

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

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PIPELINE RUPTURE NEAR \*

HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA \*

Accident No.: DCA22FM001

ON OCTOBER 3, 2021 \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: MILOS KOVACEVIC, Chief Mate  
*MSC Danit*

Los Angeles, California

Saturday,  
October 16, 2021

APPEARANCES:

LIEUTENANT [REDACTED], Investigator  
U.S. Coast Guard

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER [REDACTED]  
U.S. Coast Guard

JOE WALSH, Attorney  
Collier Walsh Nakazawa

MAIA MDINARADZE, Attorney  
Tucker Ellis

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Milos Kovacevic:

By Lt. [REDACTED]

4

By Lt. [REDACTED]

16

I N T E R V I E W

(13:43)

1  
2  
3 LT. [REDACTED]: This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] with the Coast  
4 Guard. The date is October 16th, 2021. The time is 1343. We're  
5 onboard the *MSC Danit* at the Gulf Anchorages. And we're going to  
6 be interviewing the chief mate. So Lieutenant Command [REDACTED].

7 LT. COMMANDER [REDACTED]: [REDACTED], U.S. Coast Guard.

8 MR. WALSH: Joe Walsh, Collier Walsh Nakazawa on behalf of  
9 the owner/operator of the *MSC Danit*.

10 MR. MDINARADZE: Maia Mdinardze from Tucker Ellis  
11 representing the interviewee.

12 MR. KOVACEVIC: Milos Kovacevic. Chief mate of *MSC Danit*.

## INTERVIEW OF MILOS KOVACEVIC

13  
14 BY LT. [REDACTED]:

15 Q. Thank you. To start, I'm just going to ask you some general  
16 questions about your duties. Can you first describe to me your  
17 duties as the chief mate?

18 A. As the chief mate onboard (indiscernible) our SMS, I have a  
19 lot of duties. I'm responsible for discipline (indiscernible)  
20 onboard for cargo, for rushing of cargo, for maintenance of the  
21 whole vessel, for some SMS forms that I filling out as  
22 (indiscernible) working permit, risk assessment, lot of things.

23 Q. Thank you.

24 A. I can speak a lot about these things.

25 Q. I'm just asking in general. That's all.

1 A. Yeah, yeah.

2 Q. Are you involved with anchoring operations? And if so, how  
3 are you involved?

4 A. No, I'm not involved. I'm not involved. Only if anchoring  
5 is in my watch. I am present in my watch on bridge. This is all  
6 as deck officer.

7 Q. So you're never out on deck when the anchor is either  
8 being --

9 A. No.

10 Q. -- or heaved up? When you are -- when your vessel is  
11 involved in anchoring operations, do you have an assigned  
12 position?

13 A. Only if I am on watch.

14 Q. If you're on watch?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. What is your watch?

17 A. From 4 in the morning until 8 in the morning. And from 4  
18 afternoon until 7 afternoon.

19 Q. Until 7 in the afternoon?

20 A. 7, yeah.

21 Q. From 4 p.m. until 7 p.m.?

22 A. Yeah, correct.

23 Q. Is that all the time or just while you're in port?

24 A. In (indiscernible) I am always present on bridge. This is my  
25 watch. And only the port I'm down in officer of deck. But during

1 anchoring, I'm always in deck (indiscernible) on bridge.

2 Q. So the watch -- the hours that you described to me --

3 A. This is the watch (indiscernible) --

4 Q. -- those are your watch.

5 A. Yeah, correct.

6 Q. But when you're anchoring, you're always on the bridge?

7 A. No, negative. If anchoring is, for example, noontime or 2:00  
8 afternoon, I am not on bridge. But master is always on bridge  
9 (indiscernible).

10 Q. Thank you. Can you tell me all of the watches -- what are  
11 the times for all of the watches for the desk officers?

12 A. Yeah, of course. I will start from midnight. From midnight  
13 to 4:00 in the morning is second mate. From 4:00 in the morning  
14 until 8:00 in the morning is chief mate. From 8:00 in the morning  
15 until noontime is third mate. From noontime to 4:00 afternoon is  
16 second mate. From 4:00 afternoon until 7:00 afternoon is chief  
17 mate. And from 7:00 afternoon until midnight is third mate.

18 Q. So the third mate stands a little extra watch.

19 A. Yeah. That is (indiscernible) our SMS, fleet regulation.

20 Q. Understood. So would all MSC -- do you know if all MSC  
21 vessels this company --

22 A. Yeah, this is --

23 Q. -- (indiscernible).

24 A. SMS and the fleet is Russian on the (indiscernible). Only  
25 one vessel. Every vessel below our management is the same.

1 Q. When you are -- if you're on the bridge during -- and you're  
2 going to -- the vessel is going to anchor during your watch, what  
3 are your duties during that time?

4 A. Assisting master in -- assisting master. Because when we  
5 approach and when the anchorage, I am assisting -- following some  
6 orders what he give to me.

7 Q. Do you operate the engineer order telegraph?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Do you observe the radars?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Do you use the ships VHF radio?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. You are generally on the lookout for other vessels. Is that  
14 correct?

15 A. Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

16 Q. How do you -- how does this vessel -- what are your  
17 procedures when you anchor? Do you walk the anchor down or do you  
18 let go?

19 A. So when we approaching on anchorage or what you --

20 Q. Yes. Could you just describe to me -- how is it that the  
21 anchor gets from where it is --

22 A. From the pipe.

23 Q. From the pipe. From the (indiscernible) pipe. To the floor.  
24 Describe that process to me as best you can.

25 A. This is -- for example, master always make decision because

1 master make maneuver when we (indiscernible) and when we  
2 anchoring. So always is master decision. Master always say how  
3 we will drop the anchor. Officer who is in that moment on the  
4 bridge just following some -- master's order. In that moment,  
5 bosun and (indiscernible) are forward. And they just follow  
6 orders from the master. So it depends from situation to  
7 situation.

8 For example, if -- now, I speak not about this vessel; about  
9 usually (indiscernible). For example, if weather is nice or  
10 something, you can move the vessel -- you can move the anchor  
11 until water line. Or if it's some -- the weather or something --  
12 not the weather but some stronger current or something, you can  
13 lower one shackle in the water enough to drop the anchor. But  
14 just depends from situation to situation. And master always  
15 decide how he will drop the anchor. It always master decision.

16 Q. Who is responsible onboard the vessel for maintenance of any  
17 deck machinery?

18 A. For deck machinery?

19 Q. Including the anchor.

20 A. Engineers are responsible for all deck machinery.

21 Q. Do the engineers operationally test the equipment to find out  
22 if there's problems?

23 A. Yeah. They periodically check and test the equipment. There  
24 are a lot of things. For example, oil changing, greasing and  
25 everything.



1 Q. If there were -- if one of the -- during -- when you're  
2 anchoring, who actually operates the anchor, the windless and the  
3 -- you know, the actual (indiscernible)?

4 A. Bosun.

5 Q. Bosun.

6 A. Bosun.

7 Q. If the bosun detected a problem with the deck machinery that  
8 he or she is operating --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- who would they report that to?

11 A. He would report immediately to bridge because he's -- all the  
12 time during anchoring. So he is in communication by radio to the  
13 bridge because he following master orders during anchoring. So if  
14 the bosun recommends something what is not usual, what is not  
15 normal. I don't know. (Indiscernible) is leaking or anything,  
16 for sure he will immediately inform the bridge. And bridge will  
17 inform engineers in that case.

18 Q. Okay, in that case. If he noticed -- or he or she noticed  
19 something wrong with the deck machinery but it wasn't critical  
20 that it be reported to the bridge, how would that report be made?

21 A. Anyhow, anyhow. Because -- anyhow. Everything -- suspected  
22 that something is wrong with any kind of equipment, not only deck  
23 machinery, any kind, they here to investigate. They check.

24 Always we check (indiscernible) if something is not -- if  
25 something is -- we don't know how to fix something, we have -- we

1 order some service.

2 Q. Is there a specific engineer that's responsible for either  
3 fixing or maintaining deck machinery? Is it a specific engineer?

4 A. Chief engineer is the main guy in engine room. He --

5 Q. But --

6 A. -- delegate duties to other crew.

7 Q. He delegates the duty to another engineer?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Which engineer typically --

10 A. First engineer.

11 Q. First engineer.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. He's the one that actually goes out there and fixes it if  
14 that's necessary.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Since you've been onboard -- sorry, I forgot to ask. When  
17 did you get onboard?

18 A. I embark 1st of February.

19 Q. Where did you join the vessel?

20 A. Here in -- sorry, in Long Beach. In Long Beach at the time.

21 Q. Since you've been onboard, have you either heard reports of  
22 deck machinery that's not working properly or that needed  
23 maintenance?

24 A. No. We change oil in mooring winches and in gangway motors.  
25 We change oil on the gangway motors in April this year. And that

1 is last change of oil, I think. In April, yeah. We have four  
2 motors (indiscernible). But that is usually in routine thing.  
3 This is not something what was not normal. This is --

4 Q. Understood. Were you involved -- let me say it this way.  
5 Are you involved in classification society survey -- surveyor  
6 inspections? So DNV GL is your class society. Is that correct?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. When that person comes onboard to do tests and inspections,  
9 are you involved in that operation?

10 A. It is not clearly necessary. But usually, I am. But it is  
11 not always (indiscernible) from deck officers. He follow the  
12 (indiscernible). Like today, you are calling to go on deck, I  
13 escort them because third mate was on watch on bridge. If I was  
14 on bridge, he will escort them. It is not specified that I here  
15 to follow somebody from DNV GL or (indiscernible) or something.

16 Q. Since you've been onboard this time, have you been involved  
17 in any classification society surveys?

18 A. Yeah, yeah. DNV GL was onboard a few times after now.

19 Q. A few times. Do you recall a specific time in early this  
20 year in late January or early -- or February of this year?

21 A. In January, DNV GL was onboard. But I embark a few days  
22 after that because of corona situation. The GM inspector say that  
23 we -- in that moment, we was new crew. We have to embark vessel  
24 after they finish because of corona. So I embark in LA. I think  
25 they come onboard 27th, 28th. January, they make (indiscernible)

1 and I embark 1st of February after that.

2 Q. Who was the person that you relieved as chief mate?

3 A. Name is Luka Adenovich (ph.). That is a guy from my country,  
4 from town. But as I remember --

5 Q. You said Luka something. Do you know if I can --

6 A. What do you need?

7 Q. What was his name again?

8 A. Luka. It's written L-u-k-a.

9 Q. That's fine. How long do you have -- how much time do you  
10 spend with that person?

11 A. We here a lot of time. Because in LA is a perfect situation  
12 because (indiscernible) seven days so we was a few days together.  
13 And we have already enough time, too.

14 Q. Is that normal that you get some time with the person you're  
15 relieving to discuss things?

16 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Of course, of course. That is necessary.  
17 Especially --

18 Q. Do you get -- do you receive any notes from that person about  
19 ongoing maintenance or issues or anything?

20 A. (No audible response.)

21 Q. You don't get anything. There's no --

22 A. I not have contact --

23 Q. There's no relief notes, for example.

24 A. Oh, no. I have (indiscernible) form recalling our SMS. I  
25 have one file. Few pages of (indiscernible) document. But this

1 is all. I not have some contact with him or something. This is  
2 usual procedure. A normal one.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. Or when some officer go home -- relieve to the new guy,  
5 handing over.

6 Q. So each position --

7 A. Each position.

8 Q. -- does its own handover notes?

9 A. Yeah, yeah. Officers. Chief engineering officers  
10 (indiscernible).

11 Q. So you have some notes --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- from that person.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. What do you do with those notes?

16 A. When I embark the vessel, first off, always read -- we are  
17 together so we speak generally about vessel condition. Always we  
18 say (indiscernible) to each other what is -- if he had something,  
19 what is -- let's say, what is not normal with vessel  
20 (indiscernible) some special services in near future if vessel --  
21 for example, when I embark, vessel finish with some exams. We did  
22 DNV GL. If you have (indiscernible) position on the way, for  
23 example, if vessel make six-month requisition, we here to receive  
24 next one month. He just inform me about these things regarding  
25 equipment. Is everything in good order or not. (Indiscernible).

1 Q. Did the person --

2 A. Sorry. I have this form what he give to me to read, of  
3 course, to remind myself. Because you cannot remember everything  
4 when you embark. You have this form.

5 Q. During the time that you spent together or subsequently after  
6 that time, did that person you relieved, Luka, did he describe any  
7 heavy high wind event that they had been -- that this vessel had  
8 been involved in in the Los Angeles area, Long Beach?

9 A. Yeah, he told me that they have big (indiscernible) on  
10 anchorage. What is not usually because usually when you are --  
11 anchor is calm. But they have a very strong wind. So now, when  
12 coming all this story that you would come onboard and everything,  
13 I take a logbook and I show that it was eight or nine force of  
14 wind. That is not usual especially here for LA and for anchorage.

15 Q. Did he detail any type of anchor dragging that may have  
16 occurred?

17 A. No, he just told me that they rolling.

18 Q. Just rolling?

19 A. Just rolling. And they -- some vessels -- he say -- I'm not  
20 sure. Some vessels -- also this vessel heave up anchors but -- we  
21 just speak about this.

22 Q. Can you --

23 A. I'm not sure did he say all vessels heave up anchor or some  
24 vessels or -- I'm not sure about this.

25 Q. Can you describe everything that he told you about the high

1 wind event?

2 A. Yeah. We spoke about the -- because always when chief mate  
3 -- earlier, the chief mate, we speak on which line is the vessel.  
4 For example (indiscernible) Europe, for China, for USA, East  
5 Coast, West Coast (indiscernible). And he told me that the vessel  
6 usually heave anchorage the front of LA 10 days, 9 days, 15 days.  
7 And I say, okay, what is reason. He told me (indiscernible) is  
8 nice because you have time to (indiscernible).

9 But last time was very, very big rolling. This is all what I  
10 heard from him. And he say that some of the heaving up the anchor  
11 -- I'm not sure did he say this vessel or other vessels or all  
12 vessels from anchorage. I forgot. And after that, the last few  
13 days when master receive some mail that you would come onboard  
14 because of this inspection, I check the logbook on 25th. I  
15 thought (indiscernible) January and I show that it was eight or  
16 nine force of wind. But it's not usually.

17 Q. You said that force of wind is unusual.

18 A. Unusual for this area. In LA it's always nice weather as I  
19 know. I'm not always here.

20 Q. What were you told about -- as far as the purpose of our  
21 visit today?

22 MS. MDINARADZE: Other than his discussions with Counsel  
23 perhaps.

24 LT. [REDACTED]: What's that?

25 MS. MDINARADZE: Other than his discussions with Counsel

1 perhaps.

2 LT. [REDACTED]: I'm just asking if anyone onboard told you the  
3 purpose of why we're here today.

4 MS. MDINARADZE: Do not discuss anything that we talked  
5 about.

6 MR. WALSH: This is Joe Walsh. I'm going to assert also  
7 attorney/client privilege to the extent that we may have had  
8 conversations with ship's officers and crew prior to your arrival.  
9 So anything that you heard from my office through the captain is  
10 also something I'm asking you not to talk about.

11 MS. MDINARADZE: And anything that you discuss with me, do  
12 not discuss otherwise from anyone else.

13 LT. [REDACTED]: Anything else, [REDACTED]?

14 BY LT. COMMANDER [REDACTED]:

15 Q. Yeah, Chief. Again, thanks for speaking with us. Your  
16 English is very good, too.

17 A. Thank you.

18 Q. Have you had any situations where your -- the vessel has  
19 dragged anchor since you've been assigned to this vessel?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Have you had any issues since you've been onboard with any of  
22 the equipment, the anchoring equipment or maintenance?

23 A. No.

24 Q. No issues with that?

25 A. No issues.



1 Q. Is there anything else that you'd like to inform us about of  
2 the situation or anything else?

3 A. No.

4 LT. [REDACTED]: I think we can -- we'll go ahead and end the  
5 recording.

6 (Off the record.)

7 (On the record.)

8 LT. [REDACTED]: This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard  
9 again. The time is 1405 and we're going to stop the recording and  
10 stop the interview with chief mate. Thank you.

11 (Whereupon, at 14:05 the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

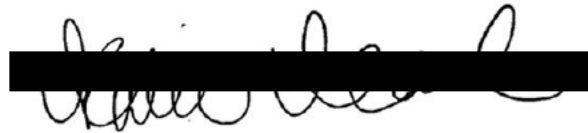
IN THE MATTER OF: PIPELINE RUPTURE NEAR  
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ACCIDENT NO.: DCA22FM001

PLACE: Los Angeles, California

DATE: October 16, 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.



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Katie Leach  
Transcriber