

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FIRE ON THE *PRESIDENT*

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EISENHOWER SOUTHWEST OF SANTA

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Accident No.: DCA21FM026

BARBARA, ON APRIL 28, 2021

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Interview of: TONEY SAWYER, A.B.

Able seaman on the *President Eisenhower*

President Eisenhower
San Pedro, California

Saturday,
May 1, 2021

APPEARANCES:

LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
U.S. Coast Guard

LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
U.S. COAST GUARD

BART BARNUM, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

TONEY SAWYER
A.B. on the *President Eisenhower*

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

I N D E X

ITEM

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Interview of Toney Sawyer:

By LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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By Bart Barnum

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By LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

19

By Joe Walsh

23

By LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

25

BY LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

26

I N T E R V I E W

(10:00 a.m.)

1
2
3 LT [REDACTED] Good morning, this is Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with
4 the United States Coast Guard. Today's date is May 1, 2021. The
5 time is 10:29. We are on board the motor vessel *President*
6 *Eisenhower* at birth LA 46 to investigate the engine room fire that
7 occurred on board the vessel in the morning of April 28, 2021.

8 Also in the room with me are the following individuals.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] IO.

10 MR. BARNUM: Good morning, Bart Barnum, NTSB Office of Marine
11 Safety.

12 MR. SAWYER: A.B. Toney Sawyer.

13 MR. WALSH: Joe Walsh with Collier Walsh Nakazawa, counsel to
14 the real party in interest, AML.

15 LT [REDACTED] Mr. Sawyer, do you consent to us recording this
16 interview?

17 MR. SAWYER: Yes, I understand.

18 LT [REDACTED] Thank you.

INTERVIEW OF TONEY SAWYER

19
20 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

21 Q. So we'll start off -- sir, if you could go ahead and just
22 kind of tell us, a, what your position of the vessel is and, b,
23 kind of your experience sailing.

24 A. I'm an A.B. I've been sailing for about three years, been a
25 part of the union almost going on four years, since May of 2017.

1 Caught my first shift in December and kind of put on a good little
2 ball -- good little row ever since. And you said my role on the
3 ship? My role on the ship is basic maintenance. You know, as an
4 able body seamen, you're responsible for basic maintenance and I'm
5 in that department. So you guys know our basic duties: drive the
6 ship, tie up the vessel. We perform basic maintenance in the
7 house, anything above the main deck.

8 Q. What watch are you on?

9 A. I'm on the 4:00 to 8:00 now.

10 Q. 4:00 to 8:00 now? Okay.

11 A. Last trip I was on the 12:00 to 4:00.

12 Q. So during the fire you were on the --

13 A. On the 4:00 to 8:00 because they would have started a new
14 trip.

15 Q. So if you could go ahead and kind of just go over your
16 experience as to the fire, what you did and just go from there;
17 like, when you were aware of the fire and go into that.

18 A. All right. So when I first heard it, I was in my room
19 asleep. When I looked at my clock, it was about, like, I would
20 say 2 o'clock in the morning, almost like dead on 2 o'clock in the
21 morning. At first, when my alarm went off, I kind of just sat in
22 my bed and I was sitting in there counting in my head up to ten
23 seconds because the last trip we had a false alarm almost every
24 week. By the time it gets to about six, seven seconds, it would
25 cut off. It would cut back on and then they would be able to cut

1 it off and that's when I'd hear the announcement that was a false
2 alarm, that was a false alarm, everybody continue doing what
3 you're doing.

4 But this time, they lasted -- when I got to 10 seconds, then
5 11 seconds, I was like, oh, no this is real. Then that has to be
6 a real drill so I went on to the hallway. I didn't see anyone.
7 So I hurry up, put my clothes on and by the time I got out the
8 hallway, that's when I seen A.B. Gomer, Keith. Keith was knocking
9 on doors and he looked at me he said bro, this is a real drill.
10 Fire in the engine room. Fire in the engine room. He said, this
11 not as drill, fire in the engine room. So I was like all right,
12 boom.

13 I rushed downstairs. When I get downstairs, no one was at
14 the fire station. Nobody was in there getting dressed. About 20
15 seconds -- no, not even that. About 15 seconds after me being
16 there, A.B. Gomer comes. He starts getting dressed. So I'm
17 watching him get dressed and I'm helping him out and that's when I
18 seen the second engineer, Conor, in the hallway. He was like,
19 suit out, suit out.

20 Me, I wasn't supposed to suit out because there was -- we had
21 three suits there and everything was based on the last trip. We
22 had two -- we had one suit that was made for two A.B.s that were
23 short and little and then one suit that was made for two A.B.s
24 that were tall. The other one was strictly for the second mate.
25 So when he said -- when he told me to dress out, I'm like fuck it,

1 I'm about to just dress out. Like, nobody else is down here, you
2 know, first responder.

3 So I went and grabbed a suit and I just so happened to
4 like -- I wear a size 11. I ended up grabbing some boots that
5 were a size 12. So I couldn't fit those and the second mate that
6 was on there before me was much heftier than I am. So when I put
7 my suit on my pants were right here, even with the harness --
8 shoulder straps tightened as much as they could. It was just too
9 wide. So my pants are right here.

10 I was just like, oh well. I grabbed the jacket, I could fit
11 the jacket. So the jacket covered up what the pants were not
12 covered on. So after that we're getting dressed and I would say
13 about --

14 Q. I'm sorry, could you go back? Could you kind of show us what
15 you're saying?

16 A. Yeah. So I have the pants on and boots and the straps were
17 about right here and my pants were about right here, underneath my
18 waist. So I couldn't figure it out no more, but I didn't have
19 enough of time to really think and look because once Keith was
20 telling me this was real and by the time you get down there you
21 can smell the fire. You can smell it and you can kind of see it
22 in the passageway.

23 So I grabbed the jacket -- I could fit the jacket, the jacket
24 was perfect and the jacket just so happened to cover what the
25 pants weren't covering. So after that I would say it was about a

1 minute after that of us getting dressed that's when the boats
2 showed up. That's when A.B. Rey showed up. A.B. Jose showed up
3 and then lastly it was A.B. Joe. Which I didn't understand how he
4 was the last one down there when he was on the watch with A.B.
5 Gomer.

6 Once they got down there, they was helping us get dressed.
7 Once we got dressed it was immediately attend the hose, attend the
8 hose. So while we're getting dressed the bosun and A.B. Jose were
9 helping us get dressed while A.B. Joe and A.B. Rey were getting
10 the hose out. So once they got the hose out they got the hose set
11 up.

12 Me and Keith immediately went over to where the fire was and
13 once we went over there it was just like the door was closed. The
14 door was closed to there, but the hatch was open and the hatch was
15 just whoosh. Black smoke everywhere, coming out, black smoke
16 coming out and that's when the second engineer came over and he
17 was like we got to get that hatch closed before we open this door.
18 So he said me and Keith we went, took the pins out the hatch,
19 closed the hatch, screwed it down. By the time we finished that
20 we went over to the hose and when we went to the hose the water
21 had not still yet been turned on.

22 We still didn't have water on deck. So I turned around, told
23 A.B. Rey I yelled at him like tell them to go get water on deck.
24 Tell them to go get water on deck. By the time he ran off it was
25 about five seconds after that by the time I turned around and our

1 chief mate he was like hey, we got water on the way. We got water
2 on the way.

3 So the first time we're lined up it was Keith, me and then it
4 was the second engineer Conor. We were on one hose. The door is
5 here and we were on the port side of the door. Once we realized
6 we had to get the door open that's when Conor walked around and he
7 was like all right, I'm going to open this door. So Conor was
8 sitting here and we had the third engineer who was assisting with
9 the hose and the first engineer who was holding the hose. They
10 were kind of cooling down the door before we get it open.

11 So while me an Keith are still on the port side of the door,
12 the second engineer Conor opened the door up and when you open it
13 up it was just immediately whoosh. Like we all felt the heat, we
14 all felt -- it as just like everything -- even though you got all
15 that equipment on you still feel it seeping through every little
16 crack that it can. So once we got it open, that's when we
17 immediately -- by the time we got it open -- we obviously had
18 water on deck so me and Keith were pointing almost to the
19 starboard side, which once we realized we were hitting it right on
20 the boiler.

21 We couldn't really see anything for the first about two
22 minutes of us spraying water inside there. We couldn't see
23 nothing. So as we get closer we start making more of an approach.
24 We get closer, we get closer and Keith is right by the door. So
25 when Keith was by the door we had a flashlight on and at one point

1 the flashlight had flashed on his arm and so he thought he was on
2 fire. So he starts like ah. So I know it's hot and he's right at
3 the door, I'm right behind him. So I grab -- I put my hand on his
4 shoulder and I'm like get down, get down, like get to a knee.
5 It's hot up there so let's just try to get lower. So we got lower
6 to get to a knee. You can feel the heat from the deck was hot as
7 hell too. It was just like there's no escaping this the deck was
8 flaming. So we had to kind of go on a knee, but not really.

9 So we were down here and once Keith thought he was on fire
10 and dropped his flashlight we ended up switching and that's when I
11 went in front of him. When I went in front of him I took control
12 of the hose and that's when I could actually see the fire.

13 The only color you could see in there was red, red and
14 orange. That's the only thing you can see, everything else was
15 black. So we were primarily focused right on the starboard side,
16 right in the door. To the right you could see the fire. So we
17 sprayed there, sprayed there until we put that out. So that's the
18 one fire -- we know for sure like the wood that was under there we
19 put that fire out. From us spraying the boiler we could literally
20 fell the steam coming off the boiler and coming in.

21 So after that at one point I don't know what happened -- the
22 second engineer he was spraying for a while, but then he stepped
23 back. When he stepped back it was just -- they put the hose down
24 so it was just me and Keith and that door. So when we were like
25 that Keith went and grabbed that hose. So then it was just me and

1 Keith sitting there and spraying and we never turned the water
2 off. We never turned the water -- we make sure like we're going
3 to keep on spraying down, keep spraying down. Keep spraying down
4 no matter what, like just don't stop.

5 Before we went in I was telling Keith like, you ready? He
6 was like yeah, I'm ready, I'm ready. I was like, all right let's
7 get it and we stood literally right by the door and we're like
8 we're not leaving, we're not leaving. We're going to keep on
9 going. So as we're standing by the door, Conor comes back and
10 he's like we're going to make an approach in. We're like, all
11 right we have this fire out for sure so we don't if it's safe to
12 go in, but we're going to go in.

13 So Conor goes in, Conor went in first. I was behind him and
14 Keith was behind me. Conor got in probably about two meters from
15 the door to the back of Keith it was probably about two feet,
16 Two-to-three feet. So we were inside the room and after we got
17 about two meters in we're spraying. We're in there for about -- I
18 would say about 30 seconds to a minute and Conor was like we got
19 to back out, we got to go, we got to go.

20 So as we're coming out Keith -- we were backing out and Keith
21 almost slipped so he grabbed me and then I was trying to back up
22 more and I almost tripped because I couldn't get my damn pants --
23 I was like holding my pants wide because they were so big. I was
24 thinking that I was at the door, but I wasn't it was just the hose
25 that I was tripping over. So I almost fell -- and then he held me

1 up.

2 It was like literally when I tell you all I love Keith
3 because we literally had each other's back in there. Like we
4 literally had each other's back in there. It was just like when
5 you have that traumatic experience with somebody and you almost
6 going through death and they help save you and you help save them
7 at one point it's just a different feeling.

8 So once we got out of there, we continued to spray down for
9 about -- I would say about five more minutes. That's when the
10 chief mate came. I guess he got word from the Captain that we got
11 out what we can. We're going to close this door and we need to go
12 back and try to change our tanks out.

13 So the second engineer was like are you guys out of air? At
14 that time when we came out, Keith was already beeping. His oxygen
15 was out, he was beeping. So we're thinking all right we're going
16 to go change our air, we're going to come back and fight it and
17 once we go change our air maybe we can change our team, but
18 there's not enough suits. So literally we were the only ones.

19 We were the only ones that were dressed out and there was not
20 enough suits for anybody else to fit anything or put anything
21 together. There was either pants that didn't match a jacket or a
22 jacket that didn't match any pants or something like that. So
23 after that, once we close it up we went over to go get our -- to
24 change out our tanks.

25 When we get to the tank station on our side, nobody knew how

1 to change it out. Nobody knew how to take it off and switch
2 tanks. Our bosun and Chris were the only ones who knew how to
3 change it out. So Chris was changing out A.B. Gomer's tank and I
4 had A.B. Rey and A.B. Joe behind me trying to change it out, but
5 they couldn't. They were struggling for a couple minutes and then
6 once Chris finished changing out A.B. Gomer's tank that's when he
7 came over and he changed out my tank.

8 Once we changed our tanks we walked back over there. We
9 walked back over there, but we didn't walk back -- we didn't get
10 as far as much to the door because that's when the Captain was
11 like we're just going to turn on the CO2. So after we mustered
12 everybody, mustered everybody together. We mustered on this side,
13 they mustered on that side, the mates made contact. We had
14 everybody out and once they got that call they ended up closing
15 everything up and then turning on the CO2.

16 Once we got the CO2 on, we still -- everybody that was suited
17 out we didn't take off our suits till four hours, till six in the
18 morning, six in the morning. It was two hours that we had our
19 tanks on our back. So it was two hours that we had our tanks on
20 our back and even after they turned on the CO2, they were like we
21 need you guys to stay suited up just in case something appears in
22 the house. We're thinking about everything, we know the fire was
23 that high because we put out fire on that level. So we knew we
24 can't get undressed, we got to stay dressed up.

25 So we stayed dressed, we waited and then after about -- I

1 would say once the two hours went by that's when they told us to
2 at least take that off and relax a little bit. Then we took those
3 off -- we took our backpacks off and then we had those pretty much
4 standing by. We kept our fire suits on for an extra two hours.
5 So from 2:00 in the morning to 6:00 in the morning we had our fire
6 suit on. It wasn't till 6:00 in the morning until we really
7 calmed down because it was like four hours of we don't know if
8 something is going to re-flare. We don't know if the CO2 actually
9 worked. It said that they all released, but we don't know so
10 we're just going to stay on guard.

11 After that that's when they ended up bringing out some snacks
12 from (indiscernible) department bringing out snacks. Once the sun
13 started coming out that's when everybody who had a suit on we were
14 laid down on deck asleep, exhausted, tired. Everybody from the
15 ship that couldn't dress out they were looking scared. They were
16 just like -- no one knew what to say. No one knew what to say.
17 It wasn't till the next day where everybody was like thank you,
18 thank you. Thank you for doing that, thank you for dressing out.
19 Thank you, you guys. Thank you. I thought it was my last day. I
20 thought it was my last day.

21 People at that time -- once we got everything calm, people
22 were literally texting their family, calling their family because
23 they didn't know what was going to happen. After that it was kind
24 of just -- it was like I don't know just kind of numb to
25 everything. Like I didn't really panic. I didn't really have too

1 much adrenaline rushing. It was just like, fuck it let's go we
2 survived the first one. You know what I'm saying? If something
3 happens again I'm ready.

4 Q. Yeah, that seems like quite a harrowing story that you've
5 gone through. We're very happy that the crew survived and no one
6 was injured. That's a very fortunate thing. Couple of questions
7 I just wanted to clarify on what you were telling us just now.
8 When you entered the engine room space you said -- you said two
9 feet and then two meters. How deep within the engine did --

10 A. We were two meters into the engine space --

11 Q. So six feet?

12 A. So Conor was about six feet and there was about two feet of
13 distance from the end man, which is Keith and the doorway.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So if you can imagine three men standing there and we're all
16 -- we're probably off about two meters just of -- I mean one meter
17 of our feet with distance apart. Just too kind of give you a
18 better picture of how far in we were in. Once we got that far in
19 Conor was like turn around, turn around.

20 Q. Okay, just wanted to clarify that. Then second thing, you
21 said that you donned a second mate suit. Where was the second
22 mate on the vessel today?

23 A. The second mate, he had come down late. He hadn't even got a
24 suit yet because he just got on the ship. He probably had been on
25 the ship for two-three days. They're going through

1 familiarization, getting used to everything. We had just left
2 when they got on. So we hadn't even reached that week point to
3 where we went over a fire drill. So all the suits and everything
4 was from the last trip.

5 Q. So when the mate did get on scene -- the second mate did get
6 on scene, what did he do?

7 A. So once he did get on scene, he seen that we were already
8 dressed and once he seen that we were already dressed I honestly
9 don't remember seeing him. Once I left that room from being
10 dressed I don't remember seeing him.

11 BY MR. BARNUM:

12 Q. Thanks, Toney. This is Bart, NTSB. To clarify, in your
13 emergency squad, what number is it?

14 A. We're port side, so probably two.

15 Q. Port side, that's your squad. Who's your squad leader?

16 A. Our second mate.

17 Q. What are his responsibilities when he --

18 A. His responsibilities once he gets there, he's responsible for
19 the muster and he's responsible for reporting to the Captain if
20 everyone is mustered there. After that, he's supposed to suit
21 but.

22 Q. Do you know who took your muster -- did he muster, was he
23 able to do that?

24 A. They said he took -- when I asked afterwards I asked A.B.
25 Jose. I asked him and he said he did take muster, but it was hard

1 for -- he couldn't take the right -- he was like panicking because
2 even the muster sheet was from last trip. I mean the muster sheet
3 was the only thing that was new, my mistake. The muster sheet was
4 for the guys who were supposed to replace A.B. Gomer and A.B.
5 Jose.

6 So he was calling out names to like two people that weren't
7 here. So Jose was telling him like no, no these guys are going to
8 replace us, we're here. We're here, you guys updated the list,
9 but those guys aren't even onboard yet.

10 Q. When you heard the general alarm you respond to your
11 emergency gear locker, is it whoever suits up, first come first
12 serve? Do you have on your station bill, on your (indiscernible)
13 card does it actually say this person needs to be in here?

14 A. No, it doesn't say this person is supposed to turn out. For
15 us, we're trying to -- if you're the first one there, you dress
16 out. The only issue is that because we're limited in the amount
17 of suits, we have two -- one suit designated for anyone that is
18 basically five ten and higher and the other suit is designated for
19 anyone who is shorter than that.

20 Obviously, you know, we sail with a lot (indiscernible) and
21 they aren't the biggest people. So we have a suit pretty much
22 made for the shorter guys and a suit made for the taller guys.
23 The second mate's suit is the second mate's suit. That's his
24 suit, no one shares a suit with him.

25 Q. Even though there is no requirement for who turns -- turn out

1 your gear on? He had his own separate suit?

2 A. It's been like that since I've been on here. The second mate
3 always you're guaranteed to dress out. The first responders the
4 reason why it's for a tall guy and a short guy is the first tall
5 guy and short guy to get there you guys dress out. Which is why I
6 didn't understand why the other A.B. who was on watch didn't come
7 down and dress out. He was a little guy. He could have easily
8 had the proper equipment on that fit him to be able to go in 100
9 percent good.

10 I'm surprised -- I was blessed, I was blessed. I don't know
11 how with that much of space and the fire we were in and me hearing
12 and me feeling everything else I don't know how I did not get
13 burned. That jacket literally helped save me. That jacket
14 protected everything in front.

15 Q. Question here about the sprinkler water mist system in the
16 engine room. Are you familiar with that at all?

17 A. I am not, no.

18 Q. When you're in the space -- two meters, one meter, whatever
19 -- fighting the fire. Did you see that go off? Did you hear any
20 of that?

21 A. We couldn't hear anything because the alarm never turned off.

22 Q. You said you were spraying the boiler. You saw steam or
23 something?

24 A. We didn't see the steam, we felt the steam. All you could
25 see is black smoke. Once we put the fire out when you're in that

1 space the only thing that you can see is fire. Everything else is
2 black. It's just black smoke, black smoke. That's how we knew
3 that we put fire out on that level because once we sprayed there
4 and put the fire out it went black. When we were in there we were
5 walking the pathway because we all know that pathway. So Conor
6 was walking that pathway up to try to see if we could try to see
7 anything else and we couldn't physically see anything else up
8 there. Everything was black smoke in your face.

9 Q. Thanks, that's all the questions I have.

10 BY LT [REDACTED]

11 Q. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] I just wanted to clarify a couple
12 things. So it sounds like you had a little bit of an issue
13 getting your bottles changed out after you guys had initially
14 responded. So did you have you SCBA on your back and people were
15 trying to change your bottle out --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- with it on your back? Okay. So that was the issue was
18 getting your bottles swapped out while it was on your back. There
19 weren't --

20 A. Yeah, while it was on my back.

21 Q. Okay. Then, just so I have it right so in your locker there
22 are three sets of gear right? There's a set generally for
23 individuals five ten and higher and then a set for individuals
24 shorter basically.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. A larger size and a smaller size and then the third one is
2 for the second mate.

3 A. It's for the second mate.

4 Q. So then which set did you -- did you put on the second mate's
5 set or --

6 A. I put on the old second mate's suit because the new second
7 mate hadn't had time. He hadn't been on board long enough to get
8 suited out. The new second mate now, him and I are the same
9 height. He's not much bigger than me. If it was his suit I would
10 have been perfectly fine. I would have been able to fit that.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. But because the last second mate was much larger than me and
13 I didn't know it was his until I put it on. So I'm like hold on,
14 Keith is already wearing the tall man's suit. How in the hell is
15 this shit so big? I was like, oh wow and that's when I realized I
16 had the old second mate's suit on.

17 Q. I was just going to ask besides the suit were there any other
18 issues with equipment or response that you identified?

19 A. No, equipment was good. Everything worked as it should.
20 Everything worked as -- we didn't have any trouble breathing.
21 Everything, the connections were good, the oxygen was great.
22 Yeah, no complaints and like I said I had a suit that wouldn't
23 even fit for me, but it still protected me. It did what it was
24 supposed to do.

25 Q. Okay.

1 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

2 Q. This is Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] Just two questions;
3 first one, when did you join this vessel?

4 A. I joined this vessel February 24th and our first trip lasted
5 60 days. We just started this new trip February, March April --
6 April 24th pretty much.

7 Q. So you joined the vessel the 24th. Did you do two trips and
8 then get off and then come back on, or no --

9 A. No, I just did one trip. That one trip lasted 60 days
10 because of how backed up all of the docks are.

11 Q. So you've been on this vessel for a little while then?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. You mentioned the last trip that you had a bunch of like
14 false alarm fire alarms where you waited a couple minutes --
15 couple seconds to make sure that it wasn't a false alarm. What
16 alarms were you getting, what false alarms were you guys getting?

17 A. Fire alarms.

18 Q. Okay. How frequent was this, like weekly?

19 A. At least once a week.

20 Q. Once a week, okay. What was going on there, what was causing
21 the alarms, do you know?

22 A. I have no idea. I just -- that's not in my department so I
23 never really asked, or even bothered to want to know. It was
24 like, to me when you hear an alarm take it serious.

25 Q. So from February 24th it was at least -- so what's that, let

- 1 me pull up a calendar real quick.
- 2 A. At least eight weeks.
- 3 Q. Eight weeks so that's at least eight --
- 4 A. At least eight times it happened.
- 5 Q. So at least eight times between February 24th until now.
- 6 A. It was false alarm, false alarm, false alarm, false alarm.
- 7 Q. Again, how were you notified that it was a false alarm?
- 8 A. They said on the PA system.
- 9 Q. Okay, so the Captain would come on?
- 10 A. Yeah.
- 11 Q. The Captain would come on and state --
- 12 A. The Captain or the mate on watch would say hey, false alarm
- 13 it's not a fire. Continue going back to what you're doing because
- 14 when it was a false alarm the alarm would only last about six or
- 15 seven seconds and it would cut off for about two seconds and it
- 16 would kind of try to cut back on. So it wasn't a regular alarm so
- 17 everyone kind of knew like, what's going on?
- 18 Q. Was this during the day or night time or one of the --
- 19 A. Random.
- 20 Q. Random?
- 21 A. Random. It wasn't always at a set time it was just random.
- 22 Q. Were there many that happened late at night or at night time?
- 23 A. I would say more at kind of like the evening. Like, let's
- 24 say 16:00 through like 20:00. We had like two of them that were
- 25 in the middle of the night.

1 Q. So you had two that were on the -- were they late at night,
2 or like --

3 A. I would say around 11:00, 12:00.

4 Q. Two of those -- those probably you remember the most because
5 they woke you up in the middle of the night.

6 A. Well, I had to watch.

7 Q. Oh, okay.

8 A. For the last trip I was on the 2:00 to 4:00. So I would be
9 up 11:00, 11:15. They would give us a call, a 45 minute grace
10 period to kind of wake up, get up and get ready go to be with the
11 next guy.

12 Q. Yeah, okay.

13 LCDR ██████████ I'm going to open up the floor for any follow up
14 questions.

15 BY MR. WALSH:

16 Q. I think I got one. Toney, this is Joe Walsh. Quick question
17 for you. You were telling one of the officers here asked you
18 about the muster, or you were talking about the muster sheet and
19 the second mate. I just want to clarify. You heard this -- that
20 the second mate was calling out names -- you got that information
21 yourself or you heard it from --

22 A. I got that from another A.B.

23 Q. Who was that?

24 A. A.B. Jose.

25 Q. A.B. Jose told you what was happening?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. So you heard about this after the fact?

3 A. After the fact, yeah.

4 Q. The next morning or --

5 A. Like, probably it's about eight in the morning, little bit
6 after when we kind of -- because what happened on watch right
7 after that. So then Jose came to relieve me and that's when we
8 were talking about it.

9 Q. Okay, that's all I wanted to clarify.

10 BY LT [REDACTED]

11 Q. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] Is there anything else important
12 that you think we should know about the incident on the ship or
13 anything?

14 A. About the incident in general? Not really, I would just say
15 we need more suits and that we need more equipment. We weren't
16 prepared to have two sets of teams. There was four guys that
17 dressed out and there was four guys that stayed dressed the entire
18 time. Even when we've been training they would tell us oh, you
19 know the fire you'll probably switch out every 10 to 15 minutes
20 for another team. Come back, get a rest, let those guys go in and
21 fight it, but it was nothing like that.

22 A.B. Jose was telling me I went to try to go dress out and I
23 was looking for pants and jacket, but there's not enough. He said
24 the one only shoes that were over there were all size nine and
25 under. That's the only thing and also we don't have anything to

1 refill the bottles onboard. So it's like once we do run out of
2 tank, we just refilled those tanks in LA. We just refilled them.
3 So it's like it just so happens a couple days before we refill
4 them we ended up running into an incident and having to use them.

5 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

6 Q. One question, this is Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] again. When
7 you do drills onboard the vessel and you do the change out of the
8 fire pack, who's the person who normally does that during the
9 drills?

10 A. When we do our drills we don't change out the bottles, but
11 normally it would be the mate.

12 Q. The mate?

13 A. The mate, the second mate.

14 Q. During the drill you may not actually physically change it
15 out, but you would simulate that at least, right?

16 A. We would simulate -- we would get dressed all the way and
17 then sometimes they want us to go on air we would, but since I've
18 been on this ship because we don't have anything to fill up the
19 tanks we never go on air.

20 BY LT [REDACTED]

21 Q. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] again. You said that the bottles
22 were refilled just recently in San Pedro?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. How many -- can you just give us an idea of how many bottles
25 have been depleted and why they have been depleted?

1 A. It was -- I don't know why. I just know it was three people
2 -- it was seven, seven bottles. It was three people carrying two
3 and then one more person came down and grabbed one.

4 Q. Seven bottles were refilled --

5 A. We refilled.

6 Q. Okay, thank you.

7 A. I don't know why maybe they kind of seeing if they were kind
8 of low before or empty I'm not sure, but we got seven of them
9 refilled in LA.

10 LCDR DAIS: Again, if there are no further questions, I
11 appreciate your time. Thank you so much.

12 MR. SAWYER: No problem.

13 LT [REDACTED] All right the time is 11:03 on May 1, 2021. We
14 have concluded the interview with Mr. Toney Sawyer, A.B. Now we
15 must stop the recording.

16 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE ON THE *PRESIDENT EISENHOWER*
SOUTHWEST OF SANTA BARBARA HARBOR
ON APRIL 28, 2021
Interview of Toney Sawyer

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FM026

PLACE: *President Eisenhower* in San Pedro, CA

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.



Nikolas Oka
Transcriber