

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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ENGINE ROOM FIRE ABOARD THE *

TOWING VESSEL *MISS DOROTHY* *

ON THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER * Accident No.: DCA21FM018

NORTH OF BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, *

ON MARCH 17, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: SHAWN PACE, Pilot

Western Rivers Boat Management

MSU Baton Rouge
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Thursday,
March 25, 2021

APPEARANCES:

BART BARNUM, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

CWO [REDACTED]
U.S. Coast Guard

JASON STRAIT, Vice President of Operations
Western Rivers Boat Management

COLBY DAVIS, Director of Regulatory Affairs
Western Rivers Boat Management

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:07 p.m.)

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2
3 CWO ██████ Okay. CWO ██████ ██████ for Marine Safety
4 Unit at Baton Rouge, investigating officer. It's the 25th of
5 March 2021, 1307 p.m. Central Time. We're investigating the fire
6 that had occurred on the *Miss Dorothy* on the 17th of March.

7 We'll be interviewing the pilot, Shawn Pace, and some
8 additional parties in interest. I would like everybody to go
9 around starting with NTSB, Colby, then Jason, and then Shawn, and
10 introduce yourself, say your position and speak your -- and then
11 spell your first and last name. You can go ahead and do that now,
12 please.

13 MR. BARNUM: Sure. Good afternoon, this is Bart Barnum with
14 the NTSB. That's Barnum, B-a-r-n-u-m.

15 MR. DAVIS: This is Colby Davis with Western Rivers. I'm the
16 DPA and director of regulatory affairs. C-o-l-b-y, D-a-v-i-s.

17 MR. PACE: My name is Shawn Pace. I was the pilot on watch
18 aboard the motor vessel *Miss Dorothy* at time of incident. S-h-a-
19 w-n, P-a-c-e.

20 CWO ██████ Okay. This is ██████ ██████ I want to
21 give a reminder that before anybody says anything, just say your
22 name. That way the transcriptionist will know who's speaking when
23 they transcribe the recording.

24 And Mr. Pace, we're going to record -- we're recording this
25 interview. Is that okay with you?

1 MR. PACE: Yes, sir.

2 INTERVIEW OF SHAWN PACE

3 BY CWO [REDACTED]

4 Q. So, to begin with, I would like you to give us your
5 background in maritime industry, describe your experience at
6 different positions, what companies you've worked for, and how
7 long. Can you please do that for us?

8 A. Yes, sir. So I started my career on the river approximately
9 2011, 2012 with Marquette Transportation as a deckhand. I worked
10 there for approximately one year. I then moved to Waterfront
11 Services out of Cairo, Illinois. Worked there for approximately
12 seven years as a deckhand. That's also where I got my steersman
13 license and began my journey to the wheelhouse. I don't remember
14 quite when I left there.

15 I then went to Greystone Logistics as a mate. I worked there
16 for approximately a year and a half. That is where I really
17 trained and learned how to run the larger boats. That's also
18 where I was turned loose and stood my first watch as a pilot.
19 Worked there as a pilot for approximately a year before I was laid
20 off, and that's where my career here at Western Rivers began.
21 I've been here for just over a year now running pilot.

22 Q. Okay. This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Thank you, Mr. Pace. Now,
23 I would like you start at just before you went on watch and
24 describe to us, tell us about going on watch, what you do to get
25 on watch, and on the 17th before the fire, and if you can try to

1 give us approximate times when what happened. And then just tell
2 us what happened all the way through to the end of the fire.

3 A. Okay. I'll do my best here. This is Shawn Pace. My watch
4 began that night at 11 p.m. I woke up at approximately 10:30, got
5 dressed. I was in the wheelhouse by approximately 10:50. Get my
6 cup of coffee, get any kind of a pass-down from Damian, and
7 steersman James was on watch that night. There wasn't much to
8 pass down. It'd been a pretty easy night. Just made it outside
9 of the Baton Rouge traffic system, so the radio was much quieter
10 than normal. When I came on watch at 11, we were waiting traffic
11 just below Devil Swamp Light, approximately Mile Marker 241. We
12 weren't shoved into the hill, just the bare minimum engine to hold
13 us still.

14 I don't remember the name of the southbound boat that was
15 coming down. I have the motor vessel *Christopher Wilson* ahead of
16 me also waiting traffic. He let me know at that point -- the
17 *Christopher Wilson* let me know that I had been outrunning them
18 speed wise and offered to let me go ahead and come around and get
19 in front of them once traffic cleared. Probably waited on traffic
20 until 11:15, 11:20. Once the traffic cleared, I did overtake the
21 *Christopher Wilson* and continued on northbound. Really nothing to
22 describe the driving. There was no other traffic to speak of.
23 Radios were quiet.

24 Made it all the way up Mile Marker 249 approximately, just at
25 the tip of Profit Island, when the fire alarm sounded. And it's

1 an automatic system, smoke detector/smoke detector house, you
2 know. So that alarm sounded. I immediately grabbed my radio and
3 hollered for the deck crew downstairs. I didn't even get an
4 answer from them.

5 Q. This is [REDACTED] Can you -- as you're talking through this,
6 can you give an approximate time when things are happening?

7 A. The fire alarm sounded at approximately 12:45. It would have
8 been 12:45 a.m. on the 17th, I believe.

9 Q. Okay. You can continue with everything just as you were
10 saying things out, and if you could give us approximate times,
11 that will help us. That way we don't have to come back and ask
12 you later.

13 A. All right. Okay. I'll do the best that I can. This is
14 Shawn Pace again. So the alarm sounded at approximately 12:45
15 a.m. on the 17th, and I immediately reached for the radio to
16 contact my deck crew. And I never actually made contact with them
17 for some reason. I was not getting answers on my radio. I then
18 stood up and walked to the back window of the wheelhouse just
19 looking for any kind of sign of trouble. And all I saw was really
20 just a small puff of smoke. The way the wind was blowing that
21 night, it wasn't instantly alarming, and I was thinking probably
22 exhaust fume being caught in a drafts around the boat, that kind
23 of thing.

24 But it grew in intensity very quickly, like within 30, 40
25 seconds of me actually hearing the alarm sound. When I saw the

1 smoke growing, I actually walked forward and hit the general alarm
2 switch on top of the fire alarm that was still sounding to get
3 everybody up. Within 60 seconds of that, we're going to say
4 approximately 12:47, 12:48, Damian showed up to the wheelhouse and
5 pretty well took control from there. Damian tried to contact the
6 Coast Guard on Channel 16 and we couldn't get an answer from them.
7 We were notified by the *Christopher Wilson* who was still in radio
8 range that they were in fact answering us and for some reason we
9 weren't picking that up.

10 Approximately 12:50 a.m., the smoke has grown to large scale
11 is the only way I know to describe it. It's starting to creep up
12 the stairs into the wheelhouse. And we are noticing flames coming
13 from -- well, we really can't see where they're coming from. But
14 they're tall enough they're over the stack of the boat. Damian
15 continued to try to call for the Coast Guard for a minute. And it
16 was at that point that probably, I'd say 12:51, 12:52, he told me
17 to go ahead and call the abandon ship, get everybody together and
18 get on tow.

19 I then proceeded down the interior stairs of the wheelhouse
20 to the second level of the boat, where the smoke was so thick you
21 couldn't see where you were walking, really just kind of stumbling
22 around, using walls to feel around, calling for anybody who may be
23 in that area. I did not receive any answer, did not find any
24 persons on the second deck. I then proceeded down the stairs from
25 the second level to the first level on the interior cabins of the

1 boat and again called. Didn't hear nobody answering, nothing like
2 that. The smoke was so thick down there, I think I was having
3 trouble breathing at this point.

4 I then went back up the interior stairs to the second deck
5 and stepped outside an exterior door where I -- at that point, I
6 could actually hear voices, the guys yelling and organizing to
7 fight, get the fire action. But the smoke was so thick there, I
8 couldn't see anything still. I hung my head over the railing of
9 the second deck and called down to them to abandon ship. I could
10 hear them validate and they could, they could hear me.

11 At that point, I went to the bow of the vessel. And this is
12 all happening real quick. I mean, we're still before 12:55 I'd
13 imagine. Now, I continued to the bow of the vessel. Went
14 downstairs to the first deck of the boat where I met all of the
15 crew except for Damian, the captain on watch. I then instructed
16 all the crew to get on the tow. And we waited right there on the
17 stern of the tow until Damian come down two to three minutes
18 later. So we're going on 1 a.m. now.

19 Once Damian arrived, we walked out away from the boat
20 approximately 200 feet and, using a handheld radio that one of the
21 one of the deckhands had, we called for the *Christopher Wilson*. I
22 can't remember if that radio call was answered or not. They may
23 have been out of range. We may have made a phone call to make
24 that happen. But we did get the *Christopher Wilson's* attention
25 one way or the other. And then he told us they would be tying

1 that tow off and coming to assist us.

2 We probably didn't stand there but 15 minutes, so now we're
3 looking at 1:15 a.m., we heard something on the boat. It was a
4 small explosion. We don't know what it was. It was loud enough
5 that the *Christopher Wilson* heard it from approximately three-
6 quarters of a mile away. When we heard that, we actually ventured
7 another 200 feet farther away from the boat just in case anything
8 else were to happen. And that is where we stayed until the
9 *Christopher Wilson* arrived.

10 It took them a while to get there. I'd say it was close to
11 1:45 a.m. when they actually arrived. They then caught a line on
12 the side of our tow and pushed the tow against the bank, got
13 everything stopped. My deck crew along with theirs teamed up and
14 actually caught a line to the bank to secure the two. And once we
15 had everybody aboard the *Christopher Wilson*, we shifted up towards
16 the *Miss Dorothy* and continued to fight that fire with their
17 onboard fire system. That's pretty well it.

18 We fought that fire for hours. I don't even know what time
19 it was. When we were finished, we were all exhausted. I feel
20 like that's about where the story ends, if you have any questions?

21 Q. This is [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard. Thank you very much
22 for all that. Can we go -- the performance of your engines and
23 the steering, was there -- did they operate fine? Were they
24 holding -- were the main engines holding normal RPMs consistently?
25 Were they hunting? By hunting, I mean was it revving up and down?

1 Describe the overall conditions and the way everything was
2 operating please.

3 A. Yes, sir. This is Shawn Pace. Prior to the -- I'm going all
4 the way back to when I came on watch at 11 p.m. I didn't have any
5 issues whatsoever from my engines, my throttles. I didn't notice
6 any hunting, as you called it. I mean, it was just a perfect
7 night to be running a boat, if you will. No issues at all. No
8 alarms leading up to the fire, with the exception of the fire
9 alarm obviously. Everything operated impeccable, if you will. No
10 issues to describe whatsoever, all the way up to the point I
11 relieved control to Damian. I never lost control of anything, you
12 know, while I was, while I was in control of the vessel, if that
13 makes sense.

14 Q. This is [REDACTED] When -- after the fire alarm went off, was
15 there anything different, changed now that -- because I might have
16 asked you before, but maybe you thought back. After the fire
17 alarm went off, did you notice any change in the propulsion, if an
18 engine dropped offline or started, or you lost power completely?

19 A. No, sir. I did not notice anything like that while I was in
20 control of the vessel. Once I had given control of the vessel to
21 Damian, we did get an engine room alarm. Like I can't recall
22 which engine it was, so I don't even want to speculate on that.
23 But we did get an engine room alarm. And I did not realize
24 whether or not he had lost an engine at that point. We had
25 already pulled the throttles back.

1 We knew the fire was in the engine room. We didn't know what
2 had caused it, what was burning. We had already pulled the engine
3 back at that point. So we weren't -- if that -- we weren't using
4 them to know if they weren't running. I wasn't anyway. I had
5 already pulled the engines back. If I had lost it, I wouldn't
6 have noticed because I wasn't using propulsion at that point.

7 CWO ██████████ This is ██████████ Mr. Barnum, would you like
8 to start with your questions?

9 MR. BARNUM: Sure, thank you.

10 BY MR. BARNUM:

11 Q. Bart Barnum, NTSB. Thank you, Mr. Pace. I do have a few
12 follow-ups for you. And I did listen to your initial interview
13 with the Coast Guard as well, so thank you for that. Just a
14 clarification on your timeline there, your sequence. You said
15 after you abandoned the vessel onto the tow, it was roughly 45
16 minutes before the *Christopher Wilson* showed up. Is that correct?

17 A. Again, that's approximate. I would say that's pretty
18 accurate.

19 Q. Okay. And was there anything -- how did you account for
20 everybody onboard the vessel? You know, when you abandoned, was
21 there some sort of muster sheet, or how -- you know, or just you
22 knew that everybody was there? How did you know?

23 A. Excuse me. This is Shawn Pace. It was just an approximate
24 headcount. I've been working with these guys, most of them for
25 20-plus days. I knew who I had on my vessel, and I had counted by

1 them, you know, by teams, they were safe. I didn't have any paper
2 in front of me to go off of. I just knew who was supposed to be
3 on my boat.

4 Q. Okay. So the abandon ship, is that something that you
5 practice doing? Is that a drill that's run on a period basis?

6 A. We do run that drill.

7 Q. Still there, sir?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. So would you say -- you said you conduct that drill.
10 Would you say the drill helped prepare you for eventually what
11 happened that night, abandoning ship? Was there anything
12 different that you didn't drill, that didn't work for the actual
13 emergency night?

14 A. So yes, that drill was absolutely necessary to really -- how
15 do I describe it? When something like this happens, your body
16 just kind of naturally freezes up, and these drills and this
17 training is all we have to fall back on for muscle memory, if you
18 will. This drill -- these drills we did, you know, just a couple
19 weeks prior were absolutely crucial to that, how it end up coming
20 together the way it did. The drills and training are the reason
21 that we got everybody off of that boat safely.

22 Q. Okay. Typically, how -- in your drills, how is it, the
23 abandon ship? Who's responsible for making that call to abandon
24 ship?

25 A. The captain of the vessel is always responsible to make that

1 call. In this case, it would have been Damian. The drills are
2 conducted in the same manner. It's a mock situation where Damian
3 would give that call and, you know, it would be perceived the same
4 way. General alarm would be rung. Everybody would meet together
5 in their muster station where a headcount would be conducted, and
6 then the order to abandon would be delivered.

7 Q. Okay. You mentioned muster stations. Where are the muster
8 stations on board the vessel?

9 A. The muster stations for that boat is the deck locker, the
10 lowest -- it's on the first deck of the boat, the farthest room
11 forward to the bow.

12 Q. Okay. And I might have missed it, but you were describing,
13 obviously, that the captain verbally told you to abandon ship. Is
14 there a P.A. system on board, or how is that typically relayed
15 from the captain, the order to abandon ship?

16 A. Generally, it'd be delivered by either P.A. or handheld
17 radio. With the issues we were having with the radio that night,
18 we didn't know if it was something related to the fire or if they
19 were just too busy. Again, when you're in an engine room fighting
20 a fire, it's so loud, you probably didn't even hear that thing
21 going off on your shoulder, the little mic.

22 So he delivered the message to me, and I delivered to the
23 crew. While that's not, you know, the first line of defense, so
24 to speak; that's not how we would like to do it. It is a last
25 resort. We have to deliver by word of mouth, and that's the way

1 we do it. But the bottom line is that we're going to make sure
2 everybody hears that order.

3 Q. Okay. So did anybody muster at the designated muster station
4 when the general alarm went off that you know of?

5 A. I was in the wheelhouse. I wouldn't know.

6 Q. Okay. All right. You mentioned you -- clarifying question
7 here. You had heard the fire alarm. You said it was just a, like
8 a household smoke alarm. Can you describe the fire alarm system
9 onboard a little better for me please?

10 A. It's a little more than just a smoke alarm. So our fire
11 alarm system is a series of sensors from heat, smoke -- yeah, heat
12 detection system, smoke detection system. All are wired through a
13 central panel that activates autonomously, automatically, and
14 identifies which zones the fire -- well, not the fire, I'm sorry
15 -- which zone the sensor is picking up whatever its alarming us
16 to.

17 Q. Okay. And where is that panel, Mr. Pace?

18 A. That panel on the *Miss Dorothy* was on the port side of the
19 wheelhouse at cabinet height.

20 Q. Okay. Is there an auxiliary panel in the deck locker or in
21 the engine room anywhere that you know of?

22 A. No.

23 Q. No? Okay. All right. So you got the fire alarm, and then
24 you radioed your deck crew, but you didn't receive a response. Do
25 you know where they were at that time?

1 A. That's correct. I do not.

2 Q. Okay. Have you found out since? Have you got -- obviously,
3 you've spoken to them?

4 A. So my understanding by speaking to them is that, as soon as
5 they heard the -- they were already downstairs in that area when
6 the alarm sounded. So they immediately -- you know, on top of the
7 alarm sounding, plus the general alarm sounding, they instantly
8 had guys coming out of their rooms to respond to that alarm. And
9 they all instantaneously pretty well went to find this fire was in
10 the engine room. My understanding is, I did not get answered
11 because their hands were full with whatever equipment they were
12 using and because of the -- just how loud it is in an engine room.

13 Q. Okay. All right. So I got -- I think I got it here. So the
14 alarm sounded; it sounds on the panel on the bridge and it also
15 sounds locally. Is that correct?

16 A. I wouldn't even call it locally. When that alarm sounds, it
17 sounds through the entire boat.

18 Q. Okay. So you have an indication on your panel on the bridge
19 -- I'm just trying to understand the system you have onboard. You
20 have an indication on a panel on the bridge what zone is alarming
21 and what alarm is alarming where, and then there's also an audible
22 alarm that sounds everywhere on the boat?

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I can't -- the zones are numbered one through, one through --

1 I think it's four or five. I can't remember exactly. But it is a
2 visible flashing light on that panel that tells me which zone has
3 been activated. And all the zones, on top of being zone one,
4 it'll also have a label above it that says what zone includes. I
5 can't remember what zone it was, but it was engine room.

6 Q. All right. Do you know if those alarms sound in any of the
7 staterooms or the cabins?

8 A. I do not know if there are individual alarms in the cabins.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. It's loud enough it can be heard from all cabins, but I don't
11 know if there's anything specifically in each cabin.

12 Q. All right. Engine alarms, you had indicated that you get an
13 alarm -- an engine room alarm, but you weren't sure which one it
14 was, understandably. Where else do those alarms sounds? I mean,
15 typically, what type of alarm would you see on the bridge of the
16 vessel while you're operating it? Can you see -- what do you see?
17 You know, let me give you an example. When you see -- will you
18 see a lube oil pressure alarm or is it just a general starboard
19 engine alarm?

20 A. Okay. The alarms I get in the wheelhouse are just general.
21 It tells me what piece of machinery has a problem. Starboard
22 main, port main, starboard generator, port generator. It does not
23 give me a description of the issue, you know, as far as low oil
24 pressure or anything like that.

25 Q. What is your standard procedure when you receive one of these

1 alarms, you know, in the middle of the night when the chief is
2 sleeping?

3 A. Standard procedure is I pull the engines back just, you know,
4 to account for, me personally, for air pressure. If I'm losing
5 air pressure, I don't want to use all my air pressure pull --
6 pushing ahead, so I pull them back. And the next move is to call
7 down to the deck crew and make sure that the chief is aware of the
8 alarm and going to investigate. He gets that alarm in his room
9 also, so me calling on the radio is just kind of contingency, if
10 you will.

11 Q. Okay. So you don't actually call him on the phone? You task
12 your deck crew on -- via the radio to go verify and make sure he's
13 addressing it?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Okay. All right. There's been some talk throughout our
16 interview today about your deck crew and their duties. What are
17 they doing while you're underway? You know, let's say you didn't
18 have fire that night. What would they be doing typically
19 throughout their watch and during the night there?

20 A. Well, when they come on watch at approximately -- they come
21 on watch the same time I do, 11 p.m. Thirty minutes afterwards,
22 they're expected to walk the tow, check hatches on the barges, and
23 make sure we're not taking on any water. Once that is completed,
24 and it don't take long, then they'll come back to the boat, and
25 they're supposed to be cleaning and making rounds, just staying

1 busy, you know, making rounds on the boat, making sure everything
2 is operating as well as they expect it to, with their experience
3 anyway. They're not checking pressures or temperatures or
4 anything like that. They're just looking for visual signs of a
5 problem. Yeah, just rounds and cleaning really. And yet there's
6 still work to do.

7 Q. Okay. As the pilot, what areas are you expecting them to
8 make rounds of? Do you expect them to walk through the engine
9 room? Understanding they're not checking pressures and
10 temperatures, but is that space they should be -- visually be
11 looking at?

12 A. Right. I don't think there's anything that requires me to,
13 but I do make it a habit once every, you know, day or two just to
14 walk around the boat and take a look at everything and make sure
15 everything meets our expectations. And it's also where we come up
16 with tasks for deck crew. Hey, guys, I walked through the deck
17 locker today and noticed that you had this mess over here on the
18 floor; you all should work on cleaning that up tonight. Same
19 thing with the engine room. We might take a walk through there
20 and just basically making sure it's clean and clutter free, the
21 walkways are clear. Yeah, I make it a point to do that every day
22 or two, every day to two days.

23 Q. Right. And how about your deck crew during your watch; would
24 -- do you expect them to go down there as well and check it out?

25 A. They're supposed to be making rounds every watch, you know,

1 at least once every couple of hours.

2 Q. Okay. And that is including the engine room?

3 A. That is including the engine room.

4 Q. It -- that requirement to make the rounds, is that something
5 that you verbally assign them or is that a -- is it written down
6 in a company policy or shipboard policy?

7 A. It's something that we just verbally assign. And then on
8 their own know they're supposed to be doing that. There's no
9 policy to my knowledge.

10 Q. And typically, for that evening watch, that 1100 to 0500,
11 what, 2300 -- sorry, to 0500, what time are they typically going
12 down in the engine room?

13 A. I don't think there's necessarily an assigned time. Just a
14 couple of times, I would expect, you know, at the minimum at least
15 around 3 a.m., maybe a little earlier, about halfway through the
16 watch.

17 Q. Okay. All right. How about smoking on board, sir? Do you
18 -- is it a -- is there certain locations you could smoke or is it
19 just you can smoke anywhere?

20 A. No. We have a designated smoking area. The deck locker,
21 wheelhouse, and that goes farther. They're not allowed to smoke
22 at all on tow when we're carrying any kind of red flag chemical
23 barges.

24 Q. Okay. Are -- how often do -- are you responsible for filling
25 up the day tanks of the vessel, fueling them, or is that something

1 that the chief makes sure that you have plenty of fuel in the day
2 tanks? How does that work?

3 A. That's all the chief's. I have nothing to do with that.

4 Q. Okay. So you just operate the engines, you steer the vessel,
5 but, you know, you don't -- you never have any concern that you
6 don't have enough fuel?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. All right. Let me see here. Just a couple more questions
9 for you, sir. Let's check my notes. So, following your long
10 night there fighting the fire and evacuating and, you know, making
11 discussions with your crew and company folks, what is your general
12 consensus of what happened? How did the fire start?

13 A. I believe it started in the engine room, and that's about
14 where my expertise ends. I don't want to speculate on something I
15 don't know anything about, to be honest with you.

16 Q. Okay. Did you -- you know, you said there was a lot of thick
17 smoke. Did you -- was there certain smell? I mean, obviously, we
18 weren't there. Was there anything out of the ordinary, like oh,
19 wow, this is -- you know, it smells like burning plastic or an
20 electrical fire, or this is diesel smell; did you notice anything
21 while you were abandoning the ship?

22 A. No, sir. I didn't notice anything like that. No, I really
23 don't even know how to -- you know, the smoke didn't mean anything
24 out of the ordinary. It definitely did not have a diesel fuel
25 smell to it or anything like that, that I noticed anyway.

1 Q. Okay. All right. You explained to us that you're -- you
2 know, pretty extensive history of working on these boats as far as
3 deckhand, steersman, working your way up to pilot. Have you seen
4 anything on the different vessels that you've been on that maybe
5 you didn't have on this boat that would have better prepared you
6 or maybe possibly better prepare the vessel to help combat this
7 fire?

8 A. A fixed fire alarm system I imagine would have helped a lot.
9 I've never had to use a system like that, but I have to think that
10 any tool at our disposal would have been great.

11 Q. Okay. My understanding -- a fixed firefighting system, is
12 that what you're referring to?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And just one last question. You talked about your
15 procedures for abandoning the ship and go to your muster station
16 and what happen when the general alarm sounds and your training.
17 When you're on watch, you get a fire alarm, you sound the general
18 alarm just like you did, are there any other duties that is
19 required of you? You know, is there any -- are you required to
20 shut down engines? Are you required to steer a certain course?
21 Are you required to shut off ventilation, fuel oil, anything like
22 that?

23 A. Me personally, no. We do have those systems in place to use,
24 but -- and the fire gotten out of hand so quickly, a lot of that
25 equipment couldn't be reached.

1 Q. Okay. And whose responsibility is to -- is that to do those?

2 A. It would be the chief's responsibility. Everyone's trained
3 to do it, but the chief has the primary responsibility.

4 MR. BARNUM: Okay. Understood. Thanks, sir. That's all the
5 questions I have for you right now. I'll pass it back to

6 [REDACTED]

7 BY CWO [REDACTED]

8 Q. This is [REDACTED] Thank you. All right. I do have a couple
9 more here. I think you've hit everything that I had an interest
10 of asking you so far. Did you hear comms, anything over comms or
11 communication with your deckhand or mate during the -- during your
12 watch and the fire?

13 A. I did have communications with them prior to the fire, when
14 they went on tow at 11:30. They did a radio check with me, and I
15 heard them both on the radio. And even after the fire, I noticed
16 that they were still carrying the radios. So I myself, I think
17 that it -- you know, as far as me getting ahold of my deck crew,
18 it was probably more of them being in a noisy environment than it
19 was an equipment malfunction.

20 Q. Okay. So you don't -- during the fire, did either one of
21 them call you and tell you that there was a fire in the engine
22 room? Because at first, all you saw was like light smoke. Did --
23 after you -- after the fire alarm went off, but you never got a
24 call from either one of them?

25 A. Somebody did grab the radio at some point and say, fire in

1 the engine room. But I couldn't get a response other than that.
2 They sounded out of breath like they had been running or
3 something, and I have no idea who said it.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you. Back to the deckhands' responsibilities.
5 I think you did a good job of covering that. Do they have any
6 kind of checklist or log that they're supposed to fill out when
7 they're on watch?

8 A. No, sir.

9 Q. Okay. Do you have logs that you're supposed to fill out when
10 you're on watch?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. What kind of entries do you have -- are you required to make
13 in the log?

14 A. Typical stuff. Waiting for traffic, when I stopped, drills.
15 I've got to mark my drills, my training. If we were to find like
16 damage on a barge or something, I'd put an entry of that in the
17 log, too. Yeah, that's about it, other than, you know, daily
18 running the boat, stopping here to wait for this boat and noting
19 drills and things of that nature. That's about it.

20 Q. Okay. If you do get alarms on the generators or the main
21 propulsion system or bilge alarms, do you log that kind of
22 information into your logs? Are you still there, Mr. Pace?

23 A. Yes. Can you ask that again?

24 Q. Okay. If you get alarms for your generators, your propulsion
25 system, bilge alarms -- or do you log that kind of information

1 into your log?

2 A. No. Not normally. Not unless it's creating delay.

3 Q. Okay. Thank you. I have only one more. Now that it's --
4 you know, you've had time to think about everything, have you
5 thought about, was there anything that you or the other crew
6 members could have done to prevent this fire?

7 A. No. No, sir.

8 CWO [REDACTED] That's all the questions I have.

9 Mr. Davis, or Jason, do you have any questions you'd like to
10 ask?

11 MR. DAVIS: No. I don't think so.

12 MR. STRAIT: No, not on the pilot.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

14 Mr. Barnum, if you don't have anything else in the interview?

15 MR. BARNUM: No. This is Bart Barnum, NTSB. Thank you,
16 Mr. Pace. I have no further questions.

17 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] It is 1351,
18 and the interview with Mr. Pace is over.

19 (Whereupon, at 1:51 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: ENGINE ROOM FIRE ABOARD THE
 TOWING VESSEL *MISS DOROTHY*
 ON THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER
 NORTH OF BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA,
 ON MARCH 17, 2021
 Interview of Shawn Pace

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FM018

PLACE: Baton Rouge, Louisiana

DATE: March 25, 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.



Romona Phillips
Transcriber