

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SHIPBOARD FIRE ABOARD THE *HOËGH*
XIAMEN IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA,
ON JUNE 4, 2020

Accident No.: DCA20FM020

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Interview of: CHAD MAVROMAT, Stevedore
SSA Atlantic

Jacksonville, Florida

Wednesday,
June 10, 2020

APPEARANCES:

MARCEL L. MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JOSEPH PANAGIOTOU, Fire and Explosion Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Jacksonville

LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Jacksonville

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MARK THOMPSON, Attorney
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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 LTJG [REDACTED] All right, good afternoon, everyone. My
3 name's LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm an investigator with the Coast
4 Guard here in Jacksonville. We're here today because we're doing
5 -- the Coast Guard is conducting an investigation about the fire
6 which occurred onboard the *Hoëgh Xiamen* on June 4th. We're to
7 interview Mr. Chad Mavromat today.

8 The first thing we're going to do, we'll go around the table,
9 introduce ourselves. We have some gentlemen on the phone, NTSB,
10 as well as party-in-interest from the charterer, Grimaldi.

11 But first, just to explain why we're doing this, the Coast
12 Guard's first and foremost goal with this is to figure out what
13 happened and how we can prevent it from happening again.
14 Obviously, like, those nine firefighters got pretty badly hurt,
15 and we just want to avoid that again.

16 So, like I said, my name is [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

17 MR. [REDACTED] I'm [REDACTED] [REDACTED] lead investigator with the
18 Coast Guard.

19 MR. MUISE: [REDACTED] I think we're missing one of the parties on
20 the line.

21 LTJG [REDACTED] Oh. Is Mr. Thiel not online yet?

22 MR. MUISE: Yeah, that's who we're missing.

23 LTJG [REDACTED] Okay. I guess we'll just wait.

24 MR. MOSELY: Thiel.

25 LTJG [REDACTED] Thiel. Sorry. Thiel.

1 MR. MOSELY: That's okay.

2 LTJG [REDACTED] I guess we'll just hold off a second.

3 MR. [REDACTED] Want to send him an email, let him know we're
4 on?

5 MR. MOSELY: Glad we got that sorted out.

6 LTJG [REDACTED] The H is silent.

7 MR. MOSELY: I say that so people won't go correcting me. I
8 think that's what it is.

9 MR. THIEL: This is Eric Thiel. I'm back on.

10 LTJG [REDACTED] Okay. Awesome. Mr. Thiel, we just, kind of
11 just did the little intro, just explaining, you know, the purpose
12 of the investigation is to prevent the reoccurrence, and we're
13 just going to go around and do the introductions again.

14 MR. THIEL: Okay.

15 LT [REDACTED] I'm LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] investigator with the Coast
16 Guard.

17 MR. MOSELY: Jim Mosely, Jr. for the vessel interests,
18 including Hoëgh.

19 MR. BAIAD: Todd Baiad, counsel for SSA Atlantic.

20 MR. MAVROMAT: And Chad Mavromat, SSA Atlantic.

21 LTJG [REDACTED] And if the NTSB and then the attorneys on the
22 line could introduce themselves, please?

23 MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise from Marine Safety with the
24 NTSB.

25 MR. PANAGIOTOU: This is Joseph Panagiotou, NTSB, Office of

1 Research and Engineering.

2 MR. THIEL: This is Eric Thiel, attorney for Grimaldi.

3 LTJG [REDACTED] All right. So --

4 MR. THOMPSON: I'm sorry. London, Mark Thompson. HFW, the
5 London solicitor for vessel interests.

6 LTJG [REDACTED] All right, so that's all the parties. And the
7 Coast Guard's going to start, then NTSB, and then the attorneys
8 will ask their questions. Are you okay with that, sir?

9 MR. MAVROMAT: Yes.

10 INTERVIEW OF CHAD MAVROMAT

11 BY LTJG [REDACTED]

12 Q. All right. So you work for SSA Atlantic, Mr. Mavromat,
13 correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And then what's your position with them?

16 A. Stevedore. Or, I mean, that's what they call us, a
17 stevedore.

18 Q. Okay, stevedore. Awesome. So, when the vessel *Hoëgh Xiamen*
19 was in port June 3rd and 4th, did you participate in the loading
20 of the vessel?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay, great. Did you do it both days?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. And those days, what decks did you load?

25 A. 8 and 7.

1 Q. 8 and 7. Okay. And what kind of cargo did you oversee
2 loading on those decks?

3 A. Tow cars.

4 Q. Tow cars? And those are cars which have to be towed on
5 because they cannot start themselves, correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay, awesome. And then you also oversaw the lashing and the
8 battery-disconnector gangs onboard for those decks?

9 A. Not oversaw, no.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I work alongside.

12 Q. You work alongside them?

13 A. Yes. I don't, like, oversee what they do with that.

14 Q. Okay, great. So we're going to primarily focus, obviously,
15 on Decks 7 and 8, because that's where you loaded. But
16 specifically, we believe the deck -- the fire started in the rear
17 of Deck 8. So if you'll just go through, you know, what do you
18 remember about Deck 8, especially the rear portion, specifically
19 the cars that were loaded back there, and then we'll talk about
20 the rest of the environment.

21 A. I don't understand what you're saying.

22 Q. Just what kind of cars were loaded in the aft portion of Deck
23 8?

24 A. You had tow-on cars and a few drive-on cars.

25 Q. And then if you could just generally describe the condition

1 of those cars that were loaded in the aft part of Deck 8?

2 A. They're all -- every one of the cars on there, they're about
3 the same. They're all what would be considered junk cars.

4 Q. Okay. Varying levels of damages?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. When you were onboard, loading Deck 8, did you notice
7 anything electrical-wise back there, like lighting fixtures,
8 outlets, anything like that?

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. You did not? Was there any issues with the lighting on Deck
11 8?

12 A. Not that I recall.

13 Q. Okay. So it was well lit while you were doing the loading
14 operations then?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. What about the ventilation? How was the ventilation
17 on Deck 8?

18 A. The ventilation was not good.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I had to call down several times to another stevedore, and
21 that stevedore had to get all the way with the chief mate to -- or
22 chief officer, or whatever they're called, to actually get the
23 ventilation running properly.

24 Q. Did it ever start running properly?

25 A. I never noticed much difference in the change when they said

1 it was changed, so I would say no, it never started running
2 properly.

3 Q. Okay. Was there any movement of air occurring?

4 A. Very little.

5 Q. Very little? The cars that were loaded on Deck 8,
6 specifically in the rear portion, did you notice any that were
7 leaking fuel, lube oil, any kinds of fluids?

8 A. No, sir.

9 Q. No? Did you smell any gasoline?

10 A. No, sir.

11 Q. Okay. Did you notice any crewmembers wiping up fluid --

12 A. No, sir, we --

13 Q. -- at the back of Deck 8?

14 A. We make sure we bring it to their attention if we do see any.

15 Q. Okay, great. And so, did you bring any --

16 A. No, sir.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. We didn't have any. That I saw, there was no leakage of any
19 kind.

20 Q. Okay, great. And in speaking with the crew, we understand
21 when they identify an issue with a car that they don't feel is
22 safe to load, they have it taken back off. Were any cars from
23 Deck 8 identified to be taken back off by the crew?

24 A. No, sir.

25 LTJG [REDACTED] Okay.

1 BY MR. [REDACTED]

2 Q. Is there somebody from the ship on each of those decks, or at
3 least the decks that you worked on?

4 A. I guess you'd call them a third mate or whatever. They
5 follow behind and, like, check lashing and, you know, make sure
6 that they're pleased with what -- how it's loaded, you know.

7 Q. Okay. And on Deck 8, and I'm talking the entire Deck 8, do
8 you recall the conditions of the vessel's doors and things like
9 that?

10 A. No, sir. That's not -- I'm paying attention to the loading
11 operation, not the vessel itself.

12 Q. Okay. And does that include Deck 7 as well? Do you remember
13 any extra doors? Because I believe Deck 7 is where they do the --
14 have, like, the mooring stations and stuff there. Do you recall
15 those doors?

16 A. The only doors I remember on Deck 8 is in the nose of the
17 ship. There's, like, a section I had to work around that has
18 doorways and all in it. I don't know where it goes or anything
19 like that. But that's the only doors I saw. I use all rampways
20 to get up and down.

21 Q. Okay. And were those doors closed?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Okay. And so, the vehicles that were towed onboard, are we
24 talking all kinds of passenger vehicles, like minivans, trucks,
25 cars, all types of vehicles on that?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Do you recall if there were any large, like, minivans, trucks
3 or anything on Deck 8?

4 A. I don't recall if there were any minivans or trucks.

5 Q. Okay. Do you recall any vehicles that -- well, I guess, were
6 they all personal-type vehicles, no commercial type?

7 A. Yeah, nothing was commercial. It was all your typical,
8 everyday drivers that were, you know, I guess in an accident or
9 whatever. So nothing operated, no.

10 Q. Okay. I'm going to shift gears a little bit here. So how
11 long have you been a stevedore?

12 A. Since 2012.

13 Q. Okay, so about 8 years?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Here in Jacksonville?

16 A. Jacksonville, Brunswick, and Savannah.

17 Q. Okay. And in those past 8 years, I guess you've done quite a
18 few loads of vehicles and everything. So, in your opinion, what
19 was the condition of the vessel that you were working with on --

20 A. Older vessel. You know, it's -- I wouldn't say it was super
21 clean and as far as that goes. But other than that, I mean, I
22 didn't see a lot of rust damage or anything, either, so --

23 Q. Okay. What about the crew? Did they seem to be competent?

24 You know, do the systems work well, other than the ventilation
25 issue?

1 A. Language barrier, you know. Other than that, you know, that
2 would be the only thing I would say.

3 Q. When you started loading, was there any vehicles on Deck 8?

4 A. No, sir.

5 Q. So, when you started -- all the vehicles on Deck 8 came from
6 Jacksonville?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Okay. And can you just confirm for us how Deck 8 was loaded?
9 As far as when the vehicles came onboard, was there a certain way
10 that you guys loaded it?

11 A. Yeah, you flow starboard. I was given specific directions by
12 Mike with Grimaldi of exactly how he wanted the entire vessel, the
13 entire deck to be loaded before we ever started. And he came up
14 there and walked through and checked on me throughout to make sure
15 it was exactly how he wanted the vessel to flow. And then, also,
16 we were given specific directions from Grimaldi on the battery
17 disconnect set up and everything with that, as well.

18 Q. Okay. So, with those directions given for loading Deck 8,
19 was there -- can you kind of go into detail about that, perhaps?

20 A. Yeah, he -- inshore, he wanted four cars inside the
21 stanchions, side by side; middle, six cars; offshore, four cars.
22 We did a flow stow, which I point -- I start in the aft end of the
23 ship, basically, beside the ramp, and work my way all the way back
24 to the aft, and then you flow the cars around and work back down
25 the -- let's see, I started offshore, worked to inshore, and then

1 back to offshore.

2 Q. Okay. So just to confirm, starting offshore, would that be
3 the starboard side of the vessel or the port side of the vessel?

4 A. I can't recall as far as -- because I --

5 Q. Okay, yeah. I just want to kind of confirm that for our
6 folks, too, who are unable to kind of see how the layout is. So
7 the vessel ramp where the vehicles come onboard is located on the
8 aft starboard side?

9 A. Right.

10 Q. The vehicles came onboard, came up the ramp, so then you
11 eventually --

12 A. You've got to remember ramps do this. So, when I get to 8, I
13 wouldn't -- it's hard to remember.

14 Q. You're getting disoriented, yeah.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. Because you're going around and around. So, when they
17 loaded, though, they were loaded towards the -- which side did you
18 say again? Not the inshore side, right?

19 A. That's not something I can recall as far as which way --
20 which side of the ramp I'm on when I'm on the vessel.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I loaded beside the ramp, facing down. If you gave me a --
23 you know, my paperwork from the ship, I could tell you exactly
24 which side is which, but I can't tell you thinking of it now.

25 Q. Okay. All right. No problem. And the reason I'm asking

1 that is I'm just trying to get a timeline. As Mr. [REDACTED]
2 mentioned that, you know, we're focusing a little bit there on the
3 aft section of the vessel, particularly on the port side. There
4 was --

5 A. I was done loading the aft end of the vessel before
6 lunchtime.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. On Wednesday.

9 Q. For Deck 8?

10 A. For Deck 8. The entire aft was loaded before lunch.

11 Q. Okay, so prior to noon, at least?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. On Wednesday?

14 A. Yes, on Wednesday.

15 Q. So then you loaded the remainder of Deck 8 --

16 A. On Thursday.

17 Q. -- on Thursday?

18 A. And that was -- that would have been from the mid of the ship
19 through the nose.

20 Q. Half forward, okay.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Were those vehicles, were they brought on pretty tight?
23 Like, were they loaded --

24 A. I loaded how I was instructed, and that was by the port
25 captain.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. For Grimaldi.

3 Q. And about how much space would you say was between the
4 vehicles?

5 A. About a fist width side to side between the vehicles, between
6 your mirrors, and then front to back, I would say 10 to 12 inches
7 between your rows.

8 Q. Gotcha. You talk faster than I write. Give me one second.
9 I appreciate it.

10 LTJG [REDACTED] That's why you've got to get one of these.

11 MR. [REDACTED] I know.

12 BY MR. [REDACTED]

13 Q. And approximately -- or you may even know -- how many
14 vehicles were loaded, was loaded on Deck 8?

15 A. It was over 300. I cannot recall the exact number today.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But it was over 300 vehicles on Deck 8.

18 Q. Okay. And then once you loaded Deck 8, you went down to Deck
19 7. Once Deck 8's loading is completed, is that when they do the
20 lashing and the batteries, or do you just --

21 A. No, no, the lashing and batteries is done as we are working,
22 and the -- when it's all completed, a mate goes in, checks the
23 entire deck, makes sure everything is correct, and then signs off.

24 Q. Okay, signs off. Is there a sheet that they sign?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 LTJG [REDACTED] Do you mind?

2 MR. [REDACTED] Go ahead, yeah.

3 BY LTJG [REDACTED]

4 Q. So, like you were just saying, once the deck's done, the mate
5 goes around, does a look, and signs off the sheet. How does the
6 mate check the cars that I guess would be in the middle of the
7 deck, right? Because, you know, there's not a lot of room to get
8 there. Did you --

9 A. No, no -- okay, just to explain?

10 Q. Yeah, absolutely.

11 A. When you flow-stow a deck, you'll still have lanes to where
12 you can walk down.

13 Q. Okay. So the mate was still able to walk down?

14 A. Right.

15 Q. Okay. Did you see the mate walk down the rows before he
16 signed the check-off?

17 A. I saw the mate up there checking.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I mean, I was going down to load another deck.

20 Q. Right, but you saw him actively checking?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I saw a mate on the deck.

24 LTJG [REDACTED] Thank you.

25 BY MR. [REDACTED]

1 Q. And do you know if all the batteries were disconnected on the
2 eighth deck?

3 A. No.

4 Q. You don't know or you're --

5 A. No, they were not.

6 Q. They were not? Okay. And how do you know they were not?

7 A. We have, per a protocol that was given to us by Grimaldi when
8 we started, to flag the ones that weren't disconnected, like I
9 say. And that is also noted on the sign-off sheet.

10 Q. Okay. And do you know the reason why those particular
11 vehicles were not disconnected?

12 A. Too damaged, I would say, most of the time is the situation.

13 Q. And is there some way that those are noted? Like, could I
14 look at a -- could anybody look at the vehicles and know?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And how is that?

17 A. Yes, there's caution tape -- big, 2-inch-wide caution tape
18 that is attached to the car, and it's about 2-feet-long-worth of
19 caution tape on the windshield wipers, lifted straight up in the
20 air. So you could walk on the deck and you would see it.

21 LT [REDACTED] I have no questions.

22 LTJG [REDACTED] All right, at this time, if the NTSB would
23 like to ask some questions?

24 MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise, NTSB. I have nothing
25 further to say.

1 BY MR. PANAGIOTOU:

2 Q. This is Joseph Panagiotou. I didn't hear very clearly. What
3 was the reason for some of the vehicles not having their batteries
4 disconnected?

5 A. Too damaged.

6 Q. So --

7 A. Say a hood --

8 Q. -- the damage, like crash damage --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- or a crumpled hood that you can't open up?

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 MR. PANAGIOTOU: Okay, thank you.

13 LTJG ██████████ All right. Mr. Mosely?

14 MR. MOSELY: Yes. Hello, Mr. Mavromat. I represent the
15 ship.

16 MR. MAVROMAT: Yes, sir.

17 MR. MOSELY: I'm just going to ask you some questions, and
18 I'll try to get through this as quickly as possible.

19 BY MR. MOSELY:

20 Q. So you started on Wednesday morning and finished before lunch
21 the aft port of Deck 8?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. So, what time did you start? At 0800 or --

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. Okay. So 0800 to about 1130? I'm trying to get an idea.

- 1 A. It's hard to recall the exact time that I completed, but it
2 was before lunchtime.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. Because after lunch, I came further down.
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. Out of the aft -- I was already out of the aft.
- 7 Q. All right. I'm just trying to get a reference point.
- 8 A. Right. Yes, sir.
- 9 Q. So we can say lunchtime.
- 10 A. Yes, sir.
- 11 Q. It could be --
- 12 A. Noon.
- 13 Q. -- 12:30, it could be --
- 14 A. Yes, sir.
- 15 Q. Okay. So that was about 4 hours of cars loaded on Deck 8 by
16 tow?
- 17 A. Yes, sir.
- 18 Q. There were none taken to Deck 8 with forklifts?
- 19 A. No, sir.
- 20 Q. And there were none that were driven, no runners?
- 21 A. There were a few runners, yes, sir.
- 22 Q. How many runners were there on Deck 8 that first day, that
23 morning?
- 24 A. I would have to look at the paperwork. It was 20 to 30 or
25 so. Without having the paperwork, I can't tell you exactly. I

1 can't recall because they --

2 Q. I understand.

3 A. -- they send them there for -- to help the flow, because of
4 how you have to load.

5 Q. What paperwork are you referring to? You have to look at the
6 paperwork?

7 A. Oh, we document amount of vehicles loaded per hour.

8 Q. Do you know which vehicles are loaded or just the amount?

9 A. Just the amount.

10 Q. So we don't know -- we can't identify which vehicles were
11 loaded?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. Okay. That first day, let's say 0800 to noon, how many
14 vehicles were loaded, total, in that aft portion, if 20 to 30 were
15 runners and the majority were the tows?

16 A. I average around 20 to 25 tows an hour.

17 Q. Okay. So about a hundred?

18 A. About, yes, sir.

19 Q. Okay. So, if we had 100, about 130 at the most, and 100 of
20 those vehicles were tows?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. When you were stowing the aft -- well, let me ask you this:
23 Did the runners go on first, or they come up during the process?

24 A. During the process.

25 Q. Okay. And the aft starboard corner, in that area, do you

1 know if those were runners or tows or anything like that?

2 A. Without seeing -- like I say, without seeing the paperwork, I
3 can't tell you starboard or, you know, inshore or offshore,
4 because it's drawn out on there.

5 Q. Okay, let me ask you this: The first row against the aft,
6 were those tows?

7 A. The first row against the aft would have been runners.

8 Q. Would have been runners.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And the second would have been what?

11 A. The second would have been runners.

12 Q. And then the third would have been tows?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And the rest would have been tows?

15 A. Yes. Because what you -- what I had to do is use runners,
16 because you can't pull a tow car into -- if you understand what
17 I'm saying, to get it into that area.

18 Q. Okay. And the tows don't have their batteries disconnected
19 because --

20 A. The tows do get their batteries disconnected as well.

21 Q. Oh, they did?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. I misunderstood you. I thought I understood that none of the
24 vehicles on Deck 8 had the batteries disconnected, but I got it
25 wrong. Did any of the vehicles on Deck 8 have their batteries

1 disconnected?

2 A. All of the vehicles on Deck 8 except for, I think it was,
3 50 -- no, we have a set number that did not get done. I don't
4 recall the exact number that did not get disconnected. Everything
5 else got disconnected.

6 Q. That's because they were wrecks or there was a problem with
7 the hood or something like that?

8 A. The ones that did not get disconnected was too damaged to get
9 to a battery.

10 Q. Okay, that was the only reason?

11 A. Right.

12 Q. Okay. Whether they were towed or whatever it is, the vehicle
13 was too damaged to get to the battery?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Were some of those vehicles runners?

16 A. No.

17 Q. They were all tows that had that kind of damage?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Can you describe Deck 8 for me? Let me back up. Some of the
20 decks are solid and have D-rings for lashing?

21 A. That would be a lower part of the ship.

22 Q. And some of the decks are moveable and they have holes in
23 them for lashing?

24 A. Deck 8 has holes in it for lashing. I don't know if it's a
25 moveable deck or not. I couldn't tell you that.

- 1 Q. Sure.
- 2 A. But it does have holes for lashing.
- 3 Q. So there are holes in the bottom of the deck where you can
4 look down there and look and see Deck 7?
- 5 A. I can't tell you that, either. I didn't look, like, in the
6 hole. Because some ships have a metal cup under the hole. I
7 don't know what this one is, the difference.
- 8 Q. Okay, you don't remember?
- 9 A. Right. I just don't --
- 10 Q. You weren't concerned with that?
- 11 A. Right.
- 12 Q. And are those vehicles lashed differently than the ones that
13 have the D-ring on a flat surface?
- 14 A. No, they're all lashed the same.
- 15 Q. Mr. Lewis, Mike Lewis, who is the port captain, he met with
16 you on Deck 8?
- 17 A. Yes, sir, several times.
- 18 Q. Was that before Deck 8 was loaded?
- 19 A. He met with me at the start, before it got loaded, to explain
20 exactly how he wanted it loaded. He came up through the deck
21 periodically while I was loading. He was there both days, several
22 times, because he comes to survey space for his next port he's
23 going to go to so he knows what he's got left. So he was
24 throughout that day, both days.
- 25 Q. Now, you were talking about there are rows to walk down. I

1 guess that's forward and aft, or is that aboard ship as well?

2 A. When you're -- I don't know how to explain it. Basically,
3 when I say rows, I mean there's an area you can walk to get, say,
4 all the way to the aft and all the way to the forward, and it's
5 just how it's stowed that you can get between. Because people
6 have to get in the vehicle, so you have to have room to get into
7 those vehicles.

8 Q. And that's what I'm questioning. Like, if it's a forward to
9 aft trail, so to speak, or the -- is there more than one row?

10 A. I don't understand what you're asking me.

11 Q. You're talking about a row so that people can walk forward to
12 aft. Is there more than one row or is it just one row? Along the
13 sides, you can walk freely, correct, against the bulkhead on the
14 starboard and port side?

15 A. Pretty close, yes, sir.

16 Q. And then there's also --

17 A. Where the stanchions -- just where your stanchions are,
18 there's going to be a little more space between the vehicles
19 because you have the width of the stanchion itself. So that is
20 still open area.

21 Q. Okay. So you have two rows because of the stanchions,
22 forward and aft?

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. Okay. And those are the only rows that are kind of built
25 into the loading system?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. Okay. Were you with anyone from the ship's crew when they
3 walked down those rows, or do they just come see you afterwards?

4 A. They come up, I ask for them to inspect lashing and
5 everything, you know, make sure -- to inspect the decks. And then
6 I step down to the next deck to continue my process of loading.

7 And they come down after that and ask us to actually get with the
8 chief mate, and they would tell the chief mate that everything was
9 good for the chief mate to sign off on the vessel sheets.

10 Q. And I'm just about done here. I just want to ask this:
11 Visually, can you tell the difference between those vehicles that
12 were towed and those that were runners, or are they all kind of in
13 the same condition and some vary?

14 A. You can't. You wouldn't know the difference, no, sir.

15 Q. Okay. So some of the runners looked wrecked, just as wrecked
16 as the tows?

17 A. Some do, yes.

18 MR. MOSELY: I have nothing else.

19 LTJG ██████████ All right. Mr. Thiel?

20 MR. THIEL: All right. Thank you.

21 BY MR. THIEL:

22 Q. The first question you probably answered before I got on the
23 phone, and that is, how do you spell your last name?

24 A. M-a-v, as in Victor, r-o-m-a-t.

25 Q. M-a-v-r-o-m-a-t?

1 A. Mavromat.

2 Q. Okay, got it. Thank you. The only question I have for
3 you -- I didn't hear you real clear -- was when you're talking
4 about the first and second row of cars that were put in all the
5 way back aft. I heard that the first and second rows were
6 runners, but then did you say the third row was also runners?

7 A. No, sir. That would have been tow-on.

8 Q. Okay, so the first two rows are runners, and the rest were --
9 or the other ones were tow?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Okay. Then the other question was, and then you're talking
12 about marking the cars and the batteries that weren't disconnected
13 with the caution tape and the windshield wipers. Was there any
14 record kept of where those were located?

15 A. No, sir.

16 MR. THIEL: Okay, that's all I have. Thanks.

17 BY MR. MOSELY:

18 Q. I have a follow-up on that. Who put the caution tape up when
19 they couldn't get to the batteries?

20 A. That would be the mechanics.

21 Q. Do you recall seeing caution tape on any of the vehicles in
22 the aft portion?

23 A. No, sir, not that I recall.

24 Q. Could there have been some there and you don't recall it, or
25 is it that you remember you didn't see any? That's my question.

1 A. You could see from one end of the ship to the other any
2 windshield wiper up with caution tape.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So I don't recall seeing any.

5 Q. Okay. Did you see any others that had the red caution tape
6 around the vessel on Deck 8?

7 A. Like I say, I have to go through and count them, you know,
8 how many don't have -- or have the caution tape, but other than
9 that, I mean, nothing that I recall in the aft of the ship.

10 Q. Do you make a note where in the ship those vehicles are
11 located?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. Is there anything that would show us where those vehicles
14 were located that had the red caution tape?

15 A. No, sir.

16 MR. MOSELY: Okay, nothing else.

17 LTJG ██████████ All right.

18 BY MR. ██████████

19 Q. Actually, I've got one. The port captain came on there and
20 was talking to you about the loading process.

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. Is that common?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Okay. And have you worked with this port captain before?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. And is that kind of his standard, packing them a little bit
2 tighter?

3 A. Yes, sir. That was his -- his exact words were, "my pet
4 peeves of how I want my ship to look."

5 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

6 LTJG [REDACTED] All right. Well, that concludes the interview
7 with Mr. Mavromat. It's approximately 2:45 in the afternoon on
8 June 10th, 2020.

9 Thank you very much for your cooperation, sir.

10 MR. MAVROMAT: Thank you.

11 LTJG [REDACTED] This ends the interview.

12 (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: SHIPBOARD FIRE ABOARD THE *HOËGH XIAMEN* IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA,
ON JUNE 4, 2020
Interview of Chad Mavromat

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA20FM020

PLACE: Jacksonville, Florida

DATE: June 10, 2020

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 Fuerstenberg
Transcriber