

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CAPSIZING OF THE LIFTBOAT *SEACOR*
POWER SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,
LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 13, 2021

Accident No.: DCA21MM024

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Interview of: ROBERT SHENINGER,
Vice President of HSE & Sustainability
Talos Energy

Via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday,
April 21, 2021

Errata

Interview of: Robert Sheninger

Page Line	Correction
Page 12 Line 21	“(indiscernible)” should be “HSE plan”
Page 12 Line 22	“(indiscernible)” should be “Hazard Risk Assessment”
Page XX Line XX	
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APPEARANCES:

ANDREW EHLERS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

██████████ ██████████ Member
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

JOHN PRESTON, Chief Surveyor Offshore
American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)

MICHAEL CENAC, QHSE Manager, Designated Person Ashore,
Chief Security Officer, Seacor Marine

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of ROBERT SHENINGER:

By Marcel Muisse

5

By [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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By Marcel Muisse

19

I N T E R V I E W

(3:00 p.m.)

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2
3 MARCEL MUISE: This is Marcel Muise. I am an investigator
4 with the National Transportation Safety Board. It is 1400 Central
5 Time. We're in Houma, Louisiana investigating the circumstances
6 around the loss of the liftboat *Seacor Power*. We'll be
7 interviewing the Vice President of HSE for Talos Energy.

8 Rob, if you would, please go ahead and spell your name, or
9 introduce yourself and spell your name for us please.

10 ROBERT SHENINGER: Yes, Robert Sheninger, Vice President of
11 HSE and sustainability for Talos Energy; last name is
12 S-H-E-N-I-N-G-E-R.

13 MARCEL MUISE: We'll go around the room so you know who's
14 here please.

15 ANDREW EHLERS: This is Drew Ehlers. I'm the investigator in
16 charge for the NTSB.

17 [REDACTED] I'm with the U.S. Coast Guard.

18 JOHN PRESTON: John Preston with the American Bureau of
19 Shipping.

20 MICHAEL CENAC: Michael Cenac with Seacor Marine.

21 MARCEL MUISE: I forgot to mention, if you need to take a
22 break or talk to counsel at any time, just say so and we will just
23 take a break. Do you agree to let me record this interview?

24 ROBERT SHENINGER: Yes.

25 Q. Okay, thank you. So sir, can you, just in a broad stroke,

1 can you tell us what it is you do for Talos Energy?

2 A. Yes. I lead the Health Safety Environmental programs for
3 Talos Energy making sure that above all else we're compliant with
4 the law. We create a culture that both empowers and engages our
5 employees to work safely. Also, heavily on the environmental
6 protection side as well, and ESG, which is one of the big things
7 these days; climate change; from protecting the Gulf of Mexico
8 from anything getting overboard.

9 So anything to do with safety and the environment, I'm
10 helping -- partnering with operations to make that happen. Also
11 heavily involved in contractor management. We work with a lot of
12 contractors and making sure they're aware of our HSE expectations
13 as well as the employees who work for us.

14 Q. Okay. I understand the standard -- that's the latest and
15 greatest is called SEMS, and your system complies with that, or is
16 compliant with that system?

17 A. Yes. SEMS is the short for the Safety and Environmental
18 Management System. It's a framework similar to, like, ISO 14000
19 or OSHAS 18000 where it's actually a management system which has
20 17 components. I won't go through all those components, but
21 hazard and risk assessment is one, management change, training in
22 competency, stop work authority. And our program not only aligns
23 to SEMS, it's in full compliance with SEMS. We're audited every
24 three years by an independent third party, and they're looking at,
25 not only the applicability of SEMS to our operations, but also

1 making sure contractors are aware and involved as well.

2 Q. Okay. So your system is audited by a third party that meets
3 BSEE's approval, is that correct?

4 A. Yes, BSEE's -- in order to be a SEMS accredited auditor, it
5 has to be one that is approved jointly between BSEE and the Center
6 for Offshore Safety.

7 Q. Okay, thank you. How do your contractors come into play
8 there? How do you make sure that they are compliant with your
9 system?

10 A. So we have a SEMS bridging agreement where it's kind of a gap
11 analysis where we make sure that contractors are aware of our SEMS
12 program and the components that they need to have in place. We
13 vet contractors through a system called ISNetWorld. So it's kind
14 of a computerized database where we have questionnaires that
15 contractors answer questions. They know which applicable SEMS
16 programs apply to them and every contractor we work with we have a
17 SEMS bridging agreement for. So they're aware of what their
18 expectations are in order to meet SEMS and comply with our
19 expectations.

20 Q. And you had such an agreement with Seacor Marine, as well?

21 A. Yeah. We did and we're happy to share it.

22 Q. Okay, thank you. Does the same goes for Cardinal and I
23 believe that the (indiscernible) was also a third-party
24 contractor?

25 A. Every contractor -- it's part of our MSA process, our Master

1 Service Agreement. So in order to work for Talos, you need to
2 have an MSA and a SEMS bridging agreement.

3 Q. Okay. I understand competency assurance is part of SEMS?

4 A. Training in competency, correct.

5 Q. Can we -- how do you go about -- competency assurance is a
6 whole science, so I'm just curious how do we go about that at
7 Talos?

8 A. Yeah, we have an HSE training matrix, which identifies all of
9 the required training by job type. So contractors -- we actually
10 also tie this into the ISNetWorld. So let's say you're a rigger
11 and you have, obviously you have to have rigger training. They
12 have to upload proof that they've had it and it's tied to a scan
13 card system. So when the contractors arrive to either the shore
14 base or the heliport, they scan in and that's how we assure the
15 competency. It's also -- it's audited by, it's audited during the
16 SEMS process as well. So we're looking at that. We've actually
17 looked at that pretty heavily in the SEMS audit process.

18 Q. Is water survival part of that training?

19 A. Yes. Yes, it is. It's interesting you mention that. I just
20 went through my water survival renewal last week.

21 Q. Okay. Can you just briefly describe the water survival
22 training that's required by your SEMS program? What does it
23 involve?

24 A. Yeah. So the water survival -- it depends if you're going
25 for an annual, a first time, or a refresher. But it's about --

1 it's an 8-hour course. You have -- the first morning is
2 instruction. Then in the afternoon you're getting dunked in a pool
3 and you go through multiple simulations. So it is helicopter-
4 based, but a component of that is also sea survival.

5 So what they'll do is you'll put on your life vest. They
6 will have you jump into the water in different forms, fastened.
7 They go through different types of life vests. They also will put
8 that -- I don't know what that thing is, but they'll throw this
9 thing in the pool, you'll put it around yourself and they'll hoist
10 you out of the pool.

11 So I'd say the actual sea survival is probably an hour to two
12 hours depending on the class size. They also put you in your
13 safety ring. So the group of students is holding wrist to wrist
14 and practicing, you know, flotation, flutter kicks, things of that
15 sort. It's accredited by OPITO. So OPITO is the main certifying
16 body out of Aberdeen Scotland. So we take our folks through the
17 OPITO course.

18 Q. That was my next question. These are all -- Talos requires
19 the water survival to be OPITO approved?

20 A. I wouldn't say we require it to be OPITO, but most of the
21 ones that -- the ones in Houston we used M&A safety, we used
22 Falck. They're all OPITO approved. So it's not explicitly stated
23 in our training matrix, but you'll be hard pressed to find HUET
24 that's not OPITO.

25 Q. Okay. I'm familiar with BOSIET (indiscernible), is this the

1 same thing, or similar?

2 A. What was that again?

3 Q. Is this the same thing as OPITO BOSIET?

4 A. Okay. So BOSIET's a little different. So we do tropical
5 HUET. BOSIET is more advanced and it's geared towards cold
6 weather. So you'll go through BOSIET if, say, you're working in
7 the North Sea, it's much more intensive. They also do
8 firefighting training. They do some other stuff not related to
9 underwater survival egress. So BOSIET is like a three-to-five day
10 course, where our T-HUET is a one-day course.

11 Q. Okay. That's a Talos requirement, to have at least T-HUET,
12 is that right?

13 A. That is correct.

14 Q. It's not a BSEE requirement or --

15 A. And T-HUET -- and again T-HUET is required for those that are
16 going out by helicopter.

17 Q. Okay. How about those that are travelling by crew boat or
18 liftboat?

19 A. I will have to check the training matrix to verify that and
20 look at the job title. We have over 200 job titles, and I don't
21 have that in front of me. But I can definitely pull that up and
22 get you that answer.

23 Q. Okay. Obviously, we have an issue here with loss of people
24 and we'd like to back at the training -- what training they had
25 and what training is appropriate.

1 A. And again that's also a question for Seacor as well --

2 Q. Absolutely.

3 A. With their own training matrix. I would say, when you look
4 at their training matrix, you may very well see that sea survival
5 is -- they may even have a more advanced training requirement than
6 what we have.

7 Q. In the bridging document, does Seacor have additional
8 requirements for non-Seacor employees that are just riding with
9 Talos employees, or Talos contractors that are riding on Seacor
10 vessels?

11 A. The bridging agreement it's pretty much for a vessel, is that
12 anyone on the vessel will comply with Seacor's HSE management
13 system and their requirements. So that would apply to Seacor
14 employees, subcontractors, Talos personnel. I mean, we -- if I
15 was on that vessel, I would be following all of Seacor's HSE
16 requirements.

17 Q. Okay. Have you seen Seacor's safety management system?

18 A. I have not.

19 Q. Who generates the gap analysis between the two?

20 A. So the gap analysis, the -- you're talking about the SEMS
21 bridging agreement?

22 Q. Yes, sir.

23 A. So the bridging agreement is a standard document for all of
24 our contractors that is generated by the HSE department, and then
25 it's shared with the contractors we have through the MSA process,

1 also pre-job meetings and through ISN, which is our constant
2 contractor management system where we can identify potential gaps
3 if they come up.

4 Q. Okay. Does it get into the level of detail, for example, if
5 Talos requires me to wear a red hard hat and Seacor says green,
6 does the bridging document get into that kind of detail, which
7 system we're going to follow?

8 A. It's easy. If Seacor says green, we wear green. So
9 basically, it's similar to -- the best analogy I have is, like, a
10 helicopter for instance. You know, we go to the heliport, we got
11 our bags, we tell the pilot we're ready to go. But at the end of
12 the day, he is the only one that's going to make that decision on
13 whether it's safe to fly or not.

14 We are completely within his sphere of influence, his
15 control, and it's the same with the vessel. I've been on vessels
16 before, and when I board the vessel, I'm getting all my
17 instructions from the captain. Whether it be safety briefings,
18 expectations, loading, unloading, everything.

19 Q. Okay. Have you ever been at -- from an HSE perspective, ever
20 been asked to -- or, you know, wherever, request to remove a
21 captain or a chief engineer from -- not just Seacor, but any
22 vessel out there?

23 A. I have not, no.

24 Q. Does Talos have a hotline, a safety hotline?

25 A. We have a whistleblower hotline. It's completely anonymous.

1 Also BSEE has a whistleblower hotline as well. So there's two
2 opportunities where somebody could file an anonymous complaint.
3 But we work really hard to create a transparent culture where we
4 would hope they come right to our person in charge, or the captain
5 of the vessel. But yes, we do have a whistleblower hotline.

6 Q. Are you aware of any complaints on those hotlines for *Seacor*
7 *Power* or *Seacor* in general?

8 A. No. We actually never had -- since I've been here, it's
9 going on six years -- we've never had an HSE related complaint
10 called into the hotline.

11 Q. Okay. You mentioned ISO 140001 and 9001. Are those
12 requirements for contractors as well?

13 A. No, because we're unique in that SEMS is an enforceable
14 management system by standards. So we do see ISO a lot in the
15 European markets. Some of our contractors do pursue ISO or OSHAS
16 to meet other customer requirements, but SEMS is the one, the
17 overarching that we follow.

18 Q. When you contract a vessel is there an overarching risk
19 analysis such -- are you familiar with safety cases?

20 A. I know the term. So in this case, we had performed a
21 (indiscernible) for the project, which I believe is similar to
22 your (indiscernible) safety case. But a (indiscernible) goes
23 through a risk matrix based on frequency and probability. We look
24 -- there is a color coding system, and we rank the different
25 activities. We also have a standard set of safety guidelines that

1 I am also happy to share that's embedded within the work pact.

2 So it covers, you know, fitness for duty, fatigue management,
3 training requirements, incident reporting. So we got multiple
4 layers of controls to not only identify risks, but mitigate them.
5 And then a major component of SEMS is the job of safety analysis.
6 They need to be done. That's another that's unique to our
7 industry. It's required that we are doing JSEA, job safety
8 analysis, for all of our job tasks.

9 Q. The hazard study that was just for this one project, for the
10 platform, did it also include the liftboat?

11 A. It was -- there is a segment on there for marine
12 transportation. I think it was item -- don't quote me on this,
13 but it could be, like, item 63. But it was for the quote
14 (indiscernible) project. We had a meeting on March 1st to review
15 that information with the team.

16 Q. Did you set up some sort of incident management team there
17 for this incident?

18 A. Yeah. Michael Boudreaux, who I believe you talked to, is the
19 lead, and he has been liaising with Seacor, Coast Guard. And then
20 we have internally a team that has been -- we were meeting quite
21 regularly, but also getting updates at least twice a day when
22 they're having news conferences and so forth.

23 Q. Are you familiar with another PO class called MEM, or Major
24 Emergency Management?

25 A. I'm familiar with the ICS system. That OPITO class, I don't

1 want to say I'm --

2 Q. That's fine, okay. Yeah, ICS is more of an American thing,
3 where MEM is OPITO.

4 Does Telos have a no-knife policy for its contractors?

5 A. Can you explain?

6 Q. Some clients and companies now ban pocket knives for their
7 employees.

8 A. Oh, pocket knives. Yeah, we don't allow them to be used. So
9 you can't use a pocket knife for a job. But I don't believe we
10 specifically say you can't have them on your person, but it can't
11 be used.

12 Q. So would that policy apply to -- I remember you said we use
13 Seacor's Safety Management System. On a Seacor vessel, would that
14 policy apply to their crew?

15 A. It would apply on the work that is being performed for us.
16 So at our platform, yes. In transit I would say, in my
17 professional opinion, no. It's Seacor's HSE management system
18 that would be applicable

19 MARCEL MUISE: Okay. Thank you, sir. With that, I'm going
20 to pass it onto my colleague, Drew. Thank you.

21 ANDREW EHLERS: I don't have any additional questions. Thank
22 you.

23 MARCEL MUISE: Okay. Coast Guard?

24 [REDACTED] I did, but it's just that, pocketknife just
25 threw me off. I'll come back.

1 MARCEL MUISE: ADS, nothing? Seacor?

2 BY MICHAEL CENAC: Just a point of clarity on ISNetWorld. So
3 the bridging document is an agreement to comply with ISN?

4 ROBERT SHENINGER: No.

5 MICHAEL CENAC: So if there is gaps in ISNetWorld, it will
6 show up as a flag for Talos and for Seacor. So you wouldn't have
7 an additional, as you described, layer to show differences, unless
8 there was something non-compliant. So the bridging document as
9 referred to is an agreeance to comply with ISN.

10 MARCEL MUISE: Is that a question?

11 MICHAEL CENAC: No, it's a point of clarification.

12 BY MARCEL MUISE:

13 Q. Okay. Does that make sense? Is that correct, Rob?

14 A. No. The ISNetWorld is just the means in which we can vet
15 contractors to our HSE expectations. The SEMS bridging agreement,
16 the sole purpose is to look for differences in SEMS requirement
17 and what a contractor who doesn't work offshore -- because again
18 the operator is the one who is ultimately responsible for
19 compliance with SEMS. So we use these bridging agreements to make
20 sure that our contractors know what SEMS requirements are expected
21 of them and that it's their responsibility to have those
22 expectations met upon arrival at our facility.

23 Q. Okay. So what Michael was trying to say I think; if I show
24 up and scan my card at the heliport and I'm supposed to have T-
25 HUET and I don't, or it's expired, I'll get flagged as red.

1 A. That is correct. That is correct.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. ISN scanning does two things; it looks for training, but it
4 also looks for your overall grade and your overall grade is a
5 combination of having all your SEMS documentation in place,
6 acknowledging our HSE policies. So it's a check and balance to
7 make sure that when a contractor does arrive to work for us, that
8 they're trained, competent, they're meeting our HSE expectations.

9 Q. Is ISNetWorld a database or is it an organization or both?

10 A. It's both. It's the largest contractor management system in
11 the world. All the major oil and gas players use it. You go to a
12 heliport or a dock, you're going to see most of the people there
13 with ISN scan cards. So there's other systems out there, but ISN
14 is pretty much the eight-hundred-pound gorilla that we utilize.

15 Q. Okay, so that covers crew. Is there a system for vetting the
16 vessel itself, such as OVID or CMID audits?

17 A. I would not be able to answer that. I don't know.

18 MARCEL MUISE: Okay. All right. [REDACTED] did you have a follow
19 up?

20 BY [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

21 Q. Yeah. Robert, you said something about a hotline, Talos
22 hotline --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. For reporting different things? Is that number provided on
25 board the assets, like the *Seacor Power*? Is that available, is

1 that like given to them in advance? Is that posted anywhere for
2 masters available, or anything?

3 A. The only place I know that doesn't have a BSEE hotline, I
4 would assume. As far as the Talos, it is on our platforms. I
5 can't say if it's on vessels or not.

6 Q. All right. I was just trying to determine if it was
7 something that was passed down to the crews on different vessels
8 and stuff.

9 A. Now we do have stop work authority cards and we do hand out
10 stop work authority cards when people arrive to our platforms, and
11 it has our whistleblower line on it. It has the BSEE number on
12 it. Whether or not it was handed out to this crew -- if they
13 worked for us in the past, maybe, but if this was an initial trip,
14 I would say they wouldn't have all of that. Now, a company man
15 that was on the vessel, probably had his stop work authority card
16 on him because he worked for us before.

17 Q. In the past, it's been a while -- back when I mean, when I
18 was working offshore it was -- things was still getting it pretty
19 good, but in the past, there was safety awards and compliance
20 awards. Like, if we turned in so many stop work authority cards,
21 or I don't know what type of system you all have for basic
22 awareness of incidents and hazards, but if we--

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. If we turned in so many cards, or if we worked for a
25 contractor like yourself for a period of six months, a year, we

1 get some type of incentive bonus, either pay or a jacket, t-shirt,
2 some type of reward. Do you all still have any systems like that
3 in place, and if so --

4 A. Yeah, we got multiple layers. The easiest is we do culture
5 recognition where it's basically if somebody observes a great
6 behavior intervention, we give them a gift card on the spot, we
7 take a photo, we then share that recognition with all of our
8 employees. We also try to touch as many contracts as possible.
9 That program is more geared to contractors than it is to our
10 people.

11 Internally, we do a quarterly safety bonus which looks at
12 observation cards. It looks at stop work authority interventions.
13 It looks at, you know, are they leading safety meetings? I mean,
14 it's a much different criteria than just doing an observation
15 card, but we really try to -- and we also -- when we have
16 significant incidents, we generate what's called a lessons learned
17 and we talk about what went right; where were the opportunities
18 for improvement and those are shared amongst Talos and we also
19 sent them out to contractors as best we can.

20 So hazard -- sharing lessons learned is a big piece of what
21 my department does. It helps us with BSEE when we have a BSEE
22 reportable, but recognition as well. We have worked really hard
23 to create a culture where people feel comfortable speaking up if
24 something is not right and we definitely want to recognize folks
25 for all they do well. People do a lot more right than they ever

1 do wrong. So we do have multiple systems in place to recognize
2 the efforts of our folks and our contractors.

3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Okay, cool.

4 BY MARCEL MUISE:

5 Q. One other element in SEMS is ultimate work authority I
6 believe, right? Is that correct?

7 A. Yeah. Ultimate work authority is where you're giving one
8 individual the -- pretty much the sole responsibility to approve
9 the work that's going on. Ultimate work authority is usually the
10 PIC on a platform, but on a vessel, UWA is the Captain.

11 Q. Okay, that was my next question. Thank you. Well, sir,
12 thanks. Thank you for taking time to talk to us.

13 Does anybody else have any follow ups? Rob, is there
14 anything else I didn't ask that you think I should know about, or
15 I should be looking into?

16 A. No, but can I just ask, I'm just curious, the pocketknife
17 question, was that a -- I was just curious, because that kind of
18 threw me off too. I was just curious where that was coming from?

19 Q. I don't want to get into analysis, but you could probably see
20 it's a tool that gets used sometimes --

21 A. Yeah, not only pocketknives, but cheater bars and has
22 something else that we've had in the past and we've banned those.
23 We really work to provide the right tool for the job and make sure
24 it's engineered and set for purpose, but again we're not searching
25 bags for that.

1 But if somebody were caught using one, that would be
2 definitely something we'd be looking at our accountability
3 ventures for.

4 Q. The reason for that?

5 A. What's that?

6 Q. What is the reasoning behind that?

7 A. The reasoning behind?

8 Q. Behind not using a pocketknife. What are the hazards with --

9 A. Oh --

10 JOHN PRESTON: Robert, you talked about using it as a tool to
11 perform work on a platform?

12 ROBERT SHENINGER: No. A pocketknife is not the right tool
13 for the job and it should never allowed to be used. If somebody
14 were to use a knife, they'd be given a safety knife which is
15 retractable and safe to use. That's why we don't allow those. I
16 mean, I think Chevron was the first major to send out -- because I
17 used to work as a contractor, and they were the first ones to ban
18 pocketknives and we never allow them. I was just curious, you
19 know, the train of thought for why it came up. But no, we provide
20 the right tools for the job, for every job.

21 MARCEL MUISE: Okay. Well, thank you. If there's anything
22 you can think of at all that I missed or you want to -- that comes
23 up that might be useful, please reach out to me. You can reach me
24 through Mr. Moss, he has my email.

25 ROBERT SHENINGER: Yeah. Again if there's anything you need

1 from me, we can coordinate through Tommy. We're more than willing
2 to share the things we have in place and what we're doing to make
3 everyone successful.

4 MARCEL MUISE: Okay. And with that, it's 1430, and we will
5 secure the record.

6 (Whereupon, at 2:30 p.m. the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

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

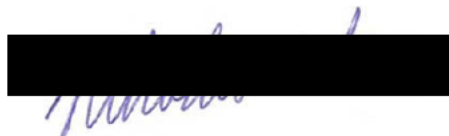
IN THE MATTER OF: CAPSIZING OF THE LIFTBOAT *SEACOR*
 POWER SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,
 LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 13, 2021
 Interview of Robert Sheninger

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21MM024

PLACE: Via Microsoft Teams

DATE: April 21, 2021

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been
transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of the transcriber. Above the box, there are faint, handwritten blue ink marks that appear to be the initials 'NO'.

Nikolas Oka
Transcriber