

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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FIRE ON THE *PRESIDENT* *

EISENHOWER SOUTHWEST OF SANTA * Accident No.: DCA21FM026

BARBARA, ON APRIL 28, 2021 *

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Interview of: KEITH GOMER, JR.
Able Seaman on the *President Eisenhower*

JOSE YSERN
Able Seaman on the *President Eisenhower*

President Eisenhower
San Pedro, California

Friday,
April 30, 2021

APPEARANCES:

BART BARNUM, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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

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

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

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

I N T E R V I E W

(1322)

1
2
3 LT [REDACTED] Good morning. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with
4 the United States Coast Guard. Today is April 30, 2021. The time
5 is 1322.

6 We're on board the motor vessel *President Eisenhower* at Earth
7 LA46 to investigate the engine room fire that occurred on board
8 the vessel on the morning of April 28, 2021.

9 In the room with me are the following individuals:

10 LCDR [REDACTED] Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Ohio.

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

12 B-A-R-N-U-M.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] U.S. Coast
14 Guard, Sector Los Angeles, Long Beach.

15 MR. WALSH: Joe Walsh, Collier Walsh Nakazawa. Counsel to
16 the party of interest, AML.

17 MR. GOMER: Keith Gomer, Rank A.B. S.U.P.

18 MR. YSERN: Jose Ysern, A.B. Watch (ph.) Standard.

19 MR. REID: Sir, could you say your last name again?

20 MR. YSERN: Y S E R N

21 LT [REDACTED] And Mr. Gomer, do you consent to being recorded for
22 this interview?

23 MR. GOMER: Yes, I do.

24 LT [REDACTED] And Mr. YSERN, do you consent?

25 MR. YSERN: No. No -- I mean yes.

1 LT [REDACTED] Okay. I was like uh-oh.

2 INTERVIEW OF KEITH GOMER JR. AND JOSE YSERN

3 MR. BARNUM: All right. So, we'll start off, gentlemen, if
4 you could just go ahead and -- each of you just kind of give us a
5 very quick background of your experience in sailing and we'll go
6 from there.

7 MR. GOMER: I can go. I've been sailing with S.U.P. since
8 2014. Been working on the military ships for the last 7 years.
9 This is my first commercial ship for the A.P.L. And -- so yeah.
10 I've been an A.B. for the last 3 years.

11 MR. YSERN: My name is Jose Ysern. I started sailing, I
12 believe, in 2013 or 2014, too, with S.U.P. And I was sailing in
13 military ships, too, but I was sailing with Matson and A.P.L in
14 the last couple years.

15 MR. BARNUM: Okay. Thank you, gentlemen. Now if you can go
16 ahead and just kind of -- both of you kind of give us a rundown of
17 what you experienced during the fire? What happened, and if you
18 were on watch, who you were with? You can go ahead and run us
19 through what you were doing?

20 LT [REDACTED] And just please, before you speak, just state your
21 name again so that we can keep track of who's speaking for the
22 recording. Yeah, sorry, this is Lieutenant [REDACTED]

23 MR. GOMER: Keith Gomer, A.B., A.P.L., *Eisenhower*. All
24 right. I started -- I was on the 12:00 to 4:00 watch in the
25 morning. And around 1:00 I stepped outside on the bridge wing to

1 smoke a cigarette. And as I was putting my cigarette out I could
2 see the smoke flaring from the back of the house. And I
3 immediately ran in and told the man on watch -- I believe his name
4 is Josh. He's new crew. I don't really know his name but his
5 name is Josh, I believe. And I told him, I said we have a fucking
6 fire. So then he said what? I said we have a fire.

7 And then I ran to the cameras -- we have a screen on the
8 bridge that has -- shows the cameras. And I seen that there was a
9 camera -- there was a fire inside the engine room. So I told him
10 I wanted them -- I want to suit up. So I ran downstairs. On my
11 way down I knocked on as many doors as I possibly can because I
12 didn't see no one out. Ran around knocking on doors. And I met
13 Toney -- A.B. Toney Sawyer in the hallway. I told him --

14 LT [REDACTED] Sorry. I'm going to go --

15 MR. WALSH: Please take -- just focus.

16 LT [REDACTED] For the record, Mr. Walsh just departed the room to
17 speak with Mr. Ricks. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] again.

18 All right, Mr. Gomer, you can go ahead and continue.

19 MR. GOMER: I met A.B. Toney in the hallway. I told him time
20 to suit up, I said we on fire. It's not a drill. So we ran down,
21 I suited up as fast as I can, grabbed my STBA. He suited up.

22 LT [REDACTED] And just for the record Mr. Walsh has returned to
23 the interview.

24 MR. WALSH: My apologies.

25 MR. GOMER: He suited up and that's when we met Second

1 Engineer Connor inside of the hallway and he told us that the
2 fire -- where the fire was located. So then we proceeded to go
3 outside. And that's when started pulling fire extinguishers out,
4 water hoses out and we set everything up on the portside. And
5 then me and Toney we were the only people in STBAs and full
6 turnout gear.

7 So then we approached the fire with one fire hose and as I
8 got to the fire -- I was the lead man. Got to the fire, felt the
9 door because it was closed. And then I felt this heat so then I
10 opened the door, Toney flash-sprayed the side. And then I closed
11 the back because I realized that the hatch was open. The
12 engineers hatch. So me and Toney both closed the hatch to the
13 engine room to stop the oxygen from flowing to the fire.

14 And then that's when Third Engineer Russ -- I don't know his
15 last name. Russ came with the other hose from the starboard side
16 but he wasn't in turnout gear. So then I took the hose from him.
17 So now I have a hose and Toney has a hose. And we opened the door
18 again and now we're fighting the fire from outside of the doorway.
19 And then me and Toney were sitting there for about, I don't know,
20 I'll say five minutes. Time was flying. Sitting there fighting
21 this -- fighting the fire. And I told him that we're going to
22 make an approach on the fire because chief mate walked by and I
23 said chief mate, we're going to make an approach on the fire. He
24 said okay, stay low. So we went in.

25 Around -- still fighting the fire, me and Toney. Toney on

1 one hose, I'm on the other hose. And we're fighting the fire.
2 And then it got real hot. So I tell Toney back out and then we
3 closed the door. And then we continued to do boundary cooling
4 because it was too much going on. So boundary cooling and then
5 that's when Connor came back and he opened the door again and we
6 continued to spray inside. And then it was me and Toney again
7 fighting the fire. So then me and Toney locked arms because we
8 couldn't fucking stand that water hose. We locked arms, we're
9 fighting the fire, shoulder to shoulder. And then Connor comes
10 and he said we're going to make another approach.

11 We went in fight the fire for a little while and then Connor
12 said it's too much, back out. So we all backed out and then we
13 continued to boundary cooling. And they said you're going to shut
14 the whole engine room down and shut -- close all the doors, make
15 sure everything is tight, and they're going to release the CO2.
16 So then me and Toney Sawyer, we went back, changed our tanks --
17 they gave us new tanks. And we're standing by ready to go back
18 in. But then they said they released the CO2 and no one was going
19 back in. That's it.

20 MR. BARNUM: Thank you. Sir?

21 MR. YSERN: Yeah. My name is Jose Ysern, an A.B. Watch (ph.)
22 Standard on the *Eisenhower*. And my watch, it was 8:00 to 12:00 so
23 Keith relieved me. And it was a really nice night, very good
24 weather, no traffic, very easy watch. And Keith relieved me so I
25 went to my room and about ten minutes before 2:00 I heard the

1 alarm. I think it was before 2:00. I don't know if ten minute,
2 five minute, whatever. And then I heard the alarm and I was a
3 little bit confused in the beginning.

4 I went to my station -- it's same station as Keith when I get
5 there. Keith was already dressed, the other guy was dressed. So
6 I was with the second mate because we need to account and be sure
7 everybody was there. Quite frankly what I think is the reaction
8 to people was very quick and the people actually -- the
9 officer -- and the communication with the offer, it was very fluid
10 and very clear. So we know all the time what to do. So that was
11 very good because the situation -- it was very intense, you know?

12 And so I tried to bring -- we needed to connect the hoses for
13 the people -- the (indiscernible) that I was there. And I was
14 there connecting the hose but it was -- I don't have any -- at
15 that time I wasn't dressed so it was very smoke and hot. It was
16 hard to do that. We did that and we issued the -- we organized a
17 team to be sure that everything is okay for the guy who was on the
18 line with the fires. So bring everything they needed.

19 And another thing that we did -- I deal with the boss. We
20 waited about (indiscernible) to be sure that we have enough
21 pressure on the system to also we can find the fire. I think that
22 -- well, the fire was so big -- I mean we figured it out that we
23 cannot fight the fire. I mean it was so big. And then chief mate
24 decide we need to account everybody. We're going to put everybody
25 -- we're going to throw everybody -- we're going to put everybody

1 on the windward side. And so we can more -- we can breathe over
2 there. We're going to be very sure everybody's there. We're
3 going to count everybody a couple times because we're going to
4 release the CO2.

5 And then that was all our work because everybody put on the
6 windward side and account because the second mate, he's just
7 joined the ship. And then we had the new list so it was
8 accounting a couple guys that wasn't on board.

9 MR. BARNUM: Oh.

10 MR. YSERN: So we missing two guys. And then, you know, no
11 we're not missing anybody. You know, everybody's here so we ready
12 to go. Okay. But, again, I mean, that's my opinion. I think
13 that everybody handled it very well. I mean considering that it
14 was very intense situation. I think the communication that was
15 important thing in that time with the officer was very fluid and
16 very clear. Everybody know what to do all the time and that
17 helped a lot. And quite frankly I think that the decision make it
18 from release the CO2 it was a great decision and in a great time.
19 Because I don't think we can fight the freaking fire, you know?

20 Thanks to God everybody is safe. The captain saved the crew,
21 and the ship, and the cargo. And, you know, that's all I can say.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. So during the fire did -- sorry this is
23 Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] speaking. During the fire you said
24 that you heard the alarm. Roughly what time was that you said?

25 MR. YSERN: I believe it was before 2:00.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] Uh huh.

2 MR. YSERN: I'm not sure it was five minute before 2:00 or
3 ten minute before 2:00. I was sleeping, I mean, I was down.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

5 MR. YSERN: And I didn't know exactly what's going on. You
6 know it's a moment when you are confused. I remember the kid was
7 already coming down and he said Jose we have fire. We got to go.
8 And then I said okay. And then I was just business, you know?
9 Thank you, sure, and go to your station. But I mean I don't know
10 if I answered your question or not. I don't know exactly --

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Roughly around --

12 MR. YSERN: if it was to minutes or five minutes. But it was
13 before 2:00.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] And then you said that the crew mustered on the
15 windward side of the vessel. What -- was that port or starboard
16 side?

17 MR. YSERN: Oh shit. I think it was port side.

18 MR. GOMER: Starboard side.

19 MR. YSERN: I don't know. I mean we connect -- it was a
20 little bit confusing in the beginning because we had to connect.
21 We have first station on the port side, gangway -- I mean the
22 starboard side gangway. And I remember that we connect both to go
23 behind the house because we cannot approach the fire from inside
24 the house. So we decide to go outside the house from the door
25 that is close to the hutch in the (indiscernible). And then I

1 remember that in the beginning there was people in both sides.
2 And then later the officer decide to put everybody in the windward
3 side because we can breathe over there, you know? And then
4 everybody go to the windward side. But we have both team
5 evacuating for port side and the starboard side. I don't remember
6 right now the windward side was the port side or the starboard
7 side. But I remember that we decide to go to the windward side.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Mr. Gomer you think it was the starboard
9 side?

10 MR. GOMER: It was the starboard side.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, thank you. Okay, I'm going to open it up
12 to additional questions.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Okay this is the Chief Warrant Officer speaking.
14 So one thing, so you mentioned being out on the bridge when you
15 were having a smoke, right, then you said you saw smoke coming out
16 of the engine space. Did you hear an alarm at that time? Or was
17 the alarm after that?

18 MR. GOMER: I'd seen the smoke before the alarm went off.

19 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. And what was the time period in between
20 you seeing the smoke coming out of the engine space and actually
21 hearing the alarm?

22 MR. GOMER: It was around 1:45, 1:50 when I'd seen the smoke.
23 And then I immediately ran and told second -- the third mate that
24 it's a fucking fire. And after that I took off, went to suit up,
25 went straight down. As I'm going down the stairs the alarm goes

1 off.

2 CWO [REDACTED] So that'd be approximately like nine minutes?

3 Would that be --

4 MR. GOMER: I'd say like 25 seconds.

5 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

6 MR. GOMER: I was flying.

7 CWO [REDACTED] Oh, that quick?

8 MR. GOMER: I was flying.

9 CWO [REDACTED] All right.

10 MR. BARNUM: This is Bart Barnum with the NTSB. Just to
11 follow up on that, Keith. The alarm, having a smoke, the system
12 parts, I really want to get this straight. You said you smoke or
13 did you see flame?

14 MR. GOMER: I seen the smoke.

15 MR. BARNUM: The smoke? Okay. Is there a fire control panel
16 on the bridge?

17 MR. GOMER: Yes. There is.

18 MR. BARNUM: And are you familiar with that?

19 MR. GOMER: No. I am not.

20 MR. BARNUM: Have you ever seen it?

21 MR. GOMER: Yes.

22 MR. BARNUM: Is there lights on it? What does it look like?

23 MR. GOMER: There's lights on it. It's square. When
24 it -- I think I know where it is. I can't, like, describe it.

25 MR. BARNUM: I haven't seen it myself so I'm just curious.

1 MR. GOMER: I can't describe it. I know it's -- the helm is
2 here, it's right behind the helm.

3 MR. BARNUM: Okay.

4 MR. GOMER: It's right behind the helm and it's mounted on --

5 MR. BARNUM: What is on that panel? Is it an alarm? Or what
6 is it --

7 MR. GOMER: It's a bunch of buttons.

8 MR. BARNUM: Yeah.

9 MR. GOMER: Bunch of buttons and a little screen.

10 MR. BARNUM: Have you ever heard an alarm? Did you hear an
11 alarm that night?

12 MR. GOMER: I was out of there.

13 MR. BARNUM: You didn't hear it.

14 MR. GOMER: I ran down.

15 MR. BARNUM: The alarm that you both are referring to,
16 will -- is that the general alarm? Or is there a different alarm
17 you were hearing?

18 MR. GOMER: It was a general alarm.

19 MR. BARNUM: And what was the sound? Was it a continuous
20 ringing or was it --

21 MR. YSERN: Continuous ringing.

22 MR. GOMER: Continuous.

23 MR. BARNUM: Keith, you indicated you suited up. What is
24 your muster station? What is your fire station?

25 MR. GOMER: The first station is portside, U deck.

1 MR. BARNUM: Okay. Can you say that number?

2 MR. YSERN: Number one.

3 MR. GOMER: Number one?

4 MR. YSERN: Yeah.

5 MR. GOMER: Number one.

6 MR. BARNUM: How about you, Jose --

7 MR. YSERN: It's the same.

8 MR. BARNUM: -- where is it? Same?

9 MR. YSERN: Yeah.

10 MR. BARNUM: Okay.

11 MR. YSERN: Usually Keith and I, we dress, but during
12 the -- when we do the training always the person is in watch,
13 obviously. They go there first and do it first because the other
14 guy's going to be sleeping so it's going to take more time to do
15 that, you know? So -- but we have the same station.

16 MR. BARNUM: Jose, you mentioned watch. The A.B. on watch,
17 what are you typically doing on the bridge?

18 MR. YSERN: I'm sorry what did you say?

19 MR. BARNUM: The A.B. on what, what are you typically doing
20 on the bridge during the watch?

21 MR. YSERN: Well it depends. There is one-main watch and
22 two-main watch. You're two-main watch there is one look out and
23 there is other one is a helmsman. Of course the helmsman
24 look -- the look out too. If it's only one-main watch like it was
25 that night it was a very clear -- we have a very good visibility.

1 The weather was very good. So usually over there -- because you
2 have the helms and then in and out too -- what you're doing over
3 there, you assist the main in whatever he needs, you know?

4 But you had your screen over there, you said there is
5 traffic, how traffic -- how close you are to the traffic. That's
6 it.

7 MR. BARNUM: The night of the accident you're going up Santa
8 Barbara Channel, you're on autopilot?

9 MR. YSERN: Yes.

10 MR. BARNUM: How fast are you going? What was your --

11 MR. YSERN: I think we were like ten knots?

12 MR. GOMER: Ten knots.

13 MR. YSERN: About ten knots.

14 MR. BARNUM: Is that full ahead, half ahead? How fast do
15 you --

16 MR. YSERN: Oh, no, that's not full ahead. Full ahead we
17 going 20 knot.

18 MR. BARNUM: Okay.

19 MR. YSERN: Yeah. No, it was -- we went ten knot. We were
20 on the channel. We have -- I remember we have a wide ship dead
21 ahead from us about six, seven miles. Something like that. And
22 again, it was very good visibility, very good weather, nothing's
23 going on, traffic was very calm. I mean it was a very full moon.
24 It was a beautiful night. So, you know?

25 CWO [REDACTED] You guys -- you both mentioned training. You

1 just now -- it sounds like you guys are really well trained with
2 how you responded to the fire in my opinion. But I'm curious,
3 where do you get that training from? That firefighting training.

4 MR. GOMER: Oh, well --

5 MR. YSERN: I went to San Diego.

6 MR. GOMER: Yeah. San Diego TRO.

7 CWO [REDACTED] TRO?

8 MR. YSERN: Yeah.

9 CWO [REDACTED] What is -- is that a -- how long is that course?

10 MR. YSERN: I don't remember. I say we do -- first you go I
11 think you do firefighting training and then you do advanced
12 firefighting. It is more longer --

13 MR. GOMER: And you do --

14 MR. YSERN: I think it's --

15 MR. GOMER: -- helio (ph.) firefighting.

16 MR. YSERN: I think it's two, three days -- something like
17 that. And we made drills on the ship. I think it's what
18 every --

19 MR. GOMER: Every week.

20 MR. YSERN: -- week.

21 MR. GOMER: Every week there's a drill.

22 MR. YSERN: Every week you have a drill. So -- and that is
23 when we share the -- you share this week, I share this week, be
24 sure that we have everything, you know? So in the case that we
25 need it. That is -- because I said, I mean, it surprised me

1 because -- it was a very intense freaking night. I tell you right
2 now, it was fucking scary. And everybody handled it very well,
3 and communication was good, and everybody know what to do. And, I
4 mean, quite frankly I was surprised that we handled it that way.
5 So you see because I it was fucking --

6 CWO [REDACTED] You -- back to the training real quick. Is that
7 something the advanced firefighting training in San Diego -- is
8 that something that you need for your A.B. credentials --

9 MR. GOMER: Yeah.

10 MR. YSERN: Yes.

11 CWO [REDACTED] -- the company makes you do it?

12 MR. YSERN: Yeah.

13 MR. GOMER: Yes. Then -- sorry. We get something on the
14 military ships so you -- in order to go over there you have to
15 have these certifications.

16 MR. YSERN: I don't know about the commercial situation but,
17 yeah.

18 CWO [REDACTED] Keith, I believe you mentioned this; when you
19 first responded to the engine room there was a hatch open. Can
20 you describe that?

21 MR. GOMER: I didn't go to the engine room. If you go in the
22 back of the house on the main deck there's a hatch where we do our
23 crane lifts through from the main deck to the engine room. And
24 that hatch was open.

25 CWO [REDACTED] Is that typically open at sea when you're

1 underway?

2 MR. GOMER: No. It wasn't supposed to be open.

3 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. Did --

4 MR. GOMER: It was supposed to be closed. It's a watertight
5 door.

6 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. Was there any reason that had it -- the
7 vessel had it open?

8 MR. GOMER: Maybe it was hot in the engine room. Maybe we
9 left it open at the stores. I don't know but it was not as if it
10 blew open. It was open and it was pinned in -- the pins were in.

11 CWO [REDACTED] All right.

12 MR. GOMER: So me and Toney removed the pins, closed the
13 hatch, and dogged it down.

14 CWO [REDACTED] I see. Just one more question on the hatch. Is
15 that something typically that's left open? Or is it -- was it
16 something once that you noticed? Or you go by every time and it's
17 always open?

18 MR. GOMER: No. That to me -- it shouldn't have been open.

19 CWO [REDACTED] Right. But is it normal -- do you two normally
20 see it open? Or is it --

21 MR. GOMER: Whenever we're doing stores or doing lifts out of
22 the engine room or into the engine room.

23 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

24 MR. GOMER: But at sea? No.

25 CWO [REDACTED] All right.

1 MR. GOMER: Never.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Is -- sorry, this is Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED]
3 Was the hatch -- like you said it was pinned open, but was it
4 pinned open -- fully open? Or was it pinned open like partial
5 way? Or how was it --

6 MR. GOMER: Pinned open, fully open. In order to put the
7 pins in you have to open the door -- hatch all the way open.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] So it was fully open? Okay. Thank you.

9 MR. GOMER: That's the reason I was able to see the smoke
10 from the bridge. Because I was look-out on the bridge smoking a
11 cigarette on the wing. And that's how I was able to see the
12 smoke -- because the hatch was open. If the hatch was not open
13 would've never ever seen the smoke.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] When you go over fighting or -- Keith when you
15 were fighting the fire you were locking arms with A.B. Toney. Did
16 you have anybody else on the hose with you? Or was it just you?

17 MR. GOMER: I had one hose, Toney had the other hose, and we
18 locked arms throughout fighting the fire.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] In training you usually -- do you usually have
20 someone else behind you?

21 MR. GOMER: There's supposed to be at least three men on each
22 hose.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] Oh. Where were they? Did they not muster? Or
24 were they late?

25 MR. GOMER: We only have two SVA back packs on board this

1 ship on each -- in each locker. So that's four. So this team has
2 a SVA back pack. This team has two SVA back packs. Me and Toney
3 are in the same locker so we grabbed the first back packs and the
4 only back packs. We have extra tanks but there's no extra back
5 packs.

6 LCDR [REDACTED] Sure.

7 MR. GOMER: Which is fucked up because they need to be able
8 to change out. After one person goes in that person needs to be
9 able to change out. And that was not able to -- no one could do
10 that. And the -- on the other side Connor was the third engineer
11 he had his SVA on as well as the first engineer. But the first
12 engineer was going around turning the power and shit off as he's
13 supposed to. So then Connor was, I think, assisting him at the
14 time. Connor was coming back and forth. So Connor -- me, Connor
15 and Toney made a approach and me and Toney made an approach by
16 ourselves.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Is there just the two fire stations? How many
18 fire stations do you have on board?

19 MR. GOMER: Oh --

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Turnout gear lockers.

21 MR. YSERN: Oh, for the -- two.

22 MR. GOMER: Two.

23 MR. YSERN: One for side watch and --

24 MR. GOMER: All on U deck.

25 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

1 MR. YSERN: Can I say something?

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Yes.

3 MR. YSERN: Okay.

4 LT [REDACTED] For the record time is 1348. Mr. Letournel just
5 entered the conference room. And we'll continue the interview.

6 This is Lieutenant [REDACTED]

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Go ahead, sir.

8 MR. YSERN: So when Keith said that there is only two back
9 packs with us that's because we decide to make a team and at this
10 time passing the oxygen all the way to this guy. And when we went
11 behind the helm we kind of stayed over there. It was so smoky
12 then that we decided to go inside. So in that time we were
13 talking about to send out another team to relieve this guy, and
14 this guy go, and then the new team go inside, you know? But
15 everything happened so fast and then finally they decide we're not
16 going to fight the fire anymore and then we going to release, you
17 know? So our -- the orders changed so now we need to take
18 everybody together like I mentioned before. Put everybody in the
19 windward side, account everybody, be sure that everybody's there
20 before to release CO2. So in every ship when you do the drill you
21 set out a little bit different. How we set up on this ship is the
22 kid and I, we share the suit and decision. And then another guy
23 share the other suit. If Keith go there before me he dress first
24 and then I do something -- whatever something else, you know?
25 That's how we set up over here.

1 MR. GOMER: I want to say something. But that -- the way we
2 set up on here is we have small guys on this ship and we have
3 bigger guys on this ship. Me and Jose being the bigger guys
4 have -- we share the suit. And then the other suit that was set
5 up was --

6 MR. YSERN: For the --

7 MR. GOMER: -- was for a smaller guy. And they would've --
8 they didn't respond down there before anyone else. So me and
9 Toney went down there and Toney put on the suit that was too big
10 for him. So he did not have proper fucking gear. His pants were
11 at his fucking ankles fighting the fire.

12 MR. YSERN: I mean that's because it was set up that way.
13 So -- but I want to say something. I mean everybody respond very
14 quick. Everybody was follow orders, you know, that all was very
15 clear. And we didn't know how big the fire's going to be -- it
16 was huge. So and then we taking decisions, you know, all the
17 time. First we thought let's move up there. Other decision so we
18 can change over there -- we cannot do that. And then we tried to
19 make another team to relieve this guy and then we decide -- and
20 then the captain decide he's going to release the CO2. My opinion
21 was it was a great decision, you know? Because we cannot fight
22 that fire, you know?

23 And then everything changed. Now we need to make everybody
24 go to the wayward side, be sure that we account, and everybody is
25 there, and it's safe to do the CO2. So everything was changing,

1 you know? But, again, as I mentioned before I think that the
2 communication with the officer was very fluid, very clear.
3 Everybody knows what to do all the time and that was a big help.

4 LCDR ██████ Yeah. I understand. It sounds like a lot of
5 things went well. But there's also always these parts where we
6 can critique and that's our job. To find out things that maybe
7 didn't go so well. So I appreciate, Keith, everything you're
8 saying very much. And as well as you, Jose.

9 The muster, how you guys re mustered after a starboard side,
10 windward side, sounds like a good decision.

11 Keith, you mentioned there was an issue with the muster
12 lifts.

13 MR. YSERN: I mentioned that. Well this --

14 LCDR ██████ Jose, just a second. I just -- let me
15 ask -- I'll get to you as well.

16 I'll direct this question to Keith, I guess. Keith, when was
17 the last crew change on the vessel?

18 MR. GOMER: San Pedro. Before we left San Pedro. I want to
19 say that was, I don't know, maybe the 27th. We had a new crew
20 come aboard. Or it could've been the day before. I could be
21 mistaken. But we had new crew change, a couple of third mates,
22 one A.B. came aboard, an engineer -- a third engineer, Connor, and
23 Stewart.

24 LCDR ██████ Jose, did you -- I'm sorry, not Jose.

25 Keith, one more question for you and then I'll get to you,

1 Jose. Did you have a fire drill -- or a drill after that crew
2 change after departure?

3 MR. GOMER: No.

4 MR. BARNUM: No? Okay. So, Keith -- sorry to interrupt you
5 there. Could you tell me about that muster list? It was the old
6 one you said?

7 MR. YSERN: No. It was a new one. That was a confusing
8 thing. So we -- I believe we arrived to San Pedro the 23 and we
9 departed 27th, I believe. And then they changed -- it was part of
10 the crew they change over there. And it was part of the crew is
11 going to relieve us in Oakland. And then we only have like what?
12 24 hours from San Pedro to Oakland. And then we have the new
13 list, you know? And that is the list that the second mate had.
14 But the second mate had joined the chief in San Pedro. So he
15 doesn't know -- he doesn't -- he is not familiarized with the crew
16 ship. That is because when we were there I was helping him with
17 the list because he say we don't have -- we missing this guy, we
18 missing these guys. I said no. This is a new list but the crew
19 that's supposed to be over here aren't here, you know?

20 MR. GOMER: Yeah they said they fucked up and they updated
21 the list before those guys even got here.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] This is Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] I have an
23 IMO crew list here that was provided by the ship (indiscernible).
24 The two gentleman and I want them to -- is this the list that they
25 were talking about?

1 MR. YSERN: Yeah. This is the list -- this is the original
2 list that they put, for example, they didn't put me on the list
3 they put my relief. I was --

4 MR. GOMER: I was -- we were rigging up in Oakland. So my
5 name wasn't on that list, his name wasn't on that list. And they
6 had replaced those names with the people that's relieving us
7 already. So it was already up there for Oakland because they're
8 on 24 hours.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Almost trying to do -- get their job done
10 earlier.

11 MR. GOMER: Cutting the fucking top off.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] Who -- where's all this crew that's muster lists
13 that you use for mustering during an emergency?

14 MR. YSERN: It's over there on the boat station.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] One at each station?

16 MR. YSERN: Yeah, exactly.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. And who updates those? Who's responsible
18 for putting those in the log?

19 MR. YSERN: I don't have the answer for that questions. I
20 don't know who's responsible for that.

21 MR. GOMER: I don't know.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] In your -- you guys mentioned training on
23 board -- fire drills --

24 MR. YSERN: But I -- let me tell you something. Because this
25 is very frequently on the ship, you know? But you don't have

1 really too much time between one port and the other port. And you
2 going to know people's relief of the people and they need to
3 figure it out -- who's going to have one watch, the other watch,
4 the other watch. They do a little bit in advanced. That's really
5 frequently, you know, because otherwise you don't know who to
6 call. Or you already watching and you have to relief -- to call
7 your relief. You don't know what -- who to call. So that is
8 not -- I don't think it's a mistake. I think this is something
9 that we do on regular routine, you know? Because there is no time
10 from one port and the other port. So they do that. And
11 unfortunately this happened in between.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] And so who -- how were you able to verify that
13 you everybody mustered correctly? How did you --

14 MR. YSERN: Because I am the ship for 115 days. And we do
15 drill every week. So I know who is in my station. So
16 that -- because I was helping the second mate because he just
17 enjoy the ship. And he doesn't know -- he was calling a guy that
18 is not coming on board until we arrive to San Francisco. So I
19 said no --

20 MR. GOMER: And he was on --

21 MR. YSERN: -- no, everybody's here, mate, everybody's here.
22 Everybody who's supposed to be here is here. This guy has not
23 joined the ship yet, this guy has -- no.

24 MR. GOMER: -- he had also joined in San Pedro so he's not
25 familiar with any places either. So --

1 MR. YSERN: Isn't that was I say? So he doesn't familiar
2 this ship because he just came on board, you know? But we are
3 here for 115 days we -- doing drills every week so I know who is
4 in my station. So that's because I said no, everything okay. The
5 people that supposed to be here are here, you know? Having the
6 same situation when doing the account before to release the CO2.
7 Can't imagine how important it is to know where everybody --

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Yeah.

9 MR. YSERN: -- you know, before to do that. And then we have
10 the same thing with the list. That we verified and --

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Just one last thing on training. Had you guys
12 done a similar scenario training drill in the past? An engine
13 room fire?

14 MR. GOMER: No, not an engine room fire. But in Treasure
15 Island I did a course where they let off -- I think napalm sprays.
16 And they have this house setup, we walked crawl-ins like an actual
17 fire but just controlled fire that we put out. So that shit
18 kicked in.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] How about on board, though? When you do your
20 weekly drills where are you -- where are the fires usually
21 located?

22 MR. GOMER: It's different spots -- wherever the chief made,
23 or the captain might say. Or there's a drill -- there's a fire
24 here, there's a fire here, how would you approach it? So it can
25 be engine room, it can be on deck --

1 LCDR [REDACTED] So you have done a simulated engine room fire
2 before?

3 MR. YSERN: Everything.

4 MR. GOMER: Yeah.

5 MR. YSERN: I think the important thing is that people figure
6 it out quickly and know what to do and they end up where the fire
7 is, you know, because you never know what it's going to be. But
8 the important thing is you heard the alarms, you know where you
9 had to go, you know what you had to do.

10 LCDR [REDACTED] One last part and then I'll relinquish my
11 questioning here. So is -- We've heard real good things that make
12 a good crew. Is there anything that you feel that could've been
13 done differently other than the things we might've already
14 mentioned if this happens again?

15 MR. GOMER: Just more turnout gear, more SVAs. Just at least
16 have a plan, you know, for if shit -- the scenarios, like you
17 said, if shit was to happen like this again we would at least have
18 a plan to approach it already. You know?

19 MR. YSERN: Well my opinion -- this is the third fire that I
20 have on ship, okay? I have one before in the (indiscernible)
21 Maston -- it was on this tour group. And I have another one
22 before to come to the ship it was on the *Sizzler*, it's a military
23 ship, it was on in the officer laundry room. Nothing as big and
24 as huge as this one was.

25 MR. GOMER: Yeah.

1 MR. YSERN: And I mention before and I mention again. I
2 think that people react very good. I think that the communication
3 was always fluid, clear, everybody know what to do. I was in
4 another fire before and it was a little bit of (indiscernible).
5 You know everybody was -- it doesn't happen here. I mean I wasn't
6 perfect it was very intense situation. I understand about the
7 list. I was set (indiscernible). That's it, you know? I mean
8 because that's just like a part of the routine. You know the
9 ship, you always put the new list because it's all the watcher
10 chain and then you need to know who is coming, you know? You're
11 not going to call a guy at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning when it's
12 not the guy they have to relieve you. It doesn't make a lot of
13 sense to me.

14 In general I think that the people react very quick and
15 everybody handled it, in my opinion, very good. Especially for
16 the intense that it was. And I think the communication was very
17 fluid, very clear all the time. And I think that here, quite
18 frankly, they make the right decision the right time.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] Thank you.

20 MR. YSERN: That's what I think. I mean --

21 CWO [REDACTED] All right. This is Chief Warrant [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
22 speaking. Just real quick. So when both of you headed to the
23 space to fight the fire. You know, you said you had the hoses
24 charged for spraying the water. Where were you directing that
25 water? What were you aiming at?

1 MR. GOMER: I seen red. I shot at red.

2 CWO [REDACTED] That's it? Okay. So you couldn't see the piece
3 of equipment you were aiming at? I understand. Yeah.

4 MR. GOMER: I was on the bridge. I seen the fucking fire on
5 the camera.

6 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

7 MR. GOMER: I seen that it was in the main engine.

8 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

9 MR. GOMER: So I came around to go I was prepared to run to
10 the engine room. I came around and they said the fire, we're
11 going to go through here. So I opened the fucking door and I seen
12 red so I shot there. But the engine room is 60 feet below -- two
13 stories above what the fuck was on fire.

14 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah.

15 MR. GOMER: It's the second deck -- it's the U deck -- second
16 deck below U deck. So then maybe the first level engine room and
17 they're a bunch of powders down there for fucking stores and that
18 shit caught on fire. And that's what we put out -- me and Toney.

19 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. So you're spray wasn't necessarily at the
20 engine --

21 MR. GOMER: No.

22 CWO [REDACTED] -- as opposed to what was on fire --

23 MR. GOMER: Somebody's shit caught on fire.

24 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

25 MR. YSERN: There is no way to access over there. The flame

1 it was like, what, 20, 30 feet flame?

2 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. I understand. And then the last thing
3 that I have -- so with the new crew was the unpublished. Were
4 your names on it? Because, you know, both of you were schedule --

5 MR. YSERN: No that's the point. They take our name and put
6 the new names. Okay. But we still on board. The guy didn't come
7 check. Very frequently -- it's not the first ship that that
8 happened, you know?

9 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah.

10 MR. YSERN: They usually -- they do that.

11 MR. GOMER: Shouldn't have fucking done it. They're not
12 here. That's my opinion.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. All right. That's all I've got. Thank
14 you.

15 LT [REDACTED] This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] Mr. Gomer, when you -- so
16 after you departed from the bridge, went down to your fire
17 station, got dressed out, and you started fighting the fire.
18 Could you explain one more time the location of that watertight
19 door that you were at in relation to the engine room hatch?

20 MR. GOMER: I went outside the portside door closest to my
21 fire station. And I went to the back of the house maybe 40 feet
22 around. And it's right in the back of the house.

23 LT [REDACTED] Okay. Is the watertight door right --

24 MR. GOMER: Right back of the house.

25 LT [REDACTED] -- forward of that large engine room hatch --

1 MR. GOMER: Yes.

2 LT [REDACTED] Okay. Is there anything else that you feel that we
3 should know?

4 MR. GOMER: That shit was hot.

5 LT [REDACTED] Mr. Ysern is there anything else that you feel that
6 we should know?

7 MR. YSERN: No.

8 LT [REDACTED] Okay. I don't have any additional questions.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] I just have -- this is Lieutenant Commander
10 [REDACTED] Just two more questions. First one, Mr. Gomer, you said
11 that you were having the issue with the fire with, you know,
12 holding the hose, that you needed help from another crew member.
13 Was that an inch and a half or a two and a half inch hose that you
14 were using, do you recall?

15 MR. GOMER: I can't recall.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] Was it a bigger --

17 MR. GOMER: It was a regular sized fire hose. Not the big
18 shit, the regular size that sits in every station on board the
19 ship.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] And then this is for both of you. After the
21 fire was out -- or now out did either of you enter the engine
22 space at all?

23 MR. GOMER: No.

24 MR. YSERN: Wait, what is the question?

25 LCDR [REDACTED] Did you enter the engine room at all after the

1 fire was out?

2 MR. GOMER: No.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] No?

4 MR. YSERN: No.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

6 MR. BARNUM: I have one more question. Bart Barnum with
7 NTSB. Being on board a couple days after the fire -- crew
8 members, everybody's talking. What are you hearing start -- what
9 started the fire?

10 MR. YSERN: What started the fire?

11 MR. BARNUM: What started the fire? What are you hearing?
12 How'd it start?

13 MR. GOMER: Fuel line burst. Hit some hot shit, caught fire.

14 MR. BARNUM: Is that the same thing you're hearing?

15 MR. YSERN: That's what I heard but, I mean, the engine room
16 is not my --

17 MR. BARNUM: Okay. Thank you.

18 CWO [REDACTED] Mr. Gomer, got a couple quick questions. You
19 mentioned third mate Connor a couple of times. I'm looking at the
20 crew list --

21 MR. GOMER: Third engineer, sorry.

22 CWO [REDACTED] I'm sorry, third engineer. Is he the second
23 engineer or third engineer? I'm sorry. Do you remember?

24 MR. GOMER: He could be the second.

25 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

1 MR. GOMER: He could be the third, he could be the second.

2 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. All right. Fair enough. So
3 you -- they're just Connor.

4 MR. GOMER: Connor.

5 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. That's good enough. And then secondly
6 when -- at the muster station when -- your names are not on there
7 but they're also -- the positions are 12 to four A.B. -- eight to
8 four, you know, whatever the watch. So you have the A.B.
9 positions right? So it's master, boatswain, 12 to four, four to
10 eight, blah, blah, blah, right? So you know if there's an A.B.
11 and he's calling Jimmy Schmitt, but it's really Jose, he knows
12 he's the 12 to four --

13 MR. GOMER: We have article numbers.

14 CWO [REDACTED] What's that?

15 MR. GOMER: We have article numbers.

16 CWO [REDACTED] Article numbers. So in addition to the names
17 being updated necessarily, there are also article numbers. So the
18 mate was calling those numbers out and then called the person's
19 name?

20 MR. GOMER: Yes.

21 CWO [REDACTED] And so when you said, okay he's calling somebody
22 that's not here that's actually me. I'm article number such and
23 such. You guys knew to speak up that it was you.

24 MR. GOMER: No. Personally I didn't hear shit about no call
25 list. I was suiting the fuck up.

1 MR. YSERN: Yeah. That's what I tried to explain. Because
2 these guys were inside dressing, second mate was outside making
3 the account. And then I was helping him because I know who's
4 supposed to be over there and I know that he's saying, hey, Jose,
5 I'm missing two guys. And I say no, you not missing anybody.
6 Everybody is here, you know?

7 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

8 MR. YSERN: It's not because he'd just joined the ship he's
9 not familiarized with the crew. So we made the account and we
10 verified that everybody was there and called the bridge. Person
11 number one is present --

12 CWO [REDACTED] How long did it take to straighten that out
13 through the mustering?

14 MR. YSERN: Like I mentioned I cannot tell you time but it
15 was very quick. I mean everybody respond very quick and these
16 guys risked -- I mean when I go there this guy was already
17 dressed. And the other guy was almost --

18 CWO [REDACTED] That's all I got. Thank you.

19 MR. BARNUM: All right. Last round, any other questions
20 before we end this?

21 LT [REDACTED] All right. The time is 1408 and we have concluded
22 the interview with Mr. Gomer and Mr. Ysern. I'm going to end the
23 recording.

24 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

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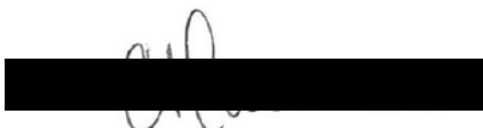
IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE ON THE *PRESIDENT EISENHOWER*
 SOUTHWEST OF SANTA BARBARA
 ON APRIL 28, 2021
 Interview of Keith Gomer, Jr.
 and Jose Ysern

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FM026

PLACE: *President Eisenhower* in San Pedro, CA

DATE: April 30, 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.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber