

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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R/V *QUALIFIER 105* CATCHES FIRE
IN THE NORTHERN ENTERPRISES
BOATYARD IN HOMER, ALASKA,
ON JANUARY 19, 2023

Accident No.: DCA23FM015

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Interview of: JARED BRADSHAW, Vessel Co-Owner, Vice President
Support Vessels of Alaska

JOSHUA BRADSHAW, Deckhand
Support Vessels of Alaska

MICHAEL RATHIBHAN, Port Engineer
Support Vessels of Alaska

DAVID MASTOLIER, Vessel Co-Owner, President
Support Vessels of Alaska

Homer, Alaska

Thursday,
January 19, 2023

APPEARANCES:

██████████ ██████████ Lieutenant, Investigator
United States Coast Guard

MICHAEL KARR, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

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2 MR. [REDACTED] Investigation into the fire on board the small
3 passenger vessel, Qualifier 105, on the 19th of January, 2023, in
4 Homer, Alaska. My name is Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] spelled
5 [REDACTED], and I'm the investigator for the Coast Guard. I'd
6 now like to turn it over to my colleague from the National
7 Transportation Safety Board to introduce himself.

8 MR. KARR: Yeah. Hello, and thanks for coming in. So, I'm
9 Michael Karr, and my name is spelled K-A-R-R, and I'm with the
10 National Transportation Safety Board. Our office is in
11 Washington, D.C. And for certain accidents, we share jurisdiction
12 with the Coast Guard, and because this accident involved a vessel
13 where damage was more than \$500,000, we have jurisdiction to
14 investigate. We're doing a joint investigation with the Coast
15 Guard, so the Coast Guard has the lead, and I will participate
16 with the Coast Guard so we don't, do not duplicate efforts.

17 At some point, when all the evidence is collected, we'll each
18 write our own reports where we can make our own -- where the NTSB
19 will make its own conclusions, and the Coast Guard will make their
20 conclusions, and each Agency will, you know, provide -- do with it
21 what they do. The NTSB, we make -- we will probably publish a
22 short report of like nine or 10 pages. And I will highlight the
23 fact that when the report is written, parties and interests for
24 the NTSB investigation will have a chance to review it, so that
25 means I'll share my draft report and information that the owner of

1 the vessel would like to, you know, see in there or talk to me
2 about. The NTSB will consider it. So, thank you for allowing me
3 to explain a little bit about the NTSB.

4 MR. [REDACTED] All right. Thanks, Mike.

5 INTERVIEW OF JARED BRADSHAW

6 BY MR. [REDACTED]

7 Q. So, Jared, I believe you've been nominated to start, so if I
8 could ask you to please state your first and last name for the
9 record, and then spell out your last name, please?

10 A. Name is Jared Bradshaw, and spelled B-R-A-D-S-H-A-W.

11 Q. Thank you. And you confirm for me that you've been made
12 aware that this interview is being recorded and that you consent
13 to the recording of the interview?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Thank you. Can you please describe your role in relation to
16 the Qualifier 105?

17 A. So, I am VP of the company and half owner of the Qualifier
18 105. I oversee the operations manager, which is mainly the boat
19 maintenance and supply of the vessels. During summertime and
20 wintertime, I will receive the dockside -- or, the dry dock of the
21 vessels, and that's what I was doing at the time.

22 Q. How long have you been in this role?

23 A. Ten years.

24 Q. Ten years. Okay. Now, can you please walk us through the
25 sequence of events that began around 19 January and continuing

1 through to that day, to the best of your recollection?

2 A. Yes. I was, at the time, on the other vessels that we have
3 inside of our company, passed by the boatyard where the Qualifier
4 was dry docked. There was no suspicious activity at the time. I
5 was aware of work and what work was being performed on it at the
6 time. By the time I got home from lunch, I was -- I received a
7 text message from the deputy harbormaster that he heard over the
8 scanner that there was fire on the Qualifier 105. I immediately
9 turned back around and headed towards the Qualifier.

10 As I was traveling back to the Qualifier, which, I had
11 about -- it was under 10 minutes travel time, I made phone calls
12 to crew members that I knew that was on the vessel. I got no
13 response, late to find out that they were talking to proper
14 authorities and taking care of the situation at hand. I arrived
15 at the boatyard where the vessel was dry docked, found our crew
16 members, talked with them, made sure everybody was off the vessel,
17 and removed everybody from the vessel. They had made a setback of
18 safety from the vessel, and at that time, I joined the shipyard
19 personnel and the other vessel owner in trying to extinguish the
20 fire until the fire department was able to get water on the fire.
21 That's about it.

22 Q. Thanks. You mentioned that there was work being done on the
23 vessel in dry dock. Could you explain a little bit about what
24 sort of work was going on at the time?

25 A. Oh, they were doing general maintenance. We had a little bit

1 of, you know, shaft work, just sweeping and things, renewing
2 things. We did have some welding at the time that was away from
3 where the fire started. We had our safety protocols in place
4 handling that. And it was just small maintenance, fueling of the
5 tank. Nothing major, refit, or anything like that.

6 (Indiscernible) and paint.

7 Q. You mentioned some safety protocols that were in place.
8 Could you describe those a little bit?

9 A. Yeah. We had, well, the standard (indiscernible) manual
10 required any time there's welding going on to have a firewatch in
11 place. They have their own little protocol that they have to do
12 as far as doing a firewatch stand on the -- pretty much laid out
13 in our safety manual, and they were performing that at the time.

14 Q. And who was actually conducting the hot work? Was that the
15 employee?

16 A. No, that was a contractor.

17 Q. And --

18 A. Subcontractor.

19 Q. -- do you know the name of that contractor?

20 A. Is it Ken and Sons?

21 (Crosstalk)

22 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Okay. We can get that to you.

23 MR. KARR: Okay. Thank you.

24 BY MR. KARR:

25 Q. Have you used them before for other maintenance work?

1 A. No, this was the first time that we used them, the first
2 time.

3 Q. What was the status of the vessels in (indiscernible) at that
4 point? Specifically, I'm looking at the electrical system on the
5 vessel. Was the vessel being powered in the yard? Was it
6 receiving power?

7 A. Yeah. So, also, inside of our safety protocols, yes, we were
8 using power from the yard. But as far as personal -- as
9 companywide, we disconnect that power each evening, so the power's
10 not left overnight. We shut down all systems and all breakers
11 when nobody's on the vessel. So, it is not powered up when it's
12 not manned.

13 Q. Okay. And how about the vessel's installed fire suppression
14 system? Was it connected?

15 A. The fire suppression system was connected. You know, it's in
16 the engine room, the hot work (indiscernible) system. It was
17 installed and operational at the time.

18 Q. All right. And does the vessel have a fire main with water?

19 A. It does, it does. It would be useless without being in the
20 water.

21 Q. There's no provision for it to be connected, nothing beyond
22 that it could --

23 A. No.

24 Q. -- hook up to? Thank you.

25 A. So, MW Willis and Sons, LLC is the contractor. MW Willis.

1 Q. Thank you. So, after the fire department did their thing,
2 and the thing was returned back to you, did you have the
3 opportunity to go on board the vessel and kind of survey any of
4 the damage?

5 A. We walked through with the fire chief. That's the very first
6 time we walked through, that we were allowed to walk through.
7 And, yeah, we did assess the damage of the vessel.

8 Q. And could you briefly speak to the extent of damage that you
9 were able to observe?

10 A. We have to kind of base ourselves off of the expertise of the
11 fire marshal. We, you know, we're not fire experts. They
12 pinpointed roughly a location of where the fire started; his
13 opinion of, you know, what might be the cause and what might not.
14 I mean, it's his opinion. That's all that we're based on. We
15 have no idea. So, we could see where the major, hot part of the
16 fire was. We recognized that it went up. The main damage looked
17 like everything down below, and outside of that at the same level
18 just received smoke. The main cabin seemed to take the most of
19 it. And then, it traveled up into the head behind the wheelhouse.
20 The wheelhouse was heavily smoke damaged. And then, the bulk of
21 the (indiscernible) fire came through, and that's when what was
22 extinguished. The main cabin was the main damage of the fire.

23 Q. Okay. And so, you mentioned that the fire marshal kind of
24 pointed at a suspected area of origin. Where was that located --

25 A. It was located in the forward bunk and the aft bunk, I think

1 room J, is it?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: J.

3 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: J.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: J.

5 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: It's room J. So, just as you get
6 downstairs, the first room on the --

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: J's the first one -- room.

8 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: Yeah. So, J, yeah.

9 BY MR. [REDACTED]

10 Q. And then, I assume the -- there was a number of 1.25 million
11 listed on the Coast Guard form 2692 that was submitted. Was that
12 the insured value of the vessel?

13 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: Is that what they have?

14 (Crosstalk)

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: Yeah.

16 BY MR. [REDACTED]

17 Q. Okay. And, I guess, what steps has the insurance company
18 taken in terms of getting to any sort of root cause of the fire,
19 getting the damage surveyed?

20 A. So, they sent a --

21 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: What is his title?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: Surveyor.

23 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: They sent a surveyor down to assess the
24 damage and get his report; and then, they have the reports of the
25 fire department. And they were still waiting for a mechanical

1 engineer -- electrical engineer to come down, which I believe just
2 got pushed back to the 17th. And then, in the meantime, they
3 asked for bids from local builders as far as what it would cost to
4 bring it back to original --

5 BY MR. [REDACTED]

6 Q. So, have there been -- there's been no determination that the
7 vessel is a total loss at this point?

8 A. Not at this point. We don't have it in concrete. The Coast
9 Guard's not giving us a number (indiscernible) at the Coast Guard.

10 Q. You mentioned a surveyor. Jack, I believe you said his name
11 was?

12 A. Jack McFarland (ph.).

13 Q. Jack McFarland? Is he a marine surveyor, or is he just --

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. -- someone (indiscernible)? And was there a fire
16 investigator that the insurance company sent, as well?

17 A. -- yeah.

18 Q. And is this something that someone else could better speak
19 to --

20 A. Well, I mean, I wasn't there. I was sick at the time, so I
21 was quarantined from the vessel --

22 Q. Oh, no.

23 A. -- when the investigator came down, walked through. And they
24 all have their theories, but nobody's saying what it is. I think
25 they established that it wasn't (indiscernible). That's

1 everything that they agreed on. It wasn't having to do anything
2 with the welder or the welding itself.

3 Q. By the welder, are you referring to the welding machine?

4 A. The welding processor, and then the actual welding that they
5 were doing at the time.

6 Q. And where on the vessel was the welding actually occurring in
7 relation to that room J?

8 A. So, it was kitty corner to another room, a separate room. It
9 would be at the head area. It was behind two walls, two separate
10 walls. That's where -- the separation between the fire, I'm
11 guessing 10, 15 feet, maybe 20 feet. But between, there was two
12 walls, these two walls, between them.

13 Q. And then, the welding machine itself was located in that room
14 J?

15 A. In the room J, yeah.

16 Q. Do you know how that welding machine was being powered? Was
17 it connected externally, or was it connected to a power source on
18 board the vessel?

19 A. So, it's connected to the power source on the vessel, but it
20 was through the engine room. And so, the main power to the boat
21 comes into the engine room to the main distribution panel; and
22 then, we have special connections for welders in the engine room.
23 So, it was plugged in there and ran forward to the welding area.

24 MR. [REDACTED] Well, thank you, Jared. I think that's all the
25 questions I have for you at this time. So, I'm going to, before I

1 let you off the hook, here, reach back out to Mike and see if Mike
2 has any follow-up questions for Jared, our vice president, owner,
3 and operations manager.

4 MR. KARR: Sure. Thanks. So, it's Mike Karr with the NTSB.

5 BY MR. KARR:

6 Q. You said that people have ruled out that it had anything to
7 do with welding or the welding machine?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Even though the welding machine was in room J?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Did you see anything, or did someone -- you know, do you have
12 secondhand information of what somebody saw that said, this is why
13 we're not thinking it's any of the welding machine or the cable
14 for the welding machine?

15 A. So, I can't speak for their opinions, but what was pointed
16 out to us is, the welding machine itself, none of the cords were
17 melted, so it showed no overload on any of the cords going into it
18 and coming out of it. There was no sparks in the area, and the
19 immediate area around the welding machine was not burned. The
20 fire was above it.

21 Q. Do you know of any sources of heat above it, above the
22 welding machine?

23 A. Any what? Sources of heat?

24 Q. Sources of heat?

25 A. We weren't aware of any sources of heat in that room. The

1 circuit breakers were turned off to the outlets. So, like the
2 bunk lights that might have been available, the breakers were
3 turned off to that. The overhead light is the only thing that
4 might have been on.

5 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: Or, was it even on?

6 (Crosstalk)

7 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: The overhead light was the only thing
8 that was on.

9 BY MR. KARR:

10 Q. Now, let me ask you some more basic questions. Do you
11 captain the vessel at all?

12 A. Only when needed to.

13 Q. All right. Was your dry dock period a Coast Guard dry dock
14 inspection?

15 A. No. We were going to do a dry dock, because we replaced --
16 we were going to go ahead and do a full dry dock inspection just
17 so that we could renew our ticket for two years. So, we had
18 already pulled the bow, the bow that had been inspected. We were
19 replacing a section that had already been replaced.

20 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: Did we have the final on it yet?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: (Indiscernible).

22 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: So, we were just waiting on the final
23 inspection on that piece that we'd replaced on the underside of
24 the hull, which was in a completely different area. It was far
25 forward of the vessel.

1 BY MR. KARR:

2 Q. Was that the area that they were welding on?

3 A. Not at the time. No, that was done.

4 Q. Oh, okay.

5 A. That was finished. We were just waiting for the final exam
6 on that one.

7 Q. Was there a Coast Guard worklist at the -- had the Coast
8 Guard issued a worklist at the time, you know -- excuse me. How
9 do I phrase this? Had the Coast issued your worklist for your
10 time that you were in the yard?

11 A. No, there was no 832 or anything that we were required to do.
12 This was stuff that we took upon ourselves to improve the vessel
13 and just get passed off. And then, by doing the valves, it would
14 extend our next dry dock for two years, is why we were doing that.

15 Q. So, the Coast Guard had visited the ship, but -- you know,
16 did their inspections, but had given you nothing in writing?

17 A. Yes, yes. They had inspected our valves; and then, they had
18 done the cutout, fit-up, and back gouge inspections on that
19 forward piece.

20 Q. And when was the last time the vessel was operated with
21 passengers before going into the yard?

22 A. September? September of last year, of 2022.

23 Q. And between that time and going to the yard, did the vessel
24 do anything, or was it dockside?

25 A. We pulled it out of the water right away so we don't have to

1 pay for harbor fees, and put it in a dry dock there locally.

2 Q. Oh. So, when did it -- how long had it been in the shipyard?

3 A. It had been there for a few months. It was shortly after we
4 finished with our projects, we pulled it out of the water.

5 Q. And what project was that?

6 A. That it finished on?

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. A (indiscernible) survey.

9 Q. All right. Were there any mechanical or electrical issues
10 when you took it out of the water and put it in the yard?

11 A. No.

12 Q. So, what's it called: bunkroom J or room J?

13 A. Room J.

14 Q. Room J. I know you've got a 3D video of the vessel. Can you
15 tell me which room that is off the top of your head?

16 A. Yeah. So, as you head into the vessel through the back, the
17 main doors in the back of the vessel, as you head forward toward
18 the bow and enter the hallway, there's a set of stairs that head
19 aft. You take those stairs aft down into the aft bunkroom, and as
20 you enter those bunkrooms down those hallways, the first bedroom
21 on the left.

22 Q. Now, is that the -- so, it's on the left. Is it on the port
23 side or the starboard side? Am I walking backwards?

24 A. It would be a portside bunkroom, and it would be forward
25 bunkrooms of the aft staterooms.

1 Q. Say that again? So, port --

2 A. It's on the portside of the vessel, but it's the far forward
3 stateroom of the aft bunkrooms -- or, aft staterooms.

4 Q. Got you. Okay. Good. That's a good description. Can you
5 tell me what was in that compartment besides the welding machine?

6 A. Three bunks, a sink with a light over top, a TV with a DVD
7 player.

8 Q. Was it being used for any kind of storage?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Was there -- do you have shoreside storage for -- do you have
11 shoreside storage for supplies --

12 A. We do.

13 Q. All right. Were there any -- was anything stored on the
14 vessel?

15 A. As in?

16 Q. Good question. As in -- you know, normal day-to-day
17 operations, you know, you're going to have your toilet paper,
18 you're going to have your cleaning supplies, you know, you're
19 going to have what you need to run the vessel. I'm not sure what
20 kind of engine room --

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. -- spare parts you keep. But was there anything -- was there
23 any unusual amount of material other than what might just be
24 needed for daily use? You know, was the ship used for any storage
25 that --

1 A. No, the ship wasn't used for any storage. You know, tools
2 that might have been out of place, but that was it. We didn't
3 have anything extra, anything stored on the vessel out of the
4 normal.

5 Q. How about spare parts?

6 A. The parts that we have on during the normal vessel operations
7 were still on there, yes.

8 Q. Now, were they on deck, or were they stored below deck?

9 A. We have specific compartments that we hold separate items in,
10 and they were in their compartments. Like, there's engine room
11 parts that are specifically put in the engine room in certain
12 places. If they're head parts, they're in a specific location on
13 the vessel in a storage compartment that we use for the head. All
14 depending on what system, it's usually close by in a storage
15 compartment.

16 Q. Then, how would you describe those storage compartments?

17 A. As appropriately needed.

18 Q. I mean, are they specially -- are they voids? Are they
19 compartments built into the ship just for that purpose, to store
20 stuff?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Did any of those burn?

23 A. No, no. I mean, the toilet paper's still on the boat and
24 could probably be sold.

25 Q. And how about, were there any cardboard boxes, you know, with

1 -- either empty or with stuff on board the vessel?

2 A. No, the cardboard boxes had been removed. Any cargo boxes we
3 accumulate during the summertime due to supplies had been removed
4 from the vessel before then.

5 Q. All right. How about plastic, you know, storage containers?

6 A. Not that I was aware of, any plastic storage containers. We
7 don't keep things in plastic storage containers. So, no.

8 Q. Yeah. From what you saw or what you heard secondhand, how
9 did the fire -- well, let me ask you this question: Can you tell
10 me fire progressed? And if you don't know, you can say you don't
11 know.

12 A. I don't know.

13 Q. All right. Did any -- do you have secondhand information to
14 anybody relating how the fire progressed?

15 A. You know, everybody has their ideas. They're pretty tight-
16 lipped, because they don't want to speak out of turn.

17 Q. Okay. Can you tell me what -- was there any machinery that
18 was running? Were you on the vessel that morning?

19 A. I stopped by in the morning, but I was not at the time.

20 Q. All right. Well, you were not on it. Okay. Not at the
21 time, but were you on the vessel during the morning?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Do you recall if any machinery was running?

24 A. We have all the breakers turned off in the morning time. The
25 only machinery is what we turn on to start the day with.

1 Q. So, nothing mechanically, you know, nothing -- no engines
2 were running?

3 A. No engines were running.

4 Q. All right. And switching to electrical, any -- you know,
5 when you left, what -- any electrical equipment that would have
6 current going to it?

7 A. The breakers, but they -- or, the outlets were turned on in
8 the locations they were working so they could run small power
9 tools. The breaker to the welder was turned on, and lights, is
10 all that I was aware of.

11 Q. Now, did you turn on any of those breakers yourself?

12 A. Nope, I did not.

13 Q. Okay. You said, when you got to the ship, that the fire
14 department wasn't there yet, correct?

15 A. The fire department was there, but not admitting water yet.

16 Q. Oh, okay. So, I was going to ask you, who ordered the crew
17 off the ship, and was that the fire department?

18 A. That was our -- well, our firewatch evacuated the --
19 everybody on the vessel, and our port engineer kept everybody at a
20 safe distance from the vessel.

21 Q. And they both did that before the fire department got there?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. All right. Oh, and the fire suppression system, did it
24 activate?

25 A. No. That was in the engine room, the fire suppression system

1 is.

2 Q. Was the engine room damaged at all?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Oh. I did not know that. So, I -- okay. It's been a long
5 day for me here on the East Coast. I was up very early this
6 morning. So, let me just ask that question again. So, the fire
7 suppression was for the engine room, and --

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. -- did it or did it not activate?

10 A. It did not.

11 Q. Okay. All right. And can you tell me, you know, being a
12 mariner, being the owner of this boat for 10 years and a captain,
13 so how did the fire not get into the engine room?

14 A. We believe that the bulkheads did their job. The bulkheads
15 were properly installed, properly sealed. We did not see fire
16 (indiscernible) beyond the bulkheads.

17 Q. Was there -- did the fire get anywhere near an engine room
18 door?

19 A. It did not.

20 Q. Okay. And was -- it did not. Okay. Is there, below deck --
21 you know, when I looked at that 3D drawing, I saw you could get
22 into the engine room from the aft deck, you know, the main deck
23 aft, going down. Is there a door in the forward bulkhead from --

24 A. No, there's not.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. There's the (indiscernible), the emergency escape hatch, and
2 the engine room access is both from the outside deck.

3 Q. Wow. You guys have got to feel pretty good about the engine
4 room not getting burnt. Yeah. All right. Yeah, that's all the
5 questions I have. Anything else that we didn't talk about that
6 you'd like to mention to help us write a good report?

7 A. You know, I -- just looking back, you know, my view as an
8 owner, and the design of the vessel, I was impressed with. With
9 the fire being on the back side of a bulkhead, we noticed that it
10 didn't travel through that bulkhead. It didn't burn the stuff on
11 the other side of the bulkhead. Even the hotness of the fire
12 didn't penetrate that. So, I was impressed with that. It was
13 comforting to see that. The response of our crew, I was impressed
14 with. You know, it helps us fine tune our standards, but they
15 performed what they were taught, and they performed it well. And
16 there was no loss of life. Those are things we are grateful for.

17 Q. That's a good list. Let me ask you about the bulkhead.
18 Which bulkhead is that that you were talking about?

19 A. So, the forward wall of that room has a bulkhead, a
20 separation bulkhead between the forward staterooms and the aft
21 staterooms. And the wall coverings, everything in that side,
22 paper towels on the other side of that bulkhead, was untouched
23 other than smoke. Or, unscathed, I should say.

24 Q. So, the forward staterooms were not, as you said --

25 A. Not damaged, other --

- 1 Q. Got you.
- 2 A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. All right. So --
- 4 A. -- water, right, yeah.
- 5 Q. So, the fire was contained --
- 6 (Crosstalk)
- 7 Q. Can you -- was the fire contained between two bulkheads?
- 8 A. It was contained between bulkheads, yep.
- 9 Q. And did those bulkheads have any openings in them? You know,
- 10 did they have any doors below the main deck?
- 11 A. No, no. No.
- 12 Q. Okay. Well, that's a good way to keep the bulkheads closed.
- 13 All right. (Indiscernible) between -- okay. And was there flame
- 14 damage above?
- 15 A. So, that's where the fire went, was, went up. From that
- 16 stateroom, the fire went up.
- 17 Q. And how did the fire go up? You know, we were --
- 18 A. I don't know how fire travels, but it traveled up into the
- 19 main cabin, and burned what was in the main cabin, and then
- 20 continued to travel up.
- 21 Q. All right. When you went on board with the fire chief --
- 22 well, what openings are there -- well, let me ask you this: So,
- 23 the flames left the aft stateroom area and went up to the main
- 24 deck?
- 25 A. Correct, from my understanding.

1 Q. Okay. All right. Well, I -- did you see how that could have
2 happened? I mean, is there a large opening, a hatch, stairwell?

3 A. It didn't come up through the stairwell.

4 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: It just came straight up from that room,
5 correct, or --

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: It also came up through the
7 emergency escape hatch --

8 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: Oh, it did come up through the emergency
9 escape hatch in the aft staterooms.

10 BY MR. KARR:

11 Q. That was at -- did anyone see it open? You know. I mean, it
12 does make sense that, yeah, if there's an opening like that, it
13 would come up. Well, I'll say, you weren't there. You don't know
14 if it was open, if that escape hatch was open --

15 (Crosstalk)

16 Q. -- or closed.

17 A. The emergency escape hatch was open.

18 Q. And that's because you saw it?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Like, when you -- and can -- and was that part of your --
21 tell me why it was open.

22 A. For air ventilation.

23 Q. Okay. So, it's pretty safe to say that that escape hatch has
24 probably been open since the vessel was in dry dock?

25 A. It's closed easy evening.

1 Q. Ah. Okay.

2 A. But it's been open -- but then, it's open when we are
3 actively working.

4 Q. All right. And why do you close it in the evening?

5 A. To avoid a hold in the floor and a hazard.

6 Q. And is that inside -- again, I don't have the general
7 arrangement plan. Is that inside the main cabin, or is that out
8 on the main deck?

9 A. It's in the main cabin just as you step inside the back
10 doors, is the emergency escape hatch for the aft staterooms.

11 MR. KARR: All right. Okay. Thanks. Thank you for all that
12 information. So, I have no more questions, [REDACTED]

13 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you, Mike. We can move on to our
14 next, and what I'm thinking is -- you know, obviously, you're all
15 here. I was thinking maybe jump to someone who was on board the
16 vessel on that day; and then, we can come back and kind of finish
17 up with you, Dave, and you can, you know, answer anything that's
18 still hanging out. So, I'm sorry, we haven't met. I'm [REDACTED]

19 [REDACTED] And were you the firewatch?

20 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Yes.

21 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So, are you okay being our next
22 interviewee?

23 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Yeah.

24 MR. [REDACTED] All right. So, I'm going to go through the
25 whole spiel again.

INTERVIEW OF JOSHUA BRADSHAW

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BY MR. [REDACTED]

Q. If you wouldn't mind stating your first and last name for the record, spelling your last name?

A. My name is Joshua Bradshaw, and that is spelled B-R-A-D-S-H-A-W.

Q. Any relation to Jared Bradshaw?

A. I'm his son.

Q. Okay. And as you've been made aware, this interview is being recorded, and you consent to the recording?

A. Yes.

Q. Thank you. Can you describe your role in relation to the Qualifier 105?

A. Well, I'm a deckhand for the company, and I don't -- I'm not tied to a specific boat. I'm low man on the totem pole. I go where I'm told and do what I'm told.

Q. Got you. And how long have you been doing that?

A. This is the beginning of my second year.

MR. KARR: I thought he was going to say when he was five years old.

BY MR. [REDACTED]

Q. All right. And can you just please go ahead and walk us through the events of the 19th, to the best of your recollection?

A. Yeah. I started out my day, you know, on the Qualifier with the welders acting as firewatch. I was the only SVA (ph.)

1 employee on the boat for the majority of the day. They all
2 stopped in and came in from time to time. But I would
3 occasionally -- I mean, there's the two welders, and there was
4 one welding, and then the apprentice who would stand firewatch, as
5 well, and assist the welder. From time to time, I would check the
6 rest of the vessel, and on one of those rounds around the vessel,
7 I noticed a strange haze coming from the stairwell. It was normal
8 to have dust come up from there with the welding, but it seemed
9 like it was almost like a different color, and it had an odd
10 smell, like a burning smell.

11 And I went back down the stairs and saw flame on the bunk,
12 and immediately notified the welders by yelling, fire. And I
13 believe they had a -- yeah, they had a fire extinguisher with
14 them. And I ran up, and the nearest extinguisher from there that
15 I remembered was outside the door. We ran and grabbed that one
16 and grabbed the one from above the engine room, as well. And we
17 had three fire extinguishers down there trying to put it out until
18 the smoke got too thick, until we had to evacuate the vessel. And
19 at that point, we called -- I called 9-1-1. And we weren't
20 sure -- we filled that room with extinguisher, so we weren't sure
21 if it was out or not, because there was still smoke, until we
22 could see flame coming up from that forward hatch, the escape
23 hatch.

24 And at that point, it came into the main salon area, and the
25 fire actually kicked out the door at us at that point, and that's

1 when we evaluated the vessel. And we waited there. We never came
2 back to the vessel. We stayed at a safe distance for the rest of
3 the time. At some point, I accidentally hung up on 9-1-1, but at
4 that point, the police department was there and the fire
5 department was on their way.

6 Q. Okay. Thank you. So, do you remember about what time you
7 started, kind of, that day?

8 A. We start work at 9:00 a.m.

9 Q. 9:00 a.m.? And so, what were your duties as firewatch? Can
10 you kind of explain what they entailed?

11 A. Well, you know, my main job is to be on firewatch and watch,
12 you know, where they're welding in case of any fire; and I would
13 also go around the vessel making sure everything was in its place,
14 and move tools back into place, and everything; and assist welders
15 as needed. And I was it for that day.

16 Q. Did you get any special training, or do they have any
17 specified procedures for you to follow as a firewatch?

18 A. Before I started working for them, I went through an AB
19 course and went through basic firefighting. And so, there was no
20 -- like, it was all special training from the AB course on how to
21 stand firewatch and everything, and they made sure that I had that
22 understanding of how to stand firewatch and what to do in those
23 situations. And so, I guess, yes.

24 Q. And when you say, AB course, is that a Coast Guard able
25 seaman course?

- 1 A. (No audible response.)
- 2 Q. And who was that through?
- 3 A. It was through AFEK (ph.).
- 4 Q. Through AFEK. Over in --
- 5 A. Um-hum.
- 6 Q. Okay. All right. Now, were you doing -- was there any sort
- 7 of specified timeline for the rounds of the vessel you were doing?
- 8 A. No, there wasn't a specified timeline. It was just, from
- 9 time to time I'd get up and check around.
- 10 Q. And do you have a specific kind of order that you'd go
- 11 through the vessel?
- 12 A. Yeah. I would just go up the stairs, and then through the
- 13 hallways and forward bunks, just check down there. Come back up.
- 14 And then -- it's a small vessel, and so I would just maybe
- 15 (indiscernible) and then, just go back down. They're very short
- 16 routes.
- 17 Q. So, during the time you weren't doing rounds, you were in the
- 18 area that the welder and welding assistant were, ready to support
- 19 them or --
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 Q. -- if needed? And so, would that be the conclusion of one of
- 22 those rounds, when you were coming back to the staircase to go
- 23 back down to that, that you first noticed the haze and the burning
- 24 smell that you mentioned?
- 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So, you proceeded down the stairwell, you hooked a
2 (indiscernible), and saw room J right there?

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. And so, you were looking through the door into the room.
5 Where specifically did you see the flames coming from?

6 A. I didn't see much at all. Like, I didn't stop to
7 investigate. I just saw, on that quarter, there's -- the far side
8 bunks, just on that corner right at the edge, is where I saw the
9 flame, on the (indiscernible). That's all I saw. The far side
10 bunk, that the -- it would be starboard side bunks, over in that
11 room.

12 Q. Okay. And there are two bunks on that side --

13 A. I believe so.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: There's three forward --

15 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Okay. So -- no, no, no. That'd be two
16 on the port side, right? There's two --

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: Two on the --

18 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: -- port side, and one on the starboard
19 side.

20 BY MR. [REDACTED]

21 Q. Okay. And it was that starboard side?

22 A. It was that one starboard side bunk, yeah, on the portside
23 corner of that bunk.

24 Q. And can you describe what that looked like to you using
25 colors, sizes, anything?

1 A. I just -- it was like a small, 6-inch, yellow-orange flame.

2 Q. Okay. And so, you witnessed that, and at that point, correct
3 me if I'm wrong, you were staring into the room, and the welding's
4 going on behind you, correct?

5 A. No. It was going on forward of the room and to the right,
6 and then into the tower.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: So, where's the welding going on?
8 That was behind you.

9 MR. [REDACTED] When you're facing the --

10 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: When I'm facing the room, it's --
11 correct, because I had my back to the wall when I saw the fire,
12 correct? When I came down that staircase?

13 BY MR. [REDACTED]

14 Q. So, you're facing the room, looking at it?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Where were the welders, as opposed to where you're at right
17 now?

18 A. Where I'm at? So, if I'm facing down the hallway, and room J
19 is to my left --

20 Q. You're facing into room J?

21 A. Okay, facing into room J, yeah, they're behind you.

22 Q. Okay. So, when you were looking at (indiscernible) off to
23 your left, because you had just --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- come down the --

- 1 A. Yeah, the fire was off to my left.
- 2 Q. Okay. So, you come downstairs, see the fire on the left in
3 room J. What was your next step?
- 4 A. I yelled, fire, to the welders, and as soon as I -- like, I
5 waited for a response. I yelled a second time, until I heard
6 them -- you know, they heard me, they understood. They started
7 saying, fire, fire, and got up, and so I knew that they heard me,
8 and that's when I ran up to go get an extinguisher.
- 9 Q. Okay. So, you ran back up the same stairs you came down --
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. -- back through the main cabin, past the open emergency
12 escape hatch at --
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. -- that point?
- 15 A. Yeah.
- 16 Q. Were there any sort of power ventilation, any fans or
17 anything going on in any of that?
- 18 A. We did have a fan going into the escape hatch for to push
19 fresh air down.
- 20 Q. Okay. And then, you said the extinguisher you grabbed was
21 mounted on the exterior outside the main cabin outdoors?
- 22 A. It wasn't mounted at the time. It was taken out of the mount
23 and set on the deck. But yeah, it was just outside on the
24 starboard side of the vessel, outside those main doors.
- 25 Q. So, you brought that, then, back, retraced your steps down,

1 and at that time, the welders had emerged from the welding area.
2 And at that point, were they already discharging an extinguisher
3 into that space?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And that was one of -- an extinguisher they had with them --

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. -- at their --

8 A. And then, I even went back up another time, and there was an
9 extinguisher mounted directly above the engine room entrance, and
10 I grabbed that one from them, as well.

11 Q. That's the engine room entrance on the aft deck?

12 A. Yes, sir.

13 Q. And so, a total of three extinguishers were discharged into?

14 A. No. The third one, I brought. The welders were on their way
15 back up the stairs, and that one was left up top of the stairs,
16 and -- yeah.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: The guys tripped down the stairs --

18 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Yeah. That's where I left it. And
19 then, we had to have had a fourth extinguisher, then, because I
20 remember, while on the phone with 9-1-1, they had another
21 extinguisher trying to put chemical down as the fire was moving
22 into the main area.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #2: 'Bye, Mike.

24 MR. KARR: See you, John (ph.).

25 BY MR. [REDACTED]

1 Q. So, when you returned to the stateroom from grabbing the
2 first extinguisher, had the fire grown since your initial sighting
3 of it?

4 A. I didn't look. And, you know, I was just -- we needed more
5 extinguishers. That was the only thing on my mind.

6 Q. Okay. And when you -- well, at the same time, I believe you
7 mentioned that you were -- there was too much smoke, and you had
8 to get out of there. Did you observe any more flame at that
9 point, or was it just --

10 A. The smoke was really thick and black, and we couldn't see
11 anything through it. So, I -- and I didn't -- that's how we
12 didn't know if it was out or if it was still going. We couldn't
13 see it. We couldn't breathe, and so we moved out of the vessel.

14 Q. So, what was your egress path from where you were to safety
15 away from that?

16 A. Straight out the back doors.

17 Q. Straight out the back doors? So, up that stairwell?

18 A. I was at the top of the stairwell --

19 Q. You were at the top.

20 A. -- when we started evacuating.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. But they came up that stairwell. And then, we all moved out
23 those back doors --

24 Q. Were there any issues with the evacuation, or were you able
25 to make it --

- 1 A. No, we all --
- 2 Q. -- safely and rather quickly?
- 3 A. We all made it out very quickly and unscathed.
- 4 Q. Okay. And then, at that point, you were standing on the aft
5 deck of the vessel?
- 6 A. Um-hum.
- 7 Q. And it was just you and the two welders at that point?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. And what kind of happened as you were standing on that aft
10 deck?
- 11 A. I immediately got on the phone with 9-1-1. The smoke's
12 starting to get thicker and thicker coming out the doors, and we
13 just -- you know, none of us are fire experts, so we had no idea
14 if it was out, if this was still going and getting worse. But we
15 were just on the line with 9-1-1, and that's when we started
16 seeing fire kind of glow (indiscernible). And that's when the
17 welders started putting chemical down in order to try to prevent
18 it. And it grew larger inside the salon, and then it kicked out
19 the doors at us, and that's when we immediately disembarked the
20 vessel.
- 21 Q. And you disembarked via some access arrangement that was
22 already set up on the boat?
- 23 A. Yeah. We have a set of stairs going up to the vessel.
- 24 Q. And that's on the starboard side?
- 25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. The same stairs that are set up now --

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. Okay. And then, once you were off the vessel, what happened
4 then?

5 A. Right as I got off the vessel, we parked our cars right next
6 to it, and I immediately got to my car, and moved it out of the
7 way, and hopped back out. And that's when I saw Mike, our dry
8 dock engineer, coming through, and he moved his vehicle. I think,
9 around that point is when I accidentally hung up on 9-1-1. But
10 people started screaming in. Dave came in. And then, the police
11 officers started coming in all at the same time. The shipyard
12 itself brought a water truck over and started to hook that up.
13 And, you know, I stood off to the side as more and more employees
14 and everybody came in, and then the fire department. And it all
15 just happened super quickly. Everybody just started coming in
16 attempting to put out the fire.

17 Q. Did you have any role in the firefighting efforts once you
18 evacuated the vessel?

19 A. No. I was told to stay back, and that's what I did.

20 Q. So, it was -- the Northern Enterprises water truck came over.
21 Did they start actively engaging the fire?

22 A. No. They hooked it up, and that was when Dave got there.
23 Dave was the one fighting the fire.

24 Q. Okay. When you were doing your rounds, was the lighting
25 fixture in that room J? Was that eliminated during that time?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And as part of your, you getting there in the morning, were
3 you the one who was energizing any of the power that was needed on
4 the vessel, or was that someone else?

5 A. That was someone else.

6 Q. Aside from (indiscernible) when you witnessed that there was
7 actually fire in that space, did you notice anything out of the
8 ordinary in any of your previous rounds with regard to room J or
9 that area?

10 A. No.

11 MR. [REDACTED] I think that's all the questions I have for you
12 at this time, so I'm going to turn it over to Mike with NTSB
13 again.

14 BY MR. KARR:

15 Q. Hi. Mike Karr with the NTSB. Who did energize the power for
16 that day?

17 A. I'm not sure. I just woke up, didn't have my coffee yet, and
18 was -- I wasn't paying attention to who was flipping switches.

19 MR. KARR: [REDACTED] I've made a note here, and the note is for
20 Joshua Bradshaw.

21 BY MR. KARR:

22 Q. I'd like you to make a diagram of, you know, where you were,
23 you know, where you were -- showing where you were standing, where
24 you saw the fire, and then where the welders were. You know,
25 simple sketch. It doesn't have to be very artistic. Just a

1 simple sketch, you know, showing bulkheads, and the stairway, and
2 the hallways, so that we can get an idea of where the fire was and
3 where the activity was.

4 A. Should I just (indiscernible) as I'm drawing it?

5 Q. Well, you know what? Let me just keep asking questions, and
6 that's something you can do maybe when we're talking to someone
7 else.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. All right. So, let me -- I'll keep -- so, I've got more
10 questions for you. What were the welders working on? Was it a
11 piece of equipment? Was it shell plate?

12 A. It was a seam along the fuel tank.

13 Q. And how far away -- how many feet were they away from where
14 the fire was?

15 A. I want to say, 15 feet.

16 Q. And is that fuel tank in that -- between the bulkheads we
17 talked about earlier with your dad?

18 A. I believe so.

19 Q. And what does that fuel tank service?

20 A. I'm sorry, what was that?

21 Q. Do you know what the fuel tank services? You know, where the
22 lines go?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Do you know if the fuel tank was empty?

25 A. It was, yes.

1 Q. Do you know if it had been gas-free?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Do you know if someone had verified that? You know, usually,
4 on big ships, a marine chemist does, but do you know if -- was
5 there any other method used to determine that there were no
6 flammable vapors in there?

7 A. I know we had a marine chemist come and test it.

8 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Right?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: It was competent shipyard.

10 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: It was a competent shipyard test, and
11 that's what we had.

12 BY MR. KARR:

13 Q. All right. Thanks. You mentioned seeing black smoke. Did
14 you ever see any white smoke at any time?

15 A. No. I think the closest thing to white smoke was that small
16 haze I saw that seemed more gray than white.

17 Q. And that was what you saw initially?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. The escape hatch, was there anything blocking it from being
20 closed? You know, was there an electrical cord or anything else
21 sticking through the escape hatch?

22 A. We had the escape hatch open. We had the -- the hatch
23 (indiscernible) removed, and we had that fan blowing in fresh air
24 at that escape hatch --

25 Q. Was there actually --

1 A. -- before that.

2 Q. -- was there -- so, I think I can picture it, but I'll ask
3 you this --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. -- just to make sure I have it pictured right. Was there
6 anything penetrating the deck through the hatch? You know, any
7 kind of a cord?

8 A. I don't believe so. I think we just had that fan on top.
9 And Dave reminded me it wasn't blowing air in; it was blowing air
10 out.

11 Q. So, the fan was below the main deck, then, blowing up?

12 A. No, it was on top of that main deck just taking air from that
13 general area, pushing it outside.

14 Q. And was it right over the hatch?

15 A. Yes. Well, it wasn't on top of it, but it was next to it
16 aiming towards it.

17 Q. So, can you describe that fan, you know, how it looked, you
18 know, the type of fan, and then how it was sitting on the deck?

19 A. It was one of those round fans. It seemed like a blower for
20 like a -- it normally had one of those elephant trunks attached to
21 them, one of those blowers, and it was angled like -- it was
22 tipped back, and so that the end of it that pulled the air through
23 was almost, I guess, as close to the hatch as possible, and it was
24 tied in place so it could be angled and pull air out of there.

25 Q. All right. Were you the last -- who was the last person to

1 look into room J?

2 A. When the fire -- like, before or after the fire started?

3 Q. After the fire started.

4 A. After the fire started, it was the welders that were the last
5 ones to look in there.

6 Q. All righty. When you looked and saw the flame, what was in
7 the vicinity of the flame, what was in the vicinity of the bunk?

8 A. I didn't stay and take a deep look. I just saw like -- I
9 barely saw into the room, and just saw a little bit of fire, and
10 that was enough for me to yell, fire, and immediately try to stop
11 it. I didn't look for anything.

12 Q. Did anything look unusual other than the flame on the bunk?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Any damage, you know, something that looked out of place?

15 A. No.

16 Q. And what was on the bunk where the flame was?

17 A. I don't recall there being anything on the bunk.

18 Q. Was there a mattress?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Was there any sheets or blankets on -- you know, was it made
21 up, or was just an empty -- just a mattress?

22 A. It was just the mattress.

23 Q. Was there anything on the mattress?

24 A. All of our mattresses have like a fabric cover on top of them
25 to protect the mattresses themselves, but that was it.

1 Q. All right. And then, I need to know a little bit more about
2 you. How old are you?

3 A. I'm 20 years old.

4 Q. All right. Do you hold any Coast Guard licenses or
5 documents?

6 A. Right now, I'm in the process of receiving my documents. I
7 sent in my paperwork to get my AB, I want to say, a month or two
8 ago, so I'm in the process of receiving those documents.

9 Q. All right. So, tell me about your maritime experience. How
10 long, you know, have you been working as a deckhand with SVA, and
11 have you done anything in addition to SVA?

12 A. This is my second year with SVA, but before this, I worked --
13 a couple of years ago, I worked on a commercial fishing vessel. A
14 couple of years before that, I worked on a charter vessel. And
15 then, in between those, I worked at the fuel dock here in Homer.
16 That's all my marine experiences.

17 Q. All right. Thanks for that. Did I hear you say that when
18 you were on board the ship, the flames actually chased you out of
19 the main deckhouse?

20 A. The flames didn't. It was the smoke that forced us out.

21 Q. Can you --

22 A. It was the flames -- once they reached the back door is what
23 forced us off the vessel.

24 Q. So, flames -- you saw flames reach the back door?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So, how long do you think that took from the time you saw the
2 flame and reported that there was a fire until the flames reached
3 the back door on the upper deck? Or on the main deck?

4 A. It all went by super quickly, but it only could have been
5 like a couple minutes. It didn't take long for us to be
6 disembarking the vessel from the moment it started. I know for a
7 fact my call log said I called 9-1-1 at about 12:01, but -- so, I
8 want to say, anywhere between 11:55 and 11:58 is when it could
9 have started. And then, probably 12:03 is probably when we -- at
10 the most, the latest we disembarked that vessel.

11 Q. And you disembarked when the flames reached the back door?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. That was an excellent timeline. That was good.
14 Joshua, do you recall when the -- you know, days, weeks, months,
15 when the competent person verified that that fuel tank was empty
16 or gas-free?

17 A. I do not. It was -- yeah, I honestly don't know.

18 Q. All right. Do you know if they checked any -- did they do
19 that for any other tanks?

20 A. Not that I know of.

21 MR. KARR: All right. So, thank you. I have no more
22 questions.

23 MR. [REDACTED] I just have one follow-up, and that is -- thank
24 you for the diagram.

25 BY MR. [REDACTED]

1 Q. Could you also indicate on there about where the welding
2 machine was located in that room with respect to the bunk?

3 A. It was dead center in the room.

4 MR. [REDACTED] Dead center in the room? Thank you.

5 MR. KARR: And this is a question for Joshua and Dad.
6 Why was the welding machine put in that room?

7 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: I don't know if there was a specific
8 reason.

9 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: Well, my speculation is, to get it out
10 of the way. It wasn't in the same room as them welding. You
11 know, these are not real big rooms. And correct me if I'm wrong,
12 Mike, but they couldn't have it in the same room that they were in
13 because of limited space; and then, they couldn't have it in the
14 hallway to impede our access to --

15 MR. KARR: So, the -- what kind of lines ran from the welding
16 machine to where they were working? It ran out room J into the
17 hallway, and into the passageway, and then into the room they were
18 working?

19 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Yeah. So, they have a spool gun, so
20 it's a series of four wires -- three wires to the gun, I think.

21 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: Yeah.

22 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: You have a gas, you have a wire, and
23 you have a power. So, there's three wires, and they're all kind
24 of grouped together in one wire, so that's what was running from
25 that machine to the place they were welding.

1 Q. Right. And so, for both of you or anyone else, how long had
2 they been welding in that area that morning?

3 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: That'd be, probably, a question for our
4 port engineer, Mike. He can answer the breaker question. He can
5 answer about stuff.

6 MR. KARR: All right.

7 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: They were welding pretty much from --
8 when we got there, around 9 o'clock, all the way up to when the
9 fire happened.

10 MR. RATHIBHAN: Okay. So, this is Mike, the port engineer.
11 So --

12 (Crosstalk)

13 INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL RATHIBHAN

14 BY MR. KARR:

15 Q. And that morning, Mike, were you on -- I think I know the
16 answer, but I'll ask you, were you on -- you know, for what
17 periods of time were you on the vessel from 9 o'clock until the
18 fire occurred?

19 A. I was on the vessel from 9:00 a.m. I believe I left shortly
20 after that, probably around 45 minutes later. We had other things
21 we got (indiscernible). I pretty much left after that.

22 Q. And at 9 o'clock, when the welders started, were they working
23 in that same area?

24 A. Yes, they were working in that same area.

25 Q. All right. And what was the nature of the seam work that

1 they were doing or other -- you know, what was the nature of what
2 they were doing?

3 A. It was all (indiscernible) maintenance. They had a few leaks
4 that just needed to get addressed, and it was weeping, so we just
5 wanted to make sure that's sealed it and there was no further
6 leaking throughout the season to come.

7 Q. And a leak, were they like, were the leaks all in the seams,
8 or were there other little thin areas where they were putting
9 welding metal in there?

10 A. They weren't welding any metal in there. They were pretty
11 much taking away old welds and building it back, back gouging it
12 and building it back up to make sure it doesn't leak anymore.

13 Q. All right. Back gouging it. Man. I'm not a welder, so does
14 that mean they were grinding, or is that something you do with a
15 hot -- with an arc?

16 A. Yes, they were grinding.

17 MR. KARR: They were grinding. Okay. All right. Okay, I'm
18 done. I stole the thunder of Mike, so -- but I'm done with
19 Joshua.

20 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. We'll go through the introduction for
21 Mike, then, backing up.

22 BY MR. [REDACTED]

23 Q. So, Mike, if you wouldn't mind, would you please state your
24 name for the record, spelling your last name?

25 A. It's Michael Rathibhan, last name spelled R-A-T-H-I-B-H-A-N.

1 Q. And have you been made aware that this interview is being
2 recorded and you consent to the recording?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Can you describe your role in relationship to the Qualifier
5 105?

6 A. I'm the port engineer for the company, so (indiscernible)
7 Qualifier 105, we have three other different boats, so I'm usually
8 jumping around --

9 Q. And how long have you been in that position?

10 A. Three years now.

11 Q. Three years? And what did you do before that?

12 A. I was a Coastie. I was in the Coast Guard --

13 Q. Okay. And can you please walk us through the events of that
14 day, to the best of your recollection?

15 A. So, from in the morning when we got there at 9:00 a.m. I went
16 down, and I energized all the breakers, which includes the heater,
17 includes the weather machine. And then, I go up forward to where
18 other breaker panel, and that's where I turn on the lights for the
19 salon area; and then, down below, where they were doing all the
20 hot work. From there, I just ensure that the welders are all set
21 to go, and the firewatch is posted, and we go through our own
22 safety brief and make sure everyone's on the same page. And then,
23 after that, I had departed the vessel.

24 When I was coming back, that was around 11:30ish. I went and
25 got lunch right there at the boatyard café, and that's when I saw

1 everyone starting to look over at the Qualifier, and they all saw
2 flames out there. And that's when I ran outside and, you know,
3 moved my truck. And, you know, I immediately saw Josh moving his
4 vehicle away, and he was on the phone, and I automatically assumed
5 it was the fire department. And then, saw the welders moving
6 their vehicles, as well. From there, we were just pretty much
7 standing point to make sure no one else came around the immediate
8 area. Knowing that there is fuel on the other side of the vessel,
9 I didn't want -- we didn't want any -- take any precautions
10 whatsoever, so we made sure everyone was a good amount of distance
11 back, and that was at least 100 to 200 feet.

12 Q. And did you actually engage in any of the firefighting
13 efforts after that point?

14 A. Yeah. At some point, when Dave Mastolier had showed up, I
15 assisted him with the firehose that was supplied by the boatyard
16 itself, and myself and him were up there trying to somewhat put
17 the fire out on (indiscernible) until the fire department showed
18 up and came on the vessel.

19 Q. And when you say, up there, was that on the back of the
20 vessel?

21 A. Yes, correct.

22 Q. On that aft deck?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And were you attacking the fire in the main cabin at that
25 point, or --

1 A. We were trying to. They didn't have the proper nozzle, so it
2 was like fighting a fire with a garden hose at that point. I
3 think the boatyard pretty much wasn't up to par with their
4 firefight equipment at that moment, so they're more aware of what
5 they need to fix.

6 Q. And then, at what point did you get off the vessel yourself?

7 A. I believe it was when the fire department showed up; and
8 then, they wanted everyone off the vessel.

9 Q. Okay. With regard to the welding machine, so, Jared
10 mentioned that there was a connection for that in the engine
11 room --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. How was the actual power cable run from the machine itself to
14 that special connection for it?

15 A. So, we had a -- it pretty much came up from the engine room,
16 and it was ran forward to the room itself. Excuse me. Went
17 through, yeah, went through the emergency escape hatch where the
18 fan was sucking air out of. We had pretty much like a frame that
19 we made, and we had the box on top there, and a hole, pretty much,
20 where the wire penetrated through --

21 Q. So, the power cord was through the emergency escape hatch
22 there?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And so, did that obstruct the ability of the hatch to close
25 if someone tried to close it if they had to (indiscernible) to

1 close it?

2 A. They would have to remove that power cord, but at that point,
3 it's just this little piece of metal that was (indiscernible).

4 There's a safe hatch --

5 Q. And do you know the name of the gentlemen who were doing the
6 welding at that point?

7 A. It was Ken Lewis, and his son, Mike Lewis, was there.

8 Q. And then, was Ken the main welder, and then his --

9 A. Well, he's the --

10 Q. And then, he has his two --

11 A. His other son was off doing a parts run. He's the actual
12 welder. And then, he had his other welder there, as well, his
13 other son that was doing the prep work and whatnot.

14 Q. Now, you mentioned a safety meeting that was held that
15 morning. Can you --

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. -- just describe the topic --

18 A. So, we usually go through, every morning, what our -- you
19 know, what the scope is for that day and what it entails, you
20 know. And for that specific job, it was, you know, welding,
21 grinding. So, we made sure everyone had their proper PPs (ph.).
22 That was safety glasses, gloves, respirators if needed. And then,
23 we talk about -- you know, make sure that they're aware, if there
24 was ever a fire, what to go -- what to do. Such as that.

25 Q. Okay. So, you're speaking about some of the breakers that

1 you energized that morning. Where did we get the breaker box that
2 you use for the welding connection --

3 A. All that's in the engine room.

4 Q. All that's in the engine room?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And then, the second breaker panel that you use for the
7 (indiscernible) and lighting in that area, where is that located?

8 A. There is one by the stairway that goes down to the aft
9 staterooms there, as for the whole salon area in the top deck.
10 And then, as you go down the stairway right to the port hand side
11 of the ship, there's another breaker box that --

12 Q. At any point during firefighting efforts, did you disconnect
13 the shore power to the vessel?

14 A. No. I didn't think to go down there. But I believe I recall
15 talking to Aaron (ph.). He's the boatyard manager or foreman
16 there. And he said he cut the whole power to everything in the
17 boatyard --

18 Q. Yes.

19 A. -- because of that, yeah.

20 Q. -- power?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. But during the whole time, the boat was plugged into the --

23 A. Yeah, it was plugged in. We would have to go down in the
24 engine room, which (indiscernible) breaker itself.

25 Q. Was there any yard work taking place in that actual room J?

1 Was any maintenance scheduled in May or anything?

2 A. No.

3 Q. No? Okay.

4 A. That was pretty much an area that had, you know, all of our
5 welding equipment. It would be out of the way so we weren't
6 stepping over it. (Indiscernible) part of that.

7 Q. And as I mentioned earlier, the two things (indiscernible)
8 where you've been even checked by a competent person, were you
9 part of that at all?

10 A. We had checked it initially. I don't remember exactly when,
11 but we did check it. We have a gas-free meter, and we check them.
12 And they constantly are blowing air to that.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Fresh air.

15 Q. And then, it's already been discussed, but there was that you
16 need a fan up there that, in turn, was sucking air out of that
17 lower space there where the welding was occurring; that's correct?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. When you were there from 9:00 to 9:45, did you do any general
20 walkaround of the vessel, or did you have more specific task that
21 you were there to --

22 A. Usually, when I'm turning on the (indiscernible), I look
23 around and make sure nothing's out of the normal, things like
24 that.

25 Q. Did you notice anything out of place, anything that seemed

1 strange?

2 A. No. Everything looked normal.

3 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. That's all I have for you right now.

4 I'm going to turn it over to other Mike with --

5 MR. RATHIBHAN: Okay.

6 MR. [REDACTED] -- NTSB.

7 MR. KARR: All right. Thanks.

8 BY MR. KARR:

9 Q. Were there any flammable or combustible liquids in room J?

10 A. Nope, there was no flammable or combustible liquids at all.

11 If we ever had any kind of flammable liquids, it would just be
12 (indiscernible) paint which was all being conducted in that area
13 at all.

14 Q. You mentioned, you said something about air blowing. Was
15 there air blowing through the fuel tank that they were working on?

16 A. Yeah. When anyone's in the fuel tank itself, we always push
17 fresh air in there for ventilation, and eventually, the natural
18 vents on the side of the ship.

19 Q. Oh. Is that fuel tank that they were working on, is that an
20 integral -- is that part of the ship, or is that an independent
21 fuel tank?

22 A. That's part of the ship.

23 Q. Is that along the --

24 A. It was on the port side.

25 Q. Port side? So, the bottom of the tank is the bottom of the

1 ship?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: Starboard side.

3 MR. RATHIBHAN: Or -- I'm getting turned around. It was
4 starboard side. I'm sorry. Get turned around in that stateroom
5 there.

6 BY MR. KARR:

7 Q. So, starboard side, and so, the exterior of the hull was the
8 side of the fuel tank?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And the bottom of the tank is the bottom of the hull?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And what are the forward and after sides of the tank? Are
13 they ship bulkheads?

14 A. The aft side of the tank is where the engine room would meet
15 up; and then, forward would be staterooms.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: Correct.

17 BY MR. KARR:

18 Q. And then, what's on the -- so, let's see, so the tank's on
19 the starboard side. Let me -- I'm making my own little drawing,
20 here. Four staterooms. And what's to the -- you know, if I'm
21 looking at the bow, what would be on the left side of the tank?

22 A. If you're looking at the bow, left side of the tank --

23 Q. Yeah, I'm looking -- I'm standing at the stern. I'm looking
24 forward on the ship. So, I got --

25 A. Okay.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: Bilge.

2 MR. RATHIBHAN: Yeah. The left side of the tank would be
3 just the bilge area.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: Right. If you're at the stern
5 looking forward, (indiscernible) to a fire, right?. So, you have
6 the forward up in the staterooms, then (indiscernible), then the
7 bilge, and you have the hull on one side. And then, each side
8 (indiscernible) bulkhead.

9 MR. RATHIBHAN: Yes.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: (Indiscernible).

11 BY MR. KARR:

12 Q. So, the top of the tank, is that a deck?

13 A. The top of the tank is, yes, we use it as a deck. That's
14 correct.

15 Q. And what deck would that -- what room is that?

16 A. J, K, the head, and -- that last one.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: There are two --

18 MR. RATHIBHAN: All right. So, you've got K, the head, and
19 I, would be the staterooms and the head.

20 BY MR. KARR:

21 Q. So, that's a big fuel tank.

22 A. Yes, it is. It's the main -- well, there's two main fuel
23 tanks.

24 Q. So, do you know where on that tank they were welding?

25 A. They were welding pretty much right on the head there, so the

1 center-ish of the tank.

2 Q. Center of the tank, and were they welding at the top? You
3 said --

4 A. Yes, they --

5 Q. -- you said they were --

6 A. -- were welding --

7 Q. You said they were welding -- I heard, head, so I assume that
8 they were --

9 A. Yes, yes, they were welding in the head, and that's the top
10 of the tank itself, and they were welding right at the seam at the
11 time. They had multiple different leaks that they had to address.

12 Q. So, they were welding on the top of the tank?

13 A. Yes, top of the tank, the side of the tank.

14 Q. All right. Was there any -- did you see -- did you go
15 through the vessel after the fire?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: (Indiscernible).

17 MR. RATHIBHAN: I did not go through the vessel after the
18 fire. (Indiscernible) the vessel.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #1: (Indiscernible).

20 BY MR. KARR:

21 Q. Are there any -- in room J, where the flame was seen, what's
22 in the overhead above -- you know, what's in the ceiling? Let me
23 ask you this: Is there a drop ceiling in that room?

24 A. No.

25 Q. So, it's just -- so, there's -- so, if I'm in that bunk

1 looking up, it's just a steel bulkhead? Excuse me, a steel plate?

2 A. No, it was, I guess you'd say, like framing and whatnot for
3 the carpet. So, it's all carpet if you're looking up.

4 Q. Ah. Is there anything behind the carpet?

5 A. I would assume there would be framing for light fixtures; and
6 then, right after that will be the main deck.

7 Q. All right. So, there would be wires running through there?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. All right. Any fuel lines running through there?

10 A. Negative.

11 Q. During the safety meeting, were there any specific risks
12 addressed with regard to the welding of that fuel tank?

13 A. We always make sure we tell everyone to use the proper PP.
14 So, ventilation is number one. You know, eye protection, gloves.
15 Those are the main things that we go through with everyone, and
16 just knowing. But if there's ever a fire, you know, how to
17 address it, which is, you know, trying to find the source first,
18 and securing it, and then going about with fighting with an
19 extinguisher and making sure everyone else in that immediate area
20 knows about it, yes.

21 Q. Okay. Was there any discussion about, you know, any specific
22 discussion addressing how a fire could start with the work that
23 they were doing?

24 A. A specific discussion, no, but we pretty much are aware that
25 when they're welding, there's a firewatch, and he's looking around

1 the immediate area and, as Josh was doing, looking around the rest
2 of the vessel to make sure that nothing is out of sorts, because
3 just because they're welding in one spot doesn't mean something
4 can't travel to another spot. But who knows?

5 Q. The hatch, the emergency hatch, is that just a manhole cover,
6 or is it hinged?

7 A. It's a manhole cover, pretty much like a sheet of aluminum
8 with integrated face on it, so it (indiscernible) in the hole
9 itself.

10 Q. And has it got a securing device in the middle, some sort of
11 handle, or, you know, something that someone would turn to unlock
12 it?

13 A. No. It's very light to where you can just grab the edges and
14 lift it up.

15 Q. Oh, okay.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And what material did you say it was made of?

18 A. Aluminum.

19 Q. Okay. So, is the ship aluminum?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And were you on the vessel at the same time Joshua was when
22 it -- when the flames -- when you guys got off the vessel?

23 A. I was not on the vessel. I was having lunch right across
24 from the vessel. And as I came, come running to the ship itself,
25 I see Josh and the welders evacuating and moving vehicles out of

1 the way.

2 MR. KARR: All right. Joshua, are you there?

3 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: What was that?

4 MR. KARR: Is Joshua -- are you there?

5 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Yes.

6 MR. KARR: Timeline-wise, when you moved your car, that was
7 after the flames came to the door and you left the vessel?

8 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Yes.

9 MR. KARR: Okay. All right, [REDACTED] I have no more questions
10 for the port engineer. Mike, how do you pronounce your last name
11 again?

12 MR. RATHIBHAN: Rathibhan.

13 MR. KARR: And how is that spelled?

14 MR. RATHIBHAN: It's R-A-T-H-I-B-H-A-N.

15 MR. KARR: Okay. I had a T in there. All right. Rathibhan.
16 Okay. All right. Thanks.

17 MR. RATHIBHAN: No worries.

18 MR. [REDACTED] All right --

19 MR. KARR: I'll tell you what: Let me take --

20 (Crosstalk)

21 MR. KARR: [REDACTED] let me take five minutes or less to make a
22 head call.

23 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

24 MR. KARR: All right. I'll be right back. I'll keep you on
25 the line.

1 MR. [REDACTED] All right.

2 (Off the record.)

3 (On the record at 6:36.)

4 MR. KARR: All right. I've returned at --

5 MR. [REDACTED] All right.

6 MR. KARR: -- at 6:36.

7 MR. [REDACTED] 6:36. Welcome back. It's a little earlier in
8 Homer. Okay. So, we're going to pass it on to Dave here.

9 INTERVIEW OF DAVID MASTOLIER

10 BY MR. [REDACTED]

11 Q. And same spiel. Would you mind stating your first and last
12 name for the record and spelling your last name?

13 A. Yes. Dave Mastolier. That's spelled M-A-S-T-O-L-I-E-R.

14 Q. And, Dave, have you been made aware that this interview is
15 being recorded, and do you consent to its recording?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Could you please describe your role in relation to the
18 Qualifier 105?

19 A. Yeah. I'm the president and owner with Jared.

20 Q. And how long have you been in this role?

21 A. Ten years.

22 Q. And what did you do before that?

23 A. Ran boats, ran other survey boats and had another charter
24 business.

25 Q. Okay. Do you hold any Coast Guard licenses?

1 A. I have 100 --

2 Q. Okay. And can you please walk us through the sequence of
3 events on the 19th to the best of your recollection?

4 A. Sure. So, I was at our home office, and I got a text from
5 the deputy harbormaster saying that Qualifier was on fire. So, I
6 raced to the boatyard, saw that Mike Rathibhan had the crew and
7 all the people away from the boat. I went up on the boat to see
8 what the fire was doing. There was a fire extinguisher laying
9 there. I sprayed the fire extinguisher in the RAD intake. That
10 was worthless. And then, the water truck showed up, and they
11 threw the hose up to me, and, as Mike explained, it was pretty
12 worthless. Their water pump wasn't really working, and it would
13 squirt once in a while. And we stayed up there as long as we
14 could. The fire department showed up, and they wanted us off the
15 boat. So, we kept trying to fight the fire with what water was
16 available until the fire department could start spraying water on,
17 which took a while. And then, once they started spraying water,
18 then I got off the boat. And then, we watched our boat burn.

19 Actually, I take that back. We went back on the boat and
20 hung out. Jared and I hung out on the stern of the boat to assist
21 the fire team to -- because they weren't familiar with the layout
22 on the boat, and it was smoky. They couldn't see. So, we would
23 tell them the directions how to get down below, how to cut a hole
24 through the side of the boat at the proper place, how to drill a
25 hole in the bottom of the boat so they could drain the water out,

1 stuff like that.

2 Q. When you mentioned that it was a long time for the fire
3 department to get water on there, do you have any estimate of how
4 long that period was?

5 A. I would say, from the time the fire truck showed up, it was
6 probably a good five to eight minutes before they actually had a
7 true -- if not 10 minutes, true flow of water. They evidently
8 have some more training they need to go through, because their
9 hose was being disconnected. When they tried to pressure up, it
10 blew seals or -- they were learning. It's a volunteer fire
11 department.

12 Q. So, we've already heard a little bit about the scope of work
13 that was occurring on the Qualifier. Did we get that pretty much
14 correct, or any inaccuracies there that we --

15 A. No, that was pretty much it. And I guess, one thing I want
16 to try to clarify, Mike, so you can get a picture of what -- the
17 Homer shipyard, boatyard, is not a standard boatyard of what you
18 would normally see where you pull a ship out and the union
19 shipyard guys work on it. We pull our boat out, pull the
20 Qualifier out, because it's aluminum, and the steel crab boats
21 like to use it as a fender when they pull into the Homer Harbor.
22 And so, it's cheaper for us to pull our aluminum boat out, and
23 just set it on blocks, and leave it for the winter when their
24 season's done. And that's kind of what that yard does, is
25 (indiscernible) boat storage, and you're allowed to work on it

1 yourself.

2 Q. Good.

3 A. -- and a lot of people don't realize. They think a shipyard
4 is your standard shipyard. You -- the only reason you pull out is
5 because you're going to do maintenance, and as soon as that
6 maintenance is done, you're splashing. But this isn't the case.
7 If it's out (indiscernible) do the maintenance, and do all that
8 stuff.

9 Q. Were you part of the walk-through afterwards with the fire
10 marshal there?

11 A. Yeah, yeah. I was part of the walk-through.

12 Q. And so, do you kind of recall what he was able to point out
13 as you were going through that simply with regards to that
14 stateroom J?

15 A. Yeah. It was actually a good learning experience. When we
16 did the walk-through, we all first thought -- because we knew that
17 the only thing that was in that stateroom was the welding machine,
18 and we assumed that that machine must have malfunctioned and
19 started the fire. But as soon as we got in there, and you could
20 look at the stateroom, the welding machine was undamaged.
21 Everything below the bunk was undamaged. The light switch
22 (indiscernible) weren't even melted. It was very obvious that the
23 fire started much higher than those items, which are just above me
24 or my height.

25 And then, he pointed out, on the bulkhead, very clearly, the

1 Y shape you get from a fire to where the hot spot is, and so --
2 which was on the back of -- or, the front of the bunk. And then,
3 it was very obvious that that fan that was sucking air out of the
4 cabin drew the fire all across the ceiling and up the escape hatch
5 once that fire got going. So, the hallways weren't burnt down
6 low. Everything yep high was burnt. So -- and that was a very
7 high CFM fan. It did exactly what it was supposed to do, get the
8 smoke out. But a lot of smoke. So, yeah, so, it was easy to see
9 whereabouts the fire started, how it traveled. And now, yeah,
10 now, we're waiting for word.

11 Q. Knowing kind of the point that the fire marshal pointed out
12 as the likely area of origin and what is actually in that
13 compartment, do you have any suspicions on what may have actually
14 initiated the fire?

15 A. We don't have any idea. I mean, as a guess, I'm going to say
16 it's an electrical, and how, I don't know. The only thing in that
17 corner was a TV, DVD player, a bunk light, which were all -- the
18 breakers weren't on for those. But yeah, we're not sure what it
19 was.

20 Q. And were you there for the insurance fire investigator who --

21 A. I was.

22 Q. -- came out, as well?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Did he pass on any information, anything --

25 A. No, he concurred with the fire marshal -- the fire chief,

1 that, yep, the fire started there. And he was -- we asked, how
2 come the guys didn't see the flame up high, and there again was a
3 learning lesson. He said, yes, very common that they won't see
4 the flames across the ceiling, because the smoke is so thick. And
5 so, the welders, when they were trying to put the fire out below,
6 he said, yeah, they wouldn't have seen the fire up high. They
7 could have only thought they saw it on the bunk, but the fire was
8 actually racing across their heads and out the escape hatch.

9 Q. Do you happen to know the name of that investigator off the
10 top of your head?

11 A. Off the top of my head, I don't. But I can get that to you.

12 Q. Oh. Appreciate that. You've had the benefit of sitting here
13 listening to all of the three other folks speak. Is there
14 anything that you'd like to add that you feel, you know, we didn't
15 really hammer out or expand upon now that we've been through
16 everyone else?

17 A. No, I think everybody hit everything well. It was -- I mean,
18 I can just verify that as far as the welding went, it definitely
19 was not that. It wasn't the fuel tank. We were lucky, the
20 3,000 gallons, they were in the other tank, that the fire --
21 because the fire stayed high. It never even got down low. So,
22 the tanks didn't get heated. But -- and I don't know, Mike, I
23 guess, when you've seen the walk-through, the fire was contained
24 down below between the bulkheads, but once you got above into the
25 salon area, there's no bulkheads, and that fire went throughout

1 that section, and then up into the wheelhouse. But no, I think
2 everybody hit it well. My take on it is, as far as a crisis goes,
3 let me say that again, this was a crisis, but it was as good of a
4 crisis as you could get, because nobody was hurt. Two boats next
5 to it had very minor damage, so they're not going to lose their
6 season. It was all contained to us. And Mike Rathibhan did
7 exactly what he should have done, got everybody away; and Josh did
8 exactly what he should have done.

9 Q. And could you just touch on the nature of the damage to the
10 two adjacent boats there?

11 A. Yeah. They have some minor -- they melted some buoys on a
12 tender-skiff. There's some spark damage into the paint on another
13 vessel, and two wheelhouse windows are cracked from the heat. So,
14 yes, really, pretty minor.

15 Q. And those are both commercial fishing vessels?

16 A. Commercial fishing vessels, yes, and fire insurance is
17 covering their damage.

18 Q. And who is your insurance provider?

19 A. Yeah. You hear that all the time. I'm drawing a blank on
20 that --

21 Q. And then, as far as --

22 A. Was that (indiscernible)? Yeah, let's see. Gallagher's
23 (ph.) our broker, but we'll have to get back to you.

24 Q. Okay.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #2: We're real close with them.

1 MR. MASTOLIER: Yeah, we never talk to them. We talk to --

2 MR. [REDACTED] Yeah.

3 MR. MASTOLIER: -- the broker that we deal with. Yeah. Any
4 other questions?

5 MR. [REDACTED] That's all I have. I'm going to, again, turn
6 it over to Mike here.

7 MR. KARR: Yeah. Mike Karr with the NTSB.

8 BY MR. KARR:

9 Q. When you were in room J with the fire marshal -- is the fire
10 marshal and the fire chief the same person, or is it two different
11 people?

12 A. No. So, the fire marshal didn't come down. It's the fire
13 chief. So, we just said -- saying fire marshal's the wrong
14 verbiage.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. But the Homer fire chief. And then, we have a fire
17 investigator and the marine surveyor, and next will be the
18 electrical engineer. So, those are the chain of command for
19 those.

20 Q. Right. Were you with the fire investigator when he came to
21 the ship?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Did he say anything, did he provide any factual information,
24 about what he saw in room J as to what could have been the cause
25 or origin of the fire?

1 A. Other than electrical, no, that's all he -- he asked the same
2 questions, you know, what was there, and -- which, again, was TV,
3 DVD player, and bunk light. But even that was offset from where
4 the Y that -- I don't know if you've seen a picture, Mike, of it,
5 but where the aluminum has a very distinct U or a V shape to it.
6 And they said, yeah, that's right where the hot spot it.

7 Q. And was that the forward ship bulkhead or a -- this was --

8 A. That was the bulkhead between the two staterooms, the aft
9 stateroom area and the forward stateroom area.

10 Q. All right. And the -- I heard that the overhead in room J
11 was carpeted?

12 A. Yes. All of the -- yep, there was carpet throughout.

13 Q. Is there any insulation above the carpet?

14 A. No, no insulation.

15 Q. So, just carpet --

16 A. But --

17 Q. -- runs along the frame, so there's space above the carpet
18 and the overhead above it?

19 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: The carpet --

20 MR. MASTOLIER: Yeah.

21 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: -- then the plywood.

22 MR. MASTOLIER: Yeah. So, there's the aluminum framing; and
23 then, there's five (indiscernible) to the aluminum framing, and
24 the carpet glued to the plywood.

25 MR. KARR: All right. Thanks for that. Let's see. And when

1 you were on the boat, had the flames reached the salon?

2 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Yeah, yeah, that's where you -- in
3 fact, it was so hot at the time, that's why the extinguisher
4 didn't do any good. I couldn't even get close enough physically
5 to really get the fire extinguisher to spray into the salon, there
6 was so much heat coming out the aft doors.

7 MR. KARR: All right. And behind the TV and the DVD player,
8 was there any wall covering of the aluminum bulkhead?

9 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Carpet.

10 MR. KARR: All right.

11 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Carpet glued to it.

12 MR. KARR: Just carpet? No plywood?

13 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: I don't believe that. We had --

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #2: I don't believe that one had.
15 (Crosstalk)

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER #2: But I think the --

17 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: -- bulkhead.

18 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Yeah. That's just glued to the
19 aluminum.

20 BY MR. KARR:

21 Q. Dave, you told us about the hoses disconnecting when the
22 pressure was first applied. Did anybody else actually see that?

23 A. Yeah.

24 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: The fire truck, right?

25 MR. MASTOLIER: Well, yeah, the -- it was the, whatever, this

1 4- or 5-inch hose that ran from the fire hydrant to the truck that
2 blew. So, yes, yeah, there were several people that heard it and
3 saw it, because when a 5-inch hose blows, it was pretty
4 entertaining.

5 BY MR. KARR:

6 Q. So, then, they had -- so, did you -- do you know what
7 happened? I mean, I'm going to assume that they had to go back to
8 the hydrant, secure it, turn it off, reconnect the hose, and then
9 turn it back on again?

10 A. Exactly what they had to do, yep. I don't know if they --
11 somebody just didn't connect it right or what, but they said they
12 blew a seal.

13 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: Oh, that was underneath the truck, on
14 the --

15 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Yeah.

16 MR. JARED BRADSHAW: -- truck itself. Their big monitor
17 that's on the truck, the seal to that blew, is what they said.

18 MR. KARR: And who was that that just --

19 (Crosstalk)

20 MR. KARR: Who just said that?

21 MR. JOSHUA BRADSHAW: Jared Bradshaw.

22 MR. KARR: Jared? All right.

23 BY MR. KARR:

24 Q. When did you plan on putting the vessel back in the water?
25 You know, if this fire had not occurred, when had you planned on

1 putting the vessel back in the water?

2 A. It would have probably gone in about April.

3 MR. KARR: No, I have no more questions.

4 MR. [REDACTED] All right, Mike. Well, that was everyone we
5 have here today. So, absent any further questions that popped up
6 for any of the other gentlemen here, that kind of concludes our
7 planned interviewed for today.

8 MR. KARR: All right. Well, [REDACTED] the only thing I say is,
9 if the Coast Guard can't locate the general arrangement drawing,
10 see if the owner has one. And also, I'd be curious to look at the
11 piping and the electrical diagram for the vessel.

12 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

13 MR. KARR: And I appreciate the diagram that Joshua made.

14 MR. [REDACTED] Yep. Well, I'll have two diagrams come your
15 way, one from Joshua kind of showing that area, and then another
16 from Jared that kind of better outlines how the fuel tanks are
17 aligned in that space.

18 MR. KARR: Very good, very good. And, gentlemen, I
19 appreciate you all coming in to give us this information, and good
20 luck with moving forward with the vessel.

21 MR. MASTOLIER: Thank you.

22 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. Thanks, Mike.

23 MR. KARR: You're welcome, [REDACTED] And I will stop the
24 recording. It is now 6:56 on the East Coast. All right. You all
25 enjoy the rest of your afternoon.

1 MR. MASTOLIER: Thank you. Bye-bye.

2 MR. KARR: 'Bye.

3 (Whereupon, at 6:56 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

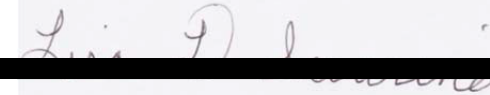
IN THE MATTER OF: R/V *QUALIFIER 105* CATCHES FIRE IN
THE NORTHERN ENTERPRISES BOATYARD
IN HOMER, ALASKA, ON JANUARY 19, 2023
Interview of Jared Bradshaw,
Joshua Bradshaw, Michael Rathibhan,
& David Mastolier

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM015

PLACE: Homer, Alaska

DATE: January 19, 2023

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.



Lisa D. Sevarino
Transcriber