fire
14 alarm on.

15 So after that one, I went down there. We start the work.
16 After 9 o'clock, we came up and nothing happened, because half an
17 hour of break, after that one, 9:30, then we went downstairs and
18 we start again the job. And after that one, you know, sometime --
19 my second time I come up, I think it may be 20 minutes, you know,
20 from after work, then I come up. I look around. I open my room
21 too, you know. It's nothing. No alarm, fire alarm too. Nothing.
22 Then we went down there, so we finished to cut the plate. Then I
23 bring down from -- I help the guy. He cut and I bring down, you
24 know?

25 And about 19 more minutes to 11, and the other guy come,

1 assist, and he say, oh, it's lunch time. So that's the time I go
2 up, you know. I no open my room. I go straight to the bathroom,
3 because my room is over here, and the bathroom -- because I come
4 from the bow, the bow door, the step that we come up. Then I come
5 around the bathroom over there and I went inside.

6 I wash my hands about 5 more minutes, and I hear a fire
7 alarm, you know? Then I come, I hear another alarm which is on.
8 Then I open my room, the smoking come on the air condition. Then
9 I stop the alarm but is more worse, you know? I can't, I can't
10 see anything. And I hear the other guy yelling the fire, you
11 know, the other side, he said, from the storeroom.

12 So I try to get my stuff, my passport. I can't. So I turn
13 around. I come around. I can't see nothing, you know? And I
14 come out. We call a fire, then I grab the fire bottle. We try to
15 kill the fire, but is very strong smoke and we no have a mask. I
16 had to -- and I went out. I saw my other, the crew of my boat,
17 they bring -- two guys, they bring the big hose, the firehose. So
18 we bring inside to try to kill the -- then after that one, I saw
19 the truck is coming, that they pass the hose, and I -- the guy
20 come, he had no mask, no nothing, you know? And I come -- the
21 other guy come with a (indiscernible) and he hold the hose, he try
22 to. And I said, hey, that door is closed, because the door when
23 you go inside, that one that you (indiscernible), and they go back
24 again.

25 So the guys, they still over there. They spray -- they stay

1 outside. They spray the -- I told him, that's the toilet you're
2 spraying, not inside. The fire from inside. And the other guy
3 come with the mask. After there weren't no water. I said, no
4 water, you know? And we try to grab another hose. Us, we try to
5 pass inside, but it's more worse, you know?

6 And another truck is coming. Then the guy, he sit down and
7 all the fire, the security -- and the security come. He say, hey,
8 you guys go outside. I say, no, I want to help the guy to, you
9 know, to kill -- because he spray the toilet. I told him the fire
10 inside the middle of the boat. It's over there, the storeroom.

11 Then after that one, the big -- another truck is coming.
12 Then I saw the guy. They bring the hose. Then he sit down, no
13 helmet, no nothing, you know. No shoes. Nothing. They sit down
14 like this and hold the hose. His boss, they tell him to spray the
15 window, the one window they broke from the pilothouse. But under
16 the window, we have a pail, a net. So he's very close to the
17 window. But this guy, they spray the -- put the water, they sit
18 down and spray the water, they spray the net.

19 So I go over there, tell the guy, please, can you put your
20 hose a little bit? Because you spray the net, you no spray the
21 hose. So his boss is coming to, you know, to tell him, you know,
22 where -- and the guys they told me, okay, you stay over there
23 because I can't see nothing, you know. These guys, they sit down
24 and hold the hose.

25 So -- and the security, they come, but they take us. You

1 know, they say, no, you guys go; it's more worse. I'm really
2 pissed off because, you know, I can help the guy because they
3 don't know where's the place to the fire. That's why the guy say,
4 where they start the fire? I say, inside of the cabins -- the
5 hallway underneath and the ceiling from the work deck. So I tell
6 the guy, that's the place over there. It's the middle of the boat
7 they start the fire, the storeroom.

8 Then after that one, then we come outside. So we cannot go,
9 because those guys, they come, the security, take us, all the
10 crew, you know. And I come around the other side. I saw the
11 boat, it go like this. I told my boss, hey, can you call another
12 guy? Because we can't grab our pump over there because the stern
13 of the boat is real clear, you know, only the -- then we try to
14 pump the -- I saw a lot of water.

15 And my boss says he's going to come with the pump, he's going
16 to come. So they bring one pump from, I think from the *American*
17 *Victoria*. So we try to help to start. About 45 minutes, then the
18 pump, it stops, and they bring another pump from the other guy,
19 *West Pacific*, has two pump.

20 Then the security come again. They take -- because all my
21 crew, they go over there, you know, and we try to pick it up the
22 water from the bucket and, you know, for -- we're going to save
23 the boat, you know?

24 Q. Yeah. I saw you.

25 A. We're going to save the boat, but we can't do nothing. The

1 security come again and they said go out, you know? And I saw
2 those guys, they come with the hose, you know. The hose is not
3 strong. No more water. So they connect only the big one over
4 there by the big pump. That's the one they help a lot, but the
5 rest, not enough water for to kill the fire, you know, because the
6 foam -- the boat, it gets the foam and -- because I saw that one
7 before. I saw a lot -- two boat, I saw the fire in.

8 I saw the *American Queen* too before, the white boat, it sink.
9 And I saw a couple boat like *Jeannette*, the old *Jeannette*? Yeah.

10 And after that one, we look, when we look at the boat, I cry
11 because I have a little -- the boat's like -- that's my house, you
12 know. He help a lot from my (indiscernible), because I know the
13 old man. He's a good old man. He's always a good guy, you know.
14 I cried. The boat -- take him out, you know. You know, we're
15 going to -- because I make money the boat. I make money the boat.

16 But the first time I came the boat, is not too, not too good
17 trip, you know? I went to the boat my first trip. You know, I go
18 up to the mess, you know, because I fish a long time. I know this
19 captain, the owner. I know, I no fishing with him, but I know he
20 came on the boat. A lot of my friends. That's why I cry, you
21 know? I told the guy you have to take care of business, you know?
22 Because the chief left, and he give the list to the guy to repair,
23 the job to do.

24 So those guys -- he didn't tell me, you know, the welder guy
25 finish -- the time we finish our work, I go over there, shut off

1 work light because it looks like a spotlight they using for to
2 look up the thing we chipping, you know. And I go shut it off,
3 you know, because I know it's danger, you know? Is going to burn.
4 I never know that happen.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. Because I know of a lot. Even in the boat top, outside, we
7 fishing. I can't sleep because I always watching the smoke. Some
8 fire, they start from a smokestack. So I always stay over there
9 looking. I call the other guy, you know, watch out, you know.
10 Now the guy, they see that happen now, I told the guy, when the
11 boat fire -- he lucky he can kill the fire because all the foam,
12 the foam is very danger, you know?

13 Q. Right.

14 A. So after that one, the boat is taken out, you know.
15 (Indiscernible) only one small the boat. I can't pack my
16 (indiscernible). That time I came back over a year when I left go
17 fishing to the other side. Six years, I sign my contract
18 *Elizabeth I* (ph.).

19 BY MR. THOMSEN:

20 Q. Tinifu, from -- how long you been on board? How long you
21 been on board?

22 A. That boat?

23 Q. That boat.

24 A. I start fishing on the boat. I came to American Samoa
25 January '14.

1 Q. Of this year?

2 A. No, 2014.

3 Q. So you've been on the *Jeannette* since 2014?

4 A. Yeah. Then I start fishing in June. That's the last time
5 for the (indiscernible). Then the boat came. After, they went,
6 the boat come and go to the shipyard to the (indiscernible).

7 Q. Okay. That day, yesterday, what was your job that day?
8 Yesterday before the fire, what was your job?

9 A. We work in the -- I'm chipping the --

10 Q. You're chipping?

11 A. Yeah. I'm only the one they chipping, and those guys, they
12 welding. These two guys welding.

13 Q. Were you doing fire watch?

14 A. Yeah, because that -- yesterday, I went down there. The guy
15 cut the beam. I told the guy, because all the time, the chief, he
16 take one guy up there. Those guys, they know already. But I went
17 over there and nobody -- I told the guy, hey, somebody up there is
18 -- you know, that's why I do the two job. The chipping -- I do my
19 job because only one chipping gun, and these guys, they -- and
20 after that one, I go up and only -- maybe the first time, 15
21 minutes, something like that, you know.

22 LT [REDACTED]: Your job was a paint chipper? Chipping paint?

23 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, yesterday.

24 LT [REDACTED]: Yesterday that's what you were doing? You
25 weren't doing a fire watch; you were paint chipping.

1 BY MR. THOMSEN:

2 Q. Did somebody tell you to do, to do fire watch? Did somebody
3 tell you to go up, or you just did that on your own?

4 A. No. Nobody tell me to watch. I'm the one they -- went over
5 there. Because I know is danger. You know, I told the guy,
6 nobody's go up there. That's why I come chipping the thing and I
7 go look around, come back, you know. I think four times, I no --
8 and the third time, I no open my room. But the first time and the
9 second, I open the room. And my third time, I no open the room,
10 so I come back down there and I work. And after that one, we go
11 for the lunch, so we clean the hands. And I hear the alarm. I no
12 hear the big alarm. Only the small alarm in the room.

13 Q. The modular one?

14 A. Yeah, that's the one I hear when I washing my hands. You
15 know, maybe --

16 Q. So that's the reason why you opened your door.

17 A. Yeah. That's the one. I open the door. Then I saw the fire
18 come and straight through my room. It's very strong. They come
19 from the air condition, very strong. The smoking. I can't
20 breathe. I try to get my passport but I can't, you know. I say,
21 forget it. (Indiscernible) but I don't want to die. So I run
22 away.

23 Q. So did you hear any other alarm? So you heard the modular --
24 the little fire alarm.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Did you hear any other alarm?

2 A. Yeah, I hear the alarm. So then I open my room. I head into
3 the fire, but I hear the other guy say fire to the other side. He
4 said from the storeroom. Then I came out. Those two guys, I --
5 because they have two bottles right over there. So the other guy
6 trap the other one. I come, grab the other one, you know. We try
7 to kill the -- but we don't know the main point the fire come
8 because it come from the air condition, the smoking.

9 BY LT [REDACTED]:

10 Q. So I'm sorry. I just want to back up a little bit. Your
11 job, your job yesterday was what? What was your job yesterday?

12 A. My job is --

13 Q. Yesterday, what was your job?

14 A. Yeah, that's -- my job is chipping and a watch.

15 Q. Chipping paint and being a fire watch.

16 A. No, I no, I no paint. Only the chipping.

17 Q. Only chipping --

18 A. And watch.

19 Q. And be a fire watch.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Both at the same time.

22 A. After chipping, then I go up. You know, I come, I come
23 chipping a little bit, then I go up watching. Because I watching
24 the -- some fires. So I look around.

25 Q. Were you told to be -- who told -- did someone tell you to be

1 both a paint chipper and a fire watch?

2 A. No, nobody tell me to.

3 Q. So why'd you -- why were you being a paint chipper and a fire
4 watch yesterday if no one told you to do it?

5 A. Because I know this, you know, I know this guy working down
6 there. He's very danger. Because I know, I know before a lot of
7 time, you know, some boat because --

8 MR. THOMSEN: I'm going to, I'm going to ask a question in
9 Samoan.

10 LT [REDACTED]: Yeah.

11 MR. THOMSEN: (Samoan).

12 MR. VAILAINA: Nobody tell me to -- those guys, the -- for
13 me, I go over there --

14 (Conversation in Samoan)

15 MR. THOMSEN: Nobody told him to do the chipping. Nobody
16 told him to do the fire watch. He just did it on his own.

17 BY MR. THOMSEN:

18 Q. Tinifu, the drills. You know, to abandon ship, firefighting,
19 flooding, man overboard. (Indiscernible) drills?

20 A. What?

21 Q. (Samoan) -- when was the last time (indiscernible) drills?

22 A. (Samoan).

23 Q. So, what, last month? Late last month?

24 A. Yeah, last month.

25 Q. So last month was the last time they did drills.

1 A. Well we go -- no, our trip is only 21 days.

2 Q. So what were the drills that you guys did? I mean, what were
3 the drills that were conducted? (Samoan).

4 A. The fire drill. They normally --
5 (Conversation in Samoan)

6 LT [REDACTED]: Just fire drills?

7 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

8 MR. THOMSEN: So I -- he says, I did a fire drill before
9 that, and they did the fire drill out at sea.

10 LT [REDACTED]: That was a month ago?

11 MR. THOMSEN: They did -- last month they did drills while
12 they were out at sea.

13 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

14 LT [REDACTED]: Okay.

15 MR. THOMSEN: So prior to that, he's saying that I did do a
16 commercial fishing vessel exam, and most likely I did drills.

17 (Conversation in Samoan)

18 MR. THOMSEN: He said on his fourth time going up to check is
19 when he saw the smoke. You said (Samoan), Tinifu, that that guy
20 told you to go up? After you told him it's dangerous?

21 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, that's why I -- yeah, after I told
22 him --

23 MR. THOMSEN: That he told you to go check.

24 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, that's what he told me. Then I go up
25 because I know it's danger this way.

1 MR. THOMSEN: Okay.

2 LT [REDACTED]: Fourth time that day, yesterday.

3 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

4 LT [REDACTED]: Starting at what time? When did you start
5 work? 8 o'clock?

6 MR. VAILAINA: 8 o'clock.

7 BY MR. THOMSEN:

8 Q. You said that you went up above, and somebody was handling
9 the fire hose? You said the guy was getting the fire hose ready?

10 (Conversation in Samoan)

11 Q. Where is that? At that bow?

12 A. No, the stern.

13 Q. At the stern.

14 A. Yeah, right under the -- another fire pump, we have a hose on
15 the, on -- yeah, that's the one they try to --

16 Q. So you and the other guy, the deck boss, was getting that
17 hose ready. And then what?

18 A. Yeah. And we try to bring the -- spray the place because we
19 can't go inside. The smoking very strong. It's why he can't grab
20 something, save something, clothes or something, you know.

21 Q. So what about SCBAs? You know, (Samoan). The fire suit.

22 A. (Indiscernible) the storeroom. (Samoan).

23 Q. (Samoan) -- how many SCBAs do you have onboard?

24 A. (Samoan).

25 Q. Two. No, three.

1 A. I don't know because they have two new one.

2 Q. So one SCBA was near the fire.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And where was the other SCBA?

5 A. The other one, the other one, they have a mask and, you know,
6 you have some hose at the back --

7 Q. And where was that one at? (Samoan).

8 A. They have a -- they stack the other one. They stack the big
9 pack, and the other one is stored because they have two -- they
10 hanging over there, the big one. The old one. But the new one,
11 they have stacked inside a big -- a basket.

12 Q. Okay.

13 MR. THOMSEN: I'm going to switch to the Samoan language.

14 (Conversation in Samoan)

15 MR. THOMSEN: I'm trying to imagine the location.

16 (Conversation in Samoan)

17 MR. THOMSEN: He said both SCBAs were in the same locker, one
18 in, one in a container, the other one hanging up.

19 MR. VAILAINA: (Samoan).

20 MR. THOMSEN: Okay, and it's adjacent to the, to the
21 storeroom.

22 MR. VAILAINA: We try to --

23 MR. THOMSEN: So they couldn't get to it.

24 MR. VAILAINA: -- get it, but we can't get it. It's the one
25 we try to -- that's why we stay in the front of the door, the

1 galley from the -- that's the only place to be open to -- for us
2 to spray the water.

3 LT [REDACTED]: I have another question for you, but it's --
4 it doesn't have to do with SCBAs. My question is, the two
5 welders, the two people welding?

6 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, two people welding.

7 LT [REDACTED]: Did they think that you were a fire watch?
8 Did they think you were a fire watch, or did they think you were a
9 paint chipper?

10 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, I'm a -- yeah, I'm a -- I do the, I
11 do --

12 LT [REDACTED]: Can we shut that door, maybe? So they'll
13 leave us alone?

14 BY LT [REDACTED]:

15 Q. I just want to know if they were relying on you --

16 A. No --

17 Q. -- as a, as a fire watch, or were -- I just want to -- I want
18 to understand that better.

19 A. I do the -- yesterday, most of the time I'm a fire watch, you
20 know. I watch the -- and I -- sometimes I go over there, only use
21 the chipping. And this guy want to use it, then get it when I
22 come back. But the 1 week already, I work with the guy. I always
23 chipping and --

24 Q. You're always chipping paint around him while he's welding?

25 A. Yeah. Yeah.

1 Q. Is that part of the welding process, for you to chip paint?
2 I don't understand why -- why are you always chipping paint around
3 the welders? Is that part of the deal, or you're just cleaning up
4 the paint job?

5 A. No, no, no, no. The rust that -- with the rust. Yeah, and
6 those guys, they -- he sees some hole in the, in the beam. So he
7 welding the -- you know, he welding the block to cover the hole.
8 And after that one, you know, and I go to the chipping the thing
9 and put primer, you know.

10 Q. You chip all the extra paint off so that you can repaint
11 where it's been welded?

12 A. Yeah, I repair the -- when all the welding -- no, we don't --
13 I'm not to paint when after welding. Then I paint straight the --
14 maybe after lunch, then the guy finish in the morning, then I go
15 chipping the paint. I put the -- I put primer, you know.

16 Q. Just so I --

17 A. (Indiscernible) the place is not too hot already, you know?

18 LT [REDACTED]: Is there -- maybe you could -- I just want to
19 better understand why he's always chipping paint around the
20 welders. Is that part of the welding process, to chip the extra
21 paint away, or is this coincidence?

22 (Conversation in Samoan)

23 MR. THOMSEN: Do you understand what he's --

24 MR. HALL: I think, I think what he's saying is that his job
25 is just to do the chipping. And while he's chipping, if there's a

1 hole --

2 MR. THOMSEN: Yeah, that's what --

3 MR. HALL: -- or, you know, damage, and then the -- they tell
4 the welders, and the welders go and can repair.

5 LT [REDACTED]: Okay. So there are two --

6 MR. THOMSEN: But (indiscernible) yesterday, these guys were
7 doing over at -- painting of a beam. Pipe two Strickland (ph.) --

8 LT [REDACTED]: They were replacing beams. So why would they
9 need someone to chip paint if they're just going to tear the whole
10 thing up and replace it? Why do you need to chip paint on
11 something you're going to get rid of?

12 (Conversation in Samoan)

13 MR. THOMSEN: Yeah, he does the chipping, then they come over
14 and weld.

15 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

16 LT [REDACTED]: So basically he finds flaws in the steel, and
17 then the welders come and repair the steel.

18 MR. THOMSEN: Sounds like it.

19 LT [REDACTED]: But yesterday, when they were changing out
20 large portions of beams and whatnot, why was he chipping --

21 MR. THOMSEN: That's why, that's why I'm a little bit
22 confused.

23 LT [REDACTED]: I don't see how that -- if you're getting a
24 giant new piece of steel, it's not even going to be painted. What
25 are you going to chip on a brand new piece of steel?

1 MR. THOMSEN: We're going to have to reask those two, because
2 it's -- okay.

3 (Conversation in Samoan)

4 MR. VAILAINA: We have to do the one Monday, you know. We
5 have to keep going to finish the one section, you know. That's
6 why (Samoan).

7 MR. THOMSEN: Okay, so let me -- so I think I know now. So
8 on the weekend --

9 (Conversation in Samoan)

10 MR. THOMSEN: Okay. The deck boss told him over the weekend
11 to begin the chipping process down on wet deck on Monday. So on
12 Monday, he started chipping. Tuesday, he started chipping.
13 Wednesday, he started chipping. So that's what he means about
14 nobody told him. It was -- he was actually informed to do that on
15 the weekend, so Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. (Samoan). The two
16 guys who are welding on Monday, were they following you or --

17 (Conversation in Samoan)

18 BY MR. HALL:

19 Q. On Monday, were the welders doing welding on the wet deck?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. On Tuesday, were the welders doing welding on the wet deck?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. And Wednesday, they were doing welding?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, you were doing

1 chipping.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. With the welders.

4 MR. THOMSEN: (Samoan).

5 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

6 MR. THOMSEN: So Monday, Tuesday, (Samoan).

7 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

8 MR. THOMSEN: Okay. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, they were
9 welding, but his job was separate from theirs. They were doing
10 their own stuff on Wednesday.

11 LT [REDACTED]: So you weren't -- they weren't working with
12 the -- he wasn't working with the welders.

13 MR. THOMSEN: But he said, if he came across an issue --

14 LT [REDACTED]: He would tell --

15 MR. THOMSEN: -- perforated metal, he would let them know.

16 LT [REDACTED]: Okay. That makes sense. Got it, got it, got
17 it.

18 BY LT [REDACTED]:

19 Q. So just to rehash, you were never -- you were only told to be
20 a chipper, right?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. You were never told to be a fire watch. You were never told
23 to be a fire watch?

24 A. Yesterday the guy welding, he told me to go watch --

25 Q. The guy that's welding isn't your boss, though. Who's your

1 boss?

2 A. The deck boss.

3 Q. The deck boss is your boss, right?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Did the deck boss tell you to be a fire watch?

6 A. No, he no tell me about fire watch.

7 Q. Did the deck boss tell you to be a fire watch?

8 A. No. He no tell, because I saw the guys they welding, then I
9 told the guy -- because an older engine room guy, if someone --
10 that's the guy they watching the thing. And I go over there, and
11 nobody was --

12 Q. Yeah, I know. You were taking the initiative. But did your
13 boss tell you to be a fire watch?

14 A. No, never. No.

15 Q. Never. Okay. You took initiative. That's great. I'm
16 wondering If -- what your, what your job was formally. Okay.

17 MR. THOMSEN: (Samoan) Bruno Martins.

18 MR. VAILAINA: That's the one he told me to chipping the --

19 LT [REDACTED]: Bruno Martins.

20 MR. VAILAINA: They keep going the chipping. That's why we
21 working there. Because we seen the guy, the boss, you know, that
22 always do the job.

23 MR. THOMSEN: (Samoan). I just want to -- we're trying to
24 get this down now. I'm going to ask you again --

25 (Conversation in Samoan)

1 MR. VAILAINA: Sometimes I use the chipping gun, because only
2 one chipping gun.

3 MR. THOMSEN: Okay.

4 BY MR. HALL:

5 Q. Let me just ask this. So on Monday, did you on your own do a
6 fire watch for the welders? On Monday.

7 A. No, no. Nobody --

8 Q. No, no. Did you do a fire watch for the welders on Monday?

9 A. Yeah, I keep -- I do that.

10 Q. On Tuesday, did you do --

11 A. Yeah, yeah.

12 Q. -- the fire watch for the welders? And on Wednesday, you did
13 the fire watch for the welders.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. On your own. You did it. Is that what you're saying?

16 A. Yeah.

17 MR. THOMSEN: Now you sure that --

18 (Conversation in Samoan)

19 MR. THOMSEN: And I want to -- (indiscernible).

20 (Conversation in Samoan)

21 MR. THOMSEN: Okay, I'm going to ask a different question

22 other than -- we're just busting our heads over this. (Samoan).

23 Who was the fire team? (Samoan) station bill. Remember the

24 station bill, each person's job for each situation? Fire

25 (indiscernible), ship metal, core, flooding. Do you know who the

1 firefighters are? Who are assigned as the firefighters?

2 (Conversation in Samoan)

3 MR. VAILAINA: I think Rubin or something, the name.

4 MR. HALL: Boyd (ph.)?

5 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

6 LT [REDACTED]: Too cold in here?

7 MR. THOMSEN: No, it's -- the lights.

8 LT [REDACTED]: Let me turn on -- do you want me to turn the
9 lights on in here?

10 MR. HALL: Yeah.

11 LT [REDACTED]: It's right behind, it's right behind you.

12 Sorry about that. I'm used to just --

13 MR. THOMSEN: (Samoan). Bright now. (Indiscernible).

14 LT [REDACTED]: Sorry, guys. I always -- I forget there's
15 even a switch there.

16 Who are the fire team members? Could you say it out loud so
17 we all know?

18 MR. THOMSEN: He's trying to locate them.

19 LT [REDACTED]: Okay, understood. Go ahead.

20 MR. VAILAINA: He said his name Boyd, but I don't know the
21 real name. Rubin or something.

22 MR. THOMSEN: We can always ask Itchy that, or --

23 MR. VAILAINA: His name is Boyd, but --

24 BY LT [REDACTED]:

25 Q. Ruel Lopez?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Ruel Lopez. What's the other person? I don't want to say it
3 to --

4 A. He's Filipino.

5 Q. Yeah, he's Filipino.

6 A. Yeah, yeah. I can see --

7 Q. Just him?

8 A. Yeah. He always, when we make a fire drill, he test up on
9 the -- yeah, he put --

10 MR. THOMSEN: (Samoan).

11 LT [REDACTED]: Rue Lopez is the only fire team member.

12 MR. THOMSEN: No, they got two SCBAs. They should have two
13 firefighters.

14 LT [REDACTED]: Yeah.

15 MR. THOMSEN: (Samoan).

16 LT [REDACTED]: Who is the other person?

17 MR. VAILAINA: (Samoan). Vincent.

18 BY MR. THOMSEN:

19 Q. Vincent.

20 A. Yeah, Vincent.

21 Q. Masacodi (ph.).

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. (Samoan).

24 A. Yeah, now he come -- this guy uses the fire drill for the new
25 guys.

1 Q. (Samoan).

2 A. Yeah. That's the one that they saw the fire. That guy,
3 Vincent.

4 Q. (Samoan). What do you mean?

5 A. (Samoan).

6 Q. Okay, and Vincent said -- he said Vincent's the one that was
7 yelling about --

8 A. He's the one he came -- run from --

9 Q. Yelling fire.

10 A. It was me and him. We prepped two bottles of fire
11 (indiscernible). The smoke is coming strong.

12 MR. HALL: You grabbed the what? The fire hose?

13 MR. VAILAINA: No, the bottle.

14 MR. HALL: Oh, the fire extinguisher.

15 MR. VAILAINA: It's right there. I try to kill, but it's
16 coming strong. We can't --

17 MR. THOMSEN: All right, Tinifu. When you, when you said you
18 went back up, you washed your hands.

19 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

20 MR. THOMSEN: Before you heard -- (Samoan). Before you heard
21 the alarm in your room, was there any -- there was no smoke in the
22 quarters in the hallway.

23 MR. VAILAINA: No, no, no, nothing at all. Because I came
24 down. I no look around. I came and I went inside the bathroom.
25 Then I opened the water, wash, and I hear the alarm, you know.

1 Then I hear the alarm one, two. Then I go, you know. I go open
2 the room, because I hear the two alarms. Then I open -- my room
3 was -- the smoking come (indiscernible) inside the air condition.
4 Because this time when we clean the hand for go for lunch.

5 MR. THOMSEN: I'm going to ask this in Samoan, because I want
6 to make sure that --

7 LT [REDACTED]: Yeah.

8 MR. THOMSEN: -- we get a good answer. I'm going to ask him
9 about -- from the time that -- because there was no smoke in the
10 quarters, and how long did it take for the smoke to actually
11 thicken where they cannot respond.

12 BY MR. THOMSEN:

13 (Conversation in Samoan)

14 A. For me, I don't know how long. Maybe 20 minutes, you know,
15 (Samoan).

16 Q. Okay, I'm not talking about (Samoan). I'm talking about
17 (Samoan).

18 A. Yes.

19 (Conversation in Samoan)

20 A. It's coming from the air condition.

21 Q. Okay.

22 (Conversation in Samoan)

23 A. For me, maybe 4 or 5 minutes.

24 Q. So 4 to 5 minutes.

25 A. Yeah. The fire is coming strong. The smoke. And I hear the

1 guy. You know, at the time I open my door, the smoking come over
2 there is black. Is come straight. That's why I start the alarms
3 on, you know. Then I open the door. The smoking come, and I went
4 over there to prep the bottle. I turned around. You know, the --
5 under the door, we have some (indiscernible) over there. The
6 smoking come over there from -- by the storeroom and the one they
7 store the fire clothes.

8 MR. THOMSEN: I'm going to ask him where he thinks the fire
9 originated.

10 BY MR. THOMSEN:

11 (Conversation in Samoan)

12 A. Yeah, but this guy, they saw that -- I hear the other side,
13 the hallway. Vincent, they saw the fire. The two guys.

14 Q. Saw the fire where?

15 A. Yeah. From the storeroom.

16 Q. Storeroom.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. (Indiscernible) ventilation go in the storeroom. Basic air
19 conditioning unit go in the storeroom.

20 A. For me, I don't know the --

21 Q. Okay. (Samoan).

22 MR. THOMSEN: I'm asking if he had eyes in the storeroom.

23 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

24 MR. THOMSEN: Okay.

25 (Conversation in Samoan)

1 LT [REDACTED]: Are there ducts?

2 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

3 MR. THOMSEN: Yeah, that's what I'm asking him.

4 LT [REDACTED]: Yeah.

5 MR. THOMSEN: Well you've been onboard since January of 2014
6 now.

7 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah. I never -- only the cook, they went
8 inside the storeroom. For us, I can't -- all the time, they bring
9 the supply for us. They only to put the stuff outside the
10 storeroom, you know. And the cook -- only the cook. They bring
11 the other guy. They bring the stuff inside.

12 MR. THOMSEN: What's inside the storeroom? What's inside the
13 storeroom?

14 (Conversation in Samoan)

15 MR. VAILAINA: Everything's over there. All the box, you
16 know, like (Samoan).

17 MR. THOMSEN: (Indiscernible). Makes sense.

18 MR. VAILAINA: And all those kinds of stuff they store there.

19 LT [REDACTED] So the fire did not originate in his room,
20 because he saw smoke coming out of the vent. So we can rule that
21 out. I'm just talking out loud.

22 MR. THOMSEN: Yeah. Okay. (Samoan) -- I'm going to ask him
23 if there's any welding procedures in place.

24 LT [REDACTED]: Yeah.

25 (Conversation in Samoan)

1 MR. THOMSEN: He's just confusing, just confusing me.

2 LT [REDACTED]: You want to change the direction?

3 MR. THOMSEN: No, I'm going to ask one more time. I'm going
4 to ask him one more time.

5 (Conversation in Samoan)

6 MR. THOMSEN: Yes or no?

7 MR. VAILAINA: Yes. (Samoan) --

8 MR. HALL: Let me -- I think that -- I think what he's trying
9 to say is the deck boss told him to (indiscernible) to watch the
10 welders.

11 MR. THOMSEN: Yeah, that's what he said just a few minutes
12 ago.

13 MR. HALL: Yeah, I'm not sure (indiscernible).

14 MR. THOMSEN: No, he's telling me that he did it of his own
15 accord.

16 MR. HALL: I know that -- I know that's what he's saying.
17 (Indiscernible) what he just said that -- telling him to watch the
18 welders (indiscernible).

19 LT [REDACTED]: Maybe he's not understanding the fire watch.
20 Maybe he thinks that means watching --

21 MR. HALL: He's saying watch the welders.

22 LT [REDACTED]: And I'm going to use a different word in mine.

23 MR. THOMSEN: You know what?

24 LT [REDACTED]: Can we speak in English? Or is it --

25 MR. THOMSEN: We'll talk to the deck boss.

1 LT [REDACTED]: That'd probably be easier, yeah.

2 MR. THOMSEN: That'll be easier --

3 LT [REDACTED]: From what he -- from what I was told, from
4 what he said earlier, he was not told -- I'm going to write that
5 down. The deck boss only told him to chip paint, but the fire
6 watch was his own initiative.

7 MR. THOMSEN: But then he said that he was the watch.

8 MR. HALL: But then he also said that the deck boss told him
9 to watch the welders. That's what he just said in Samoan.

10 LT [REDACTED]: Oh, okay. That's --

11 MR. THOMSEN: Okay. We'll just -- we'll call the deck boss,
12 and we'll (indiscernible) --

13 LT [REDACTED]: And we can always re-interview him as needed,
14 yeah?

15 MR. THOMSEN: Yeah.

16 BY LT [REDACTED]:

17 Q. Are you going to be -- do you, do you live here in American
18 Samoa?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay, you live here? You're not -- are you going anywhere?
21 You're leaving the island?

22 A. Yeah, I think I got to go to Western Samoa. Western Samoa.

23 Q. When? When?

24 A. They finish this one, then I go for Christmas.

25 Q. When are you going to go to Western Samoa?

1 A. I don't know yet, but --

2 Q. You don't know when you're leaving, but you're leaving?

3 MR. THOMSEN: Before Christmas. He says he's going for
4 Christmas.

5 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, because (indiscernible).

6 MR. HALL: He's from Samoa. He's not American Samoan. He's
7 Samoan.

8 LT [REDACTED]: But it's not Christmas yet. There's still --
9 you'll be here all next week too, right?

10 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, I'll be here. Yeah.

11 LT [REDACTED]: Next week?

12 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, this week.

13 LT [REDACTED]: Okay. We many need to ask you some additional
14 questions. We're going to talk to your boss, and then we may need
15 to talk to you again. Do you understand?

16 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah. Okay. No problem.

17 MR. THOMSEN: Okay. I'm just going to go down this thing one
18 more time. Okay, yeah, no further questions. (Samoan).

19 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah.

20 MR. THOMSEN: (Samoan).

21 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, no problem.

22 LT [REDACTED]: Yeah, thank you for coming here today and
23 talking to us.

24 MR. VAILAINA: That's no problem, because --

25 LT [REDACTED]: We're trying to learn what happened, and we

1 want to prevent other fishing boats from having the same problems.
2 So we're -- you're helping make it safer for everyone else by
3 being truthful and honest and telling us everything you know. It
4 can help us help other fishing boats be safe. So thank you for
5 doing that.

6 MR. VAILAINA: That's right, you know, because -- only I
7 don't -- I no understand, because (indiscernible). And this guy,
8 they --

9 LT [REDACTED]: Understood.

10 MR. VAILAINA: -- go do the job down there and all.

11 LT [REDACTED]: Okay. I'm going to stop the recording.

12 MR. VAILAINA: Yeah, okay.

13 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: SINKING OF THE FISHING VESSEL
 JEANETTE OFF THE COAST OF PAGO PAGO
 DECEMBER 5, 2018
 Interview of Tinifu Vailaina

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA19FM010

PLACE:

DATE: December 6, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Transcriber