UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
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FIRE ON THE *PRESIDENT EISENHOWER*	*	
SOUTHWEST OF SANTA BARBARA	*	Accident No.: DCA21FM026
HARBOR, ON APRIL 28, 2021	*	
	*	

Interview of: PEDRO MEDEIROS, Chief Mate
President Eisenhower

Los Angeles, California

Saturday,
May 1, 2021

APPEARANCES:

BART BARNUM, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LCDR [redacted]
U.S. Coast Guard

LT [redacted]
U.S. Coast Guard

ENSIGN [redacted]
U.S. Coast Guard

JOE WALSH, Attorney
Collier Walsh Nakazawa
(On behalf of the vessel owners)

ANTOINE LETOURNEL
APL Maritime

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

(8:25 a.m.)

LT [redacted] I'll say a couple of things and we'll do introductions. Just state your name and your position onboard the vessel, and then I'll ask you again if you consent to being recorded.

Good morning. This is Lieutenant [redacted] with the United States Coast Guard. Today is May 1st, 2021. The current time is 0825. We are on board the motor vessel President Eisenhower at berth LA 46 to investigate the engine room fire that occurred onboard the vessel the morning of April 28th, 2021.

In the room with myself are the following individuals.

LCDR [redacted] Lieutenant Commander [redacted]

MR. BARNUM: Bart Barnum, NTSB Office Marine Safety.

MR. LETOURNEL: Antoine Letournel, APL Maritime.

MR. MEDEIROS: Pedro Medeiros, Chief Mate.

MR. WALSH: Joe Walsh of Collier Walsh Nakazawa, counsel to to the party in interest, AML (sic).

MS. [redacted] Ensign [redacted] Inspections Division.

LT [redacted] And Mr. Medeiros, do you consent to us recording this interview?

MR. MEDEIROS: I do.

LT [redacted] Thank you.

BY LCDR [redacted]

Q. Thank you, Mate, for joining us. Today we'd like to just talk about what happened during the fire. So, to start off, can you kind of give us just a background of your training, experience and history?

A. Sure. I've sailed for just about 14 years through M&P (ph.) and also in the offshore industry for a couple of years. I worked on several different types of vessels; tankers, bulk and, more recently, container ships the last -- since 2015.

I've been with APL working since 2015, and I've been a permanent chief mate on here for almost two years.

Q. And your rotation onboard the vessel is how many days on, how many days off roughly?

A. Normally, it's 84 days on and then 84 days off.

Q. So you were on when they reflagged her?

A. No, I wasn't. I was not permanent yet.

Q. Okay.

A. I came on October.

LT [redacted] This is Lieutenant [redacted] We had an individual open the door to the conference room, but he quickly shut the door. So it's the same participants in the room.

BY LCDR [redacted]

Q. So 84 days on, 84 days off, and you joined the vessel most recently when?

A. Here in LA, the 24th.

Q. So if you can go ahead and kind of give us an overview of what happened during the fire, when you first noticed anything going on.

A. Sure. I was in bed. I woke up to the general alarm going off around 2ish. I got up, and as soon as I got up, I got a call from the first engineer saying, yeah, it looks like to be a fire of wood or pallet around the boiler flat area. I said, okay, thanks. So I got dressed out and ran down the ladder well for the muster and the teams -- some people were starting to show up, some people were already there suiting up, getting ready. So I let them know there's an engine room fire, suit up and we need some hoses, so one on the portside and one on the starboard side.

And then I went outside on the starboard side and I went to go check out -- take a look to see what I could find and get more information. So I could see -- when I went out through the house, I could see the hatch open and black smoke shooting out with embers also in it. It was very thick, black smoke. So, yeah, this is definitely a real fire. I felt the deck underneath, which was warm, and I felt the bulkheads and the water-tight door, which were warm also.

Then I ran back to the main deck area where people were suiting up, and they were just about getting there; not everybody was fully suited out. But the -- people were asking where exactly they wanted the hoses let out so I pointed that out to them, and that was being rigged, and then the rest of the guys started

coming out in their teams, squad one and squad two. And then we had -- I asked guys to pull all of the spare CO2 dry cans out on desk just to be ready, and we had a bunch of spare air bottles as well in case we needed any more.

Right around that same time, the squads -- both squads were fully mustered. They had hoses and were ready and started doing -- or asked for water on deck. I got water on deck. As soon as it came charged, it started releasing water and doing boundary cooling. We did boundary cooling for a little bit, and then we proceeded to open the water-tight doors and then shoot water inside to see what we could see, and so the squad two, the engineering squad, was the lead squad. It's their specialty, so they kind of led it and went in.

So when we opened the water-tight door, there was no pressure on the door because the hatch -- we left that hatch open. I thought it was a smaller fire, assuming it was still the boiler, but I wanted to try to clear the smoke and make sure there was no pressure so I kept that open. So when they opened the water-tight door, there was smoke coming out, but it wasn't like out of the cargo hatch (indiscernible). So they went in and started attacking it and shooting it, and they saw immediately to the right -- I guess they could see flames, so they were really spraying and concentrating on that.

Then they tried advancing further. It was very thick. And I remember thinking or hearing water mist system, and so I left -- I

ran to the fire control room to make sure that the water mist system was running. There was smoke in there, in the passageway, so I kind of ducked down, ran and went through and found that the main engine light was running to the water mist system. I didn't see any other lights on so I pressed the auxiliary boiler water mist system on and then I ran out back to the team.

Then they were starting to come out -- no, or were they already out? I'm not sure. They were fighting it at the door. Both teams were at the door and that's why I ran in because they were kind of being pushed out. So they were at the door trying to shoot it. It was really intense.

At some point, I heard one of the air bottles start whistling, so I tapped on my guy, pull back, change your bottle, change your bottle, and I told the rest of the team, change your bottles. Everybody change your bottles. So they went back out the starboard main deck and started changing out air bottles.

I think, at that time, there was a second engineer that tapped -- or was talking to me and he had soot everywhere. His face was black. He was like, it's too intense. It's way bigger. He was like, we can't go. It's too intense. I said, okay, and I think he said, I recommend CO2. I'm like, yeah, I agree with you. The amount of smoke that was billowing out was too much. It just seemed too intense, so I asked everybody to button everything up, close the hatch, close the water-tight door, and I recommended it on the radio too. I told the bridge, water mist systems on, it's

too intense, recommending CO2 dump. I think I saw the chief there maybe -- was there on the back deck too, and I think he said he had already closed the dampers and wanted me to go verify that the dampers were closed. So I verified. Everyone was out still doing boundary cooling, and so I ran up the house, shut the dampers all along the house and the fiddley. It seemed like the top fiddley may not have been closed, so I was reporting that it wasn't closed. I went through the bridge, found a manual valve there, a little air release, turned that to close it.

Q. You said this was the fiddley damper?

A. Right. Right on that bridge level, bridge deck. I think that closed it, or I remember seeing it closed later. And then going back to the bridge, through the bridge, smoke -- lots of smoke, and then running down and trying to find the chief that everything's closed, everything's closed.

At some point -- I'm not sure if the CO2 was dumped or not, but I remember running back into the main deck, the fire control room and checking to see if the CO2 had been pulled. It was (indiscernible) we did the muster though first. I think before I ran up, as we were going out, we did the muster. I recommended a CO2 dump. Everyone was going -- there were some people on the port -- sorry, I'm jumping around.

Q. That's fine.

A. There were some people on the port and some people on the starboard still. The smoke was more intense and lingering on the

portside, so I had everybody go to the starboard side, on the wind side, the windward side. (Indiscernible) better muster there, so everyone went to starboard side. Everyone was accounted for (indiscernible), squad one all accounted for and squad two. It was somewhere along the (indiscernible).

So by the time I got back to the main deck, I didn't know -- I didn't hear whether or not the CO2 had been pulled so I went to go check it and it was pulled already. So -- and I could see both black levers down and the -- both delay cylinders were frosted. So then I ran back out and I relayed that on the radio that the CO2 was pulled. Everyone was kind of on the starboard side waiting. I was trying to inform them frequently, the crew, what was going on, what we were trying to do, CO2 was dumped, to stay here, stay together, don't go inside. We were trying to address the alarms and silence the alarms. It was hard to communicate.

I ran back up to the bridge to see what was going on, and I remember seeing that the chief and the captain were there working on it -- on the fire panel, trying to silence the alarms, making calls. It was just very smokey. So I told the captain, I gotta close the damper for the bridge because there's natural air ventilation down by the fiddley even though the dampers were closed. There's still a lot of smoke coming out of it. So I went out (indiscernible) house, closed the dampers there (indiscernible) to stop it from coming into the bridge. It's difficult when you work there. So I closed that and I came back

out and talked to the captain. What's going on? He said that he had made calls and to stand by, we're waiting for call back for further instructions, something like that. Yeah, I just -- going back down from the bridge to the ninth deck and informing the crew what was going on.

On the way down, checking deck by deck, opening up the doors. Since the smoke was pretty much contained up high, I was concerned for any of the cable tracks warming up, so I checked all the cable tracks. It was hot on the main deck, and then it go cooler, but the hotter -- the higher you got, the hotter it was. So I opened up all the cable ducts to make sure there was no debris or anything in that because it was really warm. I didn't want electronics in the wire room and everything else -- I opened the passageway doors so that the -- there was quite a bit of breeze, a nice, cool breeze to provide convectional cooling for those (indiscernible). I didn't want that getting too hot and causing other issues. And then just going down and checking it frequently and talking to the crew what's going on, if they were okay, and going --

And then I could see, at some point -- I don't know when but they were getting really tired. Some of the crew was trying to sleep or rest as much as they could waiting. So I had -- went back up to the bridge, communicated that. Cap and I decided to use the facilities room as a temporary resting area, and then decided to go ahead and test the rooms if it was safe for them to

return to their rooms. So I took a G4, the gas meter, and I went through all the rooms, opened all the rooms, checked all the rooms to make sure they were okay, checked the atmosphere. It was all fine, and then let the crew know that we could go back to our rooms, but then we had a little pow-wow at that point. Captain came down, everyone was down on the starboard side of the main deck, and they -- there may (indiscernible) bridge, I don't know. We just spoke about what happened, what to expect, and then everyone went off to their rooms and we told them, you can go to your rooms, don't close the doors, open the windows, but it's safe to go back in. We set up watches (indiscernible) what to do, constant boundary cooling, and a fire watch (indiscernible) the house and around the house.

At some point in there, the smoke alarms, of course, were going at the number eight cargo hold, and I had gone into cargo hold eight to verify what was going on, but it was fine. It was just a forward bulkhead towards the engine room that was warm, but it wasn't hot. I checked all around and there was no -- the cargo was safe. I came back up (indiscernible) and -- yeah.

Q. Okay. And then can you kind of just give us a little background on, like, what you did with TNT when they arrived?

A. Sure. TNT, they arrived, I think, around dinnertime. I remember thinking, oh, work time. Then we were talking to the tug prior to that, so we knew that they were on their way out prior on a crew boat. So we discussed with the tug what would be best.

They were really stable there at the transom, so it would be better to get them on the tug and then the tug up to us instead of trying to crane down off our gangway. So we did that. We started getting the Jacob's ladder ready on the stern (indiscernible). We -- captain and I also went to the boat's hold to get shackles in case we needed it for a tow.

We came back, rigged up the ladder, the Jacob's ladder, over the side and right around that time, they were already on the tug and they got there. Captain had been back there. He was hauling in a lot of gear and helped them, and then more guys showed up to help bring their gear up. We put the ladder down, and then we got the guys up from the stern. We discussed briefly there on the stern the game plan, and then I think we had dinner (indiscernible) milkshakes. Right after dinner, we went -- came down, checked the video and jumped it to the emergency. We watched the video and so they gave their assessment and all. We came out with a game plan. At the same time, the tug was supposed to then move over and do its whole towing arrangement. I broke off with the team to -- with the first engineer to make -- possibly make entry to the engine room. At the time, they had already done full (indiscernible) around the house and deck, blah, blah, blah, and decided it was a good time to try to make entry because the temperatures were low enough. So the best, safest way we decided was the starboard tunnel, which was a little vestibule type area with a double door.

So we checked it all the way through with the camera -- thermal cameras and then had their -- a better atmosphere tester, the wand, so they cracked open with SCBAs, fire extinguishers, spare cylinders, safety gear set up there. People were dressed up and had SCBAs. Three of the TNT guys and then the first engineer were dressed out to make entry. They cracked it open, tested it -- actually, no, they weren't -- they had their gear on. They weren't on air because they were going to see if they could go in without SCBAs on first. They tested it. The first area was fine to enter so we entered, and then we tested the next engine space (indiscernible) and it wasn't safe to go in so they needed to put on the full SCBAs. They put on the full SCBAs and then went in for initial assessments.

On the video, they had seen - sorry to go back - flashing lights down near the generator -- flashing, yellow flashing. They thought possibly it could be a flame or a barrel of oil or filters that were on fire. It was a light, but we weren't sure so we wanted to investigate. So they went there ready with extinguishers and whatnot (indiscernible) and just to see if there were any small flames. It ended up being just an alarm light, amber light. So they came back out after doing a quick walkthrough of the engine room looking for anything, fires or smoldering. They came out and it was okay, but they noticed that there was some oil, I guess, gravitating -- diesel gravitating out from something, so they first came up with a plan to -- we knew

exactly how to secure that, so they went back in and they secured it and came back out.

Q. Was this an engine or what -- where was it gravitating from?

A. I don't know where from. I believe it was around the engine. Even though the fuel stops -- had stopped, I guess the lines gravitated.

Then they were checking for VOCs too, and there was the diesel so we had VOCs. We checked the ECR to see if it was fine. It was fine, and then based on the temperatures they took with the thermal cameras down in the engine room, it was only, like -- I don't know the temperature, but it was very low, 100-something Fahrenheit. He said, this is really good. I recommend definitely slowly introducing air to it and see what happens and then be ready to respond. So we opened the ECR first.

Q. What was the response like? He said be ready to respond. What was the deal? What were guys thinking for responding?

A. We had four guys suited with three TNT guys and the first engineer suited up with SCBAs. So just constantly going in and monitoring if there were any possible flashes -- reflash possibility. They started very, very slowly. They just opened the ECR first so it was isolated and everything, and then they worked into the spare parts shop, machine shop, opened that up. It was just air from the starboard tunnel coming in and feeding in. Gradually, opened up more and more and now the VOCs were low on the upper deck. We opened up basically the whole upper deck

area, washed it. It was fine. We tested other areas, no issues. And then, eventually, the TNT said to open up the portside and the hatch as well for ventilation, and then we continued ventilating and they were checking deck by deck.

LCDR [redacted] Did anyone --

MR. BARNUM: Yeah.

BY MR. BARNUM:

Q. This is Bart with NTSB. Thanks, Chief Mate, appreciate. I do have a couple of follow-ups for you.

When you're telling your narrative there, you said the first engineer called you in your stateroom. Was that on the radio or a phone? How did he call you?

A. Phone.

Q. Did anybody else call you or is that --

A. No.

Q. When you were woken by the alarm, was it the fire alarm or a general alarm?

A. It was an alarm going off. I could see in my panel in my room that it was a little flame on it, so I imagine it was the fire alarm.

Q. Okay. What kind of panel is in your room?

A. It's not the full engineering panel. It's a small, little dumb version of it. So it's just an icon indicator that lights up.

Q. Does that -- do you frequently get alarms on that?

A. No.
Q. So you knew this was different?
A. Yeah.
Q. What is your duty in emergencies, sir?
A. I am to direct the fire squads.
Q. What is your muster location?
A. My muster location is on the port gear locker.
Q. Is there specifically a person that's in charge of the port gear locker and the starboard gear locker?
A. Yes. We have the squad leaders that take musters and they're in charge of their teams.
Q. And who are they on board here?
A. So the second mate would be taking muster on portside, and the first engineer on the starboard side is going to --
Q. And how many sets of turnout gear do you have in each locker?
A. We have four SCBAs total, so it would be two SCBAs per locker.
Q. Is there a spare on board or do you have any additional --
A. No.
Q. Just two in each locker, SCBAs?
A. Yeah.
Q. How about turnout gear?
A. The gear, we have several. The portside's got three set up for turning out. They have several boots, several pants, different sizes. The starboard side's also got their jackets, the

two sets of jackets there and pants. All the spare jackets (indiscernible) port locker.

Q. Who on board is in charge of maintaining that equipment?

A. I'm over the -- I oversee the safety equipment.

Q. I was a little confused on the narrative; I just need some clarification. You were talking about water mist and that you were running around -- you ran into the fire control room and you were looking at the panel and you pressed the auxiliary boiler fire mist -- water mist.

A. Yeah.

Q. Is there other zones in the engine room too that you can press?

A. Yes, there is.

Q. Did you push any of those?

A. No.

Q. Do you know if someone else did? Were they activated?

A. Eventually, there were more lights lit up. I didn't know who had pressed them at the time, but later on the chief said that he had pressed them all.

Q. You said later on, five minutes later, an hour, two --

A. (Crosstalk) after the fire.

Q. Okay. Is there usually -- I understand you drill. I don't know if there's a policy procedure. Is there usually someone who's in charge of releasing -- activating the water mist or releasing CO2? Whose job is that?

A. No one specifically, no. The CO2 is different, but the water mist, no.
Q. There's not -- do you -- you don't have to clear the space or what -- is there anything special you do (indiscernible) --
A. No.
Q. -- secure the area or --
A. No, not for water mist.
Q. How is CO2 different?
A. CO2 is different. I mean, it displaces the oxygen, do you can't have people in the space. It's not conducive to life, so there has to be full muster taken before releasing CO2, and everything buttoned up for it to be effective, otherwise it'll dissipate in the air.
Q. Is there a procedure for that written down, or is that -- something that you follow?
A. Yeah. There's -- I don't remember where it's written down, but there's a procedure that we follow during drills to secure everything and button up all the dampers, electricity, fuel, (indiscernible), and then we do the CO2 when it's safe.
Q. We were talking to a couple of your sailors yesterday and they indicated that they take firefighting training as part of their credentials; is that something you take as well for your credential?
A. Correct.
Q. Would that be covered in some of that trailing, how to --

A. Mm-hm.
Q. Okay.
A. Yes.
Q. You're talking a lot about the alarms and how they're a real hindrance to the response, and that the chief and the captain were working on the fire -- on the bridge at the fire control panel. Do you remember approximately how long it took them to get the alarms silenced? Was it --
A. I don't know.
Q. -- after the CO2 was released?
A. It was after the CO2 was released.
Q. It was? Okay. You don't know how --
A. I don't know.
Q. Was it ten hours?
A. I don't have -- I didn't have my watch on (indiscernible) I ran out of my room and I didn't really have anything with me other than my boiler suit that I had. I sit that with my gear, but, yeah, I don't know.
Q. After the CO2 was released, you had your crew mustered, you were tracking things, communicating with the bridge, how confident were you that the fire was extinguished?
A. I had no idea. I had hoped that it was effective, but didn't know.
Q. Was there plans to abandon ship?
A. No. We're trained to see how things develop and respond

accordingly. You train for the possibility, but that wasn't --
Q. You didn't break any boats loose and break them out or anything?
A. No. I mean, the boats are ready to go if need be, but we weren't thinking that yet, just taking it as it comes.
Q. The number eight cargo hold, could you explain to me where that is located?
A. That's after the house, and that's adjacent to -- the forward bulkhead of that is adjacent to the engine room space, and it is also over part of the engine room space.
Q. Is there anything specifically stored down there? Any -- what's typically stored down there in the container?
A. I mean, I don't know. It's containers.
Q. Yeah, but it's not --
A. It's (indiscernible) so, like, vehicles. Military vehicles sometimes are loaded there or farming equipment, bulldozers occasionally.
Q. You said an alarm went off. Do you know what type of alarm was activated down there?
A. It was a smoke -- cargo hold smoke detected.
Q. Did you see where that smoke was coming from?
A. Well, the cargo holds all have them dampers open on the sides, so we were hoping that it was just coming out of the engine room, the smoke, that had gotten in there. Because the smoke detection system only found it on the forward and mid so it was

going off, not on the back section, which is a good sign. So then I went to investigate just to be sure.

Q. You said the -- after TNT got here, the first and the TNT folks went in the space, secured some fuel that was gravitating out of -- around the main engine area. Do you know who secured that fuel?

A. The first.

Q. Here we are a couple -- a few days later, and you've had some chance to talk with your crew, what are you hearing for feedback, you know, after-action reviews. Obviously, you guys did a lot of things right. Was there anything that you'd like to say that you did exceptionally well, or is there anything that you think you could improve on?

A. We could do maybe a kill switch on that general alarm would be nice, but -- just to have a little better communication because it was difficult to hear with hoses and people yelling, and the -- initially the fans (indiscernible) at the house couldn't hear. It could be hard to hear. That's about it.

Q. What about -- so then what went really well in your opinion?

A. Everyone responded well. They really showed up to it. I was really happy to have the first and the second engineer were here and were familiar with the ship already, and that the two A.B.s that had dressed out were already here for several trips, two, three or so more trips. So they were familiar and had done the training. Even the people that just got on in L.A., they were

there and they were helping, so it was -- they knew where to go and knew -- so it was really good.

Q. Do you feel that more air packs would've benefitted the firefighting?

A. It worked out. We had several spare cylinders.

Q. We heard from sailors yesterday that they were a one-man hose team essentially.

A. More entry and boundary cooler. Yeah. Did have another set you could potentially have. Two sets to attack the fire. In this instance, it was so intense. I don't know if it would've made a difference.

Q. All right, thank you. I appreciate it. That's all the questions I have.

BY LT [redacted]

Q. Good morning, chief. Lieutenant [redacted] [redacted] You said that you have taken a more formal firefighting training. When was your most recent training course and what was the location?

A. At MITAGS was the most recent location, and they use it, I think, as a (indiscernible) point location in Maryland, and that was recently. I think it was last year that I recertified for the advanced firefighting.

Q. Earlier you mentioned you had two fire teams dressed out, team one and team two.

A. Yeah.

Q. Who was on each team?

A. We had the first engineer and the second engineer in squad two, and then you had Keith and Toney on the other (indiscernible).
Q. And is Keith Mr. Gomer?
A. Yeah.
Q. And Toney is Mr. Sawyer?
A. Yes.
Q. And then which team initially was fighting the fire at the engine -- or, sorry, at the --
A. Squad two, the engineering team (indiscernible).
Q. And then where was team one, the two A.B.s, where were they fighting the fire at?
A. At the doorway, providing cooling and also, at one point, they had gone in as well to assist the other team.
Q. So they were at the doorway just to kind of forward up that large hatch that's on deck to the engine room?
A. Somewhere within there.
Q. Okay.
A. You could see some -- see them, so it wasn't too far in, and it was pretty thick.
Q. And, sorry, just for clarification, team two, the first engineer and the second engineer, where exactly were they fighting the fire at?
A. They went in to the water-tight door.
Q. The same water-tight door that's forward on that engine room

hatch?
A. Correct.
BY LCDR [redacted]
Q. (Indiscernible) the main deck?
A. Yes.
Q. I don't have any additional questions.
BY MS. [redacted]
Q. It's Ensign [redacted] Chief Mate, I just want to commend you on everything you did; you communicated it to me well. I know you said that the general alarm kind of interfered with communication with the captain and the chief engineer, correct?
A. Yeah.
Q. Do you believe that -- who all had radios during that time?
A. I don't know everyone who had a radio. The chief definitely had a radio, I had a radio, captain had a radio, the second mate had a radio, third mate had a radio.
Q. How were you able to communicate with the firefighters as they entered in a way that would've given you feedback at what they were seeing and such?
A. Not by radio. It was just coming out. You wouldn't be able to hear anything because the mask and everything. It doesn't work. We tried doing the whole (indiscernible) thing and bullshit. The only way is --
Q. Come back out? Okay. So that's why you had to run up and down back and forth to the bridge and such?

A. No. I mean, I went up and down because I'm more familiar with the vessel and the people that were on hand there near me wouldn't have known exactly. It was just easier for me to do it. Everyone was already out, you know, by the time I went up to the bridge.

Q. Thank you. I was just trying to understand the whole communication of it.

And then I was wondering, do you feel as though if you had a compressor on board in order to refill your SCBAs that maybe the firefighters would've, like, felt more comfortable in a case where you had to keep fighting the -- firefighting the fire and everything?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. We still had 26 bottles though.

Q. So you have 26 bottles currently on board?

A. We had 30 there (indiscernible), and we used about 5 or 6 bottles. At least, in the end, I saw five or six bottles that were in the dud area, spent area. There were six used, so I think there was 24 left.

BY LCDR [redacted]

Q. This is Lieutenant Commander [redacted] Thank you, Mate, we appreciate it. I just have a couple questions, and then --

So you said that the alarms were making it difficult to -- for the communications. I will confirm that. I talked to your

captain. I was the one that received the initial phone call at 3 in the morning and tried to communicate with the captain with the alarms going off in the background. It was very difficult so it's something that, yeah, was definitely making communications a little extra -- I can attest to that.

But question-wise, one of the A.B.s had mentioned that one of the members had difficulty putting on his firefighting gear; do you recall anything about that? Like, everyone (indiscernible) fitted them fine. There wasn't an issue on, like, fitting or anything?

A. Yeah, as far as I knew. They were dressing out and I had gone to check the scene and then I came back and they were finishing up dressing up. I didn't know if there was any difficulty. We do have, when they suit out, other crew members assisting them to dress out. I didn't know.

Q. Okay. So do you check the crew members before they go into the space, or do they just -- because of the urgency, do they just go in after that?

A. I didn't check them, but the people that are helping them dress out would check that.

Q. And then do they need to give you a positive report that they fit and they're ready or anything like that?

A. I didn't get anything. I didn't think of asking that.

LT [redacted] This is Lieutenant [redacted] We're getting a knock on the door, so we're going to go right ahead and stand by one minute

and see who it is.

(Side conversation.)

LT [redacted] We're going to go ahead and pause the recording. The time is 0912. We'll pause the recording for a brief conversation with --

(Off the record at 9:12 a.m.)

(On the record at 9:18 a.m.)

LT [redacted] Good morning, this is Lieutenant [redacted] [redacted] The time is 0918. We are resuming the interview with Chief Engineer Medeiros -- excuse me, the Chief Mate Medeiros on board the President Eisenhower.

BY LCDR [redacted]

Q. So just to clarify where we left out, so you -- do you -- did you notice anyone's fire suit had any issues?

A. No.

Q. And when it came to the CO2, you said you were the person that was taking the (indiscernible) muster before you dumped the CO2 or --

A. No, the squad. Squad lead's usually taking muster. I was checking the dampers before that -- at that time.

Q. And then between the fire being put out and TNT being on board, what was your conclusion? Like, what -- you know, between the ship and everyone talking and your experience, what was the cause of the fire?

A. I don't know. The whole time I thought it was, like, on the

boiler flat, but then I didn't know if it had -- obviously, it spread because it was far more intense, so I didn't know.

Q. And the last thing I have just to clarify was, so when you fought the fire, did you ever actually see the video of the fire?

A. No.

Q. When was it that you first saw the video of the fire?

A. I saw it from the third engineer around, like, 6:30 in the morning after I put the SCBAs back in place. I saw -- he had taken a little vide on his phone and I started seeing it there. I was like, ah.

Q. Okay.

LCDR [redacted] I will open the floor for any follow-ups and --

BY MR. BARNUM:

Q. A couple of follow-ups. This is Bart, NTSB. You mentioned there was -- up on the fiddley -- the upper fiddley damper didn't shut and you manually shut it; is that right?

A. I saw a lot of black smoke so I didn't think it was shut, and then I -- there's a little valve there on the portside after the bridge so I turned it to the emergency shut position and checked it later and it was shut.

Q. Did you have to manually --

A. No.

Q. -- with your hand? It was just the emergency air valve?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you function test those dampers or does someone else

somewhere?
A. They are tested. I don't know when if they are. There's a certain -- in our either quarterly or whatnot, they need to be tested. I don't know the frequency of it.
Q. Do you -- who does that?
A. Usually engineers do that because it interferes with the machinery, so they would test that.
Q. Do you know how many air packs you're required to have on board?
A. Five.
Q. And you stated earlier how many do you have?
A. Four.
Q. Why is there that discrepancy?
A. That -- from what I read in the relief notes, the fifth pack, I think, failed at some point during the inspection or something, I don't know, and so there was only four that were good. We had six at one point, but five was required so we kept the five.
Q. So you had six at one point. What happened to that sixth one?
A. That one had failed during servicing, and we couldn't get parts for it because it was antiquated, so we kept it for parts and then last year, or something, we used the rest of the good parts to repair what we had. The sixth was basically just a back piece. That was all that was left. We got rid of that and we kept the five, the five good SCBAs.

Q. When the pack fails, what's failing on it? Is it a strap or is it --
A. I don't remember -- mechanical parts of it, the regulator or a valve or something.
Q. So that was on the sixth pack. How about the fifth pack? What failed on that?
A. I wasn't here and I don't know.
Q. You said you read it in your relief notes, or how were you notified about the fifth pack being --
A. In the relief notes I saw that the -- or the other offgoing mate told me that there was an issue with it and it wasn't working anymore. It had failed. They tried to get it repaired and they couldn't get it, so it was out of service.
Q. So where is that documented when a piece of safety equipment like that, a required piece of safety equipment, is failed?
A. We record everything in NS5 during our maintenance.
Q. NS5 is --
A. Is our regular maintenance program that we keep (indiscernible) does everything. It does payroll and maintenance and stuff.
Q. Electronic --
A. Correct.
Q. -- maintenance system.
A. But there's also a paper copy of inspections from the third mates for equipment.

Q. Is the office notified when a piece of safety equipment goes down like that?
A. Yes.
Q. How is that done?
A. Via email, NS5.
Q. Do you know if there was an email sent to an office person?
A. I don't know.
Q. Okay.
A. I wasn't here.
Q. Was there plans to get a new one?
A. I just got aboard. I don't know.
Q. How would you typically get a new SCBA pack? Is that something that the ship board -- is that a P.O. you can put in yourself, a purchase requisition yourself, or does someone in the office have to do that?
A. I can put in a requisition for it, yes. The office then goes through and approves it.
Q. Do you know if a requisition was made for a new pack?
A. I don't know.
Q. Is that something you could check for us?
A. Sure.
MR. BARNUM: Okay, I think we got that. Any follow-ups from you guys?
LCDR [redacted] Yes.
BY LCDR [redacted]

Q. A quick question. So for, obviously, vital equipment, so, like, SCBAs, is there a process for the company to get expedite? Because I know you take some time to (indiscernible) for critical equipment. Is there a method that you guys normally follow for expediting stuff?

A. Yeah. Normally, the routine stuff is category D, priority D, but if it's something very critical, they can go C, B, A. It's (indiscernible).

Q. And then for critical items, do you also follow up typically with emails or phone calls or anything like that?

A. Yes, emails.

Q. And you don't know if that -- if those emails were sent?

A. Yeah, I don't know.

MR. BARNUM: Yeah, so obviously we'd like to see any emails associated with that pack and that purchase requisition (indiscernible) maintenance --

MR. MEDEIROS: Sure.

MR. BARNUM: -- record on that for our purposes. Thank you.

BY LT [redacted]

Q. Just a follow-up with that. This is Lieutenant [redacted]

So you had your number one and number two fire team each made up of two individuals. Did each of those individuals have an SCBA pack on?

A. Yeah.

Q. Who would be -- who would've gotten the fifth SCBA pack if

you had had it?
A. We could have someone as a backup either to open the door or depending on the situation (indiscernible). So it's -- it was normally kept in the (indiscernible) locker, so it's an extra one that we can go to and it would've been just a backup.
Q. So did you feel by not having the fifth pack, it hindered your initial response in any way?
A. No.
Q. Okay, thank you.
BY MR. WALSH:
Q. Chief Mate, this is Joe Walsh. I have a couple of questions for you.
Can you confirm whether or not the vessel is currently equipped with a compressor?
A. We are, yes. We've got two.
Q. Huh?
A. Two.
Q. You have two compressors, and compressors that could be used to refill the bottles?
A. Correct, yeah.
Q. And then, secondly, could you also describe for us any interaction you had with any other crew members to verify whether or not the CO2 actually discharged as was planned, when it was dumped?
A. I didn't communicate with anyone because --

Q. Well, I don't want to tell you what other folks have said, but I understand that you may have attended into the CO2 room at one point after the discharge?
A. Yeah.
Q. Can you describe that process and tell me about when in the timeline, if you can remember, when that took place?
A. I don't know when it took place. I know it was, obviously, after we dumped the CO2. (Indiscernible) asked me to confirm the CO2 was set, was dumped. I know when I had gone into the fire control room I had seen the lay bottles were frosted. That was one sign. And then I was going back out to the CO2 room to check to see -- I was going to see if the pilot valves had lifted to see if they had been dumped, but they weren't, so the system didn't -- they don't actually lift when automated. So the only way I could see is that there was frost (indiscernible) bottles.
Q. Was anybody with you when you went to see the frost on the bottles of CO2?
A. Not the first time, no.
Q. You went a second time?
A. I did go two or three times.
Q. Okay.
A. The first engineer eventually, at one point, did go with me.
Q. Did the chief engineer ever go with you at one point?
A. No.
MR. WALSH: That's all I have.

BY MR. BARNUM:

Q. I just want to follow-up for my clarification. So there is a breathing air compressor on board for your bottles?

A. We have a compressor. It's a 440 (indiscernible) it's not set up for it. We're not wired for it, set up.

Q. So you have a compressor, but it doesn't work?

A. Right. It's not operational right now.

Q. So you had no way to fill your air bottles?

A. No.

Q. Okay, thank you.

LCDR [redacted] Okay. Unless there's any other questions, I think we will conclude this, but thank you very much Chief Mate. We appreciate your time.

LT [redacted] The time is 0930 on May 1st, 2021, and we have concluded the interview with Chief Mate Mr. Pedro Medeiros. I will now stop the recording.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FIRE ON THE *PRESIDENT EISENHOWER* SOUTHWEST OF SANTA BARBARA HARBOR, ON APRIL 28, 2021 Interview of Pedro Medeiros
ACCIDENT NO.:	DCA21FM026
PLACE:	Los Angeles, California
DATE:	May 1, 2021

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

[redacted]

Shelby Shover
Transcriber