NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN RE:	
THE ALLISION INVOLVING THE AFRAMAX RIVER ON THE HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL ON SEPTEMBER 6, 2016	NTSB Accident No. DCA16FM055

INTERVIEW OF: MUZAFFER ALI

September 7, 2016

BEFORE

[redacted] USCG
BRUCE DAVIES, USCG
LUKE WISNIEWSKI, NTSB
MIKE USHER, Port Pilot Commission for Harris Co. Ports
ANANT SHARMA, Aframax River Marine Superintendent

APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of G&H Towing Company:

JAY HUFFMAN, ESQ.
Blank Rome LLP
717 Texas Avenue
Suite 1400
Houston, TX 77002
[redacted]

On Behalf of the Aframax River:

JAMES BAILEY, ESQ.
Eastham, Watson, Dale & Forney, LLP
The Niels Esperson Building
808 Travis, Suite 1300
Houston, TX 77002-5769
[redacted]

On Behalf of Other Individuals Involved in this Investigation:

CAMERON HATZEL, ESQ.
Legge, Farrow, Kimmitt, McGrath & Brown LLP
5151 San Felipe, Suite 400
Houston, Texas 77056
[redacted]

On Behalf of ITC:

STACEY T. NORSTRUD, ESQ.
Fowler Rodriguez, Counselors at Law
Four Houston Center
1331 Lamar Street, Suite 1560
[redacted]

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

3:55 p.m.

[redacted] All right. The time on deck, it's approximately 15:55 and we're on board the Aframax River, doing a post casualty interview with the Chief Engineer. I'm [redacted] Sector Houston Galveston Investigations Division. I'm the duty investigator and we'll do a round table, everyone can introduce themselves.

MR. HATZEL: I'm Cameron Hatzel, on behalf of the pilots.

MR. DAVIES: Bruce Davies, Chief Investigations for Houston Coast Guard.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Luke Wisniewski, National Transportation Safety Board.

MR. BAILEY: James Bailey with Eastham Watson, on behalf of the vessel.

CHIEF ALI: I'm the Chief Engineer, Muzaffer Ali.

CPT. SHARMA: Captain Sharma from (Unintelligible) Ship Management.

MR. HUFFMAN: Jay Huffman from Blank Rome on behalf of G&H Towing Company.

MR. USHER: Mike Usher, Houston Pilot Board.

MS. NORSTRUD: Stacey Norstrud, Fowler

Rodriguez, on behalf of ITC.

(Inaudible.)

[redacted] All right. So, Chief, I'm just going to go ahead and ask some questions. If at any time you want to consult with Mr. Bailey, you can. But, again, we just want to find out what happened here, that's kind of our goal to prevent it from happening again. So, Chief, can you just start with your maritime background?

CHIEF ALI: Well, I started as merchant marine in 1975 and I worked until 1986, then I joined the (inaudible) the National Iranian Tanker Company and we had an accident onboard (inaudible) involved six bombs on the ship in the tanker and the captain got killed and I decided to give up sea life. So I got a shore job. I was in (inaudible) Hong Kong for a year as a technical superintendent, then I went to another company as a technical manager.

Eventually, after a while, I was two years ashore, and then my mother had some problems, so I gave up my job for about eight, nine months to look after her. And then when I decided to go back, I had a choice to pick up a shore job, but I came back to sea. So, I (inaudible) the sea, so I've been serving, I stay about four months at home, I've been serving as a Chief

Engineer. 1982, I got promoted as a Chief Engineer, 1986 I gave up after that incident which took place.

[redacted] All right. Thank you. And, Chief, what's your experience level onboard this type of ship, Aframax vessels?

CHIEF ALI: I have been on this ship for the fourth time now.

[redacted] This specific ship?

CHIEF ALI: This ship.

[redacted] Okay.

CHIEF ALI: My first time with this ship was in 2012. And then in between, having other ships too with the company, but on this ship is my fourth time.

[redacted] Fourth time on this ship, all right. And have you sailed into Houston --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] -- with this ship before?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] Okay. And, have you had any -- how do you feel in the engine room in terms of the way the ship operates?

CHIEF ALI: Well, the engine is in very good condition, I no see problems at all, except the time this thing happened.

[redacted] All right.

CHIEF ALI: No issues at all.

[redacted] So, in your four --

CHIEF ALI: Four contracts.

[redacted] -- contracts --

CHIEF ALI: I have no issues with any of the engine, no major issues in neither the main engine nor the generators.

[redacted] Okay.

CHIEF ALI: The other problems more the issues that come up.

[redacted] All right. And have you conducted preventative maintenance on these engines before?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] Any major overhauls or --

CHIEF ALI: The major overhauls were I think in 2015 when I wasn't here and (inaudible) that was the last one.

[redacted] That was --

CHIEF ALI: 2015.

[redacted] -- 2015? Okay. All right. Chief, let me reference to the September 5 voyage, September 4 voyage, sorry, September 4 voyage into Houston.

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] Do you recall where you were coming from?

CHIEF ALI: We came from St. Lucia --

[redacted] St. Lucia?

CHIEF ALI: -- (inaudible).

[redacted] Okay. Any issues during that voyage?

CHIEF ALI: No issues at all. No issues at all. We came (inaudible) with no problem.

[redacted] All right. And when you were transiting into the channel, Chief, any issues?

CHIEF ALI: No issues at all.

[redacted] Okay. Were you in the engine room at all times?

CHIEF ALI: Not for the transit, the whole five, six hours (inaudible) second engineer take over in the passage.

[redacted] All right.

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible) work around.

[redacted] Okay.

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible) the second engineer relieved me for my lunch (inaudible).

[redacted] Okay. And the second engineer, is he, would you consider him a good engineer?

CHIEF ALI: He's a good engineer, yes.

[redacted] Okay. Did he report any concerns with the engine at all?

CHIEF ALI: No, we had no problems at all.

[redacted] All right. Chief, going down to the voyage on the 5th of September, the voyage that resulted in the incident.

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] Can you just go a little bit over what preparations you made prior to getting underway?

CHIEF ALI: The normal procedure, when the engine received a one hour notice, he informed that we have the one hour's notice. And (inaudible) the duty engineer has the telegraph (inaudible), the normal routines. And after he finishes that, he calls me for blowing through the engine. So, he blows through the engine with compressed air and that's the time he calls me and (inaudible).

So he blowed through to show that all our units are safe, there's no leakage of water inside. And then, after blow through, he transferred control to the bridge. And from the bridge, (inaudible) ahead and astern (inaudible) that go okay, there is no problem. Engine is performing very well and (inaudible). There are no issues.

[redacted] All right, Chief, and this was done just one hour prior to getting underway?

CHIEF ALI: I do not (inaudible) the exact time (inaudible).

[redacted] Sure.

CHIEF ALI: I'm not too sure what time, but it is there on the recording.

[redacted] It is recorded?

CHIEF ALI: It is recorded (inaudible) reporting to the engine room.

[redacted] A notebook?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] So all these tasks that the second engineer did, they're also recorded?

CHIEF ALI: They're also reported and recorded (inaudible) communications between the engine room and the bridge (inaudible).

[redacted] The second engineer does this, who else, is there anyone else who assists the second engineer?

CHIEF ALI: The duty engineer. Normally, the duty engineer is always there in the engine room. (Inaudible) the second engineer, this the blowing through (inaudible) stopping of the engines in my presence (inaudible).

[redacted] And that's all written as a procedure or is that --

CHIEF ALI: That's all in a procedure. That's the (inaudible) requirements to have this procedure.

[redacted] Okay. All right. Chief, so you said you tested communications with the bridge, everything was good?

CHIEF ALI: Everything was normal.

[redacted] You transferred control over to the bridge control?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] Okay. And what happened from there? Did you stay in the engine room throughout the transit or the underway?

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible) movements, yes, I didn't because when they gave the movements, I didn't realize at that time when I saw on the RPM indicator when it was 80 RPM.

[redacted] Okay. So, let's just go back a little bit. So, you have a time where you were supposed to get underway --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] -- and all this time, where are you at this time when the vessel is --

CHIEF ALI: In the engine room.

[redacted] In the engine --

CHIEF ALI: In the control room.

[redacted] And then the control room?

CHIEF ALI: In the control room with the second engineer.

[redacted] All right. And then, is there anyone else standing by anywhere else? Emergency --

CHIEF ALI: The duty engineer was at that time (inaudible) minutes before the incident, was handing over the duty, the junior engineer was handing over duty to the third engineer.

[redacted] Okay.

CHIEF ALI: Was outside the control room.

[redacted] Were outside the --

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible) control room, normally the taking over duty engineer comes 15 minutes before taking over duty (inaudible).

[redacted] Okay.

CHIEF ALI: So I and the second engineer is the ones you want who were in the control room at that time.

[redacted] All right. So those are the only two positions, you don't have anyone else set up anywhere, a (inaudible) or anything?

CHIEF ALI: The motorman also keeps -- the duty motorman, he (inaudible) the bridge.

[redacted] Rounds?

CHIEF ALI: Rounds.

[redacted] All right. Chief, so you're in the engine control room, you realize the vessel is getting underway, and how is this relayed to you? How are you notified that the vessel is getting underway?

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible) when the engine receives from the bridge (inaudible) I look at the tachometer and the (inaudible) is given, because we on 35 or 40, but I'm (inaudible) so I typically watch (inaudible) so when the engine picks up (inaudible) about it.

[redacted] Okay.

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible) concentrate too much on the tachometer, which shows the RPM, that is all (inaudible) dead slow astern was given. The first movement report after received standby on the engine, dead slow astern was the only movement that was given.

[redacted] Okay. And at that time, when that order was given, dead slow astern, you said that you saw the RPMs?

CHIEF ALI: RPMs, I saw that they were still (inaudible) that the RPM being maintained because it

not dropping to zero.

[redacted] Maintained at what --

CHIEF ALI: Because at that time 32 to 33 --

[redacted] Okay.

CHIEF ALI: -- (inaudible).

[redacted] All right, Chief. Can you elaborate on that to --

CHIEF ALI: And this, when (inaudible) after about two and half minutes to three minutes time, there was a huge commotion that the RPM is going up and the second engineer received a call in the engine room saying that captain says that our engine is out of control. And I saw that tachometer, this was my (inaudible) and then I saw the telegraph was still dead slow astern, I'm slow astern, I tripped (inaudible).

[redacted] You tripped the --

CHIEF ALI: I tripped the main engine from (inaudible) that the RPM is going up to 80, which I confirmed, I confirmed that it was 80.

[redacted] Okay. So --

CHIEF ALI: And I looked at that time at the telegraph, the telegraph was wanting dead slow astern. And they have light indication, even though it's on bridge control --

[redacted] Yes.

CHIEF ALI: -- I can look at what position the (inaudible) was, it was dead slow astern, but so dead slow astern (inaudible) it was 80 --

[redacted] So you --

CHIEF ALI: -- on there.

[redacted] So you didn't wait for the second engineer to tell you (inaudible)

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] Okay.

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible) the captain is saying that.

[redacted] And did the RPMs start --

CHIEF ALI: Nearly dropped to zero.

[redacted] Nearly dropped to zero?

CHIEF ALI: Right. Because normally the momentum of the ship, the propeller doesn't (inaudible) especially when the ship is being pulled out by the tug boats, the engine doesn't require too much effort (inaudible) because of the wake (inaudible) it takes a few seconds for it to come to zero, it doesn't come to zero immediately.

[redacted] Okay. Do you recall how much time after that did you get the dead slow ahead bell?

CHIEF ALI: Well, what I saw was from the dead slow astern, I think the pilot realized that we

were going too fast up, so he's giving stop. Once he realized (inaudible) it's better that I give ahead movement, so that I can break the movement of the ship going up. So, he skipped stop and he give dead slow ahead. And then he gave slow ahead. In the meantime, the ship had touched on the outside and then it just stopped.

[redacted] Now, when these commands were given, did you notice the RPMs?

CHIEF ALI: No. No, I didn't. They (inaudible) and the engine did not start.

[redacted] The engine did not start?

CHIEF ALI: No. Not that it started the dead slow ahead, nor did it started at slow.

[redacted] Do you know why?

CHIEF ALI: I don't know. We are trying to figure out (inaudible) to find out what can go wrong, what has happened, why when the movement was given, dead slow astern, why did it shoot up suddenly to 80, so that I can figure out why it is --

[redacted] Okay. Now, Captain, hold up, let Mr. Davies --

MR. DAVIES: I don't really have any questions right now (inaudible).

[redacted] Okay.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Luke Wisniewski, NTSB. Captain, we have a picture that was taken from the telegraph --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: -- printer.

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Could you just circle on this one, it's a picture that's dated September 6, 2016 at 22:50, can you circle on there where you think the emergency stop or where you hit the -- is that recorded on there?

CHIEF ALI: It's recorded. This is the one that it is there (inaudible) this is the C. C is the engine control room. Anything (inaudible) from anywhere, C indicates it's done --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Control room?

CHIEF ALI: -- from the engine control room. B indicates --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: B is bridge?

CHIEF ALI: -- it's done from the bridge.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: This the one which I operate.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: And then the pilot did try to break the speed of the ship going up by giving dead

slow ahead, but it didn't operate. I could see the movement on the telegraph that came from this to this.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: But is there any RPM that's recorded on there?

CHIEF ALI: No, because -- no. The reason was, this option was too quick, the pilot didn't realize when I pressed the emergency switch, all the pumps trip off and this engine, I have to bring down the fuel lever back to zero to reset all the alarms. When you operate the emergency switch, all the alarms trips, so we have to reset all of them and unless you reset all the (inaudible) and switches, the engine will not work. So by the time we did that, at this point, when he started the zero five, when the reset, the engine did not (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: How was this information you're just discussing with us relayed to the bridge?

CHIEF ALI: Excuse me?

MR. WISNIEWSKI: How was this relayed to the personnel up on the bridge?

CHIEF ALI: Well, you see, the time was too short, this is an emergency and already at this point (inaudible) the ship already touched and there was fire. So nobody was, there was no communication at all during that period.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: Everybody attention was diverted for the fighting the fire.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. So, you said that you saw it ramp up to 80 RPM?

CHIEF ALI: Yes (inaudible) 80 when I saw the telegraph too, it was still at dead slow astern.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: What governor is on the main engine?

CHIEF ALI: We have an electronic (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Who is the manufacturer?

CHIEF ALI: The manufacturer is (Unintelligible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. What would be the over speed trip for astern? Would the governor trip at --

CHIEF ALI: It --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: -- 80 RPM astern?

CHIEF ALI: Yes. The emergency trips operate at any position.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: I'm referring to the governor over speed trip, when would that kick in or when would that go off?

CHIEF ALI: I think (inaudible) if engine's

on 99 RPM.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Ninety-nine RPM?

CHIEF ALI: Ninety-nine, so it should be plus 99 because the engine has been designed for maximum horsepower that it can go at sea, 99 RPM.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. But that's forward, how about --

CHIEF ALI: At plus ten percent is the (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Plus ten percent? Okay.

CHIEF ALI: Plus average ten percent of 99 RPM, that's the time the (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. So --

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible.)

MR. WISNIEWSKI: -- how about even astern, is there --

CHIEF ALI: Astern too.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Astern too would be the same?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. When's the last time that that was checked? Do you know?

CHIEF ALI: I don't know. Not in my time.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Is that part of your PMS, your preventative maintenance system?

CHIEF ALI: That --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Schedule?

CHIEF ALI: It's not (inaudible) is not part of this. We have a test, without the engine being done, that test was (inaudible) actual test.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: I'm going to now just start to go back a little bit. So, how long were you onboard the vessel before coming into Texas? How long has your contract been? How far are you into your contract?

CHIEF ALI: Yes. I'm not, I think I've been on this ship 22nd of May.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: And how long is the contract for?

CHIEF ALI: Four months.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Four months? And that's even with the previous four contracts? They're all --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: They're all four months long?

CHIEF ALI: Yes. But a few times, I done in three months, so I ask the company (inaudible) three months contract before.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: So that (inaudible) exactly three months (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Right.

CHIEF ALI: It always shoots more than three months, not less than three months.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yes. Was there any work performed in St. Lucia?

CHIEF ALI: None.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: When -- do you have any record of the last time --

CHIEF ALI: Well, in St. Lucia, I think I changed the number one exhaust (inaudible) because it was due for (inaudible) every 8,000 hours, we take it out, clean it. That's the only thing I done in St. Lucia. So I make the entire passage, we had no problem.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. Would you say that was the last time --

CHIEF ALI: That was the last --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: -- it was performed on the main engine?

CHIEF ALI: On the main engine, yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. How about the throttle, either on the bridge or in the engine room, any work performed on the --

CHIEF ALI: No, no, no.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Is there records of that?

CHIEF ALI: The throttle is mostly, if you go (inaudible) the throttle is directly manual, so there nothing (inaudible) other than the throttle, it's all by the governor.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: (Inaudible) the governor?

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible) the only problem you can do is, when you change out the manual loading control, you bypass (inaudible) and then directly you can give (inaudible) but even then, the (inaudible) the governor has to take over, even under manual control.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: So, your professional opinion then, what do you feel after years of superintendent and chief engineer would cause this over speed?

CHIEF ALI: I think (inaudible) knowledge is limited and you always say, marine engineers are jack of all trades and masters of none, so I can't comment on that, there are too many, it's a very complicated thing for a person to switch (inaudible) marine engineer who has to know so many machines (inaudible) just figure out what it can be. It's not my experience which I have (inaudible) in my experience, I haven't faced this kind of a problem before.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: I'd just like to go through the starts and stops. How many starts and stops did

you have with (inaudible)? Can you go through and just explain that, how many you have as far as --

CHIEF ALI: And the (inaudible) report, they normally mention about 12 to 13 after the shipping (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yes.

CHIEF ALI: You can have safely eight to ten starts.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: (Inaudible.)

CHIEF ALI: Without to have to press a button.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. So, eight to ten stops?

CHIEF ALI: Eight to ten without --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Starts?

CHIEF ALI: I mean, when you get the low pressure alarm --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yes.

CHIEF ALI: -- on the (inaudible) you not get the low pressure alarm, you still have to look at just engine response, even in that low pressure. And then it drops around ten bar pressure.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: But you indicated on the first start, no --

CHIEF ALI: No issues with it.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Fuel --

CHIEF ALI: Because it just one.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Fuel governor took right over?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. Have you ever been in the shipyard with this vessel?

CHIEF ALI: Not for this vessel.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: How about with this type of engine?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: With this type of engine?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: As well as (inaudible)?

CHIEF ALI: Yes. I was with other companies. I was at (Unintelligible) for nine years and then (Unintelligible) I was there for ten years. So, I have all done, only I think I worked (inaudible) I worked from the start, natural aspirating engine without any double charger, and that were passenger ship having about (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Can you, Chief, can you go through and explain for the group down in the engine room, when you're looking at the throttle, what you see from the -- what you can do down there locally when you

see the throttle commands come in from the bridge?

CHIEF ALI: This normal procedure (inaudible) I explain, the duty engineer and the second engineer do (inaudible) look at the tachometer. You ensure that the (inaudible) that's the most tricky part of it. So you have to look at that and make sure that the engine has pick up the speed and the (inaudible) started. It's the same (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Did you have any standing orders in place at the time? Any specific orders, standing orders that --

CHIEF ALI: Yes, we have the specific standing orders manually or (inaudible) the engine. The two generators on, also we have two generators minimum running. All the test being carried out. That's the standard thing we're supposed to do.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. For this --

CHIEF ALI: And we have checklist too (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: And those were filled out? You --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Do you witness those afterwards?

CHIEF ALI: Yes, yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Do you sign them?

CHIEF ALI: Yes, sign them.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Steering system, did you have two steering pumps on --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: -- or one?

CHIEF ALI: Yes, for two.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: And no issues or no --

CHIEF ALI: No issues.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: -- concerns over the steering?

CHIEF ALI: No. We got the same capacity, starboard side is tied into the emergency generator and port side still normal power. Both the same (inaudible) the same capacity.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Now, I guess one thing I just want to go back to again, so once you realized there was a problem or there was information from the bridge being brought down to the second engineer, who was on the phone, when did you get involved or relay what you knew back up to the bridge so they could make decisions?

CHIEF ALI: That was immediate. The phone came up and was saying to the captain (inaudible) we realize this was something serious. So I was just

sitting down, so I came towards it, and I saw that it was saying that the RPM, the captain was saying the RPM was going up to 80. So I saw it was 80 (inaudible) stop, it was 80.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. That's all I have at this time.

MR. DAVIES: Let me ask that question. Chief, you are the one who hit the emergency stop in the control room?

CHIEF ALI: That's right.

MR. DAVIES: All right. And what type of engineering training or additional training does your company require on you?

CHIEF ALI: We have the system, every month, the main engine has to be (inaudible) manually, bypassing the control system, bypassing the pneumatic control system. That is the manual (inaudible) obligation. Once a month and it's done by the engineers and I ensure it's done especially by the duty engineer (inaudible) he gets the feel of the kick that it's giving to ensure that he doesn't lose too much air, so he gets the minimum air.

And then for the stop position, I don't, once I use the lever, but for the other stop position, I use the local emergency trip to operate the engines

to stop. So, both of this is recorded every month and that is the standard our company procedure. The emergency stop and the local manually is done every month once.

MR. DAVIES: In your career, did you ever experience an over speed (inaudible)?

CHIEF ALI: I experience an over speed, one we had a very rough, I was in bulk area and this was in the ballast condition, so it tripped off. It was just a mechanical governor, it's not the electronic governors which we have now, the normal mechanical (inaudible) governor.

MR. DAVIES: (Inaudible.)

CHIEF ALI: That's the only once I experienced.

MR. DAVIES: And I think the NTSB asked you this question, but do you have a requirement that the over speed has to be checked at a certain period?

CHIEF ALI: They have given us -- without you can test it by making a test move. They've given us values that these values should come. So, once you cross-check those values, you'll know surely that those (inaudible).

MR. DAVIES: Well, when was the last time it was checked?

CHIEF ALI: Well, I don't know the date when it was last checked.

MR. DAVIES: Well, do you keep a record of it?

CHIEF ALI: Yes, we keep a record.

MR. DAVIES: And do you have that record?

CHIEF ALI: Well, I'm not sure about that, I have to check on this.

MR. DAVIES: Well, did you check?

CHIEF ALI: No, I didn't check. I didn't.

MR. DAVIES: So, it had to be at least the three months ago or before you --

CHIEF ALI: Well, I don't know. It's not in the three months period, the (inaudible) is not there. Because we have the maintenance up to six months we keep for all the equipment, that doesn't come in that (inaudible).

MR. DAVIES: All right. I don't have any other questions.

MR. HUFFMAN: This is Jay Huffman on behalf of G&H Towing. Chief, when you hit the emergency stop in the engine control room and the engines go down to zero, how long does it take for those engines to come back online?

CHIEF ALI: Well, we have to, once we operate

the emergency trip, we have to reset all the alarms. What happens is when you first press the emergency trip, the first operation that takes place is the slow down alarm. So the engine immediately slows down. And then, (inaudible) then we have to reset all the alarms (inaudible) we have to reset them. Once we reset them, as soon as we reset them, all the machinery start off.

MR. HUFFMAN: How long would that take for you to do?

CHIEF ALI: Well, this will depend upon the times we take to bring -- fuel lever has been kept at (inaudible) dead slow ahead or dead slow astern, we have to bring it mechanically down to zero. If we don't bring it down mechanically to zero, the alarms will not even reset. So, that can take more than two to three minutes.

MR. HUFFMAN: So, two to three minutes after you hit the emergency stop?

CHIEF ALI: We can do (inaudible).

MR. HUFFMAN: So, in this case, when the bell was on dead slow astern --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. HUFFMAN: -- and then you hit --

CHIEF ALI: Stop.

MR. HUFFMAN: -- stop, how long do you think

it would take? Would it take less time, less than three minutes?

CHIEF ALI: Yes, less than three minutes.

MR. HUFFMAN: And you were talking earlier and you said that the second engineer was in the engine control room monitoring the RPMs, is that correct?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. HUFFMAN: So, did he tell you when the RPMs hit -- I mean, you said you saw it at 32 and 33 when you were at the dead slow astern bell, correct? You saw it at 32 and 33 RPMs?

CHIEF ALI: That is when we were starting, that's (inaudible) I didn't notice (inaudible).

MR. HUFFMAN: But did the second engineer say anything to you from the time between when it went from 32 to 33 RPMs to 80 RPMs?

CHIEF ALI: The things is that when we see the first RPM, he doesn't keep monitoring all the time. So, we don't do that (inaudible).

MR. HUFFMAN: So, he didn't, the second engineer --

CHIEF ALI: Neither did I.

MR. HUFFMAN: -- didn't see it?

CHIEF ALI: Neither did I.

MR. HUFFMAN: Okay. Nothing further.

[redacted] Mr. Usher?

MR. USHER: Yes, please. Thank you. Mike Usher, Houston Pilot Board. Chief, what type of fuel were you using?

CHIEF ALI: LSMGO.

MR. USHER: Excuse me?

CHIEF ALI: LSMGO.

MR. USHER: Low sulphur?

CHIEF ALI: Low sulphur.

MR. USHER: Yes.

CHIEF ALI: We change over to low sulphur one and a half days before we enter the U.S. coast.

MR. USHER: Where did you come from?

CHIEF ALI: I come from India, in Chennai.

MR. USHER: No, no, your voyage.

CHIEF ALI: Oh, St. Lucia.

MR. USHER: Where were you headed? Where was your voyage planned to? When you departed here, where were you going?

CHIEF ALI: We were supposed to go to Mexico (unintelligible).

MR. USHER: Okay. Looking on this bell tape, now, this is when you got underway, at 23:59.0, and I went to five for the record, is that -- pilot ordered dead slow astern from the bridge.

CHIEF ALI: Right.

MR. USHER: Now, this is approximately 00:02.5, according to the bell tape, the pilot ordered stop engine from the bridge.

CHIEF ALI: Right.

MR. USHER: What are these numbers, there's serial numbers under each segment of (inaudible)?

CHIEF ALI: I don't know that.

MR. USHER: In this case, it's 83009768, Chief Engineer could not identify those numbers.

CHIEF ALI: No.

MR. USHER: Okay. So, approximately three minutes you had sternway?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. USHER: Okay. So, at this time, would you -- are you telling us that three minutes from departure, you noticed 80 RPMs on the tachometer?

CHIEF ALI: That's right.

MR. USHER: It took three minutes, that's all, according to your bell tape?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. USHER: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: That's three minutes from 33 come up to 80 RPM.

MR. USHER: Okay. So, apparently, I'm just

speculating here, the pilot noticed that you had too much sternway, he orders dead slow ahead from the bridge approximately four minutes from departure?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. USHER: He saw no response. At four and half minutes, he orders slow ahead from the bridge. At this time, you're telling us, at approximately five and a half minutes from departure --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. USHER: -- you hit emergency stop?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. USHER: That's indicated on the bell tape?

CHIEF ALI: Right.

MR. USHER: Now, it shows at the exact time you're at stop as 00:05:0. Now, at 00:05.5, the bridge orders dead slow ahead. Did you get a response?

CHIEF ALI: No.

MR. USHER: No response?

CHIEF ALI: No.

MR. USHER: The next command was full --

CHIEF ALI: No.

MR. USHER: -- and you got no response?

CHIEF ALI: No.

MR. USHER: Now, how about this from the

bridge, this stop engine at 00:07?

CHIEF ALI: That doesn't matter at all because the engine was already stopped, dead stop (inaudible).

MR. USHER: It was ordered from the bridge, but it didn't matter?

CHIEF ALI: This --

MR. USHER: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: This has no meaning at all, because it was still a stop, at dead slow ahead, at full also, it was stopped.

MR. USHER: Very good. So, according to the bell tape, at 01:09.5, the next orders from the bridge, the EOT, were dead slow ahead? And that was from the bridge and that was --

CHIEF ALI: Yes, after the fire was put out.

MR. USHER: -- after recovering from the incident?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. USHER: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: That was no problem at all.

MR. USHER: And you took the -- you decided to hit emergency stop? You weren't ordered from the bridge, you just did it yourself?

CHIEF ALI: Yes, the captain was telling

(inaudible) we're going 80 RPM, we want dead slow astern, that's 30 RPM, it's going up to 80. So, then I decided to switch, because there was no way I could bring from 80 to 30. I said, the best thing to do is to stop.

MR. USHER: Okay. Okay. Thank you, Chief. I have no further questions.

[redacted] Okay. Chief, just one question. Do you recall how much low sulphur fuel you had onboard?

CHIEF ALI: We had approximately I think 570 or 560 metric tons of LSMGO.

[redacted] Okay. Is that normal for you to have that much low sulphur fuel?

CHIEF ALI: Yes, we normally take full bunkers, we can take up to 870 metric tons.

[redacted] Okay.

CHIEF ALI: So, the most (inaudible) would like to have enough bunkers, but we ensure we don't exceed 85 percent of the tanks in any case.

[redacted] All right. But is this low sulphur fuel, I mean --

CHIEF ALI: Low sulphur fuel.

[redacted] All right.

CHIEF ALI: Yes, sir.

[redacted] So you don't -- is that kind of standard for you guys now, for your ship? To use low sulphur fuel even if you're not in an ECA?

CHIEF ALI: No, we are not in an ECA area, we use the normal high sulphur fuel, maximum 3.25 percent.

[redacted] Okay. So when you say that --

CHIEF ALI: We don't use LSMGO in an non-ECA area.

[redacted] All right. And, Captain, a few questions regarding your fire mains.

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] Were they operating at normal capacity --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] -- as far as you are aware?

CHIEF ALI: They were operating, normally we don't -- we use our two hoses, the fire was so much, the guys had to fight fires from both sides, so we had to rig up six hoses. So, automatically (inaudible) and the flame was huge, I realized I had to do something to (inaudible) the pressure, so I started (inaudible). And then, the main problem wasn't the fire, the oil that was floating, leaking outside astern towards the ship and going over the (inaudible) of the ship.

So, we did our best to push the oil away

from the ship so that we don't -- the fuel tanks, the ship side, we don't (inaudible) out and get the flame off us. So, we had to -- it required at least six to seven hoses. And we ended up starting the second (inaudible) I still found it that it was not possible, then I told the second engineer and the third engineer, go down the (inaudible), go down to the engine room and I realized I had a problem now with the fuel, (inaudible) ruptured the tank, I was not too sure which tank was ruptured.

It was that point of time (inaudible) both side, I decided to change over from the main bunker tank to a service tank, smaller service tank inside the engine room (inaudible) and we have the fire pump running and we have (inaudible) going, so we (inaudible) when we changed over to the service tank, they ran down, shut off completely the (inaudible) to bring up pressures on the fire. And that's already we operate even the foam (inaudible) foam onto the deck to ensure that the tanker doesn't have an explosion, so you operate the foam flow. That's how we (inaudible).

[redacted] All right, Chief. Thank you. I have no further questions.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Luke Wisniewski, NTSB. Just one more. So, would you say that the training that you

perform firefighting drills, did that really help out?

CHIEF ALI: Really helped out. The guys (inaudible) to us, we had to back off with the flame, even with some nozzling to spray more, the flames were such a velocity, it was just (inaudible) us. I kept people a safe distance (inaudible) the group performed excellently.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Fantastic, that's great to hear.

CHIEF ALI: And the worst part of it was, the flames weren't the problem. As soon as we extinguish the flame, because of the heat, the vapor would start ignite the smoke (inaudible) suffocate us. So, then we realized we can't put out all the fire to cover the deck, because the next gangway caught fire and then (inaudible) start fire, start falling on the deck. That's what time we realize we have to flood the deck with the foam, so we did that.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: So, Chief, you indicated that you had the main fire pump on, the emergency fire pump, is there any other bilge or --

CHIEF ALI: No, another pump too, so you had very little pressure. But that's the reason I told the second engineer to start the third pump, third generator too when I send him down with the (inaudible)

start the third generator too entirely if he required, and it's normally just too much, but then as soon as we closed the (inaudible) we had enough pressure to (inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: You had to put a third generator online?

CHIEF ALI: Yes, we did.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: To support the --

CHIEF ALI: It was not required for the fire part, we had to do that because the chief officer decided (inaudible) before operating the foam, we decided let's use the ballast pump, and (inaudible) all flow the water through the ballast tanks out to the deck to ensure it's going.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yes.

CHIEF ALI: So, we did that and that was a big help to us. What happened was, when they did that, the water on the deck started going to the scuppers and the scuppers are designed in this way, so the water went back and (inaudible) what happened was, when the ship was full aft, we had, I think, the water going upstream and oil was leaking from (inaudible) upstream from the port side (inaudible) starboard side, which had the leak. And it was going forward, so the tank was breached, the main fire was on the port side. The

starboard side, the bulk of oil was floating onto the water, so you had -- the ship was dead, flame breached the (inaudible) of the ship on the starboard side, not on the port side, because of this.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: All the oil was going like this. And so, then this happened and then they flooded the deck with the water, the flames kept the oil back and that happens a lot when (inaudible) with the fire hoses we were trying to drive off the oil from the side and that was (inaudible) us. So, the third generator was started mainly for the ballast pump --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: -- because the ballast pump (inaudible) was too high.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Oh, yes.

CHIEF ALI: So that's the reason I decided to start the third.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. Now, is that part of your procedures to do that?

CHIEF ALI: That's part -- it's not part of the procedures, because that was --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Use your corporate knowledge or understanding of --

CHIEF ALI: This knowledge I don't

(inaudible).

MR. WISNIEWSKI: (Inaudible.)

CHIEF ALI: Yes, when the captain got (inaudible) and I had to fight the fire on the ship, on the port and starboard side, the ship was tied up, it was on fire, there was no place where we could go. At that -- in this operation, as you (inaudible) part of the procedure, it was part of the experience, which --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yes.

CHIEF ALI: -- I remember that.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Thank you.

MR. DAVIES: (Inaudible) Chief, have you been asked to calculate how much fuel actually spilled out of the ship?

CHIEF ALI: According to my calculations, which are (inaudible), I think it was around (inaudible) 250 metric tons. I had good figures, I'm not too sure now how much I gave, but just the amount that the metric tons made up, I give them to somebody (inaudible). I like to know the exact quantity (inaudible).

MR. DAVIES: Approximately 250 metric tons?

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible.)

MR. DAVIES: Okay.

[redacted] [redacted] Is that what spilled or is that

just what was lost?

CHIEF ALI: Well, when the oil went out, it went from the ship (inaudible).

[redacted] Right. I mean, of that 250, did some of that burn off or was that actually what was spilled? I'm just trying to differentiate --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

[redacted] -- between what was spilled, what may have been burned off.

CHIEF ALI: What I would think is the intensity of the flame and LSMGO, it's very less likely to have anything (inaudible) and I also saw the guys (inaudible) of the tug boats were sent to put out the fire, they were not trying to put out the burning oil on the water's surface. They were pushing it, they were making all the oil burn off, so I don't know for sure. The master said most of the oil would have got burned off (inaudible).

[redacted] Fair enough.

MR. DAVIES: And the burning oil is still (inaudible).

CHIEF ALI: Yes (inaudible) I think of incident like (unintelligible) when the crude oil (inaudible) the fire that the crude oil was like (inaudible) it doesn't. The worst thing (inaudible) is

there any oil, that destroys the (inaudible) it grows into a ball, goes down, goes up the shores, and that's the worst (inaudible) tragic moment with the heavy oil.

MR. DAVIES: Yes.

CHIEF ALI: LSMGO, I would (inaudible) even the one that was floating on the water, I saw the tug boats not putting it out. I think that's the right thing to do, not to pollute the water.

[redacted] Does anyone else have any follow-up questions?

MR. USHER: I have one. Mike Usher, Houston Pilot Board again. Chief, did you have any other engine problems after this incident? After you got back and to come over here to the dock, did the engine respond okay?

CHIEF ALI: No, we didn't, after the incident, we didn't use the engine. We gave orders to the tug boats.

MR. USHER: Oh (inaudible) ship over?

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. USHER: Okay. You had tethered to the assist tugs. I think you mentioned this earlier, Mr. Davies may have asked or someone, but have you ever seen an engine race like this before, where they increase RPMs that quickly?

CHIEF ALI: No.

MR. USHER: You've never experienced --

CHIEF ALI: In my --

MR. USHER: -- that before?

CHIEF ALI: In my experience, I haven't seen this happen at all.

MR. USHER: I've heard that engines can get, like a gasoline engine, for instance, I've heard that they can get a high enriched atmosphere --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. USHER: -- and the intake can cause them to race. Could that happen to --

CHIEF ALI: No, in that case, it should be an injection of high vapor from the turbo charger. There is nowhere else you can get from the fuel nozzles that much quantity to happen. If you enrich --

MR. USHER: So the high vapor from the turbo charger --

CHIEF ALI: Turbo charger, if you (inaudible) and the injection of the (inaudible) the turbo charger itself is (inaudible) only thing that can happen. That usually happen in case of fires when there is a huge vapor, flammable vapor (inaudible) which is not burning and the engine is running, it gets injected into the turbo charger and then off to the engine.

MR. USHER: So the intake (inaudible)?

CHIEF ALI: And then it can happen, otherwise it cannot happen.

MR. USHER: Do you think when you engaged the emergency stop, did the RPMs immediately --

CHIEF ALI: Yes.

MR. USHER: -- fall off?

CHIEF ALI: Immediately start falling off.

MR. USHER: Immediately fell off?

CHIEF ALI: The fuel was immediately cut off.

MR. USHER: Did the engine -- how long did it take for the engine to stop?

CHIEF ALI: I don't exactly know the timing, because --

MR. USHER: Approximately?

CHIEF ALI: A few seconds, we had the whole incident, I mean, the (inaudible) took care of the moment (inaudible) to stop.

MR. USHER: So when you hit the emergency stop, does that shut off the air or the fuel to the engine?

CHIEF ALI: Fuel. The fuel.

MR. USHER: The fuel? Okay. I'm surprised, air would be quicker.

CHIEF ALI: Air, you can't stop the turbo

charger air from getting inside the (inaudible) close it off.

MR. USHER: Because of the intake (inaudible)?

CHIEF ALI: (Inaudible.)

MR. USHER: In your opinion, do you think it was enriched turbo charged caused the -- vapor to the turbo --

CHIEF ALI: No.

MR. USHER: -- charger caused the racing?

CHIEF ALI: No. You must have some high vapor in the engine room at that time (inaudible) so this what sometimes happens is that (inaudible) some leakage somewhere, some flammable vapor and the (inaudible) fans were pumping the flammable gas along with the air and that can be a reason for the -- that can happen (inaudible) engine start speeding.

MR. USHER: Have you had -- when was the last time you did preventative maintenance on those turbo chargers?

CHIEF ALI: They did it when I was not here, on December 2015, they did it (inaudible) they did it with the --

MR. USHER: SCMS?

CHIEF ALI: -- proper, the turbo charger

service engineers, they (inaudible).

MR. USHER: I see. Was that like an engineering compliance --

CHIEF ALI: Engineering compliance for the (inaudible) after so many running hours, you have to do this service.

MR. USHER: Okay.

CHIEF ALI: It was not done by the ship staff, it was done by the (inaudible) double charger service company.

MR. USHER: Okay. Well, I can go on record to say I hope that you all continue (inaudible) this problem, that would not be good.

CHIEF ALI: I don't think anybody wishes --

MR. USHER: No.

CHIEF ALI: -- to be on this ship (inaudible) --

MR. USHER: No.

CHIEF ALI: -- this thing can happen. I think nobody would wish that to happen.

MR. USHER: I understand.

CHIEF ALI: Even though good experience, I would not like to have the experience of getting this.

MR. USHER: No. Well, the pilots too. This is the first time in port something ever happened to

them like that, so it was quite an experience for all of you. And I commend you all for handling this disaster quite well. All the unlicensed deck crew onboard, the assist tug personnel, everybody did a great job.

CHIEF ALI: Thank you very much.

MR. USHER: Thank you very much, Chief, for your time.

[redacted] That concludes the interview.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Allision Involving the Aframax River
on the Houston Ship Channel, Sept. 6, 2016
Accident No. DCA16FM055
Interview of Muzaffer Ali

DATE: 09-07-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 50 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.