

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CRANE EQUIPMENT FAILURE ONBOARD
CARGO VESSEL *THORCO BASILISK*, IN
HOUSTON, TEXAS ON JULY 26, 2022

Accident No.: DCA22FM031

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Interview of: JULIAN CAMPOS, Gang Foreman
WATCO

Houston, Texas

Wednesday,
August 3, 2022

APPEARANCES:

██████████, Lieutenant, Marine Investigator
United States Coast Guard Sector Houston

██████████, Chief Warrant Officer, Marine Investigator
United States Coast Guard Sector Houston

██████████, Lieutenant Junior Grade
United States Coast Guard Sector Houston

DEREK JOHNSTON, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:57 a.m.)

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2
3 [REDACTED]: All rightie. It is August 3, approximately
4 10:57. We're here at WATCO Greens Port Terminal, 13901 Industrial
5 Road, in Houston, Texas. We are conducting the marine casualty
6 investigation of the crane equipment failure on the *Thorco*
7 *Basilisk*. My name is Lieutenant [REDACTED].

8 [REDACTED]: Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED].

9 [REDACTED]: Lieutenant Junior Grade [REDACTED].

10 MR. CAMPOS: Julian Campos, Gang Foreman.

11 [REDACTED]: Thank you, sir. And, NTSB, if you're
12 introduce yourself; and then, please go forward with your
13 statement.

14 MR. JOHNSTON: This is Derek Johnston, J-O-H-N-S-T-O-N. I'm
15 a marine casualty investigator with the National Transportation
16 Board. Sir, just a little bit about where I'm coming from, I work
17 the NTSB. We're separate from the Coast Guard. We're an
18 independent agency that is charged with investigating major
19 accidents in transportation. We do investigate the various modes.
20 Our objective is to increase safety. It's not to assign blame or
21 find fault. We don't have any regulatory or enforcement powers.
22 We gather the facts of the case alongside the Coast Guard; and
23 then, us and the Coast Guard will go separate ways and produce our
24 own reports with findings, and probable cause, and possibly
25 recommendations to prevent these type of accidents from happening

1 in the future. After we wrap things up, there'll be a transcript
2 of the interview that'll be produced. You will have an
3 opportunity to review it if you would like. And then, that
4 transcript will be placed in the final docket with the report when
5 it's published.

6 MR. CAMPOS: Okay.

7 MR. JOHNSTON: That's all I got.

8 [REDACTED]: All right. Nacellelent. Thank you.

9 INTERVIEW OF JULIAN CAMPOS

10 BY [REDACTED]:

11 Q. So, sir, would you mind giving us a timeline, please, of when
12 you arrived for work that day until when the incident occurred,
13 and then until being done for the day, finishing up cargo
14 operations.

15 A. Okay. So, usually, we arrive at 6:45 a.m., do a little
16 safety meeting about more or less what, what they're going to be
17 taking out, and, you know, safety issues, and stuff like that.
18 So, we start about 7 o'clock after the safety meeting. We went on
19 board, and I was inside the vessel, and the gear man, you know,
20 they knew was coming up, hooking up all the rigging and the proper
21 rigging we need to take out the cargo. So, we took out, we took
22 out a couple of nacelles with the same rigging that, that happened
23 with the incident with no problem, and a couple other things with
24 different rigging. Then, we went to a different hatch, and we
25 took out more, more smaller pieces with different rigging. Then,

1 we did another nacelle. We did about two nacelles.

2 I want to say it was after -- I can't give you an exact time.
3 It was after lunch. When we got to the last nacelle that was in
4 that hatch, we rigged it up like we'd been doing. Then, I started
5 coming up easy. All my guys were in position. I was a good
6 distance away from the, the nacelle flagging. As it went up, it
7 was going, it was about 4 to 5 feet in the air when, when
8 suddenly, the cable had snapped of the crane, and, and the nacelle
9 had hit the ground, the tween deck, very fast, and the block of
10 the crane went straight inside the nacelle.

11 Q. Okay. And then, after that, what did you do?

12 A. After that, after the incident happened, I radioed the
13 superintendent what occurred; and so, automatically, then, it was
14 like stop work. (Indiscernible) stopped work. They checked to
15 make sure everybody was okay. Then, we, we had came out, we had
16 came out the vessel, and we had like a meeting of what occurred,
17 and, you know, we talked about it and stuff like that. And, you
18 know, I was just happy that, you know, nobody got hurt in my crew.
19 And then, we ended up getting sent home after the, after the
20 stand-down meeting that we had. That's pretty much what happened.

21 Q. Okay. All rightie. Sir, I'll start with questions following
22 up from that. So, did you, after the incident, did you inspect
23 anything? Did you go inside the nacelle?

24 A. No, no.

25 Q. Oh. So, you didn't see -- okay.

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay. All right. And then, what are your duties during the
3 operation? As the gang foreman, are you helping assemble the
4 crane to the nacelle?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. You are. So, did you -- for this particular one, do you use
7 a checklist, do you have a procedure, and you know how to make the
8 connection?

9 A. Well, we do have like -- it's, it's a crew, and everybody's
10 doing like their specific duty; and after, it's like -- after we
11 all, we rigged it up, and we tie, we -- I, I talk to the crane
12 operator and bring them up a little bit to have tension on it to
13 make sure everything is, you know, like shackle's not bended or no
14 like nothing's, you know, cutting the strap, or make sure the
15 rigging's proper. So, that is like what I do. I just rig it up.
16 My crew helps me rig it up. We bring it up slowly and put tension
17 on it before we, before we lift, and we get outside, and we get in
18 position to make sure -- like, we use these, we call them
19 lollipops. We put like, I think, maybe like a 2' x 4'. We like
20 cushion and tape around it just so a piece don't bang against
21 nothing. So, we get all into position, put the taglines on it.
22 And before we make the lift, I make sure the rigging's done,
23 people are in the right position. And that's -- I don't have no
24 checklist or nothing like that, but I, I just check each, each
25 corner of the, the lift and make sure the rigging's right before I

1 lift it up. So, that, that would be like the procedure I do to
2 make sure everything's hooked up right --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- before I make the lift.

5 Q. How do you know it's connected right, though? Do you have a
6 document? Like, how do you know this point needs to be attached
7 here? How do you know this point needs to be attached here?

8 How --

9 A. The way --

10 Q. -- how do you know that?

11 A. The way the rigging comes hooked up on the crane, I guess
12 there's two slings that are longer than the -- other sling would
13 be smaller. So, the two slings will come to a certain point of
14 the nacelle, and, and automatically, it's, it's kind of like
15 common sense.

16 Q. I see.

17 A. When you lift it up, you ain't going to lift it like that.
18 You want it to come up even so -- and, and, you know, the gear man
19 will explain to you, hey, this goes over there, over there. If we
20 have questions, you know, we'll ask him, if we're not too
21 confident.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But it's kind of a commonsense thing that, you know --

24 Q. Does the --

25 A. -- the angles --

1 Q. Does the gear man have a document that they use, or again,
2 just a commonsense --

3 A. I was pretty sure --

4 Q. -- type of --

5 A. -- they have a document --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- you know, like the paper that --

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. -- shows you the --

10 Q. And then --

11 A. -- example.

12 Q. -- prior to the cable failing, did you notice anything? Did
13 anything happen? Did you hear anything?

14 A. No. Prior to the incident, I, I didn't notice -- I didn't
15 hear no -- I didn't hear nothing. I was, you know, a good 5 feet
16 away. I was (indiscernible) like this on one knee making sure it
17 was coming up evenly and --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- stuff like that. And by the time, you know, it just, it
20 happened really instantly.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. And we just kind of, you know, got, got safety, you know, get
23 away from -- you never know if that cable's coming --

24 Q. Sure.

25 (Crosstalk)

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- the winch operator, he told me he, he ducked in the, in
3 the crane because he was scared that cable would come back and
4 break the window, and -- and he had took pictures of like the
5 cables of the crane, and he said everything looked good, and I
6 don't (indiscernible) or not. Maybe I'll try to get a hold of the
7 crane operator. He -- you know, maybe he filled something or -- I
8 don't know his, his point of view, but --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- he did show me a picture of like, you know, the, the wires
11 that they wired up. He said everything was greased up and looked
12 good.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. They might do a checklist before they operate the crane, as
15 well. That might be something.

16 Q. You were flagging when the thing was --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- that was being hoisted up?

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. What does that mean, exactly? What are you doing?

21 A. I'm basically giving the okay to the crane operator to start
22 lifting, make sure, make sure the angle that we're lifting is
23 correct, make sure there's -- you know, make sure he's not
24 damaging the piece or, or anybody's in a bad position. So, I'm
25 basically the one that's guiding them on the piece to get out the

1 vessel or to -- in the vessel. So, I'm basically guiding the
2 piece. I'm being his eye from down there.

3 Q. And how are you communicating?

4 A. Through radio.

5 Q. Radio? Do you use --

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. -- hand signals, as well?

8 A. Yeah, we also use hand signals, but in this, in this point,
9 I'm just flagging straight to the radio. I'm, I'm watching the
10 piece --

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. -- to make sure coming up before I start to, to do anything
13 else. I've got to make sure it comes up even, not with no sling
14 or nothing --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- bad.

17 Q. And then, after the cable snapped, did you see where on the
18 crane it snapped at? Was it just above the chain block? Was it
19 up by the boom?

20 A. I didn't see exactly where it snapped at. I just know that
21 the cable snapped and the block ended up in there.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I just wanted -- I didn't to go look in the nacelle. Like --

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. -- something might have fell on me (indiscernible).

1 [REDACTED]: Understood. Thank you. Do you have
2 anything --

3 [REDACTED]: Yeah. Yes, sir.

4 [REDACTED]: -- [REDACTED]?

5 BY [REDACTED]:

6 Q. So, Mr. Campos, I have a couple of questions kind of talking
7 about working through. You said, for example, you -- the team was
8 on board, you're down inside, you hook everything up however the
9 gear man shows. You look at it. You say it's good. You then
10 radio to the crane operator or you give some hand signals, come on
11 up. The one lands on the pier. Where do we land it to? The
12 first one, where does it go to? The pier? Does it go on a truck?
13 Does it go --

14 A. Where did the piece go from outside to the vessel?

15 Q. Yes, sir.

16 A. It would, yes, it would go to a MAFI.

17 Q. Okay. So, when it lands on the trailer, when it lands on the
18 MAFI, what then happens to it? Someone climbs on, disconnects the
19 hook?

20 A. I ran the outside -- I mean, the inside operation, but yes,
21 it'll be the, it would be the same operation. Once they landed --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- evenly on the MAFI, they would bring down the tension of
24 the, of the rigging, and yes, the people will go -- in this
25 particular nacelle, you have to go inside.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So, they would have to go inside, loosen the shackles up.
3 And these shackles have taglines, because it's like
4 (indiscernible) a couple of windows, which, the slings come in
5 through the windows.

6 Q. Yes, sir.

7 A. So, they have to -- once they unhook the shackle, they would
8 have to kind of guide it up so the shackle don't damage.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. There will be somebody that's kind of in charge of the ground
11 operation, will give, give clearance for the crane operator to
12 lift up slowly once it's landed on the MAFI.

13 Q. Okay. So, they disconnect those slings and shackles?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Is that the same slings, and shackles, and lifting gear that
16 then come into the hold and get connected to the next --

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. -- nacelle?

19 A. It is.

20 Q. Okay. And so, then, the second one is discharged from the
21 ship. Okay.

22 A. Same operation.

23 Q. Prior to lunch, we then disconnected those items, we brought
24 them back into the hold. Do you know if they were reattached
25 before lunch, or were they attached after you came back from

1 lunch?

2 A. They might have been detached, on this case -- let me see.
3 They might have been stayed on there. Sometimes, depending
4 like -- if we finish this hatch prior to lunch, we will cut the
5 rigging off that crane --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- then we'll have to rotate the gear to a different crane
8 and continue on the next hatch. So, in this case, before lunch, I
9 got all the little pieces out and maybe one nacelle before prior
10 to lunch. Then, after lunch, (indiscernible) we probably did like
11 two nacelle, so the rigging probably was -- stayed on the, the
12 winch. I don't think they cut it off. There'll, there'll be
13 times where they will cut off the gear. Like if the, the crew
14 members tell me, we're going to need that crane to load some
15 pallets when you all go to lunch, or make some movements with the
16 tween decks, or -- but in this particular case, I don't think
17 they, they cut it off.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I'm not positive, but just different scenarios where they do
20 cut the rigging.

21 Q. I understand. I'm just curious, during the lunch break from
22 13 to 1400, where the gear was. If the crane was back on board
23 the ship, if the shackles and the slings were down in the hold on
24 the deck, if they were sitting on top ready to go, that's all.
25 I'm just curious where that -- because if that's the same gear we

1 used the first previous --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- two lifts, now we're using it on a third lift --

4 A. Yes, but --

5 Q. -- now --

6 A. -- we used that same gear until the incident happened. Then,
7 we ended up using new gear. After the incident, they brought a
8 whole new rigging because of --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- the -- obviously, the rigging got damaged, and the slings,
11 when the incident happened.

12 Q. Sure. Now, you said that your means of communication -- we
13 were talking about your position there as the gang foreman down
14 inside the cargo hold. You used some visual --

15 A. Yes, yes.

16 Q. -- to the crane operator. Hey, come up nice and slow.
17 You're watching it, you said, on the radio. What's the working
18 language that you're using?

19 A. Like, are you talking about like English or Spanish?

20 Q. Yes, sir.

21 A. With this crane operator, it would be Spanish that I'll be
22 talking to him in.

23 Q. Okay. And you're fluent in Spanish and English, both?

24 A. Yes, I'm, I'm pretty fluent. Very fluent.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Because most of these guys, they talk Spanish, so I will have
2 to communicate in Spanish with these guys.

3 Q. Okay. And you, you referenced the gear man. Can you explain
4 what exactly is a gear man? Is that the port captain? Is that --

5 A. No, no, the --

6 Q. -- the (indiscernible)?

7 A. The gear man will be the, the man in charge of bringing the,
8 the proper rigging, the tools that we need to, to work, like the
9 whatever we need, we go to the gear man. Even if it's something
10 as small as water, or ice, or, or any, any tools that we may need,
11 we go to the, the gear man. He's, he's the man in charge of
12 bringing the proper rigging that we need to take out the cargo,
13 whatever cargo may be.

14 Q. Okay. So, that's --

15 A. He's the man --

16 Q. -- a separate person other than the --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- port captain?

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. Where was the gear man? Was the gear man in the cargo hold
21 with you?

22 A. No, the, the gear man, he's outside the vessel.

23 Q. Just roaming wherever needed?

24 A. But yeah, he's outside the vessel roaming wherever he's
25 needed, but --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- in this case, he might have been assisting with the
3 landing of the cargo. At some points, you know, he may assist.

4 [REDACTED]: Okay. All right. Thank you, sir. Appreciate
5 that. Mr. Johnson, over to you.

6 MR. JOHNSTON: Sure. Thanks.

7 BY MR. JOHNSTON:

8 Q. Can you just give me a little brief history of your
9 background, your experience, how long you've worked for the
10 company, any kind of licenses that you may have?

11 A. Okay. I've been with the company about a year and
12 nine months (indiscernible) working inside the vessels. Prior to
13 that, I did like about two, two years working with a similar
14 company called Gulf Stream Marine. And prior to that, I also
15 worked in the Local 24 about three and a half years. So, I have a
16 couple of years of experience doing what I, what I do. And far as
17 certifications, in the past, I had like HAZMAT, forklift
18 certifications, I have CPR certifications, stuff like that far as
19 certifications go.

20 Q. Okay. Thank you. How long are your shifts, typically?

21 A. Typically, they're 12-hour shifts.

22 Q. And how many shifts do you usually work, say, in a week?

23 A. We work -- if there's work, we work seven 12s.

24 Q. Okay. Can -- seven 12s? Can you explain that to me?

25 A. Seven days a week, 12 hours a day.

1 Q. Oh, okay. Got you. Thank you. Do you remember, how many
2 total personnel were involved in the lift?

3 A. In the inside lift?

4 Q. Yeah, down in the hold, on the deck, you know, crane
5 operator, everybody.

6 A. So, it'll be -- in the, in the hold, it will be five people,
7 me and four other people. And on the deck will be the walking
8 foreman. That will be one person. Then, we have the
9 superintendent. And then, in this (indiscernible) doing nacelles,
10 I believe they would have at least three to four we call them
11 hook-ons, the ones that work the dock. And then, you have the
12 gear man. So, it'll be quite, quite a couple personnel to run --

13 Q. Okay. Thank you.

14 A. -- the whole operation.

15 Q. That's -- yeah, that's helpful. So, you said, when -- to
16 kind of test your rigging, you put some tension on the line, pull
17 up. Do the four or five people that are in the hold that you said,
18 do they get out of the hold before tension's put on the line, or
19 do they stay down there?

20 A. One person will probably stay on one side, and -- but the
21 other two guys, they will get out. So, there'll be like two or
22 three guys that stay in there to make sure the rigging's tight so
23 they, they can check their side. And so, some people get out, and
24 some people do stay in.

25 Q. And then, when they actually perform the lift, does everybody

1 get out?

2 A. Oh, yes, yes. We're out, we're out. Everybody's out when
3 we --

4 Q. Right. Understand.

5 A. -- perform the lift.

6 Q. And how many lifts, not counting the nacelles, but the three
7 that you did of the same type, how many lifts occurred prior to
8 that?

9 A. In general, besides nacelles, we took out several lifts. So,
10 they had -- I can't give you the exact amount. They gave me like
11 a storage (indiscernible). I can't, I can't give you the exact
12 amount, but we took out multiple lifts, because it was a lot of
13 smaller cargo, like radiators and stuff like that. But far as big
14 lifts, we probably took out like, maybe like six nacelles prior to
15 the, the one that -- so, something like that, sir. But we had
16 made multiple, yes.

17 Q. Well, thank you. These, the nacelles, were these the
18 largest, heaviest items that were being lifted that day?

19 A. That day, yes, sir.

20 Q. Okay. And you talked -- so, you talked about the gear man.
21 He's in charge of bringing the rigging. Does he communicate to
22 you guys, like, do you recall what the load limits were for the
23 slings?

24 A. Say that one more time?

25 Q. Do you recall what the load limits, the weight limits, were

1 for the slings that were attached?

2 A. No, no, I don't recall the weight limits for the slings.

3 Q. And how many sling lines went from the hook into the actual
4 nacelle?

5 A. It will be like four slings. Because it's four shackles and
6 four slings to take --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- the nacelle out.

9 Q. And have you ever -- is there -- is it typical for different
10 cargo to have cargo-specific loading procedures and rigging
11 procedures, or is it -- that's -- is that your job?

12 A. It's typical, yes. Different cargo will need different
13 rigging. It's my job to make sure that I think the rigging is
14 right, but it's, it's the gear man that provides the, the proper
15 rigging. But if we don't feel that, hey, this ain't going to
16 work, I will let him know before I even think about taking the
17 piece out if I don't feel confident with it. That's what's called
18 stop-work authority, and that, that will come into place.

19 Q. Does the specific loading procedures for the -- with the
20 attachments, is that something that, in your experience, is that
21 provided from the manufacturer or the owner of whatever's being
22 lifted?

23 A. I believe it'll go from the manufacturer to our company, and
24 to the company to the, the gear man to, to bring the proper
25 rigging that we need.

1 Q. Okay. And last question. You know, was there anything
2 different about the lift, the drop? Did you see anything with the
3 attachment procedures and the equipment or just the way it was
4 being lifted out of the hold? Was there anything unusual?

5 A. No, everything was fine. I was confident it was going to
6 come out. I was very surprised when, when the cable snapped.

7 MR. JOHNSTON: Okay. All right. Thank you very much.
8 That's all the questions I have.

9 [REDACTED]: All rightie. Thank you. Sir, I have one
10 last question.

11 BY [REDACTED]:

12 Q. When you left for lunch, do you believe maybe that the crew
13 used that crane at all while you were at lunch, or did the crane
14 stay there, nothing --

15 A. It's, it's possible, because, like I was telling this
16 gentleman, there, there do be times when they'll be like, hey, cut
17 the rigging off, and -- because we're going to use it to, you
18 know, move tween decks, or to move something, or to, you know, get
19 stuff. The trailer's coming (indiscernible), so whatever they
20 need. So, it's very possible.

21 Q. But as far as you recall, you don't know, have any
22 information about that?

23 A. No, I have no information. When it's time for lunch, it's --

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. -- time for lunch.

1 [REDACTED]: Okay.

2 [REDACTED]: Oh, yeah.

3 [REDACTED]: All right. [REDACTED], anything else?

4 [REDACTED]: (No audible response.)

5 [REDACTED]: All right. No outstanding questions from
6 the Coast Guard. Mr. Johnson, if you don't have any questions,
7 we'll go ahead, and we'll end this interview. Anything else?

8 MR. JOHNSTON: No, that's good.

9 [REDACTED]: Okay.

10 MR. JOHNSTON: Thank you.

11 [REDACTED]: All right. Thanks a lot. All right. We're
12 going to end the interview. Thank you.

13 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF: CRANE EQUIPMENT FAILURE ONBOARD
 CARGO VESSEL *THORCO BASILISK*, IN
 HOUSTON, TEXAS ON JULY 26, 2022
 Interview of Julian Campos

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA22FM031

PLACE: Houston, Texas

DATE: August 3, 2022

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 Sevarino
Transcriber