UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:                  *
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ACCIDENT OF THE COMMODORE FERRY    *
IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK              * Accident No.:  DCA21FM029
ON JUNE 5, 2020                    *
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Interview of: BRIAN COSTELLO, Master *Commodore*

Staten Island, New York

Wednesday,
June 9, 2021

APPEARANCES:

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National Transportation Safety Board

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On Behalf of Seastreak

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I N T E R V I E W

[redacted] Good morning. This is [redacted] U.S. Coast Guard, Section New York, Investigations. Today we are conducting the interview of Mr. Brian Costello, the Master aboard the *Commodore,* the vessel that grounded at Bushwick Inlet, New York, on June 5, 2021.

In attendance is Mr. Luke Wisniewski from NTSB.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: And for the transcription, can we just say our name and then spell our last name. So it's Luke Wisniewski, W-I-S-N-I-E-W-S-K-I.

MR. [redacted], with Marine Inspections, Sector New York.

MR. BEVINS: Jack Bevins, Seastreak, B-E-V-I-N-S.

MR. FITZGERALD: Dan Fitzgerald, F-I-T-Z-G-E-R-A-L-D. I'm with the law firm of Freehill, Hogan and Mahar, on behalf of C Street.

CAPT COSTELLO: Brian Costello, C-O-S-T-E-L-L-O, and I was the Captain above the *Commodore.*

[redacted] Once again, [redacted] U.S. Coast Guard Investigations, Sector New York. Last name spelled M[redacted].

INTERVIEW OF BRIAN COSTELLO

BY [redacted]

Q. So, Mr. Costello, can you give us a history of your experience in the marine field?

A. Yes. I have been with Seastreak for over nine years now. I've been a captain for five of those years. And prior to working at Seastreak, I worked on (indiscernible) fishing boats full time for over ten years. Pretty much since I was a kid, I've been working on boats in one form or another.

Q. And you said five years as a captain?

A. Yes.

Q. For Seastreak?

A. Yes.

Q. Prior to being a captain, the four years prior?

A. During most of that time, I was working as the mate, the licensed mate.

Q. And in your five years as a captain for Seastreak, what type of vessels were you operating?

A. All of them, anywhere from 65 foot, twin screw prop boat to the larger jet boat to the *Commodore*.

Q. So when you say all of them, you mean all the vessels that Seastreak has?

A. Yes. Yeah, there's two 95 foot prop boats. There's the three large jet boats. There's the *Commodore*. There is one propeller large boat that I don't really spend any time on. That's usually up in New England.

Q. Tell us about your credential, your capacity endorsement on your credentials.

A. My license is 100 ton near coastal. The endorsements that I

have I believe are just the radar observer (indiscernible).
Q. When did you become a 100 ton?
A. Eleven, twelve years ago. My first license was 100 ton.
Q. Okay.
A. When I was working on party boats, party boats, whatever you guys like to call them, they were larger ones, they were -- fell under the 100 ton capacity.
Q. So you've always maintained a 100 ton?
A. Yes, yes, I have.
Q. No upgrade?
A. No upgrade. Never had anything smaller. It's always been 100 ton.
Q. Tell us about your experience working for Seastreak.
A. In regards to?
Q. Good, bad --
A. Good.
Q. -- experiences?
A. No.
Q. Okay. When did you find out you were due to operator or going to operate the *Commodore?*
*A.* I think the official update came out probably Thursday.
Q. No, I'm sorry. Your initial --
A. Oh, my initial.
Q. -- engagement with the *Commodore*?
A. You mean like for the first time?

Q. For the very first time.
A. It had to be two years ago. I mean I was on there prior training. I spent a lot of time on there because it's a new boat. So for the first year, I was in service, I spent a lot of time riding with some other captains, guys that were more senior signed off on there. So I spent days on there either as the mate or as master captain just going through the boat and learning the boat with some of the more senior guys that were on there.
Q. Were you -- was it a selection process or did you put in to operate? How was that --
A. I think there was, you know what I mean. Like, I'm usually on the off peak. I worked a lot of nights, a lot of weekends. So there wasn't much need for that boat on my shift, you know what I mean. The boat's main priority was the Monday through Friday, the rush hour commutes and that was not my schedule. So that's why when I had the time, you know, and I was instructed to, I would go on there with the other guys on those runs. So that way I had my time and my training on there.
Q. So I think maybe I asked it incorrectly here. Were you selected as a master, the captain, or captain to master the *Commodore*?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So how did that process go?
A. The process was me going on there with the senior guys going through the training.

Q. I'm referring to like the company. Did they come up to you? Did they approach you and say, hey, we'd like for you to be a master of this vessel?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And you accepted?

A. Yes.

Q. And then everything followed, you took the training?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So the first year was strictly training for you?

A. Yeah, I would say for the first year that I was in service was training.

Q. What did that entail?

A. It's very similar to our other boats, like it has the same system as the Seastreak *New York* and the Seastreak *New Jersey*, for the most part, you know what I mean. The training was, a lot of it just getting familiar with the boat itself, the handling characteristics because it is larger than the other vessels. So it's different approaches into the dock, different tie ups, different things in that respect, but it's the same style engines and propulsion system as the other boats. Different layout, but I mean it's -- aside from the size and the fact that it's two more engines is not too far off of the Seastreak *New York* or Seastreak *New Jersey* which I had been on prior to the *Commodore* coming into service.

Q. Now, in this first year when you operated the vessel and it

was most training, were -- let's get a little more specific into what that training consisted of. Was there a qualification process?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And how was that process? How was it captured?

A. There's a check off sheet. So once of the thing on the sheet, I can't tell you exactly, but I know there was at least 60 hours of comp time under the supervision of another captain and then it was going through the engine room, going through the systems, going through the entire -- going through all the systems and getting checked off as proficient. For every different style of boat, there is a check off sheet to certify that you are proficient on those vessels.

Q. And that's Seastreak, that's how Seastreak --

A. Yes, sir. I think if falls under safety management but its Seastreak, but I do believe that is probably a requirement of the safety management system, but it's a Seastreak policy as far as I know.

Q. During that year of training, was that an independent assignment? In other words, you were shadowed by the qualified individual as you obtained the 60 hours and your experiences?

A. Yes.

Q. Was it just that alone or were you held to different -- other responsibilities as the mate as well?

A. No, most of that training was me coming on my days off.

Q. Okay. So on a training day, how many individuals were on the bridge?

A. There would be three. There would be -- the normal crew would be the captain and the mate, and I would be on an extra guy.

Q. Right. Yes.

A. Yeah, when I said as a mate, when I worked there as the mate, it was part of my training but, no, most of it was me on my day off or an extra scheduled day as an extra guy, not part of the crew.

Q. So were you ever a mate on the boat?

A. Yes.

Q. So the criteria is for 60 hours of training?

A. I believe that's what it is. I had more than that you know what I mean. I mean I had --

Q. Was that the helm time requirement?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. That was just the helm time requirement?

A. Right, right.

Q. So your first year, you mentioned it was considered to be a qualification period for you?

A. With that, yeah, my check off sheet. I mean some guys might have done it sooner, you know what I mean, got all the 60 hours. I did it kind of my own pace.

Q. So it took you one year to be designated as qualified to operate the *Commodore?*

A. Yes. One year from when I was in service.
Q. Do you know, did that exceed the 60 hours? I'm just curious.
A. Oh, yes. I mean I'll be honest with you. I milked it, you know what I mean. I was -- that was overtime on my day off, and I wanted to be as familiar. Like, I didn't want any part of a new boat. I didn't want to be the first one to mark it up. I didn't want to get black rubber on there, on a brand new boat, the pride to the fleet. So I was trying to sit back and if I didn't have nothing to do, and I wanted to get a couple of extra hours, I would hop on the boat and train with some of the guys.
Q. In that time period, that one year period, you considered it took you over 60 hours?
A. I'm sure.
Q. How many other individuals were qualified at that time?
A. A couple. I mean, like I don't know who was qualified when. I, you know, I'd say half of the guys were ahead of me, a couple of guys were behind me, you know what I mean. Like there was the senior guys with the shift where the boat was servicing, you know what I mean. Like the ones that were first and then I knew where that boat was going on the PM shift or the weekends which were my shifts. So that's why I wasn't in a rush. I wanted to get some service for a while before I went on there.
Q. So we can say that on -- sometime in 2019 is when you were qualified --
A. Yes.

Q. -- to standalone --
A. Yes.
Q. -- as master? Do you know exactly when?
A. I don't.
Q. Summer months?
A. Spring.
Q. Spring of 2019?
A. Summer was coming, and I was going to have to go on there and so I wanted to make sure I got myself squared away. It would probably be May, April or May of last year, or no, not last year. I'm sorry. Two years ago.
Q. Now, in that one -- since 2019 when you were hired on and you explained like your shifts were strictly on the weekend?
A. Not strictly, but --
Q. Okay.
A. -- you know, everyone worked some extra shifts, but my main schedule was nights and weekends.
Q. What hours? What would be a typical day for you?
A. Before -- for the past year, I've been working all day Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Those were my three days. Prior to COVID, I was working four nights where I would come in at 2, work until about 12, and then two weekend days where I'd come in 9 to 10. And that's not exclusive. People fill in --
Q. Sure, sure.
A. The bulk of my schedule has been the weekends and PM shift.

Q. You said 12 to 2 or 2 to 12?
A. 2 to 12. Yeah, by the time I would clock in and clock out, we're not running.
Q. And that was your weekend time?
A. No, that was the weeknight --
Q. The weeknight.
A. -- shift.
Q. You had two days that you took on.
A. Like it would be, for a while there, I was doing one week and every other weekend. That was one week of nights and every other weekend was my schedule.
Q. Where was your run?
A. From Atlantic Highlands to Pier 11 or Battery now or 35th Street and back, just New York to New Jersey.
Q. Is that route, is that labeled? Is there a name for it, if were to look up on the website?
A. Yeah, it would say New York to New Jersey. That's our standard route. I mean, there's other things --
Q. And how often do you stop during that run?
A. For the past year, we've only done the one stop at New Jersey which is Highlands, but prior to COVID, it two stops in New Jersey, two stops in New York.
Q. And what is it now?
A. Well, now we're back to the two stops but up until yesterday, it was just Highlands.

Q. So on the weekends, it isn't additional added --
A. No, the weekend, it's always just Highlands, Midtown, Downtown. And in the summer time, now this past weekend, they're ready to do the Sandy Hook stop.
Q. Right.
A. So there is the additional stop. I'm sorry. Yeah.
Q. So you have three stops.
A. Four.
Q. Four stops?
A. Yes.
Q. Two in New Jersey.
A. Two in New Jersey.
Q. -- Sandy Hook and two in New York. That's five.
A. No, I'm sorry. We don't go to Atlantic Highlands and Sandy Hook. On Saturday, my first run, I go from Highlands, I went to 35th Street, went to the Battery, went to Sandy Hook, went to Highlands. That's my route.
Q. And that is usually your normal commute or your normal route before COVID?
A. Yes, but the Sandy Hook is seasonally.
Q. Seasonal for summer?
A. Yes.
Q. So --
A. Before COVID, my PM shift, we were also going to Atlantic Highlands in New Jersey.

Q. What are your timeframes? What's an expectation to do a complete roundtrip?

A. Depending on -- on the weekends, there's usually a little more time in the schedule, but roughly two hours.

Q. From Highlands to Highlands?

A. Yes. Throughout the day, there's a few minutes here, a few minutes there, but roughly it's a two hour roundtrip.

Q. Okay. So go ahead and jump forward to Saturday, June 5th.

A. Okay.

[redacted] Does anyone have anything to add, any other questions.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yeah, I'd just like to go back to training.

[redacted] Sure.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: This is Luke Wisniewski, NTSB.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. You indicated like this one year sign off, check off sheet.

A. Yes.

Q. And so this was with multiple captains?

A. It was, yes.

Q. So you indicated the 60 hours just at the helm. Can you elaborate a little bit more on the other tasks that are listed in this? I know you don't have a check sheet in front of you.

A. Yeah.

Q. But can you elaborate a little more on what is entailed?

A. Yeah. Just the characterizations of the boat. It's like the

bilge pump system, the backup system, the location of everything, pretty much that. So in addition to the helm time, I'm also going down with the engineer, going to the engine room. I'm going through all the systems, you know, lifesaving devices, where everything is, just trying to know the boat inside and out, more than just the helm.

Q. And do they have you -- I'm just digging a little bit deeper.

A. Yeah, no. Sure.

Q. So they have you starting them up, let's say the engines, right?

A. Yes.

Q. So you go down, you start them up, in the wheelhouse, at the bridge location, on the panel that was to the left of you? Do you go down locally and start them as well?

A. You can do it either way. I mean normally on a normal day, I'm not starting the engines. We have an onboard engineer. You can go down there and start it, you know, because the engineer, he wants to go -- he's the one doing the checks, checking the fluids, checking everything. So we'll go down there, and when he's done with his checks, then he will start it, but I also have the ability to start it from the wheelhouse. But more often than not, the boat's running for me. Once the engineer does his checks down there, he starts it up and I push it and then we go.

Q. But do you know how to shut it off --

A. I do.

Q. -- locally down in the engine space --
A. Yes.
Q. -- as well as up on the bridge?
A. Yes.
Q. And so you know where all the E stops are. Like is that a part of the sign off?
A. Yeah, it's everything. That is a part of the sign off.
Q. Okay. And is that just one individual looking at you doing that, performing that task?
A. I'd --
Q. Or is over, you know, a period of time?
A. I mean as far as the -- that's probably one individual. It's probably one of the engineers going through the engine side of it with me.
Q. So how much time would you say, just the engines itself, starting up the NQs (ph.), looking at that, that portion of it, the main engines?
A. Probably only a couple hours because again it's very similar to what we have on the *New York* and the *New Jersey*.
Q. Okay.
A. I mean it's a different boat but it's the same systems.
Q. And now I'm going to lump in -- so is the hydraulic system, that's associated with that, for your jet drives?
A. Yes.
Q. Your water jets, is that also included like say, per se in

the engineering portion of it?

A. I believe its separate. No, I believe that's part of the engineering portion of it.

Q. Okay. So that the like engineering panel we saw yesterday, like had the hydraulics, the lights, the hydraulic fluid, any type of alarm, they went through that with you as well?

A. Yes.

[redacted] Is there a certain -- just to elaborate a little bit, is that a piecemealed? Like you have to do this five times or is there a set hours that you would for like bridge operations?

CAPT COSTELLO: It's just -- no, I don't. I mean that was like a yes and no for lack of a better term. What I mean it's can you do it, you know what I mean. Go down, you know where the jet pumps are, you know where the --

[redacted] What happens if you don't know it?

CAPT COSTELLO: Then they're not going to check it off until you do know it.

[redacted] Okay.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Luke, NTSB again.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. The Rolls-Royce monitors, controls that are in front of you, whether it's your main joystick, the main -- they call it the -- what's it -- the control area network or the control can you refer to it as?

A. Yes.
Q. Then they go through even the backup systems with you?
A. Oh, yes.
Q. They being the captain and --
A. Yes, that is definitely part of the training.
Q. And so you have to go through and sign off -- do they sign off on that? You put them in local control.
A. Yes.
Q. And how much time is spent just handling the Rolls-Royce, well, now Commsburg (ph.) since they bought them out --
A. Yeah.
Q. -- but the Rolls-Royce system that controls. How much time is spent on that?
A. Well, on this one, probably just a few minutes because it's the same system, you know what I mean. We do do it on this boat specifically but, you know, we have other boats. Right now, the only boat that's the Seastreak *Highlands* which has the older system that's different. I spent more time the first time when I got on the Seastreak *New York* because it's the first boat with these systems. So -- I mean this was going back a few years now, but I spent a lot more time because I didn't know. I mean we were starting from scratch there because it's going through the systems. It was probably every time I was on there and just going through the motions like, hey, man, let's go back through this, clutch it out, clutch it in, put it in backup, just so you know

everything.

Q. And that's what I was going to get into now. Yeah. So in other to clutch in, clutch out, increase, decrease RPMs on the engines, you did that underway, away from the dock I assume?

A. Well, when we're training, you know, you do it in the middle of the bay or you do it out in front of the fishery when you have some time and nobody on board and you're going slow and you can, you know, I've seen Seastreak *New York* doing drills and then it gives you some time and as part of our drills, we do do that, not right now with passengers on board but --

Q. Understood. And do you remember when you did this training about what time? I know you don't have it in front of you, but I'm just asking.

A. On the *Commodore,* it would have been about two years ago. On the other boats, I guess four years ago. Because when I was first signed off on the boats, it was the older boat with the different style. And even when I was on there as the mate, like I was on the boats as a mate long enough where obviously I wanted to be a captain. I was a mate, so I was going to through all that stuff then.

Q. And in that training, is there like a SMS procedure that lays out how to take them out of the main control into backup control?

A. Yes.

Q. Or --

A. Yes, sir. That is the manual, that is in the SMS.

Q. And you say the manual. Is that up on the bridge or --
A. There's a manual on the bridge.
Q. Do you know the name of it or --
A. I mean I think it's just a *Rolls-Royce Operating Manual*. I mean I don't know for sure. I can't picture it in my head, but there is an operating manual that, with the boat, when I first went on there, we go through the manual, you know what I mean.
Q. And I guess what that training, have you felt comfortable with it? There were no questions or anything that you had to raise up, like hey, this system is different, on the *Commodore,* the Seastreak *Commodore* versus the other, you indicated the *New York* and the *New Jersey.*
A. No, those are the same. Like the biggest difference on the *Commodore* are the extras, like the wipers, spotlight, all the -- you know what I mean. Like it's got an insane amount of electronics on there that the boats don't have, that I don't turn on, like the wind meter, you know what I mean, all this stuff that's on there that the other boats don't have and what we don't use. As far as the propulsion systems, backup system, they are -- I want to say they're identical more or less to what I'm used to on the other boats.
Q. And I highlighted the propulsion controls. Is there any other training in particular for the *Commodore* that maybe was different than let's say the *New York* or the *New Jersey*?
A. The one basic difference that I always try and go over with

the crew is the man overboard system difference. On the *Commodore*, there's a dive in with, we call it a dog catcher, you know what I mean, as opposed to a ladder that we lower down on the other boats. You know, the firefighting stuff is in different locations. So I mean as far as safety stuff, that is the difference. Like when we get a different crew on there, I like to go through all of that, different safety systems.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. I think for training that's all I have. I just -- I assume we'll go through later the -- I'll stop there. Thank you.

[redacted] Coast Guard.

BY [redacted]

Q. So, Captain Costello, if you can, starting Saturday morning, give us a run of how your day started, you know, leading up going into work and then from there, how your day progressed leading up to obviously the failure of the system.

A. Right, from my house?

Q. Sure.

A. Okay. Saturday was different because normally I come in at 9 and I start right away. Saturday I had to come in, I think I got here before 8:30, and had to move the boat from our location in Atlantic Highlands over to Highlands for fueling. So we started out at Atlantic Highlands, we did all our checks. We moved the boat over to our Highlands location and by that point, it was about 9 o'clock and we weren't running until 12. So once we

fueled, the boat was tied up, the boat was shut down. I had to give my daughter a ride. So I left and came back to the boat by 11:30. Went back over everything. We did our first run from Highlands at 12:30. The only thing out of the ordinary was Saturday morning was a lot of down time. They had our first two runs covered for us. So it was a very easy, laid back morning. Just had to come in on time just to fuel and when we fueled, we tied up, the boat was shut down, in our secure location for fueling, and that's the end of it.

Q. Okay. So 12:30 was your first run?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. You started your day at 8:30?

A. Yes.

Q. So in that 8:30 to 12:30 window, is there a process by which you're doing like a check of the vessel?

A. As soon as we get our vessel, we have our startup check list, you know what I mean. It's security sweep, it's going through our systems, making sure everything works, like before the boat leaves the dock, there is a check off list. We don't actually turn it in, but it's, you know what I mean, like the engineer does his checks, the crew does their checks, I do my checks, and we do that before we leave.

Q. So that's a physical document you guys --

A. No, it's not. It's listed there, you know what I mean.

Q. Okay.

A. It's more of a guideline. I don't think it's a guideline. I think it's what we do but it's not something we turn in, but there is a physical document in the wheelhouse, startup checklist, you know what I mean.

Q. Is it specific to you?

A. To the whole boat, you know what I mean. I'm the guy, I do it all. I write it in the logbook like checklist 1, check.

Q. Okay. So is it like one for each individual, one for the master, one --

A. One for the whole boat.

Q. One for the entire vessel?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And I'm assuming you are responsible for ensuring that each individual's looked at --

A. Yeah and I mean just to make sure the boat's clear, like I do that. I mean we walk through, make sure everything looks good. The engineer tells me everything is good on his end and that's it.

Q. Okay. Is there like a pre-departure testing of steering, propulsion systems along with the engineer?

A. I mean just leaving the dock, you know what I mean, like putting it in, you know what I mean, clutching in and trying it, like you're not getting out of the dock, untying the boat without going through your systems.

Q. Or is there not like a test for departure, departing?

A. It's just making sure everything works, yes.

Q. And that's like part of the operation of the vessel, the SMS or --

A. It's part of the SMS. Like, there's a SMS checklist when we get on the boat. There's a SMS -- there's a shutdown checklist at the end of the day.

Q. Copy. Do you know the name of the checklist?

A. Checklist 1 for the morning and checklist 2 for the afternoon.

Q. Okay.

A. Startup, shutdown.

Q. Let's say you have an issue during that check --

A. Okay.

Q. -- pre-departure check.

A. Yeah.

Q. Run me through what happens? How do you notify -- what's the process in place? Just so I'm familiar with it.

A. Yeah, right. You know what I mean if something's not right, I'm calling Brian. Brian's going to come down and look at it.

Q. Who's Brian? I'm sorry.

A. He's technical advisor.

MR. BEVINS: Director of engineering.

CAPT COSTELLO: Director of engineering, but he's the head engineer. He's the smart guy that knows how to make everything work. I mean, first we're going to try and, hey, if there's something going on, you know, if there's a pump or something,

something that we can look at and diagnose and fix, you know what I mean but if there's something that doesn't make any sense or we can't figure out, there's an actual issue, then I'm reaching out to shore side, the engineering manager.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. Have you come across any time where you've had issues prior to departing?

A. Not that I recall. I can recall a time in the past maybe where we had an issue, and we had to switch over a pump or something, you know what I mean, but not that I can recall, a specific occasion where we could not do it.

Q. And then how would you capture that, that issue in particular? Write it in the log?

A. Yeah, that would go in the log. I mean I would -- again, I don't recall an instance where this did happen. I would fill out -- we have a FO3 form which would be like a nonconformity and that can go over, that covers everything, you know what I mean. You can check off as equipment, is it vital equipment, is it this or that. So there would be a record of that. More so than the log, we do keep a record book on the boat of any kind of nonconformities as we call them and that also goes up to the office.

Q. So there's two records, office and --

A. Yes.

Q. -- and maintain a --

A. We have a binder with the carbon copy that we keep on the vessel and the original copy goes into the office.
Q. Is it a smooth or a rough log?
A. I don't know what that means.
Q. In other words, like a rough log, you can use like a notebook and you kind of write and an official logbook is smooth.
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Great. So 8:30 to 12:30, you fueled the vessel, not an issue. You come back, you go through your pre-departure checks, nothing's happening and you get underway at 12:30.
A. Yes. Our first stop at that point, I'm trying to think. They switched the schedule around. At 12:30 we left. We went to midtown, East 35th Street first on this one, 40 passengers, went downtown to the Battery. From the Battery, we went to Sandy Hook for the last morning drop off. After Sandy Hook, we returned to Highlands, filled up with passengers and now that it's the afternoon, we take people home from Sandy Hook. So from Highlands at this point, we go to Sandy Hook, and then from Sandy Hook, I was northbound for 35th Street.
Q. So, in your first stop, just to get an idea, about how many passengers did you take on?
A. On the run or the very first?
Q. The very first.
A. The very first, about 100 people, somewhere around there.
Q. The first one, the first drop off at Sandy Hook was how many

individuals?
A. I think we only brought about 20 and then we brung more people to Highlands. Then we stopped. Some of the passengers got off at Sandy Hook. The remainder went to Highlands. At Highlands, I don't remember the numbers.
Q. I want to backtrack a little here with regards to when -- your stop is a loop, I mean your run is a loop, correct?
A. Yeah.
Q. So that particular morning, the first drop off at Sandy Hook, can you -- I understand it's the first drop off. Is it possible for someone to get on and come from Sandy Hook and go to Highlands and right it up to 35th?
A. No. Sandy Hook is a reservation only. Like, it's strictly for Sandy Hook.
Q. I've got you.
A. So people that get on and off at Sandy Hook actually get scanned on with wrist bands.
Q. Okay.
A. That's different.
Q. These passengers they register through Seastreak or --
A. Yeah, I don't know the specifics of that but beforehand, they have reservations. There's actually like a manifest on the boat for the Sandy Hook passengers.
MR. BEVINS: You can't just show up for $28 and go to Sandy Hook. You have to get your ticket online, the reservation system.

BY [redacted]

Q. So you complete your first loop, any issues?

A. None at all.

Q. All right. So you're making your first or your second loop.

A. Yes, and that loop, like I said, changed directions then.

Q. Okay.

A. It goes from Sandy Hook being the last stop to the first stop. And then Highlands to Sandy Hook, no issues. Transiting across the bay through the lower harbor, no issues. There's nothing out of the ordinary until it was.

Q. And your first stop, how many passengers did you have before getting to Sandy Hook?

A. I'd have to look at the logbook, probably about 70. But again, that's -- I don't know. I mean let's leave it at I don't know. I know it was 107 once we left Sandy Hook.

Q. 170 once you left?

A. 107, 1-0-7.

Q. Okay. And then from Sandy Hook you go to East 35th. Did anyone get dropped off at East 35th?

A. We never made it there.

Q. You never made it there. So Sandy Hook was the second --

A. Pickup, yes.

Q. And in that transit, any issues?

A. None.

Q. Before we get into the failure, can you describe what's

happening on the bridge? How many folks were up there as far as personnel and --

A. It was me and the mate the entire time. The crew comes in and out. I don't recall anybody hanging out, you know what I mean. Sometimes deckhands want to get a break from the passengers. They'll sit up there for a minute, but on the bridge, it's just me and the mate and throughout the course of the trip, the engineer will check in, the deckhands check in. When we leave the docks, the deckhands will be in there logging the tickets. But the majority of the trip, it's just me and the mate.

Q. And you're aware of everyone's responsibility during the voyage, during the trip, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. So just elaborate a little bit on what the engineers -- engineer?

A. Just one engineer, yes.

Q. What's his responsibility and what's his normal -- what's normally happening during a commute with your engineer?

A. The engineer also -- I mean he's -- every time we cross the bay, he's down in the engine room checking everything, but it's not just the main engine room, you know what I mean. He's out there with the passengers. Sometimes he'll help at the bar but, you know, his main responsibility is the engine room. So he does the bulk of his work from the beginning of the day and the end of the day, you know what I mean, but every time we cross the bay, he

is doing his visual checks.

Q. So he's responsible for conducting rounds?

A. Yes.

Q. Specifically in the engine space?

A. Yes, he is the one -- his rounds do include the engine space. And also he does other things, you know what I mean. Something like, at one point, he was unclogging the toilet, you know what I mean.

Q. Right.

A. Anything like that falls in his department.

Q. Have you ever done that job?

A. I have not.

Q. Okay. And you say he checks on the engine rooms, correct?

A. Yes.

Q. And that would be both, port and starboard side or --

A. Yes.

Q. Fantastic. And do you have a role in also spotting anything with cameras at all from the bridge?

A. I mean we have the cameras on. I mean, smoke, a major leak, you know what I mean, like there are cameras facing the engines, and I have the temperatures and the information in front of me but on these boats, when we have an engineer, that's his job to log the numbers. He's the one that checks.

Q. How often -- what's the sequence, like every hour, every half hour.

A. Every hour.
Q. Every hour.
A. Yes, and the rule is, if it's a long trip, it's every hour for the back and forth every time, every crossing. So sometime between Sandy Hook and East 35th Street, he should be in the engine room. And again, once we leave crossing, he should be in the engine room. So every time we cross the bay, he should be making his checks.
Q. And do you know if he did on that particular day?
A. I would assume so. He's a thorough guy, you know what I mean. I mean I don't think he was slacking off. He didn't tell me anything, you know what I mean. He's not going to tell me unless there's an issue, but I do trust that he was -- he's a by the book guy. I trust that he was down there.
Q. Have you worked with the engineer on board that day?
A. He's been there a lot longer than I have. He's a pretty senior guy.
Q. So you've known him for a long time or what's your --
A. Not very well, yes, but we've been working together for the past few months pretty consistently.
Q. So about how many trips do you think you took with the engineer?
A. A hundred.
Q. And the mate?
A. About the same. We worked pretty steady together last summer

and then she was in part-time position for most of the winter. It's not always a set crew, you know what I mean. Like I know everybody. It's a small enough company we've worked with everybody. But my crew today might not be the same crew that I have tomorrow. Like we all stick together. Every time I go to work, there might be a different mate. There might be a different engineer. There might be different deckhands, you know what I mean. Everyone's trained. Everyone knows each other. We do kind of rotate through shifts.

Q. Okay. Did you find that there's differences sometimes with communications based on who you're with, if it's not a set crew, I mean expectation-wise?

A. Nothing important, just, you know, certain people know you like certain things differently, like I work with some guys, they know at 10-2 is time to load, you know what I mean. Just minor details but nothing of significance.

Q. Again, you guys are fine. There's no strike between the two or any other --

A. Absolutely not. Everyone gets along.

Q. Everyone gets along.

A. Yeah.

Q. So take us up to when you come up to the failure.

A. Okay. Like I said, it was normal, you know what I mean.

[redacted] I'm sorry. We need to take a timeout real quick. We'll pause it on here.

(Off the record.)

(On the record.)

BY [redacted]

Q. Captain, you left off, we were going to have you speak about leading up to the incident. On the monitor, we have a picture of the central operating station.

A. Yes.

Q. And then feel free to walk up and point out things as you need to.

A. Okay.

Q. If you can, if you can describe the events leading up to --

A. Yeah, it was a normal transit, normal Saturday, lots of traffic, going to the river. We were late, but I'm always late. I mean that's not a factor, getting to 35th Street. Normal day. We did good. I hear an alarm. It takes me a second to register what it is, and I look down and I'm going to point to it, the center panel, I look down right here and this one is normal, it's white. It shows me what's going on. This one is black, when normally they're identical. I mean they're different screens but normally they're both lit up white and it shows you your thrust. It shows you (indiscernible) position. It shows you Europeans (ph.) and everything on there, and then I look down, and the one on the left was blacked out on me. So at that point, I knew there was an issue and my first instinct is to just steer, you know what I mean, like stay in the middle of the river as I'm going there

but as I'm doing it, the boat just wants to keep right a little bit, you know what I mean. It's not a hard turn at this point, but I'm not getting where I want to go.

Q. The screen you pointed to, is there a specific name you call that?

A. I call it the control panel. I don't know if there's --

Q. I mean do you reference it in like 1, 2, A, B or how do you --

A. I call it a center, the center port, you know what I mean. There's four of them. There's the two in the center and I believe it's, you know, A and B bank on your left and or A on your left and B on your right but, no, I call them the center station port panel. But there was no warnings. There was no prior alarms. I just looked down and the screen is black.

Q. But you said you heard an alarm?

A. That was it though, you know what I mean. It wasn't like I had an alarm, a warning or get ready, you know what I mean. This is it, like that was the alarm.

Q. So you're running a little late. You heard an alarm, lost the -- I'm going to call it the center station port monitor.

A. That's what I would call it, yeah. I'm sure there's a better name for it, but --

Q. Go ahead. What were you saying after that? You were feeling the steering was off or --

A. Yeah, it wasn't responding. I attempted to steer to port and

it would not respond.

MR. [redacted] of inspections. And at this time, what controls are you using?

CAPT COSTELLO: I'm using the hand controls. So it's the two you can see on the chair and the two throttles.

MR. [redacted] Okay.

CAPT COSTELLO: That is what we use. That's our normal controls.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: This is Luke with NTSB. With that alarm, real quick, what came up?

CAPT COSTELLO: Nothing because it was off, you know what I mean. I think on my port side is another panel. So I think there was a control failure, you know what I mean. There was a flashing light. You can't see it in this picture, but on my left, there's the engine panels and there's all these jet alarms, control panels, there was a flashing red light, and I believe it probably said control failure. But once I saw that panel was out --

BY [redacted]

Q. Can you say that again? I'm sorry.

A. On the left side, like from say sitting in this chair, on your left here, you have your engine panels that will tell you your RPMs and gauges and basic temperatures, and, you know, I don't think you can bring it up there, but this -- that's it, yep. So right here, like that second one down, that would be control failure and I think that is probably the alarm that I heard,

because that did go off because obviously it was.
Q. So you heard an alarm?
A. I looked over there. I saw more or less with the panel, I knew --
Q. No, I was going to ask you, the audio, it was an audio alarm?
A. Yes.
Q. And you heard it on which side?
A. I just heard it, you know what I mean. I'm assuming it was on the left. Again, once I heard the alarm, it got my attention, and I see the black panel in front of me, and at that point, that's all I needed to see. I mean it's not but, you know what I mean. That's what got my attention was --
Q. So when did you take a look this area?
A. After the fact.
Q. After what fact?
A. After I was (indiscernible), you know what I mean. As my normal, I'm trying to regain control of the boat.
Q. So you're at the -- let me bring it back. Your main control station.
A. Yes.
Q. And just go ahead again. I'm sorry. Start from where you were.
A. Okay. Well, again the alarm. I see that the port screen went black on me. I'm trying to stay in middle of the river, you know what I mean. Obviously my first thing I want to do is stay

in the open water and I try to turn left towards the middle of the river, and the boat did not respond.

MR. [redacted] from inspections. So before you lost the screen, do you remember your last command, the last command you gave?

CAPT COSTELLO: No.

MR. [redacted] The last verbal command.

CAPT COSTELLO: No, I don't because it's -- I don't know if you're familiar with the river on Saturday. There's a lot, you know what I mean. I'm not on a ship going in a straight line. It was a jet ski here. There's a buoy there. There's a barrier there. My hand is always on the throttle. Like if you go back, you can see my hand never comes off the throttle during the course of a trip because it's pretty constant course adjustments.

BY [redacted]

Q. Which came first, just to clarify, the alarm or the loss of the monitor?

A. I heard the alarm and that's when I noticed the loss of the monitor. I'm looking out the window, you know what I mean. The alarm is in front of me, but I'm -- there's so much going on, I'm looking straight ahead. So the alarm is what got my attention to look and that's what I saw. I hear the alarm, I start looking down, looking around and that's when I notice it. So I can't answer that.

Q. Captain, I'm going to have you step back real quick and put a

pause on the actual event. Describe for us up there what controls, how are you operating the propulsion and steering like that of the *Commodore*.

A. Okay. Again, we're in hand mode which is our normal mode. So right here's the chair, tiller on the armrest, that's the steering. That controls all four steering jets. Two throttles there, one on your left is for your portside, controls both portside engines. One on your right is your starboard side engines. And that is how we maneuver.

MR. [redacted] from Inspections. Can you explain the other controls?

CAPT. COSTELLO: Yes. There's one that you can't see in this picture. It's under the armrest.

[redacted] I'll bring it up for you quickly here.

CAPT COSTELLO: So this down here, that joystick, if you switch it into what we call harbor mode, that controls everything. So when you're in the harbor mode with the joystick, that one joystick controls your steering, your throttles. It controls it all and a bunch of others.

BY MR. [redacted]

Q. Do you usually use that?

A. No. I use that in my drills as a steering loss drill, you know. It's all very method and it's -- but, no, I mean I've messed around with -- not messed around but like tried it out obviously in drills and it works but I don't like it. I don't

think anybody uses it on a regular basis, but there's for you if you need it. I find it a lot easier to maneuver with the throttle, with the tiller, do it myself. That takes some getting used to. But ideally it should control everything. So it should be able to stop you if you put it in reverse.

Q. And just to add the setup or the combination of propulsion that day, do you recall which engines were running during this timeframe?

A. All of them. All four engines.

Q. All four were running?

A. Yes. No, it's not an extra engine. We run all four.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: This is Luke, NTSB.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. How do you toggle or move between the different modes?

A. The panel here, in the center, there's -- up in the middle there, I think it's called --

Q. It's a touch screen.

A. It's a touch screen.

Q. Okay.

A. Yes. And there's -- you've got to switch out your main screen and I think it's called your harbor panel, and I'd have to look at it. It's pretty clear cut. If you're looking at it, you know what it is. And then at the bottom, it gives you modes. We're usually in hand. So hand is what it says and that is your two throttles, your one joystick. And then one of the options is

the joystick, and the joystick controls that and further in joystick it gives you sea manual, harbor manual, everything intertwines differently. If you're in sea, it steers, it controls your throttles. If you're in harbor, you could spin it. You could walk. You could do more of a closed course. But either way, you go into joystick, it has everything. It controls your steering, controls your throttles and if you put it in the harbor mode, you can spin it and then you get that lateral movement that you get with the jet boats. So I mean if you're aware (indiscernible) on this and drills and practice, you can spin this, you know what I mean, and it'll slow you down, you can forward, you go forward, you know what I mean. You guys probably know more about this stuff than I do.

Q. No, we want you to elaborate on it.

A. Yeah, that's what it is. Like I've used it in drills. I've practiced and know how to use it and that should control everything in one shot.

Q. So if I understand this correctly, when you're scrolling through that control panel, you can select how you want it to be coupled together with --

A. Yes.

Q. -- the engines.

A. Yes.

Q. With the one joystick.

A. Yeah, exactly.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah, it'll give you the option, circle -- one will say hand. Hand is what we're always in. It'll be lit up green and it'll say joystick. Hit joystick and then this is what takes over.

Q. And with the engine, they're always coupled together, both your port and board and outboard for RPMs?

A. Yes.

Q. Or can you decouple that as well?

A. You can. That is a different system.

Q. Okay. That's a different system.

A. That is a different system.

Q. Is that used at all?

A. That is. I mean that's another -- that's the back -- that's another backup system.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. And if you could see the other picture, it gives you a more clear picture of that if you want to go back to that.

[redacted] Sure.

CAPT COSTELLO: So you see these joysticks here and here.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Yes.

CAPT COSTELLO: These set of joysticks control each engine. So going through there, I mean it's not practical using four separate things, but there are, you know what I mean, you clutch in and that takes over that engine.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. You clutch it in?
A. Yeah, I can activate that one and that takes over that engine. So that's the number 1, that's number 2, that's number 3, that's number 4. So if you needed to, you can control things independently. You can split the four sides.
Q. Have you ever had to split it like that before at all?
A. Have I had to?
Q. Yes.
A. No. Have I? Yes. Actually the only time I would ever use those, I use -- with the impeller sometimes, you suck stuff up --
Q. Yes.
A. -- you know what I mean.
Q. Soil, a rock.
A. So the only time I would ever actually use that other than practice is you can clutch the one engine in -- or I'm sorry, you clutch it out and you could push the bucket up to try and flush out your engine, you know what I mean. That's the only time we would use that on a normal basis, like that happened to me a couple of weeks ago and it's nothing. I mean you get something into the jet, put the bucket up, back into the tide to get the water flowing through to clear our your impeller. So they are used, you know what I mean, but normally at least as far as I'm concerned, that's what they are used for. And I know they're back up to control the engine, but that is I think the most time that you see anybody has used that system.

Q. Is there ever a situation where you would want to -- well, where that would be used to steer if you were to have just one each side engaged and then use to either turn or twist the vessel, increase the RPM, hold the bucket straight up?

A. I've turned -- I mean, in fact, in some emergency situation but, no --

Q. That's what I'm saying. If you lost like hydraulics to your bucket, and they were both up, would that --

A. Yeah, I mean maybe if you lost hydraulics, maybe if you lost that side, you might want to turn it on and lift your buckets just so you don't have to drag, you know what I mean. But if you somehow lost steering, yeah, you can steer with that. Well, yes, you can, you know what I mean. The only controls port starboard. The one, you clutch it in, you go astern.

Q. For myself to orientate, like the control, the tiller that's on the chair --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- are you standing up most of the time? You indicated you were looking out, you know, and you were watching traffic.

A. Yeah.

Q. But I'm trying to understand. So you have the tiller on the chair, but then you've got the throttle in front of you.

A. Yeah.

Q. Are you reaching over with your left hand? You keep the right hand on the tiller or --

A. I think I go back and forth, you know what I mean. I think I might reach over or I might switch it off, you know what I mean. I'm a guy with a pretty long reach. I feel like a shorter guy, it probably it a little more uncomfortable, but I don't know.

Q. Are you right handed or left?

A. I'm right handed. So the whole time you see me, when I'm under way, I'm like this, you know what I mean. If we're in the middle, and across the bay and stuff, I'm there. I think when I'm docking, if I'm bowing, I usually switch over like this --

Q. Okay.

A. -- you know what I mean. I think when I'm docking, but again it's -- sometimes I use my left hand, sometimes I use my right hand. It's not like --

Q. And are all the vessels you've been on, you indicated both the *New York* and the -- very similar controls?

A. Yeah, they're all on the chair. Because again, most of our ride, like I said, we're constantly steering, but coming across the bay, the throttles are where the throttles are.

Q. Right. So you're leaving the throttles up unless you have to slow down --

A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q. Primarily you're just adjusting what? Back and forth on those.

A. Exactly.

Q. And there's a joystick.

A. Not on the joystick, on the tiller we call it. We use the throttles. Ideally I'm not touching the throttles from when I leave the dock until I get to the dock, you know what I mean. We're trying to get where we're going.

Q. It saves time.

A. You know, because obviously we slow down, because the tugboats, there are those, so we are slowing down and speeding up throughout the course of the trip but I'm not making speed adjustments for the sake of making speed adjustments unless I have to.

[redacted] [redacted] Let me add a question to that, [redacted] [redacted] Coast Guard.

BY [redacted] [redacted]

Q. Is it a choice, individual choice to use that versus your other options here?

A. It's a standard operating procedure.

Q. That's what I wanted to ask. That was my next question.

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't know of anyone, I don't see -- but, yes, that's what my way is. I suppose if somebody liked the other way, I don't think they say, hey, you can't but I don't know anybody that does.

MR. [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] from Inspections. If you were using the harbor boat, right, you would have to keep your hand on it the entire time, the throttle, to keep going?

CAPT COSTELLO: No, it's stays.

MR. [redacted] It stays.

CAPT COSTELLO: Yes.

MR. [redacted] Okay.

CAPT COSTELLO: I mean if I push it ahead, it stays where it is. It doesn't come back to center.

BY [redacted]

Q. Okay. Let me bring you back to when you lost the monitor -- you heard the alarm, lost the monitor, and realized that the steering was not responding.

A. Yes.

Q. Can you continue from there?

A. At that point, I switched to auto remote, and after that, you know what I mean, thinking that should bring the buckets back, should do that, like that should have stopped me. I recall trying to steer in harbor mode. I'm pretty sure like you asked, where it is, I'm pretty sure I put it in the harbor mode and pushed the throttle right back, thinking that was just going to stop me in the boat and that should have been it. So I mean that was it. Like, I left. From here, once I saw -- well, this isn't working. We're not going where I want to go, I go to this panel and I switch to harbor mode and I just pull back on that and then that doesn't work either, and I think that is when we make first announcement, Kris makes an announcement like everybody please take a seat because that's when I realized that this isn't working

out too well for me.

Q. Give us a timeframe. Like in your mind, how long of a period of time were you going from you executing each task?

A. From when I first get the alarm, because I noticed the alarm until I go into this -- because I'm also waiting for it to reconnect. Like in my head, this screen is going to come back on, you know, and I'm going to reconnect, and I'm going to make a phone call, but we're going to go about our day. That's what I'm thinking for the first 30 seconds. So maybe when I first see the alarm until I realize we're not getting to the river, we're still going towards Brooklyn, in harbor mode, maybe that's 25 seconds. And I could be off on the timeline, but it's not a long time.

Q. Okay. Keep going. I think you were --

A. Okay.

Q. -- I think you left off where the harbor mode -- you initiated harbor mode.

A. Yeah, so I initiated harbor mode, and I'm still -- and that's not working. I'm checking the screen to see if it gives me the option to reconnect, and it doesn't. So not that it really makes any difference I guess, but at this point, I transferred over to the wing station to pull it up on that screen because again, where these panels are.

MR. [redacted] from Inspections. Which wing station did you go to?

CAPT COSTELLO: Portside.

MR. [redacted] Portside.

CAPT COSTELLO: So I go to this screen, and when there's a disconnect it flashes, you know what I mean. There's like a triangle. Somewhere on the bottom of that screen, there's a triangle that will say water jam reconnect. You click on that triangle. It brings you to a screen to reconnect, and when it's available to you, it flashes green. If it's flashing green, it means it's available to you. So I came over here hoping that for whatever reason, this panel's on. It's on the portside, that it will allow me to reconnect. So I go over here, I pull up the reconnect screen, and I think I'm hitting it, even though it's not lit, you know what I mean. It will not reconnect.

MR. [redacted] So is it saying it's not reconnected. Is it doing the same thing that you're main screen is doing?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yes. Yeah. I think at this point, yeah, it was doing the same thing as the main screen. I was just trying something, you know what I mean. I'll try this screen. Maybe this screen came up, because I know my issue is on the portside. So that's why I went to the other portside screen. Maybe that will work, you know what I mean. And it brought me to the screen where it's saying it's disconnected, but it's not giving me the option to reconnect. And I thought it would have. I thought it should have.

[redacted] [redacted] You can go on.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Luke from NTSB.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. So with this reconnect screen that comes up, has this ever occurred before?

A. Yeah, I have had the boat disconnect, and it's happened -- and, you know, it disconnects. Something happens with the steering rod or whatever, you just hit the button and it reconnects, you know what I mean. It's just there. Whatever happened, I can recall it happening at least one time, and you hit the button and it reconnects and you go about your day.

Q. So to be a little more specific. On the Seastreak *Commodore* has it ever had to reconnect? You know, you spoke in generality, but I just want to be more specific.

A. Specifically I can't recall an instance on the *Commodore* when this has happened. So I can't give you like a time or a date. I may or may not have been on the *Commodore.* It may have been on one of the other boats because it's the same reconnect button. We -- I know I've been given (indiscernible) on three different boats. As far as specifics, no. But I could say no.

Q. And when this reconnect screen comes up, and you click on it, how quickly does it come back?

A. Instantly.

Q. Seconds?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. That's it. It's just electronic, you know what I mean, and

bam, you're there. You're good.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Has this ever happened at sea speed, like while you were actually like underway like you were on Saturday?

CAPT COSTELLO: Honestly, I feel like it happens more in maneuver, you know what I mean, on slow speeds. Everything's a little easier at slow speeds. I don't not recall it happening to me at full speed.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. When this happens during maneuver, have you brought this up to anyone before?

A. Yeah.

Q. You're saying it didn't happen on the *Commodore*, but --

A. When they happen, no. We can say no because I can't recall. Yeah, the time it did happen, I did pass it along to the shore side engineer and he came down and he worked on the steering rod I think it was, and then it was fixed.

MR. [redacted] And that was accompanied with a nonconformity form that you said something about earlier?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yes, yes.

MR. [redacted] And also logged in as well, the official logbook.

CAPT COSTELLO: Probably. I may not have logged it in, in the logbook. I may have just done the FO3, you know what I mean. I certainly forwarded it to management.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: In the past, that was brought up to the director of engineering?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yeah, the disconnect, absolutely.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Has ever any tech rep come out from Rolls-Royce that you're aware of?

CAPT COSTELLO: That's beyond me. I can't answer that question. I just don't have that answer for you.

[redacted] Coast Guard. If you had an issue during a certain watch, come on the next day, how do you get resolution that your issue doesn't happen to you again while you're underway? How is it addressed? How do you get comfortable with, okay, I had this problem yesterday? Was it addressed?

CAPT COSTELLO: Either from the captain who was on there next or from management, like they'll tell me, you know what I mean. Like the one time it happened, I think they were like, oh, the steering (indiscernible) was disconnecting because the steering nozzle was coming too far or something with the steering rams, and he tightened it up. We did what we had to do and that solved the issue.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: This is Luke with NTSB again.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. Just the -- and I want to make sure we capture this correctly. The alarm came on. You believe you heard the audible alarm, and you saw the panel later on, but was there any acknowledged silence that you had to do for that alarm?

A. It never -- it stayed going on.
Q. It just stayed.
A. Yeah. No, I wasn't aware --
Q. The audible.
A. -- of it at that point. Yeah, it was -- I was alerted, you know what I mean.
Q. Yeah.
A. It stayed on. There is -- you can silence the alarm system, if that's one of your questions there. There is a silence right below the alarm, but it wasn't bothering me at that point, the sound.
Q. You had other priorities for sure.
A. Exactly, you know what I mean. So I --
Q. Yeah, I just want --
A. Yeah, I know what you meant.
Q. And in these displays, is there any readout of these acknowledgements or of the alarms when they come in? Is there a history that you're aware of?
A. Yeah.
Q. You can see them on these models or where --
A. There's a log in there somewhere, yeah. On the screen, if there's an alarm, there will be a flashing red light. You can click on it and it should tell you what the alarm is. I did not check it, but it does log your alarms. So whatever the alarm was, it should, I don't know, come up. I don't know the science behind

it but, yes, there is a display. There is a log of the alarms.
Q. If we go back to the other page, the center console, the center station, I just have a question on the harbor mode, that tiller. You indicated that you went to pull that back?
A. Yes.
Q. And so it stays in like a backward position or --
A. Yes.
Q. -- how does that --
A. Yeah, no. It stays -- I don't know how to describe it, but it doesn't like spring back to center.
Q. Right.
A. It you move it to the right, it stays to the right. If you move it back, it stays to the back.
Q. Okay.
A. It has a memory I guess, you know what I mean but it does stay wherever you put it. And so --
Q. And by pulling it back, and I know you said that, you know, you thumbed it back or you called thumbed it in, you know, backwards.
A. Yeah.
Q. What's that doing? Is that lowering the RPM to the engines or dropping --
A. See, the way it is with the -- well, what I believe, you know what I mean, if -- once you go back, it should bring the RPMs back up, you know what I mean, because it's all about the steering

buckets. It's not changing. So the same thing like with the throttles, if I go to zero, the RPMs go to 750, you know what I mean, the buckets go to neutral. But then as I keep coming back, the RPMs increase and the buckets go down, you know what I mean. So you are also increasing the RPMs if you go all the way back, the RPM is coming back up, and the buckets are down and it should be pushing the water forward.

Q. So in that harbor mode, you're controlling it from the tiller. Is it correct terminology to say it, on the center console there?

A. Yeah, I call it a joystick but --

Q. Okay. The joystick there.

A. Yes.

Q. So when you're pulling that back, but you're also using the port and starboard --

A. No, no, that controls the throttle.

Q. Everything is tied into --

A. That's everything. That's one shot.

Q. Okay. That's what I wanted to make sure.

A. Yeah.

Q. Thank you.

A. Yeah, so with that, I mean, you know, forward, throttle is forward and back and then left and right is steering. And like I was saying earlier, you can get into a little more spinning it and --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- a little more control with it. You know, that's one thing that controls everything.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. Thank you.

MR. [redacted] from Inspections. When you realized you lost steerage, did you notice the RPMs (indiscernible)?

CAPT COSTELLO: I can't say that I did, no.

[redacted] with the Coast Guard.

BY [redacted]

Q. Captain, so we left off at port bridge wing.

A. Um-hum.

Q. And can you again continue from there?

A. At this point, from my location, I can see we're aimed right at the wall basically, you know what I mean, at (indiscernible). I gave it 10 seconds over there I want to say. I mean I don't know for sure, but it was quick, you know what I mean. I wasn't getting what I wanted over there either. And I think I went back to the center at that point, and I said we're fucked. Made another announcement, told people to sit down, lay down, and aimed for the opening.

Q. Captain, just to clarify, if you can recall, what specifically were you doing at --

A. Trying to reconnect the engine.

Q. Okay.

A. I went over there to pull up the screen to reconnect it, and it would not allow me to reconnect. I went over there attempting to be able to reconnect.

Q. And that was it. None of the throttles or joysticks there were utilized?

A. Not that I recall, no. I think I was -- took command on that screen to reconnect it.

MR. FITZGERALD: Dan Fitzgerald. When you went to the wing, was that screen illuminated on the wing?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yes, it was.

MR. FITZGERALD: It was illuminated?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yeah. That's why I thought I would have a chance over there, being it's on the same side as the center screen because I know somehow they're linked in. So that screen was illuminated and I could go on there. So I was hoping that I would allow me to reconnect. The only screen that was out -- I never went over to the right side. I don't know why that didn't seem relevant, but that screen was 100 percent illuminated.

MR. [redacted] So when you say reconnect, you're just -- does that mean take control from the station?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yeah. See I don't know that science behind it, you know what I mean, but again I have no control over the bucket, you know what I mean. That bucket is just doing what it wants. You don't control it. It's disconnected. So you hit reconnect, and it's right back online. I don't know the technical

term for it.

BY [redacted]

Q. So what was your next action after you couldn't reconnect? I think we had already come to --

A. I think now I'm back at the center, and I think at this point we're making another announcement. I forget exactly what Kristin said, but I think at this point, it was imminent, you know what I mean. We're coming in and I just tried to steer it in and we rode --

Q. How were you trying to steer?

A. I think -- if I recall, I think I took it back to the main command, and we were just -- at this point, there's no -- we were just dragging along the bottom, you know what I mean. At this point, the boat slowed down. We're in the cove there, dragging our way through the bottom until we stopped. I mean, yeah, once, once we -- like we did clip the wall there a little bit coming in, you know what I mean, just scraped it, and then the rocks, but by now we're dragging, you know what I mean. We're not going fast. People are outside watching. It's over. It's not over, you know what I mean, but it's --

Q. And just for clarification, [redacted] with the Coast Guard, just for clarification, by the wall, you're referring to the northeast corner of the inlet?

A. Yes. Yeah, we were kind of going -- we came back, you know what I mean. We kind of were rounding in at this point, and the

bow made it through but somewhere along mid ship, we scraped. I don't know if it was the actual wall, if was something in the water, but about halfway through the opening of the inlet, we started scraping.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [redacted] are you going to --

[redacted] I'm sorry.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are you going to ask about the backup?

[redacted] Yeah, eventually.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Because I think in sequencing, he can probably best, as far as -- do you think at some point you did attempt to hit the backup?

CAPT COSTELLO: I did. I did. I think it was when I came back or maybe that was before I went to the wing station, I did put it in backup. I did use the forward tiller, manual backup.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And that was before you went to the portside?

CAPT COSTELLO: I believe so, or I think that might -- I think it was when I came back. I think it was after I went to the portside, and once we were already in there, you know what I mean.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But you're not exactly sure.

CAPT COSTELLO: I'm not exactly sure when I did that. I think by the time I did that, it was --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It was either probably like immediately before you went to the wing or immediately after?

CAPT COSTELLO: Before or after, yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And then did you have a response with the backup?

CAPT COSTELLO: By the time I was there, we were already dragging on the bottom. So I'm sure there was a response, I mean it should have been a response but I think by the time I got to this point, it was already -- we were already scraping rocks. But, yeah, I did, I did engage the manual, the backup.

BY [redacted]

Q. Can you explain where the backup is please?

A. Yes. So again, you see the butt end, the two set of knobs. That's number 1, that's number 2, number 3 was kind of blocked by the radio there and there's 4. So each set there controls an individual engine.

Q. Okay. So other than --

A. So with the backup, you can be in full ahead on one side and that just takes that offline, you know what I mean. So if you're on backup on engine, you're still controlling everything else with your primary controls, you know what I mean. You don't turn on one and you don't get all four. It's -- you turn backup on this one, everything else is still going with your primary controls.

Q. And how do you turn on --

A. That right there is the button. That's an on/off. The forward joystick, whatever you want to call it, controls I believe, you can clutch it in, you can clutch it out, and then you steer with the other. You know, I'd have to look at it in front

of me, you know, but one controls the speed, one controls your bucket and your steering.

Q. And the range, you were calling it by a number 1 and 2.

A. That's how we label the engines. So the port outboard is 1. The port inboard is 2. The starboard inboard is 3, you know, look across the back of the boat going across, 1, 2, 3, 4. So 1 and 2 is your portside, and 3 and 4 is the starboard side.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. My question was, when you were steering, when you knew you were turning, you said that you were facing Brooklyn and trying to avoid the -- how were you steering again? What mode were you in?

A. From what I recall at this point, I'm back in primary.

Q. Primary.

A. Yes.

Q. You mean the main tiller --

A. Yeah, I switched it back over. On here, there's again your joystick. I switched it back and I'm back on the tiller at this point. I just have some steering.

Q. So I just want to hear more about how you were able to then to, you know, make sure you got left of that?

A. I think I had some steering. I think I got --

Q. How did you stay north of that?

A. I think a lot of luck was involved, you know what I mean. I did have some steering but I got lucky, you know what I mean. At this point, by the time I see where we're going, we're going in a

pretty good direction. So we just rode it out, you know what I mean, at this point, you know, where I am, where we missed the wall. Best case scenario for a worse case scenario was to keep going the way we were going.

Q. And were you trying to reduce the speed on the engines at all, the RPMs?

A. Yes. As I recall, I think I was pulling back on the throttle, but at this point, I probably only had control of the starboard side more, turning to the right there, but I still had my hand on the throttle as I was still trying to reduce the speed, but at this point, like we're in the cove there. So I'm reducing the speed and I believe that's how we ended up turning to the right.

MR. FITZGERALD: Dan Fitzgerald. Captain, did you ever go full astern on the starboard side?

CAPT COSTELLO: I think at this point when we're in the cover, I think I'm hard astern on the starboard side. I think that's just instinct. I want to be stopped full astern on the starboard side, and I believe that's how we made the right turn into the launch right there. But, yes, I did.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: This is Luke, NTSB.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. So where is the -- how can you see the engine RPM?

A. Okay.

Q. How is that available to you?

A. It's available --
Q. Was that still on that monitor that's --
A. Honestly, in front of me, it's there but it's small, like I'm not reading off that. To my left is another set of panels with the RPMs.
Q. Okay. So you're looking over to your left to see the RPMs?
A. Yes. Yeah, right here. This is directly to my left. Like you can see, this is in front of me. This is to my left. So here's your main 1, your main 2, your main 3, your main 4, and that's showing you all your RPMs right there. It is on those little panels, but it's -- that's not where we're looking. You can find it there if you're looking for it, but that's it.
Q. This is Luke, NTSB again. Is that a pretty standard configuration on all the boats like that?
A. No, this is actually the only boat like that. On the other boats, it's more in front of you. It's the same panels, you know what I mean. It's the same, same stuff, just the layout is slightly different.
Q. I'm just trying to understand, is it, you know, and just based on other ships and experiences, RPM, you have the runners, you have the indication in front of you in like one centralized location.
A. And that's how it is on the other boats.
Q. You're looking at one left-hand panel to see RPMs?
A. Yeah. And again, it is on the control panels. On that

screen, it does have the RPMs on it.

Q. Okay.

A. It's a lot smaller, you know what I mean, but it's there. Everything, the steering indicator, the RPMs, all the information you need is on that panel but it's this big. Meanwhile, on those panels it's this big, you know what I mean. So you can just glance over. And it's not like it's on the other side of the room. If I'm looking here, it's, you know what I mean, it's -- and if I'm looking at the radio, you know what I mean. You're scanning, you know what I mean. You're looking at that. You're looking at the radio. You're looking chart plotter. It's not out of your realm of vision. It's just not tunnel vision.

MR. [redacted] In the pilothouse, can you hear the engines? Can you feel the engines or --

CAPT COSTELLO: You can feel them.

MR. [redacted] Okay.

CAPT COSTELLO: You can definitely feel them but as far as can you hear them? Not really. Not over the, you know, we're three decks up at this point. People are on the boat. I won't be able to hear if an engine shuts off or whatever, you know what I mean. I'll feel it, but I won't be able to hear it, no. They're surprising quiet.

MR. FITZGERALD: Captain, real quick, throughout the Seastreak fleet, you've operated other four engine configuration vessels?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yes.

MR. FITZGERALD: What was the name of that one?

CAPT COSTELLO: The *Highlands*, Seastreak *Highlands* has four engines. Also the Seastreak *New York* and *New Jersey* were four engine vessels when I started running them.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just to clarify, did they have the same propulsions?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yes. No, actually. They had the old -- the Cummins. I mean they're jets. So still (indiscernible) jets I believe, you know what I mean, different engines, same systems. Same characteristics and everything but, yeah, up until pretty recently, all the boats were four engines, like that's the norm, and then they're repowering. So they repowered the two boats down to two engines. But again, it's the same. I think I was on the *Highlands* that day before with four engines, you know what I mean. I was on the *Highlands* the day before. I was on Friday with a four engine boat. So it's not like it's unknown to me.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. This is Luke, NTSB. Just to clarify, with the layout -- how do I want to say this. Is the mate -- is anyone else calling out things for you? Are they looking at other things to alert you of these items or is this all you taking this in, all this information?

A. I mean this is all me taking it in. The mate is there if I'm asking for something but, no, I mean at this point, it's just all

me. We do have a mate, you know, and they're familiar with it. So they are there but, no, it was all me.

Q. So you have situational awareness of everything --

A. Yes.

Q. -- in front of you, panels? They're not called out or giving you anything for these type of propulsion, disconnect, reconnect?

A. No, because everything's right there.

Q. Okay.

A. I don't know. It's not -- I think you're under the impression like this is not like right next to me. It is. Like I'm touching these screen.

Q. Yeah, no, we were on board yesterday.

A. Okay.

Q. We see how this is -- I mean it's like --

A. It encloses you.

Q. Yes.

A. Okay. We're on the --

Q. You're in a whole U shaped --

A. Oh, I wasn't sure. I mean the mate but I mean this is, you know what I mean. This is all very fast. The mate was not calling out anything at this point other than the alarm, you know what I mean, was going on. I mean she was making announcements. She was looking, like calling out, hey, there's a wall, you know what I mean. Like she's looking out the window. She's not looking at the instruments.

Q. And that's, to clarify a little more on that question. Was she or the mate engaged in trying to reconnect the system?
A. No.
Q. Reboot?
A. No.
Q. Was anyone else trying to troubleshoot this with you?
A. It was just the two of us. I mean it's not like we had -- we weren't in the middle of the ocean, you know what I mean. There's no time for the engineer to come up and start troubleshooting. It happened. It was over. Speaking of the mate, she's downstairs. I'm sorry. You were in the middle of questioning.
Q. Yeah, I just wanted to make sure, one part was just the reconnect, disconnect. When you say you're reconnecting, you know, obviously you indicated that the panel was illuminated on the port bridge wing.
A. Yes.
Q. On the port wing.
A. Yes.
Q. When you're reconnecting, is that saying you're taking control at this station?
A. No, that separate. I already took control of the station.
Q. And how did you take control --
A. Top left corner, it's a touch screen. It says station in command.
Q. Okay.

A. Hit the corner, station in command, it's green, it's yours. And then there's another screen that you pull in for the reconnect.

Q. And you did this from the main center console that --

A. No, no, you don't have to transfer anything. Like you know what I mean, whatever's going on in the center, you can over to the port and it's two buttons you hit, hit it and then it's yours.

Q. And that is also up on that screen that you showed us earlier on the port bridge wing?

A. Yes. Oh, yeah, it's all there. All the stations are the same. Like you command at each station.

Q. All right. So that's separate then to disconnect. Thank you.

A. Yeah. No, you've got to take command and then you hit the reconnect on the same touch screen but it's several buttons.

Q. Got it. That's all I have right now.

MR. [redacted] Just one more question. [redacted] [redacted] To your knowledge, you didn't try to take command on the starboard wing and the mate didn't try --

CAPT COSTELLO: On the starboard wing, no.

MR. [redacted] Okay.

CAPT COSTELLO: No, I never -- I can't imagine she did. I wasn't watching her. I can say for sure. Nobody went to the starboard side of the boat.

BY [redacted]

Q. Just two more questions so we can close out on this here. The training you received, does it include scenarios on a loss like this?

A. Yeah, I mean that's why we do it. I mean that's the idea behind the training.

Q. Okay. So is it a training that's documented? In other words, like is it -- do you know beforehand what the training will be?

A. No, I mean the training is more going over the systems, you know what I mean. It's not a simulator. Like we're not doing it in real time and it just happens. This is what you do, and you go through the (indiscernible).

Q. So it's not a scenario based training like the situation today, where you lose a monitor?

A. No, like the training might be you lose, you know, disconnect on the portside, and this is like me and my crew doing it, and it's like what are you going to do, you know what I mean? So we'll be in the middle of the bay, we're away from the dock. Portside went out. What do you do? Things like this and that.

Q. What guides that drill? Like what's the standard being followed --

A. The SMS manual gives you those guidelines, you know what I mean. I do believe it's how we interpret the guidelines, how we conduct our drills, but there is a guideline in that manual for conducting our drills. Every month we do a different drill, you

know what I mean. There's a man overboard.

Q. You said it's SMS?

A. FSMS manual, there's guidelines for drills in that manual.

Q. Do you know if that's a training that's done quarterly, weekly, monthly?

A. Monthly. Every month we do drills. Like the fire, man overboard, we do monthly. That one is quarterly. I could be off on that, you know.

Q. Is that a loss of steering drill?

A. Loss of steering. That's not an every month drill. It might be a little more than quarterly, but it's not monthly. It's more than annually.

Q. Exterior alarms, any activation letting other boaters know that there's a problem?

A. I think I had my hand on the horn at some point there but it was no boaters in front of us. I think once we went into the cove, I do recall -- I mean for passengers, too, you know what I mean, to get their attention. Like we made the announcement. I think I had my fingers on the horns --

Q. So there was --

A. -- alerting them, you know.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just so I'm clear. You were hitting the horn?

CAPT COSTELLO: I do recall hitting the horn. Maybe at some point, I made the announcement because people had their headphones

in, you know what I mean. People don't listen to us. We tell people this and that. So I think just as an added step of getting their attention, I do recall laying my finger on the horn for a minute, but there was no one in front of us. There was no other boats but, yes, just to be on the safe side, if there was anybody on shore there, which there wasn't, but -- so we did. We did lay on the horn.

BY [redacted]

Q. So, Captain, just if you can, an uninterrupted summation of from the time you got the alarm until when you grounded.

A. Okay. Heard an alarm, got the alarm, I saw that the panel in front of me had turned black. I tried to just steer, continue as I'm figuring out what's going on. I realize that the boat is not responding as I attempted to alter port. At that point, I'm thinking that screen is going to come back on, and I'm going to be able to reconnect. While I'm waiting, I put into the harbor mode, joystick, to try to bring the boat in reverse, to stop it. That does not have the effect I'm looking for. We do not stop. If anything, I think that just turns me to port, I'm sorry, to starboard a little bit.

I look over, I see that the wing station screen on the same side, the port one, is illuminated. I went over there to try and disconnect -- reconnect, I'm sorry. To reconnect. Again, it's not working. At this point, we're about to make our way into Bushwick Inlet through the little cove. I run over, and I think

once we're going in there, the mate has made the announcement. I think I switched it into the other backup at this point, to try and clutch it out, stop it, and I'm putting it in reverse and from there on, we just bumped out way into a landing in the inlet there.

Once we were in the inlet, I feel we were going pretty fast. Clipped the wall a little bit. It slowed us down. In the inlet, it was a pretty controlled, not a controlled speed, but a slow speed. It was kind of grounded to a stop.

[redacted] Mr. Wisniewski, is the video --

MR. WISNIEWSKI: I can't get the video to play.

[redacted] We'll pause again. We have video backup.

(Off the record.)

(On the record.)

[redacted] This is [redacted] U.S. Coast Guard. We just completed watching the video of the incident to correlate with the testimony from Mr. Costello. Any questions?

(No response.)

[redacted] Okay. No further questions.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Are we continuing on with this interview or --

[redacted] Based on what you saw.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Based on what we saw. Who was the other individual, the blond that was on the --

CAPT COSTELLO: That's Kristen. She is the mate.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Okay. That was -- okay.

CAPT COSTELLO: She's on standby. She's ready. She's next.

[redacted] Okay. Are there any questions of you guys, anyone has with regards to the interview so far, what we've went through?

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. I do have, Luke, NTSB, just a follow-up one like the training. You indicated that it was all OJT but I just wanted to have on the record that was there any type of like Rolls-Royce training that you received on any of these vessels?

A. No. The engineer, I know the engineer completed MTU training, but as far as specific Rolls-Royce training, no.

Q. And does that incorporate simulator?

A. No.

Q. Going somewhere, sitting down and have them going through getting a certificate at the end of the training?

A. No, it was not.

Q. Okay. And then the last one I have with training is just that we went through a lot of discussion about like loss of propulsion before, when you're out there on the waterway, you simulating propulsion control. You said there was no real guidance on or no real -- the script of guidance on what you have to do to show like loss of propulsion control.

A. Yeah, I mean there was a guideline of the steps to take in the drills. There is a guideline but the drill wasn't specific to

coming up on like the screen going blank on you, you know what I mean. It didn't cover that one.

Q. Correct. And I was just trying to follow up on that.

A. No, I mean --

Q. Loss of starboard engine, loss of port engine, inboard engine, outboard.

A. No, it was more steering propulsion loss and the steps to recover it. From what I recall, without having the manual in front of me, it wasn't super specific on the scenarios. That was kind of up to us I believe to create the scenario on what we're going to do. I don't recall anyone like on the port engine, you do this, you know what I mean. It wasn't that specific.

Q. And just for the record, what's the name of that manual that you're referring to? What's that called?

A. I just refer to it as the FSMS manual. I don't know if there's more to it than that.

Q. Okay. I mean we requested documentation.

A. I'm sure you'll --

Q. I just want to make sure we're asking for the right thing.

A. Yeah, the acronym stands for Ferry Safety Manual System.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: That's all the questions I have. Thank you.

[redacted] So if there aren't any further questions, we'll conclude today's interview with --

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. I thought we were going to go through with what steps he

took, who he contacted after the fact, you know. You got us up to the inlet. You got us to what happened. I was just curious of what happened afterwards.

A. At this point, I have Kristen calling Seastreak on our, you know, calling Jack, calling Tom Wynne, whoever, call the individuals, you know, everyone call it. And then I get on the radio. I call Coast Guard on 16 and then I'm going back and forth with FDNY and the Coast Guard on the radio and Kristen is calling Seastreak management. I didn't even have my cell phone that day. So I'm not really calling anybody on the phone. But I'm on the radio with the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard just kind of took a back seat because FTNY was there so quick, within a couple of minutes of calling the Coast Guard, the fire boat showed up. So I was dealing with FTNY on the radio more I feel like. And I'm sure I missed some calls on the radio with the Coast Guard, but they were my first call on the radio, on 16, called the Coast Guard and FTNY responded on 13. I forget how that played out, but Kristen was on the cell phone calling them. I was on the radio with responders.

Q. In doing the review, when we saw the video, you indicated the engineer came up and what instruction did you give the engineer to go around? You indicated --

A. I told him to go check, that's it. Check for leaks.

Q. Check for leaks, check the boiler space.

A. As I recall, at some point I made an announcement or I told

those guys like get like lifejackets on the crew and I said check on the crew and they said they were all fine because I guess they came up and walked past. The people seemed very calm, you know what I mean. The people seemed like they were taking selfies, you know what I mean. Like they were ordering drinks at the bar still but I had them checking on all the crew, put on lifejacket to be on the safe side.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just to clarify. You said you asked the crew to check on the passengers, correct?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yes, not the crew to check on the crew. I mean that's what I said but what I meant was the crew to check on the passengers, the engineer and open up the hatches.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What did the engineer come back with?

CAPT COSTELLO: He came said we had a bump in there. He said we are taking on water. And then I did express that over the radio, that we are taking on water, you know, I told -- I believe I was speaking to the Coast Guard at this point, you know. We have passengers on. We're taking on water, Bushwick Inlet, and then I explained where that actually was because nobody seems to know that place existed before I got there. They found me. The FTNY came in there and that was it.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. So I just want to continue. So you're heading people off.

A. Yes.

Q. Who else has reported back to you? You had the engineer come

back to you and say his status. Anyone else? Any injuries?
A. The crew came in and said everybody was fine.
Q. Okay.
A. That was my first thing, I was thinking about the passengers. My first question was is everybody okay, make sure they check and as soon as they came in, they were like, no, everybody's fine. I said keep going around. Double check. And the engineer came back up with the boat, and my main concern was the passengers. I was happy to hear that the passengers were all fine, and then it said just get lifejackets on and figure out how to get them out of here, and the engineer was working on trying to keep the water where it's supposed to be.
Q. When you went back to the center console, when do you recall shutting off the engines?
A. I don't recall. You know, I'll be honest with you. At this point, it's a blur. I think I shut off the engines probably as we were there, you know what I mean. I think --
Q. Was it as soon as you were grounded?
A. I think so. I think I came back, I'm trying to figure out what happened. I'm looking around. I'm trying to go through, look at this, look at that, and at that point is when I shut off the engines.
Q. And where did you shut them off at? The panel on the left.
A. The panel on the left.
Q. On the left. Okay. I don't have any more for like the -- so

everyone got off. How much do you imagine it took to get everyone off safely?

A. I have no concept of time at that point. Under an hour. Maybe an hour.

Q. Okay. And you stayed on board the whole time.

A. Yes, until 6 o'clock that night. The first people that got off, because luckily as I said, we ended up at a launch frame with a gate right there. So luckily they had a ladder down for some of the younger guys. They had a cherry picker on a fire truck to pick up some people, and the majority of the people were offloaded onto the fireboats and other frames that were pushed up against our stern. They were filling that. So I do think that most of the people actually got off on the fireboats just because it was much quicker and about 30, 35 people I believe got off shore side. But everybody was off. It didn't seem to be any -- we had the cherry picker for a couple little kids or, you know what I mean but everybody walked off. The only one that had any sort of medical attention was James, the engineer, just because he worked himself so hard he wore himself out. As a precaution, they wanted to check his blood pressure, and that was the response from the initial incident.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: That's all I have for the response. Are we going to get into the work history there?

[redacted] We can get into whatever you want.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. Okay. The only other thing I want to ask is how do you record your time and attendance? Do you check in?
A. Yeah, there's a time clock.
Q. Time clock?
A. Yeah.
Q. Do you punch in and out?
A. Yeah.
Q. Do you keep a log on your work schedule?
A. I mean I can pull up my phone right now and I'll show you it has a record of every punch in and punch out of when I'm actually at work, and then in the log, the guys have shorter shift, but in the logbook, you write 0800 crew on board, and you put whatever time it is and I'll do that, checklist 2, checklist and that's my last step when I leave the boat.
Q. And we didn't get into like your 72-90 six hour profile before, but I was just curious to go back just -- just go back a few days before. You indicated you worked -- you were working Friday?
A. Yes.
Q. And how about Thursday?
A. No.
Q. Was Friday a standard day?
A. Yes.
Q. And when was that timeframe?
A. The weekdays are different. Friday is a longer day but it's

mostly down time. So Friday, I shaped up at 6, and I was off the boat at 9 roughly. I mean I could check the actual times. Well, yeah. I was home by a little after 9.

Q. Okay. If you have them up on your phone, I'm just curious to know your work time on Friday, the 4th.

A. Okay. There is a scheduled down time. Like we normally even run that in because --

Q. And that would also be recorded in like Seastreak's time and attendance?

A. The down time?

Q. Not the down time but just your on and off, right?

A. Yes.

Q. But the down time is not.

A. No, the down time is not.

Q. I'm just curious how down time is recorded? Is that recorded on the phone or --

A. Yeah. In the log, it will say 0900 to whenever, crew rest. Okay. We do get paid for it. But I can tell you right now, just give me a minute to turn my phone on, and pull it up, I can tell you on that Friday, if that's what you're looking for.

Q. Yeah, I'm just curious how many hours you worked on Friday.

A. Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I was asking if you sleep well from Friday to Saturday. Did you sleep well?

CAPT COSTELLO: I rested well. Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you remember what time you went to bed Friday?

CAPT COSTELLO: 10:30. I'm an old man these days. I'm not going out with the deckhands.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. How many hours of sleep did you get?

A. I get about 8 every night. Like my daughter wakes me up at 6:45 every day. So I'm not staying up late now. I'm up at 6:45.

[redacted] [redacted] And just to add, [redacted] [redacted] Coast Guard, just to add to this, Mr. Fitzgerald, you're well aware any time with the major marine captain, the 96 hour work/rest history is a document that's requested and required by the Coast Guard.

MR. FITZGERALD: We can talk about --

[redacted] [redacted] Right.

MR. FITZGERALD: I think the 9692 is required.

[redacted] [redacted] Right.

MR. FITZGERALD: We can talk about that.

[redacted] [redacted] Required, requested.

MR. FITZGERALD: I would ask if there's information that you want, now's the opportunity. I don't think we have it as a company. We don't have an objection to providing that.

[redacted] [redacted] I do want to let you know, to expedite this, it's needed. It's always something we get documented. I'm not sure what's happened with other cases. It's called a subpoena.

MR. FITZGERALD: You can subpoena the record to support that.

You can't subpoena the form itself. In any event, you know you're going to get cooperation.

[redacted] Exactly.

CAPT COSTELLO: Friday, I got up a little later than normal. 05:37 a.m. to 09:29 is when I clocked in on Friday.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Was that total?

CAPT COSTELLO: Is that total? Is that 16 hours? 5:37 a.m. to 9:29 p.m. So, yeah, that's 16 hours with the four hours down time we have in the morning. We have layover in the city on Friday and we still had the incident.

BY MR. WISNIEWSKI:

Q. So let's back up to the day before, Thursday, June 3rd.

A. I was off.

Q. You were off?

A. I'm sorry. I've got to get back on the screen. Yeah, I think my previous day worked before that was -- the last day I worked was Monday. So Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, I was off.

Q. And you don't have any employment elsewhere outside of this?

A. Not at the moment, no.

Q. And so the 16 hours on the 4th, what was your down time? The 4 hours of rest you indicated?

A. Every Friday is different for me. I kind of fill in different shifts. I'm trying to think what the 4 hours are? I believe I had down time basically from 10 until 2:30. It was 10 to 2:30.

Q. And do you have a cabin? Do you have something to rest or --
A. Everybody brings sleeping bags and cots.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah, we're tied up, boats are off, no access to passengers. Everyone just sleeps.
Q. Okay.
A. Yeah, it's policy, you know what I mean. It's not like we're hiding. Everyone sleeps, you get that 4 hour break. That's crew rest time.
Q. And where do you sleep? Just in the --
A. On the seats.
Q. Just in the combination area?
A. Yeah, in the bunk room but people bring their cots. I have a sleeping bag. I lay my sleeping bag on some seats that don't have arm rests of them and then go to sleep. Some guys have hammocks, you know what I mean. Everybody's got their own preference, but we all go to sleep.
Q. Okay. And so is that 16 hours typical or are you covering on that for?
A. That's my Friday. That's the schedule I'm on now, yeah. Every Friday I do that. That's the weekday shift. I'm usually, like I said, mostly weekends. So on weekends, my schedule is different but on the weekdays, that's --
Q. And what two vessels were you on? You were on the *Highlands*?
A. I believe I was on the *Highlands* on Friday. I have to go

back and look at the log like I said.

Q. Is that on the timecard or --

A. No, the timecard is just on company property. Like the time clock is a (indiscernible) or an app. I mean that's not going to tell me anything.

Q. Okay. But when you sign on the vessel, how do we verify that like you were on the *Highlands*?

A. The logbook.

Q. The logbook will indicate who was the mate, who was the captain?

A. Yes, it will. And like I said, not that it doesn't matter, but we're all on different boats. We're all trained on all the boats. So I'm 90 percent sure, it was probably on the *Highlands*. I'm trying to think. Yeah, that's it.

Q. And just a couple of general questions about your health. Like no conditions, no sleep apnea, no problems?

A. No medications.

Q. No medications.

A. No medications. Nothing wrong. As far as I know, I'm pretty healthy.

Q. And how about your vision? Like seeing close up, small --

A. Last time I had them checked I have 20/20.

Q. Do you use glasses at all?

A. No.

Q. All right.

A. I had a physical last spring was my last physical, last January and even then I'm reading below the 20/20 line. Like everything was really good.
Q. And does the company have a drug and alcohol policy?
A. Yes.
Q. So what is that? You're not allowed to drink when you're obviously on the ship, but how about prior to coming on and off ship?
A. I think it's 12 hours before. Like I'm allowed to drink on my day off, you know what I mean, but I don't think I'm allowed to get hammered. I come to work Friday, you know what I mean. I mean it's zero tolerance. If I show up, you know, I don't know how to describe it. Obviously there's a zero drug policy, you know what I mean and there's a zero alcohol policy at work and while coming in Friday to work, something about the hours prior to work.
Q. Do you remember the last time you were drug tested? Is it just randomized or --
A. Yeah, random.
Q. Do you remember when you were last drug tested for --
A. Saturday.
Q. Saturday. Well, that's for the post accident.
A. Yes. No, my last random before that was -- the last time I want to say, it's been a while, within the past year, you know what I mean. Again, getting back to me, nights and weekends, I

usually miss out on the office stuff. Within the past year, maybe a little more, was when I was last drug tested.

Q. Okay. And so you don't take any medication? Any supplements or anything?

A. Multivitamin, that's it.

Q. All right. That's all I have. Thank you.

BY [redacted]

Q. Does the company have a DER?

A. I don't know what a DER is?

Q. Designated employee representative, one to handle your drug and alcohol --

A. (Indiscernible).

Q. Is that a yes?

A. Yes, sorry. And the last time you were called in you said was before post accident was a random?

A. It was a random, about a year ago. I know I had to go take one. Probably less than a year ago because I was actually coming back from COVID. So within the past year, I had a random drug test.

Q. I'll go ahead and ask, were you drinking the day before?

A. No.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And your health, on your application submitted your medical procedures and everything, the 719 (ph.), for your application for your MMC, anything --

CAPT COSTELLO: None at all, no. No operations or anything.

I've been very healthy.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You received your new or your most recent credential 2020?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: May of 2020?

CAPT COSTELLO: Yeah, I think that's when it was issued. I can tell you for a fact in a second here. Issued March of 2020. So my physical would have been January or February when I turned in my application.

[redacted] Any more questions?

MR. WISNIEWSKI: I just have a couple more before we wrap it up.

[redacted] I'm not rushing you, sir.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Just in general, if there's something, you know, we've talk about a lot of the areas that we're focused on, but is there anything that we haven't discussed yet today that you want to present or tell us about that may help us, you know, look into a certain area for you?

CAPT COSTELLO: No, I said from the best of my knowledge, it sucked. I told you what happened, what I did and I mean that was it. I don't -- that's what it was. I mean I don't have nothing further to say. I don't think there's anything else.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Thank you.

[redacted] Okay. So in closing, thank you, Captain, for coming out today. I will say again, that if we need to call you

back, we will. Obviously we'll go with the request through Mr. Fitzgerald there. It's not uncommon to get called back for an interview --

CAPT COSTELLO: Okay.

[redacted] -- should we have additional questions. And likewise, we'll extend the invitation, if something comes up, where you think of anything you want to tell us, that line of communication is always open as well.

So once again, thank you for coming out.

MR. WISNIEWSKI: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

| | |
|---|---|
| IN THE MATTER OF: | ACCIDENT OF THE *COMMODORE* FERRY<br>IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK,<br>ON JUNE 5, 2020<br>Interview of Brian Costello |
| ACCIDENT NO.: | DCA21FM029 |
| PLACE: | Staten Island, New York |
| DATE: | June 9, 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.

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

## Transcript Errata

**TABLE OF CORRECTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH: BRIAN COSTELLO**
**RECORDED ON JUNE 9, 2021**

| PAGE NUMBER | LINE NUMBER | CURRENT WORDING | CORRECTED WORDING |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 7 | Master Captain | training Captain |
| 20 | 6 | Fishery | E35 street |
| 28 | 2 | brung | brought |
| 34 | 21 | europeans | rpms |
| 47 | 13 | auto remote | harbor Mode |
| 49 | 5 | yam | yet |
| 75 | 24 | boiler space | engine space |
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If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEED. _____
Initials

Brian Costello
Printed Name of Person providing the above information

[redacted]
Signature of Person providing the above information

8/10/2021
Date

FURUNO
STBY
ON TIME
TX TIME
BACK-UP CONTROL
Rolls-Royce
HEATED WINDOWS
HUMPHREE

Sea trial
Debbie Larrabee
[redacted]
DISP
PIP
BRILL
BACK-UP CONTROL
RPM+
CLUTCH OUT
CLUTCH IN
RPM-
RPM+
CLUTCH OUT
CLUTCH IN
RPM-
AHEAD
PORT
STBD
ASTERN
BACK-UP ON/ OFF
BACK-UP ON/ OFF
AHEAD
PORT
STBD
ASTERN
Rolls-Royce
FURUNO
0560
2017
RCU-026

MX6Q U-BOOT version [U-Boot 2015.01+dr+g4a194c5]
egalax_firmware_version: FW version [1.169]
(Re)start USB...
USB0: Port not available.
USB1: USB EHCI 1.00
scanning bus 1 for devices... 2 USB Device(s) found
scanning usb for storage devices... 0 Storage Device(s) found
Net: FEC [PRIME]
Hit any key to stop autoboot: 0
AHCI 0001.0300 32 slots 1 ports 3 Gbps 0x1 impl SATA mode
flags: ncq stag pm led clo only pmp pio slum part
No port device detected!
No storage devices, perhaps not 'usb start'ed..?
Setting boot to mmc
booting from MMC ...
** Bad device mmc 0 **
** Bad device mmc 0 **
ERROR: Could not load image
** Bad device mmc 0 **
ERROR: Could not load legacy image
=>
1 Failures
Rolls-Royce
Joystick
Harb. Manual
Modes
Alarms
Joystick Failure
Unit Reduced
Low Number in Service
Heading
0.0°
Moment
-100%
0
100%
Harb. Manual
Harb. Auto
Sea Manual
Sea Auto
LOCAL RPM
SEP RPM
BU
LOCAL WJ
Failure Management
Waterjet
Control Failure Reconnect
Joystick
Joystick Failure Reconnect
Max Window
-120%
Thrust
0%
Thrust
Bucket 0%
Port Outer Jet
Bucket 99%
Nozzle -1
RPM 0
Port Inner Jet
Bucket 97%
Nozzle -1
RPM 0
Stbd Inner Jet
Bucket -1%
Nozzle -0
RPM 0
Stbd Outer Jet
Bucket -1%
Nozzle -0
RPM 0

ME #1
ME #2
ME #3
ME #4
PORT GENERATOR
STBD GENERATOR
JET ALARM PANEL
PORT JET OUTER 1
LOW HYDRAULIC OIL PRESSURE
LOW LUBE OIL PRESSURE
HIGH TEMPERATURE
CONTROL FAILURE
LOW OIL LEVEL
BACK-UP SUPPLY FAILURE
LOW OIL FLOW
COOPER BEARING 4-20Ma
STBD JET OUTER 4
Power Panels
P.O. BOX 508 MORGAN CITY, LA 70381
Phone: (985) 385-5334 * Fax: (985) 384-2223
www.powerpanels.net
JET SYSTEM ALARMS
EARTH FAULT ALARM
DC OK SYSTEM B
JOYSTICK SYSTEM FAILURE
DC OK SYSTEM A
PORT JET INNER 2
STBD JET INNER 3
POWER ON
TEST
SILENCE
ESC
ALARM ACK
EBL 1
EBL 2