UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
FIRE ON THE *KIRBY DUPUIS* F/V	*	
NEAR BELLEVIEW, KENTUCKY	*	Accident No.: DCA22FM002
ON NOVEMBER 9, 2021	*	
	*	

Interview of: OMAR NOVEROLA, Unit Service Manager
THOMAS TIERNEY, Senior Technician
Herbert S. Hiller

Via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday,
June 14, 2022

APPEARANCES:

BRIAN YOUNG, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

[redacted]
U.S. Coast Guard

TONY STAINES
Staines, Eppling & Kenney

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

MR. YOUNG: So, this is Brian Young with the National Transportation Safety Board. We are recording a Teams interview of Hiller Technicians. And if you don't mind, for the recording, we'll just go around the room and spell everybody's last name so the transcription would be accurate. My name is Brian Young, Y-o-u-n-g. And with the Coast Guard?

MR. [redacted]: [redacted]

MR. YOUNG: Okay. And with Hiller?

MR. NOVEROLA: Omar, O-m-a-r, Noverola, N-o-v-e-r-o-l-a. I'm the unit service manager for Gulf South (ph.)

MR. YOUNG: Thank you.

MR. TIERNEY: Thomas Tierney, T-i-e-r-n-e-y. I'm a senior technician with Herbert S. Hiller.

MR. YOUNG: Great, thank you. And Mr. Staines.

MR. STAINES: Tony Staines with Staines, Eppling & Kenney for Florida Marine Transporters.

MR. YOUNG: Great, thank you very much.

Okay, Mr. [redacted] if you're all set we can proceed. Thank you.

MR. [redacted] All set?

MR. YOUNG: Yes.

MR. NOVEROLA: All right. So, basically do you want a chronological or a sequence of -- a summary, (indiscernible) summary? Friday, December 8th, we received a call from Ricky

Johnson (ph.) from FMT, requesting us to refill the sapphire system that was utilized in a fire on a (indiscernible). I sent my technicians out to retrieve the cylinders. The cylinders were already landed, they were removed from the vessel when we arrived. Upon loading the cylinders, the sapphire cylinders, our technicians realized that the load on the truck seemed a little heavy. And I guess at the same time the yard also realized that it didn't look right. So, they removed the cylinders, the sapphire, the agent cylinder, and actually weighed them. They were capable of weighing them with the crane and I realized they were pulling about 1,000 pounds, approximately 1,000 pounds, which is correct, the full weight of the cylinders.

At that time, my technicians, who were in conversation with me, I reached out to Ricky and we began to discuss the cylinders are possibly full. And that I explained to him that we had to take different measures to verify, first of all, that the agent cylinder was full and the pilot cylinder, which is nitrogen, was also full. I explained to Ricky that because the pilot cylinder was nitrogen, we couldn't weigh it; we must verify it by pressure. On this particular cylinder, the pilot cylinder, there is no means of actually opening the valve and checking the pressure off of the cylinder itself. So, we -- the manufacturer, which is Ansul, has a method and equipment they supply in order to check the pressure without discharging the entire cylinder. So, at that time, I explained that to Ricky and let them come and take the information

I gave them and we came up with a plan of action from there. So, if you want me to go ahead and proceed on, I'll keep going.

12/9, the next day, myself, Tommy (ph.) and another senior technician, we attended the vessel and we took measures of verifying the weight in the sapphire cylinder, first of all by a weighing measure and the other is by a liquid level indicator. So, we soon as have a dipstick basically inserted in the cylinder. It's a magnetic dipstick. So, we're able to pull the dipstick out and actually look at the liquid level to determine if it's full (indiscernible). From that, we took the temperature. It was outside the ambient temperature outside and the pressure that the cylinder had, there's a chart that is supplied by the manufacturer and DOT to determine if that's correct because the temperature will vary the pressure inside the cylinder. So, everything seemed to be on par, everything was correct, the weight was full. We verified the sapphire cylinder was full.

In regard to the pilot cylinder, there as a little bit more entailed to that. So, we raised -- originally, they had the cylinder brought -- I suggested to bring it to my shop and witness us putting the cylinder under pressure. That was the plan, but then they decided because we were the installers, that they'd like an outside source doing the verification of the pressure. We tried to go to a company called Sotech (ph.) but they, I guess, they declined it or didn't answer. So, at the last minute, that's when Tierney and I decided to put the cylinder actually in place

on board the vessel. And so Tommy and myself, we connected the system as if it was intact as per design. The release station, the actuation cable, everything was placed on to the cylinder itself.

At that time we video recorded and took pictures of everything. We installed a pressure gauge that was given to us by the manufacturer in order for us to verify the pressure before actually discharging the cylinder. So, we did that. We witnessed it, recorded it; the pressure was good, so the cylinder was full. We relieved the pressure, connected the system as by design and we actually activated the system to release, to verify that the remote release pull station worked properly. We activated the cylinder and everything operated as per required. That (indiscernible) from start to finish basically. Do you have anything else for me to add to that?

MR. YOUNG: No, you could (indiscernible), thank you.

MR. NOVEROLA: Okay. Any questions from what I just said?

INTERVIEW OF OMAR NOVEROLA

BY MR. [redacted]:

Q. This is [redacted] from the Coast Guard. So, were you able to determine why the system did not function at the time of the fire?

A. Okay. I'm going to be real careful with this, because all we can verify is that the system operated per design with my technicians and myself installing the mechanisms. Meaning, every

year as part of the annual inspection, the technicians as the third party must remove all mechanisms in order to test the system. So, I can't say how they installed the mechanism back in place, the control mechanisms; I can only say that because everything was already disconnected. I do believe they said NTSB had pictures of the cylinders prior to it coming off. With that we may be able to determine. We'll give you some, I guess, tell tales.

On this particular valve, on the actuation valve for the pilot cylinder, there is an arrow, okay, and that arrow is on there because of a reason that there is a possibility you can put it on backwards. If you put it on backwards and you're pulling the release and you do have some cable that's coming out, but it's not actually releasing the system. And during a fire, you know, a person, you know, the adrenaline picks up so you're thinking that system discharged. That's a possibility. You'd have to look at the pictures of the system intact first. That arrow will point in which direction the actuator was sitting on top of the valve. There's a handle on top of the valve, as you saw in the picture, which when that cable is pulled, that handle pulls back and pushes the plunge down to activate the cylinder. So, if that handle is placed in the wrong direction, okay, you're going to get a little bit in play, thinking the cable pulled, but that cylinder's closed. It's not going to open. Is that understandable?

Q. Okay, that makes sense.

A. Okay.
Q. Let's see here. So, can you guys see that picture there?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. So, I'm assuming by the red markings on the cable that that indicates at least the minimum amount that those cables should be pulled out. Correct?
A. Yes. Now, what it's about -- I want to explain something to you -- this valve -- what is the valve called?
Q. A sector.
A. It's a sector valve. It flips, okay. So, when you pull that cable, you're actually pulling the valve over and it stays over, okay. So, the other valve that the other release station is for the actuation of the cylinders and you'll see it on top where it lists the valve release. All right. So, that's going to stay like that hanging. Now the other cable, when you disarm the system, where you remove the actuation mechanism, it will be -- the cable will come back in so there's no way in determining from this picture whether or not that activation was activated or not.
Q. Okay.
A. Does that make sense?
Q. Yes.
A. Can you bear with me one second? Let me tell my assistant to pick up my calls, please.
Q. Okay.
MR. [redacted]: Brian, did you -- are you good with this

picture? Did you have any other questions?

MR. YOUNG: Yes, can you -- could also show the picture of that sector valve and also the manual release valve down.

MR. NOVEROLA: Okay.

MR. [redacted]: Okay. Is that the one you wanted, Brian?

MR. YOUNG: Yes, thanks.

So, good morning, this is Brian Young with the NTSB. If you don't mind, Mr. [redacted], can you just show the picture of the sector valve? That is the circular valve that's still in the open position and then we'll get to this picture of the manual activation valve. I just wanted to confirm our understanding of how each of these are set up.

MR. [redacted]: Yes, one second. Is that one of the ones that you sent me?

MR. YOUNG: I'll send it to you again if you need it.

MR. [redacted]: Okay.

MR. YOUNG: All right. I just sent you a picture of the sector valve that we were discussing here.

MR. [redacted]: Okay. Wonderful government computers.

MR. YOUNG: I guess we could -- well, that's going right across. We can maybe look at the other picture you had up on the screen on the manual activation valve.

MR. [redacted]: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: So, and if you can zoom right in on this.

BY MR. YOUNG:

Q. I know exactly what you were saying, Omar, with the words set and kind of an arrow. Would -- you know these valves better than anyone. Are these spring-loaded that they would return back to the set position after being pulled or would they stay in the pulled position?
A. It's going to stay in pulled position.
Q. Okay. So, based on this picture, would you say that this is still in the set position or it is in the activated position?
A. Set position.
Q. And then this cable would be attached to the pull station that says cylinder release. Would that be correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. Would there be any way that once this is pulled to the open position that it could revert back to this set position or not?
A. The only way is if it was put on backwards. You have a little bit of play in the valve where as if it won't open because it's not designed to go that far back. But there is a little bit of play that you can get, about two inches off that it will return back, but the valve won't open, so it would not open.
Q. And if it were to be fully opened, that lever handle, would that have to go up and beyond 12 o'clock and over in maybe like the 1 or 2 o'clock position?
A. Yes, fully open, yes.
Q. Okay.
A. It would go all the way across.

Q. Okay. And these are the pictures we took when we got on scene a few days after the incident.

MR. YOUNG: If you don't mind, Mr. [redacted], could you go back to the picture with the two pull --

MR. [redacted]: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: -- stations.

BY MR. YOUNG:

Q. So, that was my question to, like, obviously the valve release cable in the left is showing some red paint so it appears that that is pulled and that's connected to the sector valve, which we're sending a picture across to verify it's in the open position. But it appears that the cylinder release isn't pulled or extended out as far as the valve release. And have you seen it before, do you know, on this vessel if it was pulled to the proper amount, would there be some red indication on the wire that would tell you that it's been pulled properly?

A. This question's for who?

Q. For the technician, Omar or Thomas.

A. Yes, now yes, if the cable -- the cable is from the manufacturer, okay. So, using the proper cable, yes, you will have that red indicating that it's been released.

Q. Okay.

A. Without that cable being pulled any further, I can't tell you with this particular cable.

Q. Understood, got it.

MR. YOUNG: Do you know, Mr. [redacted], if the other picture has come through on the sector valve?

MR. [redacted]: One second.

MR. YOUNG: Not yet?

MR. [redacted]: Nope.

MR. YOUNG: Okay. All right. I'll just ask a few more questions about nestling.

BY MR. YOUNG:

Q. And the term sapphire when it comes to this system, is that just a tradename or a company name for the Novec 1230 system?

MR. TIERNEY: Yes, that's correct. It's the tradename for the clean agent for Ansul.

MR. [redacted] Okay.

MR. TIERNEY: It's the manufacturer of the system.

BY MR. YOUNG:

Q. In this case with the sector valve showing in the open position and this nitrogen valve in the closed position, would there be any way that the sirens could have activated if the nitrogen had not been released?

MR. TIERNEY: No.

MR. NOVEROLA: No.

BY MR. YOUNG:

Q. Okay. It shows on the diagram that there are two pressure switches in the system. They -- it appears that they were also activated by nitrogen. Do you know what the pressure switches

control?
A. Well, in this particular case, it's by design (indiscernible), but most cases the ventilation, because you want to stop the air from getting out and also coming in, so most cases the ventilation shut down. In some cases, the (indiscernible) shut down meaning it'll kill the engines.
Q. Right.
A. That's not -- as you know, in the Coast Guard, it's not a requirement. It can approved in either direction. So, without us actually being the ones who tested the system, I really couldn't tell you. Most likely, it would be the ventilation that it shuts down.
Q. So, it's an electric --
(Crosstalk)
A. -- are done simultaneously off the pilot cylinder. So, together, when the pilot cylinder's activated, we receive the alarm, which in turn goes to the time delay. So, that tells the crew the alarm's going off, it tells them CO2's getting ready to be discharged, the time delay is prepping itself for release which is going to open up into -- open the rest of the cylinders and discharge. At that time, the pressure switch is also activated to stop the source of any incoming additional fuel.
Q. Are the sirens powered by the agent or are they electrical sirens?
A. They are powered by the nitrogen pilot cylinder. They're

pressure operated sirens --
Q. Okay.
A. -- in the nitrogen pilot.
Q. And when you tested the system on the night of December, did you actually hear the sirens?
A. Yes, we did.
Q. And on the screen now, we were able to email this through to the Coast Guard and this is the sector valve that is connected to the valve actuator. Would this tell you that this valve is in the open position based on its rotation and the way it's hitting the stop?
A. Yes. And by design, these valves are weighted heavy (indiscernible), so once you get it past a point, it's going to open. That's what the cables are designed and the stop is to catch it at the end. So, yes, it's definitely in the open position.
Q. Okay. And do you think that design also is showing some sort of an arrow to show the direction of the flow? I mean, it appears that on the left-hand side there's a, you know --
A. That valve, you know, is just by design and so it can only go one direction.
Q. Okay.
A. It's not -- and the reason being -- oh, yes, it does have one. But the reason being is this does not get removed during any type of annual inspection.

Q. Okay.
A. Yes, it does --
Q. What's the purpose of having two separate pulls? Why isn't there just one pull to release the --
A. It's a Coast Guard requirement that you have two means of operation. When you open the valve, it gives you that second, that time for thinking before you release the cylinders. So, if you were to design them with one pull, you have no forgiveness, basically.
Q. Okay.
A. You operate the system, that's it, it's discharged. This way, the two means of operation, you really will open the valve but you're not actually releasing the cylinder, the CO2 cylinders --
Q. Or the --
A. -- or the sapphire in this case.
Q. Sapphire, yes, yes. Is there any length of time between pulling the two pulls required? Does it have to be done in a certain amount of time?
A. No. The other reason behind that, too, is that you don't want the pressure from the cylinders hitting the valve. This valve in particular is basically a manually-operated valve. Other valves are operated by pressure. So, by design, you don't want that to hit at one time and causing a problem with that valve to open. So, that's another reason behind the two means of

operation.
Q. Okay.
A. Well, now there's no time gap between them. That's what the time delay that's installed in the system itself, that's his job. That's his job to give you -- give the personnel time to act or time to get out of the space.
Q. And do you know what the time delay was set for on this system?
A. This particular system, I believe, was a 30-second time delay. And that's the standard especially on these size vessels, 30 seconds, and then a larger size space would be a 60-second time delay where that siren's discharged. The siren's going off during that whole time, so while the personnel is evacuating the space.
Q. Okay. If somebody pulled both of those emergency levers at the same time and pulled them fully to see the red paint on the wire, would the system -- is the system designed to discharge in about 30 seconds after pulling both at the same time?
A. Yes. No matter what you pull, the piping, the way it's designed, is going to go through the time delay first no matter what. So, it doesn't matter if you pull both of them at the same time or not. It's still going to do what it's supposed to do by design, so it's going to -- the pressure sign is going to go off. Different piping and like I said the valve itself is on a cable, so it's just operating manually, basically.
Q. Okay. And if you did pull the valve handle and then 15

minutes later pulled the cylinder handle, would the system still operate after a 30-second delay and a 15-minute delay?

A. Yes.

Q. If both cables were pulled to the full extent?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. So, you're asking if you open the valve prior to actually pulling the cylinder release, if it would operate?

Q. Exactly. If I pulled the valve and then I went and did some other activity, let's say, it was whatever, firefighting or investigating and had it set, and then I came back 15 minutes later and decided I wanted to dump the system and then I pulled the nitrogen cylinder, would it still operate after a time delay?

A. Yes, it would.

Q. Okay. And do you know from your testing what the pressure was in both the nitrogen bottle and what it was at the sapphire bottle?

A. Yes.

Q. Could you share those numbers with us or is there a service report that would have these numbers in them?

A. There would be a service report. Also the video that we took, the pictures that we took were of the gauge itself. I don't have those because on the test itself, the object of our test was to assist FMT and determine on whether or not those cylinders were full. So, we didn't record the cylinders on our certificate

because we weren't performing an inspection. However, the pictures that we took were specified at the pressure and gauges. So, we took a picture of the gauge before we discharged it showing that the cylinders were full then afterwards when it was emptied out. And we also videoed the discharge of the pilot cylinder to the system.

Q. Okay.

A. So, the -- yes, FMT would have all the pictures with the pressures.

Q. Okay. You shared all the pictures and videos with Ricky at FMT?

A. Right. Actually with us, I think, it was FMT and one was NTSB also.

MR. TIERNEY: And the -- I think so.

BY MR. YOUNG:

Q. Okay. I think I got a better understanding of the system now, understanding especially the manual activation valve that didn't -- I didn't understand how that was working and you helped explain that. Thank you.

A. You're welcome.

MR. YOUNG: Mr. [redacted] if you have any other questions, I think --

BY MR. [redacted]

Q. So, what was the, when you all finished everything up, inspecting the system, testing, what was the date? I want to

confirm the date that that was finished up on.

A. All right. Bear with me one second. 12/21.

Q. 12/21, okay.

MR. [redacted] Brian, I don't really have any other questions.

MR. YOUNG: No, same with myself. Thank you both for taking the time to explain the system and your findings. We appreciate the technical information that you guys have.

MR. [redacted] Tony, are you still there?

MR. STAINES: I'm here.

MR. [redacted] Do you have any questions?

MR. STAINES: Yes, I do.

MR. [redacted] Okay.

MR. STAINES: Can I go now?

MR. [redacted] Yes, go ahead.

BY MR. STAINES:

Q. Good morning, gentlemen. I think that's Mr. Noverola; is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Am I saying it correctly?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Good morning, sir. You're the one that's been answering the majority of the questions, I presume. I apologize, I'm not on the Teams. I wasn't able to get on, so I'm just participating by telephone so I can't see what everyone else is seeing. I apologize for that. But, Mr. Noverola, were you the gentlemen

that was answering the majority of the questions?
A. Yes, I was.
Q. Okay. So, let me direct the questions to you. Give me one second, okay. You mentioned, Mr. Noverola, that, pursuant to a question from Mr. [redacted] that the system operated per design. Can you explain to me what you meant by that?
A. Yes. So, the systems are operated either manually or remotely. So, manually if you're in the space with the cylinders you can actually pull the lever back and activate the system manually, or by design from the release station at the point of egress. So, we actually activated the pilot cylinder from the release station, simulating, you know, there's a fire, you know, you got all the space that was on fire, and pulled the release station cable. And that's how we operated the system and that's how it's designed to operate.
Q. Okay. So, if I'm understanding correctly, by that you mean that the system as it existed at the time of the fire, which is intended to be operated manually by pulling these cables, was designed in that fashion and capable of being operated in that fashion as intended. Is that fair to say?
A. No, sir. What I'm saying is --
(Crosstalk)
A. -- is that we, myself and Tommy, we installed the system back -- the pilot cylinder back in the system the way it's supposed to be per design. We installed the actuator on the cylinder itself

and the cable -- connect to the cable and then we tested it. We didn't find the system like that. The system was already -- the cylinders were already removed from the vessel, so we don't know how the system was intact when the fire occurred. Does that make sense?

Q. Yes, thank you very much for that explanation. You also mentioned, and again in the same line of questioning about annual inspections, who performs annual inspections of that system?

A. Well, by subchapter M of third party who is qualified must perform it. I'm not sure who the vessel had prior to me.

Q. Okay.

A. You know, like Hiller is a certified company that's able to perform a third-party inspection, so I'm not sure. I would have to check with the vessel's records on who actually did the inspection. All I know is Hiller didn't do it. I did check that first of all to see if we attended the vessel because we have a system where all our inspections are monitored into our system.

Q. Okay. Now, you also mentioned in some answers to Mr. [redacted] questions that when the cable is pulled, if the handle had been placed in the wrong direction, you had some discussion about that. Can you explain that again for me with the effect of the handle being placed in the wrong direction is?

A. Well, with the cable hanging like it is in that picture, it's not pulled all the way and that was actually taken right after activation, if the actuator lever is put on incorrect or put on

backwards, you have a little bit of movement that doesn't operate the cylinder. It is by design, there's a little bit of play so it doesn't break any of this brass. So, you could actually pull the cable a little bit, but you wouldn't get more out. So, you may think that's it, by pulling the cable it would actually -- you would hit the bottom handle as far as the valve -- the lever will go. And then the pictures that were shown, from the pictures that you guys provided, that shows us that the actuation lever in on backwards. It's not any position to where the cylinder would be activated by pulling the release cable.

Q. And who would place the handle on that particular equipment?

A. I'll explain a little bit of our annual inspection and that will -- should help you in understanding that part of it. So, in order for us to test the system, the first thing we do is disarm the system to make the system safe. So, the pilot cylinder, which operates all of the sapphire or whatever the agent is, is the main mechanism that's going to activate the cylinders. So, you want to remove the actuator first before moving anything further, because with that removed, you have no chance of setting off the system. So, the person doing the inspection is going to do that first to make the system safe; we call it disarming. And then when he finishes the inspection and everything is tested correctly and to the satisfaction of the third party, he will then arm the system by putting the lever that's on the picture -- you can't see the lever -- putting the actuator lever back on the pilot cylinder.

Does that make sense?
Q. Yes, it does. Do you have any information as to who this third party is that last did the annual inspection?
A. No, sir.
Q. Okay. There was a photo shown that obviously I didn't see, but -- and I think when you were showing this particular photo, and maybe we could figure out which it is and identify it for the record, you said that it doesn't tell us whether the system was activated or not. Am I correct?
A. That picture, I believe, was the release station, so they showed the cable hanging out of the release station. That particular picture doesn't show us whether or not the system was activated. And that was basically prior to me seeing -- I didn't realize these pictures were actually the ones that were taken before any equipment was removed.
Q. Okay.
A. So, that lever, the actuating lever, once you remove it from the cylinder, that cable moves freely. So, I'll -- my statement was I couldn't tell if the cylinder was -- the system was activated by looking at that particular picture.
Q. Okay. As I understand it, there are two release stations, right? And am I correct that one is -- one releases a nitrogen cylinder and the other one releases a sapphire cylinder. Am I correct in that?
A. No, sir. So, you have two means of activating the system.

One is for the valve, there's a valve in the piping. So, without that valve open, you discharge that nitrogen cylinder that's going to remain in the piping. It won't go any further. So, one is --

Q. All right.

A. -- just a mechanical valve and the other is the one who actually activates the pilot cylinder, which then in turn operates the entire system.

Q. Okay. I apologize for that.

A. No, that's why I'm here.

Q. Either Mr. [redacted] or Mr. Young was asking about that and I was a little confused. So, the first pull is for the valve, to open the valve and the second pull is for the -- to open the cylinders. Correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. Okay. And there was some talk about the time delay and I think I understand that aspect of it, the fact that the time delay really doesn't -- well, the time between the two pulls doesn't really matter, whether it's simultaneous or as much as 15 minutes later; is that correct?

A. That's correct.

Q. Okay. Now, help me understand about the siren. The siren is going to be set off when what happens?

A. When that cylinder's released, the pilot cylinder, is activated -- so, you have a fire, you go to a release station, you open the valve and then you pull the cylinder release. When you

do that, that siren is going to sound off and it's done simultaneously. You have three items that operate during that timeframe. You're going to get the pressure switch, which is designed to either shut the ventilation down or the clamp. You'll have the time delay getting charged up and the siren is operating at the same time.

Q. Based on your inspection activities of December -- I think you said December 8 and 9 -- were you able to tell whether the valve was opened by means of the first cable pull?

A. No, because the valve wasn't on the cylinder.

Q. Okay. It could have been pulled -- I'm sorry, excuse me, let me say that again. As far as you know, you're unable to tell whether the valve is open or not. So, at the time of the fire on the day of the fire, that cable could have been pulled and activated and opened the valve; is that correct?

A. Well, the cylinder was full. So, the lever -- the actuator lever, if it was operating, would have discharged the cylinder. So, we did verify that the cylinder discharges by that same lever actuator, because we replaced the level actuator that came with the vessel when we tested the system. So, if you were to pull the lever actuator, it would operate the cylinder, it would discharge the cylinder. We did verify that. So, the cylinder wasn't discharged so I can only speculate that it didn't operate the cylinder.

Q. I understand that, but what I'm trying to understand is, and

maybe it's just a matter of my not understanding, but if -- is it possible for the cable to be pulled, which would activate -- which would open the valve, but yet the cable could not be fully pulled relative to the cylinders and therefore the cylinders not being activated, if I'm saying that kind of correctly.

A. I see what you're saying. Yes, it could. So, you're saying can you pull a cable and not actually pull it far enough and not activate the cylinders?

Q. Yes.

A. Yes. So, everybody reacts differently in circumstances of fire or war, you know, whatever it be. So, I mean, adrenalin's flowing, someone pulls the cable and did pull a little bit out, yes, it's possible that they thought it was pulled, but the cylinders weren't -- it wasn't pulled all the way to the full extent. Because you do have tension on that so --

Q. Yes, sir.

A. -- so it could be of that possibly happening also.

Q. When we talked earlier about the handle placed in the wrong direction, which handle are we talking about?

A. The actuation handle. So, we really can't see it if it was in the set -- but right now the picture that we see, the picture that was taken after the fire shows the valve is in the set position. Meaning it's in the upright position saying that it hasn't been discharged or it's activated --

Q. Right.

A. -- the valve is all the way -- it was at 90 degrees.
Q. Yes, I understand that and that's consistent with the cylinders being full when you all tested. Correct?
A. That's correct.
Q. Now, but if the handle that you're talking about was placed in the wrong direction and the engineer pulled on the cable to activate the cylinders, if that handle was in the wrong position then the cylinders aren't going to be activated when he pulls. Correct?
A. That's correct. The valve will only go -- the handle will only go so far. It won't go any further. So, you make it a little pliant, you know, you are going to get a little movement in it, so there's a possibility --
Q. Okay.
A. -- he thought he pulled it, you know.
Q. Right.
A. Thought he opened it all the way because it did move, you know, and a person that doesn't do this for, you know, for a living wouldn't know that, you know, even in training how far the, you know, the handle goes. So, yes, there's good possibility of that also.
Q. Is there any other explanation you could think of as to why the -- assuming that the engineer attempted to pull both cables on that morning and the siren didn't go off and the cylinders weren't released, is there any other explanation you can think of other

than it just wasn't -- or the handle may have not been, you know, proper direction and therefore when he pulled it didn't activate. Is there any other thing you can think of as a reason why the siren didn't go off and the cylinders weren't activated?

A. You know, we, you know, (indiscernible) returning out to the vessel, we had a Teams meeting just for that reason, to try to determine other items that may have caused it not to discharge. And really there's nothing else -- the system's pretty simplex in design. It's mostly mechanical so there's really no room for error; you know what I'm saying? By looking at the pictures that were provided today, it looks like whoever on board did what he supposed to do, he or she did whatever they were supposed to do by the glass being broken in both release stations and the cables being pulled. So, they did what they were trained to do.

I'm not sure, I really couldn't determine because of the fact that everything was removed. It would be hard to speculate even with the valve being, you know, it's -- I can only tell you how a valve operates. I can't tell you how it was put on, you know. I wouldn't -- I couldn't speculate on any other way that the system didn't operate. Like I said, that was the main purpose of us putting -- my team putting the system back together and that's why I went out there also to make sure I had a handle on it, too. That we put it in the correct way that it was installed and to verify that it operated if it was placed in the correct positions.

Q. Are you with Hiller, Mr. Noverola?

A. Yes, I'm the service manager for --
Q. Okay.
A. -- marine inspections.
Q. All right, all right. Do you know, first of all, there is a -- give me one second, I apologize. There is -- is there a Hiller operation and maintenance manual for this marine sapphire clean agent fire suppression system?
A. There is a -- Ansul, the manufacturer -- so there's operating procedures, maintenance procedures. The vessel would have been provided with this at install, but there is a manual that's provided by the OEM. So, Hiller designed the system, but they installed it as per manufacturer's inspection requirements. So, that manual --
Q. Right.
A. -- would have been provided. And in that manual details everything from the hoses to the sapphire agent, you know, duration of testing, all questions that you're asking would be in this manual.
Q. Yes, sir. Do you have any personal knowledge or information as to whether that manual that you're referencing was provided to Florida Marine at any time before the date of this fire?
A. No, sir. I'm with Hiller seven months, eight months now, so no, I couldn't speculate or even, you know -- and it would be really hard for people that are here who installed it. I can only tell you their protocol and -- there's no law that I know of

saying that they, you know, with the manufacture and installation they provide this, but I know it is a practice that they follow.

Q. Okay. Thank you all very much, gentlemen. Mr. Noverola, I appreciate your time in answering my questions. Thank you.

A. You're welcome.

MR. YOUNG: This is Brian Young with the NTSB. Just, Mr. Staines, so you know, all these pictures were sent to FMT on January 12th. So, Mr. Johnson --

MR. STAINES: Yes, we have them, Brian. I just don't have them with me and I'm not able to see them at the same time that you're looking at them on the Teams, obviously. But, yes, I'm not suggesting that I didn't get them.

MR. YOUNG: Okay. I just want to make sure that, you know, we're not -- there's no new pictures or anything, that these are the same ones we took and shared, you know, with Ricky.

MR. STAINES: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: Okay.

MR. STAINS: I have them in my file; I just don't have them at my disposal at this very second.

BY MR. YOUNG:

Q. Okay, great. If I could just follow up with one final question. Looking at the picture of this activation valve, it does say the word set and there is some sort of a line above it. It's hard to see whether it's pointing to the left or pointing to the right. But based, Mr. Noverola, on your take on this, do you

-- does it look like this valve was actually put in the wrong position?

A. I mean, I can't tell because of the arrows.

Q. Right.

A. All I know -- all we can see is that it is in the set position, meaning it's ready to be discharged. I don't know if it's in the correct position as far as, you know, the direction of the valve. It just shows --

Q. Yes.

A. -- you can't even see it.

Q. Yes. If it was pulled and completely pulled to the open position, how far beyond straight up and down would the valve go to be completely opened?

A. It would be in the opposite direction.

Q. So, almost -- so, it wouldn't go down 90 degrees. It would just be like this but a mirror image about -- if this is at 11 o'clock, it'll be at 1 o'clock would you say?

MR. TIERNEY: Probably about 2 o'clock --

MR. YOUNG: 2 o'clock?

MR. TIERNEY: 2 o'clock.

MR. YOUNG: Okay.

BY MR. YOUNG

Q. And based on all the --

(Crosstalk)

Q. And based on all the Ansul valves you've dealt with, when the

word set is on the handle, is the arrow typically pointing to the left or the right or is it hard to tell?

MR. TIERNEY: It's hard.

MR. NOVEROLA: It's hard to tell.

MR. YOUNG: I'm sorry?

MR. NOVEROLA: I said it's hard to tell.

MR. YOUNG: Okay. Okay, well thank you very much. From my side, I'm all set and thank you all for your time this morning.

MR. NOVEROLA: Thank you. So, will we get a copy of the transcript also?

MR. YOUNG: What we'll do is we'll send it to the Coast Guard and we'll request that you both review it for technical accuracy to make sure the transcription service has transcribed everything we've talked accurately because there's a lot of technical terms and we send it out to a third party. So, we just want to make sure that the proper terminology has been used throughout the transcription. But, yes, it takes about a month to get it done.

MR. NOVEROLA: All right.

MR. STAINES: All right, gentlemen, thank you very much.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. Staines.

(Crosstalk)

MR. YOUNG: All right, thank you all. I appreciate your time.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	FIRE ON THE *KIRBY DUPUIS* F/V NEAR BELLEVIEW, KENTUCKY ON NOVEMBER 9, 2021 Interview of Omar Noverola & Thomas Tierney
ACCIDENT NO.:	DCA22FM002
PLACE:	Via Microsoft Teams
DATE:	June 14, 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.

[redacted]
Maria Socorro R. Abellar
Transcriber