

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

PIPELINE RUPTURE NEAR *

HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA *

Accident No.: DCA22FM001

ON OCTOBER 3, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: [REDACTED], U.S. Coast Guard Watch Stander
Marine Exchange of Southern California

Via telephone

Wednesday,
October 27, 2021

APPEARANCES:

ANDREW EHLERS, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

██████████, Investigator
Department of Homeland Security/United States Coast
Guard

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of [REDACTED] :		
By Mr. [REDACTED]		4
By Mr. Ehlers		11
By Mr. [REDACTED]		13

I N T E R V I E W

(8:42 p.m. CST)

1
2
3 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay, this evening this is [REDACTED] with the
4 U.S. Coast Guard investigations National Center of Expertise. It
5 is Wednesday, October 27th, 8:42 p.m., and we also have on the
6 line Mr. --

7 MR. EHLERS: Andrew Ehlers, NTSB, my last name is spelled
8 E H L E R S.

9 MR. [REDACTED]: And I apologize, my name is spelled [REDACTED],
10 [REDACTED]. Along with us, we also have the witness, Mr. [REDACTED].

11 MR. EHLERS: Go ahead.

12 MR. [REDACTED]: Oh, yes, that's me.

INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

13
14 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

15 Q. Could you please state and spell your first and last name for
16 us?

17 A. First name's [REDACTED], [REDACTED], last name is
18 [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

19 Q. Okay, very good. All right, thank you very much. How long
20 have you been -- how long have you served with the United States
21 Coast Guard?

22 A. Coming up on 11 years next month.

23 Q. Okay. And what is your present duty station?

24 A. I am stationed at the Vessel Traffic of San Pedro, the Marine
25 Exchange.

1 Q. Okay. And that would be the LALB VTS station?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. Okay. How long have you been assigned to that location?

4 A. I reported here in summer of '19.

5 Q. Summer of '19, okay. Are you a qualified watch stander?

6 A. I am.

7 Q. How long have you been a qualified watch stander?

8 A. I gained my qualification approximately three months after
9 reporting here.

10 Q. So, since 2019?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Okay. All right, and what process did you go through to
13 become a qualified watch stander?

14 A. I went through the break in process here locally at the VTS.
15 I went to the school in Baltimore, then got my certification as a
16 watch stander there, and then I board here amongst the personnel
17 that works here.

18 Q. Okay. Do you have any experience at any other VTS locations
19 or stations?

20 A. No.

21 Q. None prior to this one right now, right?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. Okay. What are your duties as a qualified watch stander?

24 A. Primary duties here are to help ensure the safe navigation of
25 vessels that participate with the VTS.

1 Q. Okay. What are your responsibilities?

2 A. To overview the movements of vessels and basically ensure
3 that there's safe navigation within our AOR.

4 Q. Okay. What is your duty schedule?

5 A. Typically, we have a three on, three off schedule, so three
6 days of work and three days off with 12-hour workdays.

7 Q. Okay. And you did say days, are you on day watches, night
8 watches, rotating watches?

9 A. Night watches.

10 Q. Always on night watch?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Okay. And in your 12-hour watch, what is the typical 12-hour
13 watch consist of for you as far as where are your duty -- where do
14 you stand in your duties -- where do you perform your duties?

15 A. We do two hours on the Maris (ph.), on the desk computer,
16 monitoring the phones, and logging information about vessels that
17 check in with us, and then we do two hours on the radar, and then
18 two hours of break.

19 Q. Okay. Do you recall being on duty as a VTS watch stander on
20 January 25th of 2021?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Any particular reason -- does anything stand out to you of
23 that particular day on watch?

24 A. Not immediately, but in hindsight with the situation that
25 happened that we're alluding to, yes.

1 Q. Okay. And what would that be?

2 A. From my understanding, there was a spillage of oil in our
3 area of responsibility.

4 Q. Okay. When do you understand that spillage of oil took
5 place?

6 A. I'm not sure when it took place, but I know it took place
7 within our area of responsibility.

8 Q. Okay. In -- typically on June -- January 25th of 2021, do
9 you recall any specifics incidents that took place that evening on
10 that watch?

11 A. No, nothing regarding a specific spillage of oil, but I do
12 recall there were high winds that evening -- or morning rather.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Which is something of note that would happen during a watch.

15 Q. Right. And how were you advised of that condition of high
16 winds?

17 A. I was coming off my break and the watch supervisor informed
18 me that we are -- we have entered into the high-wind advisory and
19 that's how I knew that we had winds above 35 knots.

20 Q. Okay. And where could that information have come from that
21 the supervisor had passed to you?

22 A. Where does that information come from?

23 Q. Yeah, where would he have gotten that info (sic), do you
24 know?

25 A. Typically, we reach out to different vessels in their AOR and

1 we ask them what their -- I'm sorry, that's for visibility, excuse
2 me. We'll get -- we'll look at the -- above the right computer,
3 there's a relay of what the wind speed is, and behind our back, on
4 the wall, there's another read for wind speed.

5 Q. Got you. When you receive information, I'm assuming that
6 comes through a pass down where you're taking your station?

7 A. That is correct.

8 Q. Okay. And what's done with the -- what do you do if you're
9 coming on watch and that's part of the pass down? What do you do
10 yourself with that information, is it disseminated onto anyone
11 else, or is it just for your general knowledge?

12 A. No, it's disseminated onto the general public and we inform
13 them that there is a high-wind advisory in effect in the area and
14 that's done via a security broadcast.

15 Q. And what channel would that be on?

16 A. Channel 16 and 14 -- correction, channel 14.

17 Q. Okay. What channel does VTS work?

18 A. Channel 14.

19 Q. And what -- do you all monitor any other channels?

20 A. Yes, we monitor 16, and 72, and basically those that -- the
21 channels that we monitor are -- the radio floats in between those
22 channels and picks up if we have anything on those channels.

23 Q. Okay. All right, so forgive me, what channel would you have
24 broadcast -- or would you broadcast that information with the
25 vessels?

1 A. I believe 14.

2 Q. Channel 14, okay, got you. Do you recall making that
3 broadcast on January 25th of 2021?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. You did make that announcement to broadcast out for high
6 wind?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Let's talk a little bit about vessels coming into your
9 AOR. As vessels approach the AOR and they are anticipating to go
10 to an anchorage, can you kind of walk us through what takes place,
11 how far out they are, do they contact your, do they get directed
12 to an anchorage, if so, how?

13 A. Can you repeat the question, sorry I --

14 Q. Sure. So, as a vessel approaches your AOR and they have
15 intentions of going to anchor, can you walk us through what the
16 process of them reaching -- you know, contacting you and how they
17 get assigned an anchorage?

18 A. So, when a vessel checks in with our system and they are
19 going to announce an anchorage, we're looking at the length of the
20 vessel, the type of the vessel, the draft of the vessel, and also
21 their intended port that they will be entering.

22 Q. Okay. And then what's the deciding factor of what anchorage
23 you assign them to?

24 A. Depending on the length of the vessel, they'll go -- and they
25 will -- depending on the length and the type of the vessel, they

1 won't go in the first row of the anchorages -- of the G and F
2 anchorage, and according to the draft, that will also determine
3 where they get put. And then according to what port they are, we
4 try to put those vessels closer to their port of entry and what
5 makes logistically the most sense.

6 Q. I got you. Okay, do you happen to recall on the night of
7 January 25th of 2021, any vessels that you assigned to anchorages?

8 A. Not specific vessels, no.

9 Q. Okay. Do you recall any vessels that were anchored in your
10 AOR that would be identified as *The Danit* or *The Beijing*?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. Do you recall any extraordinary activity or events
13 that took place that night with any of the vessels in anchorage?

14 A. There -- I believe that there were -- towards the end of my
15 watch, there were two vessels that made contact at the -- I
16 believe on the 25th is when this happened in the Huntington Beach
17 anchorages.

18 Q. Okay. And just to clarify, when you say at the end of your
19 watch, at the very end of your 12-hour watch or the end of your
20 watch on the rotated watch?

21 A. At the end -- at the very end of my total watch for the day.

22 Q. Your 12-hour watch, okay, got you. When you say that you
23 recall that (indiscernible), were you involved in any of that? I
24 mean, were you on the main board when that took place?

25 A. Was I what, I'm sorry?

1 Q. Were you at the main station -- the monitoring station when
2 that took place?

3 A. No, I was on break.

4 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay, you were on break, got you.

5 Okay, Ehlers?

6 BY MR. EHLERS:

7 Q. Yeah, just a couple questions for you. The -- so, you were
8 on break at the end of your shift, is that correct -- or your
9 watch night?

10 A. That is correct.

11 Q. Okay. Were you called out to the watch floor at all to
12 assist with anything that morning, do you remember?

13 A. Yes, I remember I was called to come up so that I could
14 assist with -- if the phone rang or log in entries because the
15 work temp obviously elevated, so they brought me off of my break
16 to come help with that.

17 Q. Okay. And so, those things that you were helping out with,
18 was that to help relieve the radar operator?

19 A. Yes, it was to help mitigate the raise and work tempo on the
20 tempo of the watch that was happening.

21 Q. Okay. So, it was really busy that morning?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. How often does that happen that you get pulled in off
24 break for -- because of the tempo increases?

25 A. That was the only time that's happened during my time

1 stationed here.

2 Q. Oh, no kidding? Okay, so you'd say that's pretty unusual?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. Do you recall any discussion about concerns over
5 pipelines or anything like that?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. All right, and so you said -- say again for me, I'm
8 sorry, what you were -- what duties you had when you got pulled in
9 off break?

10 A. I was just monitoring the phones in case the pilots would
11 call for whatever reason or if anybody called for -- just for
12 general inquiries about anything that happens during the watch
13 because the other two watch standers were dealing with the
14 elevated work tempo.

15 Q. I see, okay. So, you weren't monitoring the situation on the
16 radar at all yourself?

17 A. No, I was generally aware of it, but I was not hands on
18 monitoring it at all. I was aware of it because it was happening
19 in the background.

20 Q. Sure.

21 A. But I was monitoring the phones and making sure I was logging
22 things appropriately. I was just kind of overseeing that things
23 were getting logged appropriately, helping balance, and getting
24 those things out of it.

25 Q. Okay. Would you say that was the busiest watch you had ever

1 been on?

2 A. It's hard to say because there are times that we get very
3 busy here, but that would be on the busier side of things.

4 Q. Okay. All right, a couple of sort of standard NTSB questions
5 about fatigue, what's your normal sleep schedule?

6 A. I shoot to get my seven to eight hours of sleep.

7 Q. Okay. When do you sleep typically?

8 A. Typically, I maintain the same watch/sleep schedule I have on
9 and off watch. So, my days off, I'll try to be in bed around 3:00
10 a.m., and then on my days of work, I'll go to sleep when I get off
11 work.

12 Q. Okay. All right, do you typically -- when you're on
13 watch -- when you're on rotation, do you typically drink coffee,
14 soda, any kind of caffeinated drink?

15 A. Yes, I drink a cup of coffee when I first wake up at home and
16 then here, mid-watch, I'll have another cup of coffee.

17 Q. Okay. All right, it was a long, may months ago, January 25,
18 do you remember how you felt that night, were you alert, did you
19 feel fatigued, do you remember at all?

20 A. No, I don't remember how I felt that exact night.

21 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. That's all I have. Thanks,
22 OS2.

23 MR. [REDACTED]: No problem.

24 [REDACTED]?

25 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

1 Q. Let's see, I'm sure (indiscernible). [REDACTED], is that right?

2 A. That'll work, yeah.

3 Q. Okay. All right, is there anything that you would like to
4 share with us or tell us about VTS regarding that night, the
5 watch, anything that stood out in your mind, or that you feel you
6 would -- was not proper or routine?

7 A. Outside the routing would be the situation we had with the
8 two ships in the Huntington Beach anchorage is the only thing
9 outside of the routine that I can think of now.

10 Q. Okay. You are -- are you aware of any vessels that drug
11 anchor that night out of their anchorage?

12 A. I'm aware now.

13 Q. Now you are, but that night you were not?

14 A. Negative. That night I did not -- I was not aware of it.

15 Q. Got you. And it -- is that something that would typically be
16 shared with you? In other words, would a vessel call in and
17 say, you know, we just drug anchor?

18 A. Well, so I would like to rephrase that, I was aware of
19 vessels dragging anchor due to the high wind and I was aware that
20 the vessels that made contact in the Huntington Beach anchorage
21 were due to the high wind -- dragging anchor because of that
22 situation.

23 Q. Okay. And how do you recall being made aware of that?

24 A. When I got -- when I received the phone call that I needed to
25 come up and help, I came up and I asked generally what was

1 happening and I was informed that two vessels had made contact due
2 to dragging anchor in the Huntington Beach anchorage.

3 Q. I see, okay. And again, is that something that would
4 normally be reported to you all or during the monitoring of the
5 vessels' positions, is that something that you would reach out to
6 them first?

7 A. We would -- we have a system of alarms that informs us if a
8 vessel is dragging anchor and we reach out to the vessel and ask
9 the vessel to confirm that their anchor is holding.

10 Q. Okay. Do you know if that was done that night -- was that
11 something that was executed?

12 A. I believe it was. I was not out on the watch board when said
13 vessels were dragging anchors, so I can't confirm that it was
14 done. But I -- from my understanding, it is -- it has -- it was
15 done and it always is done.

16 Q. Okay, very good. Is this -- you've been there since 2019,
17 two years, right?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Dragging anchor, is that something that you know to be a
20 common thing?

21 A. It's not uncommon. It's not something that happens every
22 watch, but their -- the alarms sometimes go off and they say that
23 the reports of the ships making movement within their anchorage.
24 So, it's not an uncommon thing that we get those alarms. I
25 don't -- I'm not sure if a ship actually dragging anchor is

1 something that's super common here.

2 MR. [REDACTED]: Got you. Okay. All right, well, thank you very
3 much. I certainly appreciate your time this evening. The time is
4 9:04 p.m., Central Time, and we will stop the recording at this
5 point.

6 (Whereupon, at 9:04 p.m. CST, the interview was concluded.)

7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

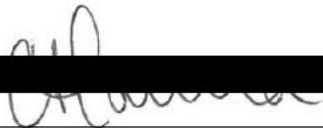
IN THE MATTER OF: PIPELINE RUPTURE NEAR
HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA
ON OCTOBER 3, 2021
Interview of [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA22FM001

PLACE: Via telephone

DATE: October 27, 2021

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.

[REDACTED]


Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber

