

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: JAMES LANIR, Superintendent
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

(10:13 a.m.)

1
2
3 [REDACTED] -- rightie. I am recording. All right.
4 Good morning. It is August 3, 2022, approximately 10:13. We're
5 at WATCO Greens Port Terminal, 13901 Industrial Road, Houston,
6 Texas, 77015. This is for the marine casualty investigation of
7 the crane equipment failure of the *Thorco Basilisk*. My name is
8 Lieutenant [REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED] Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED] Lieutenant Junior Grade [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED] And, sir, your name?

12 MR. LANIR: James Lanir, Superintendent, WATCO.

13 [REDACTED] All right. Thank you, sir. All rightie.

14 And then, NTSB?

15 MR. JOHNSTON: This is Derek Johnston, J-O-H-N-S-T-O-N. I'm
16 a marine casualty investigator with the National Transportation
17 Safety Board.

18 [REDACTED] All right, thank you. NTSB, if you don't
19 mind, sir, you can go ahead with your statement, sir.

20 MR. JOHNSTON: Sure. I thank you for joining us today to
21 talk to you about the incident back on the 26th. I'm with the
22 NTSB, the National Transportation Safety Board. We're separate
23 from the Coast Guard. We're an independent agency. We
24 investigate various accidents in different transportation modes.
25 We don't have any regulatory or enforcement authority. We just,

1 we gather the facts of the evidence alongside the Coast Guard; and
2 then, go back our separate ways and produce with an analysis and
3 determine probable cause. The ultimate goal of our investigation
4 is to -- not to assign blame or fault, but it's to present the
5 findings, and produce a probable cause, and then possibly
6 recommendations to prevent this type of casualties from happening
7 in the future. The reason that NTSB's involved at this point is
8 for the -- if the investment exceeds the threshold for \$500,000
9 amount. After we finish the interview, a transcript of the
10 interview will be produced, and you'll have a chance to review it.
11 And once (indiscernible) public docket once the report is
12 finalized. That's all I have. Here, I'll turn it back over to
13 the Coast Guard.

14 [REDACTED] All right. Thank you.

15 INTERVIEW OF JAMES LANIR

16 BY [REDACTED]

17 Q. All rightie, sir, Mr. Lanir, if you don't mind, can you just
18 give us a general timeline of your day on July 23 --

19 A. Okay. I'm going to try to be as clear as possible, because
20 like I say, I didn't know. I would have had my notes on this --

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. -- whole thing.

23 Q. Yeah, no problem.

24 A. But that day, we started, we started work generally like
25 6:45.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. That's our JSA. That's when I have my GSA meetings. Let my
3 team members know, go out -- go over the dangers, and the
4 whatnots, and, you know, the things not to do, the things to look
5 out for. You know, pretty much a lot of safety things. I make
6 sure the PPE is being worn and everybody pretty much on the same
7 page. Started our day. I couldn't tell you what -- like I said,
8 I don't have my notes. We, we started -- we was working two
9 holds, two hatches, all right? Doing pretty good throughout the
10 day. Slings was looking good. Everything's looking good. We
11 pretty much -- anything that has a tear in them, we don't use
12 them, period. Had the agent there, and, you know, everybody
13 pretty much was checking the straps and, you know, and making sure
14 everything's going before we start, which is typical, okay?
15 Besides that, we was doing pretty good throughout the day.

16 We came to this last -- I think it's on the -- they had
17 turned the ship around. So, the forward -- aft end. I think it
18 was on the aft end, because they turned the ship around after the
19 accident happened. Okay. So, we're checking that last nacelle
20 out from the tween deck. And everything was going good, like
21 normal. You know, like, we -- you know, the day was going good,
22 everything was doing -- everybody was doing a pretty good job.
23 Now, when we got it in the air, the -- maybe about 6 foot off the
24 ground, I was having a conversation with one of my guys down on
25 the ground, so I was pretty much talking to him. I was looking,

1 but -- I know they had it in the -- I hear him on my radio, but
2 they didn't have it off the ship. They still had it inside the
3 ship.

4 Let me go back. Starting that morning, before we start the
5 job, we talk to the crew, get with the chief to get the ship's
6 particulars. Crane certifications. Let me put that in there.
7 Everything was good. They say that we was good to go. I think
8 it's like every five years or something like that they do it, so
9 they say it was good to go. So, that's what we go off of. If
10 it's not good, we're not going to use that crane, period. We're
11 going to use one of our cranes; or they're going to have to pay
12 for one of our cranes, and we'll use another crane.

13 Besides that, now, okay, now, I'm going to jump back to when
14 we was getting the piece off. Piece come up. I hear him on the
15 radio. Bring it up slowly. Okay, put them up, get up. Okay.
16 You got it. Same thing we've been doing all day. No different.
17 When they get up there maybe about between 5 and 6 foot, I hear a
18 loud snap. Pow, boom. So, when I turn my head around, I hear,
19 boom. Hear him on the radio, you know, you know, which has, you
20 know, called out or panic call, you know, you know. Hey, hey, you
21 know, (indiscernible) people, talking on the radio, you know, you
22 know. So, we do an all stop. Anybody got the right to do all
23 stop. It don't matter what your position is, you can call out,
24 all stop. So, all stop right there. I called it on the ground,
25 my walking foreman called it, and my foreman called it, an all

1 stop.

2 Ran on the ship. Seeing what was going on. Went on the
3 ship. Seeing the nacelle had fell back down in the ship.
4 Immediately, everybody get off the ship. You know, everybody get
5 off the ship. Make sure everybody's all right first. Everybody's
6 all right, everybody's accounted for. Yes, everybody's accounted
7 for. I looked over my labor list. Everybody was accounted for.
8 Okay, we're good. Everybody's standing right there at the muster
9 point.

10 That's when pretty much my investigation started. I want to
11 know what happened, why did it happen, make sure we wasn't at
12 fault, make sure that -- first, make sure nobody got killed,
13 because things can be replaced, but, you know, lives can't, you
14 know. That's why they have, you know, insurance for those type of
15 things like that. So, everybody's off the ship. We're doing a
16 standdown now, so I did a standdown with all my -- you know,
17 everybody. I have that paper and that information, also.
18 Everybody signed a paper. This is what we're going to talk about.
19 We're going to talk about what just happened. Blah, blah, blah,
20 blah. You know, got through the conversation. Took maybe about
21 30 minutes to an hour. Do the standdown. After we done the
22 standdown, then that's when we went back on the ship, you know,
23 trying to figure out what happened, okay? So, we went down there,
24 looked inside. Do you all have pictures?

25 Q. Yes, we do.

1 A. Yeah. Okay. Took pictures. Okay. I looked down there.
2 First of all, I want to know, why did it fall? Was it slings?
3 Was it something that happened? Was it bad flagging? I don't
4 know, you know. So, I'm thinking. I start ruling out things, you
5 know. Bad flagging can't have something to drop -- snap like that
6 from bad flagging. If you get bad flagging, maybe the, the piece
7 will come up, because it was sitting offshore. We're bringing it
8 this way. Bad flagging might, he might boom up too much, and
9 then, boom, it comes back, something like that, but it's not going
10 to snap. So, we -- I pretty much eliminated that.

11 So, when I go to looking down in the nacelle, I'm, I'm
12 looking at the gear. I'm like, well, this is together. I'm
13 looking at all the straps, and they're together. There's no tears
14 in them. It's nothing, you know? The weight is right on them.
15 There's nothing overweighted. I mean, I'm looking. Everything is
16 pretty much good, you know? So, I eliminated that, where it's not
17 (indiscernible), because everything's still intact. It's nothing
18 ripped. You know, if something would have ripped, it would have
19 came out and -- you know.

20 So, the block had dropped down in there. So, when I look at
21 the block dropped down there, I say -- when I look up, seen the
22 cable. You all have a picture of that, also. That the cable has
23 snapped or unraveled. I, I don't know what happened to it, but I
24 know that it gave out. The weight was right, I mean, the tonnage
25 was right, so I don't know why it did that. So, the first thing I

1 did was looked at the, the ship's, you know, the ship
2 certifications and things like that, you know, and all that, the
3 particulars and everything like that. Everything was good. I
4 mean, everything was up to date. So, I say, well, that -- I
5 eliminated that. So, I started taking pictures of that, and
6 everybody started coming, and blah, blah, blah, started looking
7 at, you know, what happened up top, you know, even the, the port
8 captain. He was like, that's the problem right there, you know.
9 The ship's, the ship's cable had broke.

10 Okay. After that, we sat around for a little bit. I'm
11 waiting to get back with the port captain, so wait, wait for him
12 to get back with us so he can see, do he want to continue, or
13 what, what do he want to do for that day? But I know a lot of my
14 guys were shook up, you know, so -- you know, from that piece
15 falling down in there. And that was -- unfortunately, you know,
16 that could have been tragic, you know, could have been tragic,
17 could have been very, very bad if we would have got that piece
18 30 feet out and it would have dropped. It might have killed
19 somebody, you know. And my concern as a superintendent is to look
20 out for my guys, look after anybody who's working on that dock.
21 It's my responsibility. So, I was kind of, you know, upset about
22 that, you know.

23 Okay. So, I got back with the -- well, the port captain got
24 back with me. He said, well, we're going to cut it off for the
25 day. Okay. So, I say, well, that's fine, but we're not using

1 that ship's gear anymore, because if that one broke, I'm, I'm not
2 going to chance it anymore, you know. So, you get with the
3 captain or whatever, and you all come up with the conclusion that
4 we're going to have to use our 550 crane, which is our, our crane,
5 our offshore -- and the offshore crane. So, he said, okay, we're
6 going to get with the customer, and they're going to go over that.

7 But they're going to turn the, the ship around. So, they're
8 going to turn that ship around so we can get that piece. So, I
9 think, when they turned it around, it was on -- yeah, when they
10 turned -- yeah, they turned the ship around that morning. So,
11 when they turned that ship around, that morning, we came, and it
12 wasn't turned around, so we waited for a while. Then, they
13 finally came and turned it around, you know, and everything. So,
14 that was Sunday. I'm thinking -- yeah, yeah, that was Sunday that
15 we didn't work it, because they came and turned it around later.
16 And Monday, we got back, and we worked it.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. So -- and after that, you know, we came, and we started on, I
19 think, the, the other end of the ship, and we start doing that
20 tween deck; and then, when we jumped back to that one, we got that
21 piece off. We had to cut the top of it off. It was already
22 damage, so they talked to the customer -- I mean, the, I guess the
23 port captain, or the agent talked to the customer. So, we cut the
24 top off, rigged it up, put some paddings in between it, and we got
25 that off the ship. So, that mean -- at that point, I knew that we

1 done everything right, because we got that damaged nacelle off of
2 that ship safely, put it on a MAFI, which, it's still sitting on a
3 MAFI back there. After that, we finished the ship --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- you know? And pretty much, that's it, you know, and that
6 was that.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Right.

9 Q. So, we're going to have some follow-up questions.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. So, first off, where were you standing? Were you down in the
12 hold during --

13 A. No, no, no, no.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I was, I was on the dock.

16 Q. You were on the dock?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. So, you didn't actually the specific one getting
19 assembled -- or, getting the hoisting straps and everything put
20 up?

21 A. No, I, I could hear them on the radio.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. That's why we have --

24 Q. Okay, okay.

25 A. -- yeah, radios.

- 1 Q. Got it.
- 2 A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. And then, you mentioned, in the morning, that there was a
4 safety brief, the JSA and safety brief?
- 5 A. Um-hum.
- 6 Q. Who was part of that safety brief?
- 7 A. Well, all the team members was a part of it, so pretty much,
8 our team members and whoever's working, whoever's working on the
9 ship, the crane operators, everybody --
- 10 Q. Okay, all right.
- 11 A. -- yeah, is part of that.
- 12 Q. And is that translated in Spanish to people that aren't
13 English speakers?
- 14 A. In Spanish?
- 15 Q. Yeah.
- 16 A. Well --
- 17 Q. Or how is that kind of --
- 18 A. -- the Spanish, the Spanish guys talk to the other Spanish
19 guys.
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. So, a lot of them pretty much know what we're saying or
22 whatever not. They don't -- you know, hey, we don't understand,
23 then I do have a translator. But pretty much, everybody knew.
- 24 Q. Okay.
- 25 A. Yeah.

- 1 Q. Okay, all right.
- 2 A. Because we've been doing it, so it ain't --
- 3 Q. Yeah.
- 4 A. -- just like it just started, yeah.
- 5 Q. All right. And then, there was a -- is there a procedure or
6 something you were following to know which shackle goes where,
7 what strap goes where, how that whole mechanism gets connected to
8 the --
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. -- crane block?
- 11 A. That goes with the, the port captain, and he was down there,
12 pretty much, you know, and he comes down there and watch the
13 rigging and everything to make sure everything's rigged up right
14 and everything. And once you get the sequence of it, then, you
15 know, you don't have to be down there micromanaging them, because
16 they already know. Our guys know. We've been doing this for
17 years.
- 18 Q. Okay.
- 19 A. Yeah.
- 20 Q. Okay. All right. And then, so, you mentioned that you'd use
21 the shore crane after.
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. You didn't want to use ship's crane.
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. Do you know why, in the first place, the ship cranes were

1 used?

2 A. Because they didn't want to pay for our cranes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So, pretty much, if they -- if the ship say -- we go about it
5 like this: If they have cranes on the ship --

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. -- I'm sure they're not going to want to pay for our cranes
8 when they already have cranes.

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. If their cranes can handle the capacity of what they got
11 loaded on that ship, then they're going to use their cranes. So,
12 if they trust it, they want to use their cranes in that. Now, if
13 the piece is too heavy or anything, then that's when we'll bring
14 our cranes over. So, they wanted to use their cranes. I don't
15 know if they got it loaded with their cranes, because no one says
16 that, that use shore cranes to load all of this -- all of these
17 pieces with that crane.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So, no.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. That's why, you know.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So, we -- this pretty much goes on what the port captain and
24 the customer wants to do.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Great. And then, the crane operator -- you mentioned you
3 were using a radio. Did the crane operator have a radio? Was he
4 able to listen to that, as well, or was there a different --

5 A. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. We, we -- all our crane operators have radios. We're not
8 going to go up in that crane without a radio.

9 Q. Okay. And then --

10 A. No.

11 Q. -- do you use other communication methods, like hand signals,
12 (indiscernible) like --

13 A. Oh, yeah. We have --

14 Q. -- signals?

15 A. That's why we have a walking foreman, so he can flag.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. You know, and not only he can -- well, you start off inside
18 with the foreman. He's flagging, because he's inside the vessel.
19 And then, once the piece starts coming up and come out, that's
20 when the walking foreman will flag, and, you know, so forth.

21 Yeah, but there's flagging going on --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- all times.

24 Q. And by --

25 A. Hands or radios.

1 Q. Okay, got it.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. All right. Is there -- was there a checklist or
4 anything you used? Like, so, you said a safety brief as far as --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We'll put the other two in the other
6 conference room. Whenever you're all ready, we'll just come get
7 them.

8 [REDACTED] Thank you.

9 [REDACTED] Thank you, (indiscernible). Appreciate it.

10 BY [REDACTED]

11 Q. All rightie. Is there a checklist used? Like say the
12 morning crane operator arrives. Does he use a checklist or
13 anything to verify that maybe the cable looks like it's in good
14 condition, that we should verify the certification for the crane?
15 Is there --

16 A. Well, once we get the certifications, once -- they don't have
17 a checklist for their ship. That's their ship.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. You know. But once we get the crane certifications, you
20 know, we pretty much look it over and everything, get with the
21 port captain, make sure everything's all right, because once we
22 get the, the ship's particular and the crane certifications --
23 now, we checklist our cranes.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. You see what I'm saying?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. So, their crane certification, that's their checklist, so
3 that's why the, the chief goes up and, before he puts that crane
4 in order, he check it and make sure everything all right. And
5 then, after he checks it, he give us the crane certifications and
6 the ship's particulars.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. All right. I've got a couple more, here. So, you didn't
10 actually see the cable snap, right? That was --

11 A. No, I (indiscernible).

12 Q. -- that was more inside of the ship --

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. -- when you did get up there, where did you see the snap
15 happen? Like, was the cable, was it on the ship, on the boom of
16 the crane, or was it kind of mid between the block and the boom
17 where the crane --

18 A. Well, I have to look at that picture, but I'm thinking
19 it's -- the boom -- I'm going to say the block was inside the
20 piece, so the piece -- the, the cable was at the top where it
21 snapped at.

22 Q. Oh.

23 A. So, I just have to look at the picture. I can show you on
24 the picture --

25 Q. Okay, okay.

- 1 A. -- where that was --
- 2 Q. Yeah. I don't think --
- 3 A. -- in my mind.
- 4 Q. -- I've seen those photos of where exactly the cable --
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. -- snapped at.
- 7 A. (Indiscernible), yeah.
- 8 Q. I saw it after the fact --
- 9 (Crosstalk)
- 10 Q. -- but nothing -- we can look at those after, sir.
- 11 A. Okay.
- 12 Q. But I appreciate it. And then, the angle, do you recall what
- 13 the angle of the boom of the crane was at? Was it pretty steep?
- 14 Was it --
- 15 A. Yeah.
- 16 Q. -- 45?
- 17 A. It was probably at a -- probably about right here.
- 18 Q. Okay.
- 19 A. Yeah. Because once, once he put that -- you know, once you
- 20 put that pressure on it and lift it up --
- 21 Q. Yeah.
- 22 A. -- it's, it's not that the crane fell; the cable fell.
- 23 Q. Yeah, yeah.
- 24 A. You know. The, the cable fell, and that's what pretty
- 25 much --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. -- pretty much gave, gave out or whatever

3 [REDACTED] Okay. [REDACTED] do you have any questions?

4 [REDACTED] I do.

5 BY [REDACTED]

6 Q. Mr. Lanir, I have very similar kind of questions following on
7 to what my colleague had mentioned, and I'm going to --

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. -- back up kind of right from the beginning. I took a couple
10 of notes, here.

11 A. All rightie.

12 Q. You said that 0645, you have a JSA meeting. Everybody's
13 there. What does JSA stand for?

14 A. JSA is, is like a general safety, you know, so it's, it's
15 just for everything. It's for safety, it's for safety.

16 Q. Okay. So, that's not a specific acronym, like job safety
17 or --

18 A. Well, it's job safety, yeah. I thought --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Okay, I thought -- okay.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. I didn't want to say it. I didn't want to insult your
23 intelligence.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. But yeah, job --

1 Q. No, no, I --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. You --

4 A. Job safety analysis, you know --

5 [REDACTED] I know.

6 MR. LANIR: Things like that, you know.

7 [REDACTED] Yeah. All right.

8 BY [REDACTED]

9 Q. Okay. And my colleague brought up a point there with regard
10 to, right, just understanding the crew of the vessel's Pilipino,
11 the working language is English, then you have a job safety
12 meeting, you have two separate entities, individuals kind of
13 breaking off in a cluster speaking Spanish to discuss safety, and
14 then individuals breaking off speaking English to discuss the
15 safety, with some level of understanding of English and Spanish
16 across both boards. The crane operator is Mr. Ortiz (ph.); is
17 that correct?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. How is his interpretation of English? Enough that --

20 A. Yeah. No --

21 Q. -- you (indiscernible) he knew --

22 A. -- no, he understands.

23 Q. -- what you were saying?

24 A. Oh, yeah, yeah. That's why we have -- when we have different
25 type of nationalities, as in Spanish-speaking, it could be -- it

1 don't matter if you -- whatever nationality. You, you may speak
2 Sweden. I don't --

3 Q. Sure.

4 A. Swedish. It don't matter.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. We're going to have somebody that understands. That's why my
7 walking foreman speaks good English. He's going to let those guys
8 know, hey, this is what he means, this is what he means, this is
9 what he means. So, it wasn't, it wasn't a communication things.

10 Q. Okay. Understand.

11 A. Yeah, yeah.

12 Q. So, 0645 to roughly 0700, the safety meeting. Everybody
13 is -- you then break up. And Mr. Ortiz comes on board, goes
14 directly up into the crane. You maintain your position there on
15 the pier kind of overseeing that.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. The port captain goes on the ship, goes down in the hold?

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. The port captain, you said, is ultimately responsible for
20 ensuring that the connections and configurations to the nacelle
21 were attached correctly; is that right?

22 A. Yeah, well --

23 Q. Am I understanding?

24 A. -- we all -- I'm going to say, when we first started that
25 project, you know, we have slings, you know, or they may bring

1 slings that we -- that they have, want to use or whatever --

2 Q. Yes, sir.

3 A. -- and he makes sure that it's all right, and we make sure
4 it's all right.

5 Q. Correct. So --

6 A. And then --

7 Q. -- that's just a --

8 A. Oh, yeah.

9 Q. -- checking of the gear?

10 A. That's a checking of the gear, yeah.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. That's for sure.

13 Q. Now, the actual attachment of that gear to the piece being
14 lifted, how is that determined? Is it, years of experience says
15 hook it up like this? How do we know how to hook it up?

16 A. Well, it's according on how, how can you -- I'm going to say,
17 any time that you're rigging, you've got to do the proper rigging.
18 So, you can't hook it up how you want to hook it up. You've got
19 to hook it up how it's supposed to be hooked up.

20 Q. How do you get that guidance?

21 A. Well, through the port captain and, and -- through the port
22 captain, really. So, the port captain brings their gear, just say
23 you bring me your gear. You're --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- the port captain. This is how we're going to use it.

1 This is how they're supposed to be hooked up. It's -- he has a
2 paper that he has or whatever to show you how it's supposed to
3 be --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- hooked up and everything.

6 Q. Did he provide that document to you all at that JSA
7 meeting --

8 A. No, not at that --

9 Q. -- in the morning?

10 A. No. Not at that point.

11 Q. Okay. It had -- but that information had been communicated to
12 your crew prior to that morning's --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- JSA meeting?

15 A. Yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah.

16 Q. Okay. So, everyone down in the hold knew how to hook --

17 A. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Everybody --

18 Q. -- rig the slings?

19 A. Oh, yeah, everybody -- and that's why we have, that's why we
20 have foremen down there. You know, everybody's not going to know
21 the same thing as he knows, but as a foreman, I'm going to let you
22 know how it's supposed to be.

23 Q. Okay. And that --

24 A. It's just --

25 Q. -- walking foreman is the individual that stays down in the

- 1 cargo hold?
- 2 A. No. The foreman stays down there. The walking foreman is at
3 the top. We have two foremen.
- 4 Q. Okay.
- 5 A. It's the foreman; the walking foreman; he, the
6 superintendent.
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. So, we have three lines of defense.
- 9 Q. Okay.
- 10 A. Yeah. It's not just one guy.
- 11 Q. Perfect. Okay.
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. So, the port captain is -- ultimately provides the
14 information to you all. What's the weight of that nacelle, do you
15 know --
- 16 A. I -- no. I can just --
- 17 Q. -- roughly?
- 18 A. Yeah. I don't know. Just -- I couldn't just --
- 19 Q. Okay.
- 20 A. -- go and say that right now, yeah.
- 21 Q. My colleague had asked the question, right, so foreman in the
22 hold; walking foreman up on deck; crane operator in the crane;
23 ship superintendent, you were on the pier. So, that's kind of the
24 location of all parties involved?
- 25 A. Well, pretty much. Superintendent, I can be pretty much

1 where I want to be at that point. It's just, at that point, I was
2 down there --

3 Q. Got you.

4 A. -- because I just got through with the -- you know.

5 Q. Perfect.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. So, 0700, operations start, boom, boom, boom, we start
8 working. Is there any like 10 o'clock coffee break, 12 o'clock
9 lunch break? What time did you break?

10 A. 1300. 1300, lunch break.

11 Q. 1300 is the first lunch break?

12 A. Yeah, that's --

13 Q. The first break?

14 A. Well, that's the only lunch, lunch break. Yeah, I mean --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- it's like anybody that wants a break can have a break.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. You know. It's nothing that -- you know, nobody was
19 fatigued, or overtired, or something like that. So, if he needs a
20 break, my foreman -- somebody's in the hold and wants a break,
21 what we'll do is replace them with somebody until --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- let the person go take a break --

24 Q. Got it.

25 A. -- or we'll put a hold on something. But those guys, they

1 was fresh. Nobody needed a break. They had plenty of water, had
2 plenty to drink, everything. So, we just -- you know, business,
3 you know --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- and that's -- you know.

6 Q. Perfect. So, 1300. All right. Lunch. Calls on the radio.
7 What does everybody do? Does everybody come off the ship, go to
8 the pier, get --

9 A. Yeah. Everybody come up --

10 Q. -- in front of an AC?

11 A. -- make sure everything gets unhooked, making sure
12 everything's squared away, making sure everything is right; and
13 then, we come up off the ship, and we go off the ship, and we go
14 to lunch.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Did Mr. Ortiz come out of the crane and go shoreside during
18 that, or did he stay in the crane the whole time during lunch? Do
19 you recall?

20 A. No. No, he goes to lunch. Yeah, everybody goes to lunch.
21 No, he's not going to say up --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- on the ship, no. He --

24 Q. So, everybody --

25 A. -- yeah, he --

- 1 Q. -- came off of the ship, and then went to lunch?
- 2 A. Um-hum.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. And how long is lunch: half an hour --
- 6 A. One hour.
- 7 Q. -- an hour?
- 8 A. One. We have a one-hour lunch.
- 9 Q. One hour. Okay. So, 1400, the crew arrives back on the
- 10 pier, same little quick safety meeting, okay, we'll continue the
- 11 job, we're going to --
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. -- get back after it. Everybody go. Ready, break.
- 14 A. Yeah.
- 15 Q. And everybody disperses, correct?
- 16 A. Um-hum.
- 17 Q. Okay. When everything happened, the incident, it falls, roll
- 18 call, standdown, that standdown, you said everybody exited the
- 19 ship, they were all on the pier, and you kind of did your --
- 20 accountability all personnel.
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 Q. Did everyone come out of the cranes, everyone came out of the
- 23 hold?
- 24 A. Everybody come out the crane --
- 25 Q. A hundred percent accountability?

1 A. Yeah, 100 percent accountability. Once we have a safety
2 standdown, everybody comes from everywhere.

3 Q. Perfect.

4 A. So, you've --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- got to come down from the crane. Nobody's -- everybody.
7 Everybody comes down; and then, we have a safety meeting.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Random question, and I'm not sure if you would have
11 visibility on it or if this is a question more for the port
12 captain, regarding hooking that piece of equipment up. So, the
13 first one comes out, the second one comes out, we're in the
14 process of -- we're about to have lunch, we're about to load the
15 next one. Do you know if, prior to lunch, the crew had begun
16 attaching the nacelle, or if it was a, let's just wait; we'll go
17 to lunch; when we come back from lunch, now we're going to hook it
18 up?

19 A. Right, right. Once we come back from lunch, then we'll hook
20 it up --

21 Q. So, that's when --

22 A. -- yeah.

23 Q. -- you started the connections --

24 A. Right, right. We don't need --

25 Q. -- slings --

- 1 A. -- nothing hooked up or whatever, because those cranes, it
2 got to pretty much come out.
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. You know, you've got to probably leave them dangling or come
5 out the ship. We don't leave anything attached.
- 6 Q. Right. Now, I'm not talking block connected to straps. I'm
7 just saying straps --
- 8 A. Connected to piece.
- 9 Q. -- connected to piece.
- 10 A. Yes. No, no, no, no, no.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. We don't, we don't -- straps connected to piece, no. So,
13 it's like, when you bring the crane down to get the piece --
- 14 Q. Yes, sir.
- 15 A. -- hook it up --
- 16 Q. Yep.
- 17 A. -- no, we don't go to lunch like that.
- 18 Q. Perfect.
- 19 A. That's unacceptable.
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. You -- if you've got that piece hooked up, you unhook that
22 piece and bring that crane up, or you don't hook it up, period.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. Yeah.
- 25 Q. One more question related to that, sir. Do you know if the

1 crew that was inside the cargo hold with the port captain making
2 those connections before lunch was the exact same crew that came
3 in with the port captain and made the connections after lunch?

4 A. Same crew.

5 Q. Did anybody change out? Anybody had to leave for
6 appointment --

7 A. No, sir. Same crew. Julian. He's out there right now.

8 Q. Okay. So, the same personnel in the hold --

9 A. Same --

10 Q. -- same crew, same everything?

11 A. Yeah, we pretty much put the same guys back in there, because
12 he knows exactly what's going on in that hold.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Okay? We don't switch guys out and, hey, you just get over
15 there. No, we don't, we don't, we don't work like it here at
16 WATCO. We want to make sure, you start it, you're going to finish
17 it.

18 Q. Okay. Understood.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And what time is knockoff for the day, normal? So, 0700 to?

21 A. 8 o'clock, which is 2000.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. That's normally knockoff, you know. Or the port captain

1 might say, hey, we're going -- you know, until we open these
2 pontoons or whatever, it's going to take us a couple of hours to
3 open, to get the hatch covers off, or whatever, so hey, we're
4 going to knock off now. It might take then two hours to do it, so
5 he might say, knock off early. But that, that wasn't the case.

6 Q. Perfect. Okay.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Yeah, just a normal day, 7 --

9 A. -- yeah.

10 Q. -- to 20. Okay.

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 [REDACTED] That's awesome. No, that's pretty much -- the
13 only other thing I would ask, sir, my colleague provided you with
14 that email address, any photos that you have like right after the
15 event, if you could --

16 MR. LANIR: Right.

17 [REDACTED] -- please just forward those to that email
18 address, that would be helpful --

19 MR. LANIR: Okay.

20 [REDACTED] -- kind of following up, so --

21 MR. LANIR: Right.

22 [REDACTED] But other than that, I don't have anything else.
23 NTSB, your turn.

24 MR. JOHNSTON: Sure.

25 BY MR. JOHNSTON:

1 Q. Hi, Mr. Lanir.

2 A. Hey.

3 Q. Just kind of back up (indiscernible) can you just talk about
4 your own background and your experience, any licensing, or
5 education, training that you have?

6 A. Been on the waterfront about 11 years. I got experience in
7 truck driving, superintendence, supervising, pretty much,
8 background, pretty good. Graduated high school. Went to college
9 for like a year and a half. Worked in the oil field. After I
10 came from the oil field, I came to the port, and that's where I've
11 been.

12 Q. And how long have you worked with this company?

13 A. For about, I'd say, going on four years.

14 Q. Okay. All right. And where was the ship positioned at the
15 terminal? Was there a pier number, or a slip, or anything?

16 A. It's at dock four.

17 Q. Dock four. Okay.

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Thanks. And I know we talked about it, but do you know how
20 many total personnel were involved in the lift?

21 A. I would have to look on some notes of mine that was involved
22 in that lift. I know it was probably maybe over four or five,
23 something like that. But I've got to look at my notes. I don't
24 want to be -- just give you an answer like that without looking at
25 my notes.

1 Q. No, that's fine, that's fine.

2 A. Yeah. Because we, we put them together as gangs, so one gang
3 here and one gang another.

4 Q. Right. And so, you talked about the JSAs that you all do
5 every morning before you get going. What specific type
6 information is passed in those?

7 A. Come again. I'm sorry.

8 Q. I think it was called a JSA, just like a safety briefing at
9 the beginning of the day, you talked about. What specific type
10 information is talked about?

11 A. We'll talk about pretty much pinch points. I'm going to say,
12 are you using ladders? Clerk operations, lightning standdowns,
13 heavy lifts. It pretty much covers everything. So, what I do, I
14 access, I access the, the job, and what I do is hit the checklist
15 of what all we have going on that day, and I make sure I put that
16 checklist in there. Proper PPE gloves, safety glasses, hardhats,
17 you know, pretty much everything that we require safety out here
18 at WATCO, awareness of the job.

19 Q. And is this -- it sounds like -- is it kind of tailored to
20 what the job entails for that day?

21 A. Oh, yeah. It'll have everything on there. Anything that's
22 on that, on that, pretty much, the safety card that -- if I'm out
23 there shoveling snow, I'm going to put slip, trips, and falls on
24 there, you know, because --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- that can be something that will happen, so -- which, I do
2 that, anyway, on every job I have, because anybody can slip on a
3 water bottle or anything, so that's going to be on there, anyway,
4 yeah.

5 Q. And what kind of information is passed from the ship about
6 the crane? You said their certification. Is that the
7 Classification Society certs? Can you elaborate on what was
8 given?

9 A. Well, you get ship's particulars. It's pretty much -- you
10 know, crane certification is the -- when, when the last time your
11 crane has been looked at, you know, or when it has been certified.
12 Like, every five years, that -- you might have to get a lot of
13 that information from the port captain. But if it's good to go
14 within a five-year period of whatever, then it's, it's pretty --
15 they'll say the cranes are certified. So, I don't know who
16 certifies their cranes, but once we get the paper that says that
17 crane's certified, we need something that can classify that the
18 cranes are certified before we, before we use them. So, if it's
19 not certified, we can't use them, period. So, that's why --

20 Q. All right.

21 A. -- we get those --

22 Q. Did --

23 A. -- certifications.

24 Q. Right, yeah.

25 A. So, which means it's good to go. So, they sent -- they're

1 telling us that our cranes are good. It's good to go. It's
2 greased, it's -- we don't have no problems with it. So, it's
3 certified, so it's ready to go. So, that's what we go by, and
4 that's what we keep in our notes.

5 Q. And there were no issues with the information they passed you
6 on their cranes on the ship?

7 A. No, no. If there was, we wouldn't have used it.

8 Q. Right. Okay. And you talked about the lifting gear that's
9 provided. The -- like, your company provides everything, not
10 counting the hook, but from the hook down, correct?

11 A. Well, well, our company can provide it, but their company --
12 if they want to use their own personal sling -- like I say,
13 there's a lot of things they have to get with the port captain on
14 about, you know, of that. I think that would be a question for
15 him, you know. It's just, when we get -- you know, if it's our
16 gear, or if it's their gear, or whatever, we just make sure it's
17 in good using condition.

18 Q. Do you remember who provided the lifting gear for this lift?

19 A. If I'm -- I'm, I'm thinking it was us that provided that,
20 that gear, because I know it was our shackles. But I'm thinking
21 it was us, yes.

22 Q. WATCO?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay. Yeah. And you said that for the process for securing
25 the slings, and shackles, and whatnot to the, nacelle, that's

1 confirmed by the port captain with the foreman kind of down in the
2 hold making sure they get the hang of it?

3 A. Yeah. He goes down there. He was going back and forth down
4 there and -- well, they know what to do, anyway, but, I mean, you
5 know, some guys, some port captains, want to go make sure it's
6 hooked up right. Some -- yeah, just some people, some -- it's
7 just everybody's different, you know? He might want to come on
8 and be, okay, that's okay. This is how we're going to do it.
9 Which, we know how to do it, but, you know, coming from -- you
10 know, if he's saying it's okay, it's okay. But we're going to
11 make sure it's okay, because if it's unsafe, we're not doing it.
12 It don't matter who's down there, you know. So, pretty much,
13 yeah, that's it on that, yeah. This page isn't (indiscernible).

14 MR. JOHNSTON: All right. I think that's all I have. Thank
15 you, sir.

16 [REDACTED] Okay.

17 MR. LANIR: You're welcome.

18 [REDACTED] All right, sir. I've got, I've got one last
19 question, here.

20 MR. LANIR: Okay.

21 BY [REDACTED]

22 Q. You know, looking at the yard here, you guys obviously move
23 around wind turbine components quite frequently here. Have you
24 ever seen anything like this happen before to one of the cranes
25 when you're offloading equipment like this? Have you ever seen a

1 crane fail?

2 A. No.

3 Q. No?

4 A. No, not in my years of experience. I never seen a cable
5 snap. That was --

6 [REDACTED] Okay.

7 MR. LANIR: -- pretty much surprising to a lot of people out
8 there --

9 [REDACTED] Yeah.

10 MR. LANIR: -- that, that a cable snapped. I know I haven't
11 seen one of our cables snap.

12 [REDACTED] Okay.

13 MR. LANIR: So, when that cable snapped, that's the first
14 time I ever seen that being on the waterfront.

15 [REDACTED] Okay.

16 MR. LANIR: Yes.

17 BY [REDACTED]

18 Q. And then, knowing that, on this specific vessel, you were
19 using their cranes, on other vessels that you've offloaded similar
20 equipment, have you always used the ship's cranes on those, too,
21 or --

22 A. Oh, yeah. We use the ship's crane, also.

23 Q. Yeah? Okay.

24 A. You know, and we use the ship's crane, also, and --

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. -- never had any issue.

2 Q. Got it.

3 A. You know, like I say, get the ship's particulars, and get the
4 crane certification, and they're pretty much good to go.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. So, I don't know why theirs snapped like that, but I don't
7 know. Like I say, I don't know where they get their certification
8 from, so maybe that may, that may be what needs to be an
9 investigation right there, where are they --

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. -- getting their certifications from, or who certified this?
12 Because if it was certified, and it was the right way, and
13 somebody say, well, okay, this is good to go, I don't think that
14 should have snapped like that. Just my opinion, being a
15 superintendent.

16 [REDACTED] Yeah.

17 MR. LANIR: So --

18 [REDACTED] Understood. Thank you, sir.

19 MR. LANIR: Yeah, somebody (indiscernible) something.

20 [REDACTED] Sure.

21 MR. LANIR: Yeah.

22 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

23 MR. LANIR: Yeah.

24 [REDACTED] I just have one follow-up question, Mr. Lanir.

25 BY [REDACTED]

1 Q. Obviously, there's a certification requirement that you all
2 require of the ship to provide prior to using the equipment. You
3 said you guys have a 550 crane? Is that what you referred to it
4 as?

5 A. 550, yes.

6 Q. Okay, and that has the same/similar certifications for the
7 load-handling capacities --

8 A. Oh, yeah.

9 Q. -- and things like that?

10 A. Yeah, yeah. I'd have -- yeah, yeah.

11 Q. So, all the equipment --

12 A. (Indiscernible).

13 Q. -- has a certification. Is there any requirement that WATCO
14 has for its operators to have certifications, credentials --

15 A. Oh, yeah, yeah.

16 Q. -- licenses?

17 A. Oh, yeah. They've got to have all that. You can't get any,
18 any type of rolling/walking cranes or whatever without being
19 certified, or going to class for, or going to school for. Yeah,
20 that's mandatory here. You can't get in a forklift out here
21 without being certified --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- not --

24 Q. Can you confirm for me that Mr. Ortiz has all the required
25 certifications to be a crane operator?

1 A. For our cranes, or for their ship --

2 Q. To operate the ship's cranes.

3 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, he --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I mean, I can't show you that. That, that would have to get
6 with safety, and you have to get with safety on that --

7 [REDACTED] Okay.

8 (Crosstalk)

9 BY [REDACTED]

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. But he wouldn't be up there if he wasn't certified, because
12 safety's not going to let him up there.

13 Q. Understand.

14 A. Anybody that they send with me -- I get different people. I
15 don't just have him all the time, but I get different people. But
16 anytime that their cranes -- anytime that they're getting in these
17 cranes, they're going to be -- they've got to be certified.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So, through safety. Our safety's not going to let them, or
20 they're not going to send them to us. They have little cards or
21 something, too, that they both have that, that lets them know that
22 they're all certified to be in --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- a ship's gear crane.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah. But safety would have that.

2 Q. Sure. Yes, sir.

3 A. Yeah.

4 [REDACTED] All right. Thank you so much. I don't have any
5 follow-up --

6 [REDACTED] All right.

7 [REDACTED] -- questions.

8 [REDACTED] No outstanding questions from the Coast
9 Guard. Mr. Johnston, do you have any questions outstanding?

10 MR. JOHNSTON: No, none from me.

11 [REDACTED] All right.

12 MR. JOHNSTON: Thank you.

13 [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you. We'll be ending this
14 interview. Thank you, sir. Appreciate it.

15 MR. LANIR: All right. I appreciate it, man.

16 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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


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

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 D. Sevarino
Transcriber