UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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

Interview of: RICHARD WASHINGTON, Engineer
Captain Kirby Dupuis

Via MS Teams

Thursday,
December 14, 2021

APPEARANCES:

BRIAN YOUNG, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DEREK JOHNSTON, Performance Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CWO [redacted]
United States Coast Guard

LT [redacted]
United States Coast Guard

TONY STAINES, Esq.
Staines, Eppling & Kenney, LLC

I N D E X

I N T E R V I E W

(10:06 a.m. ET)

MR. YOUNG: Okay, the recorder is on. It's December 14th, 2021, at 10:06 a.m. Eastern Time, 9:06 Central Time. This is Brian Young with the National Transportation Safety Board. I am recording this interview for purposes of transcription. And we are investigating the engine failure and fire aboard the *Captain Kirby Dupuis*. And I'm just going to ask each one of the people present at the interview to introduce themselves and spell your last name. Again, it's Brian Young, Y-o-u-n-g. And from the NTSB, Derek.

MR. JOHNSTON: This is Derek Johnston, J-o-h-n-s-t-o-n, (Indiscernible) Performance Investigator, NTSB.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you. And from the Coast Guard?

CWO [redacted]: Yes, this is [redacted] and I'm here with [redacted]

MR. YOUNG: Thank you. And Mr. Washington, if you don't mind introducing yourself, please.

MR. WASHINGTON: Yeah, my name is Richard Washington, W-a-s-h-i-n-g-t-o-n, and I'm here with Florida Marine.

MR. YOUNG: Okay, thanks. And Mr. Staines?

MR. STAINES: Tony Staines with Staines, Eppling & Kenney, on behalf of Florida Marine Transport and (indiscernible), representing Mr. Washington.

MR. YOUNG: Great, thank you very much. And, Mr. Washington,

just before we go ahead, just would like you to acknowledge that we are recording this interview and just let you -- understand that we are recording it.

MR. WASHINGTON: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: Okay, great. So I'm going to turn it over to the Coast Guard, and Mr. [redacted] would start with a few questions on his side.

INTERVIEW OF RICHARD WASHINGTON

BY CWO [redacted]

Q. Okay, good morning, Mr. Washington. So I'd like to start off with just asking about your experience level as far as, you know, being a designated engineer onboard the vessel, about your background.

A. My complete background or just with Florida Marine?

Q. How long have you been with Florida Marine?

A. I've been with Florida Marine since 2018, March.

Q. Okay. What was your previous experience prior to that?

A. Marquette Transportation. I was with them from 2012 all the way up until the date that I came to Florida Marine in March 2018.

Q. Okay, and with -- if you could just kind of describe your experience with Marquette and what you did for them, and then leading up into what you've done for FMT.

A. Okay. From when I was with Marquette, I was a deck-mate. I worked on deck, and we did like interim stuff, too. But with Florida Marine, I came over as a deck-mate. They started me out

as a deck-mate, and I worked on deck for the first two years. And then I recently got into the engine room back in November, early December, of 2020.

Q. Okay. What -- what kind of training have -- did you receive in engineering from Florida Marine?

A. We have a package that I've not completed, I haven't completed yet, but we are going through the whole package. I'm still in training. I'm considered a deckineer (ph.) right now.

Q. Okay, got you. Understand. Now with that, were you the primary engineer on board the boat on the day of the fire?

A. Yes, I was the engineer.

Q. Okay. Okay, so how long had you been on board the vessel for that hitch?

A. For that hitch?

Q. Yes, or how -- when did you get on board the vessel?

A. I got on board in September.

Q. I guess, so have -- how long -- so you've been with the vessel since September, or that's when you were attached, like, to the vessel? Does that make sense?

A. The first time I ever got on the *Kirby Dupuis*, it was 2020, August, August of 2020.

Q. I guess for this trip, how long had you been on the boat?

A. I've been on the boat since September the 1st, this hitch.

Q. Okay, I got you, understand. During this trip, had you experienced any -- any maintenance issues, any type of repairs

that had to be conducted? If you could kind of talk about any maintenance that was conducted or any repairs that were done?
A. No, sir, there was no repairs done on the first main engine. I only had one repair that was done on the starboard main engine, and that was for a wire harness in the casing around the -- it was a little casing (indiscernible) on my injector. It was like the (indiscernible) injector on the starboard main engine that had to be replaced, and it was, like, a little wire harness that I had to do.

That was the only repair that I had in the engine room. My regular maintenance was done because we have those in (indiscernible) when the maintenance is due and when we reach a 500-hour period and a 1000-hour period.
Q. Okay, and so, on the -- had you done any maintenance, oil changes, filter swaps, prior to the incident?
A. Yes, I had just done the maintenance on the main engines, on both of the main engines, four days prior to the incident.
Q. And during that timeframe and anytime that you were making rounds on the engine, did you notice any excess leakage of oil or fuel, anything that was noted that may need to be addressed?
A. No, sir.
Q. Are you familiar -- have you seen the video from the incident of the oil spray, of the fire itself?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. Okay, and so there appeared to be a pipe that the seal had --

had failed on it, causing an oil spray. Are you familiar with that particular pipe? Is that something that you can see if you were making a round of an engine?

A. No, sir.

Q. Do you happen to know when the last time the engine was replaced or rebuilt?

A. No, sir.

Q. Okay.

A. I'm sorry I don't have that information for you.

Q. I'm sorry?

MR. STAINES: Obviously, I can get that information for you.

CWO [redacted] Okay, is this Tony?

MR. STAINES: Yes, yes, it is. I'm sorry.

CWO [redacted] That's okay. Okay. I'll send you an email on that.

MR. STAINES: Yeah, okay, and I might be able to get it for you before we end this conversation if we want to take a break. I might even have it. I think I asked for it yesterday, and just give me -- when we finish up, I'll look in my notes and see if I've got it and have it handy to tell you. And if not, I'll get it for you.

CWO [redacted]: Okay, all right. Thank you.

MR. STAINES: You're welcome.

BY CWO [redacted]:

Q. So, Mr. Washington, can we -- I'm sorry, go ahead.

MR. STAINES: We didn't say anything.

CWO [redacted]: Oh, okay.

BY CWO [redacted]:

Q. Mr. Washington, I'd like to talk about the incident date. If you could walk me through what happened, how you came to be aware of the incident, and kind of talk your way through on what time, what you saw, what you did, and kind of go forward.

A. I woke up around -- I woke up around 6:30 that morning. Went to the bathroom to go brush my teeth, and the fire alarm went off while I was in the bathroom. So I came out of the bathroom, and I walked into the room, and behind my room is the engine room, like the office door. But I can see the engine room through like a window inside of the office door.

So I opened my office door, and I could just see flames on top of the port main engine. So I ran back into my room, put on some pants, and I came out of my room door which is in a hallway. And I met a deckhand, (indiscernible), (indiscernible) was in the hallway. I told him to go and tell everybody that there was a fire on the boat.

So before I get to the engine room, I have one door, and it's like a break way where you put on headphones. And then the engine room come. So I walked through that door, put on a pair of earmuffs to try to go into the engine room because I have a big fire extinguisher sitting right up on the top deck. But when I tried to open up the door, the smoke just overtook me, and it kind

of blew back into the little safe space where you put your earmuffs on. So I had to go around the boat.

I left outside of the -- outside of the boat on the starboard side in the galley. Left out of that door and tried to grab firehoses. The deck crew had met me in the galley. We started grabbing firehoses. By the time we rolled out the firehose, which it took probably about 30 seconds to get the starboard firehose rolled out so we could try to spray water into the engine room from the starboard side.

We tried to hit the button on the firehose for the fire monitor to work, and it didn't work. So we hit all the buttons, and it didn't work. I tried -- my board was behind my starboard generator, and I tried to look into the engine room and see where my board at, whether my board was working or not, the whole counter board was melting. So that explained why the firehoses didn't go off.

So I called on the radio. I shut everything down. I shut all my fuel and everything. All my valves and everything was shut off, completely off. So I called upstairs and let the captain know that we was going to have to hit the fire suppression system because we had no way of stopping the fire. So he told me it was okay to do it.

So all my -- all of the deckhands went around and shut all of the valves and all the -- but the air could come out. All my sleeves and everything, they made sure everything was airtight.

And I hit the first fire suppression system. (Indiscernible.) Well, I came back in, and my fire suppression system is sitting right beside my engine room office door, right beside that double door that I tried to open in the beginning.

So I went inside of the boat, and went and hit -- broke the glass and hit the first fire suppression system. I went back outside on the starboard side, and the boat -- the fire was dying out. And I had (indiscernible) with me, and we noticed that there was a little fire sitting on some boxes on the starboard side on the top deck. It was kind of like starting to melt around the window, but it had already broke a little couple pieces out of the window.

So we called on the radio and let the other deckhands know to bring us a couple of fire extinguishers out of the front hole. We had like eight or nine fire extinguishers. So when they fed us the fire extinguishers, we was feeding it into the fire. And when I was feeding it into the fire on the starboard side on those boxes on the second deck, I noticed a little glow down in the bottom of the engine room where the port engine was sitting at because right through the window, you can see straight down into where the port engine is at, and the starboard. But the port engine started to glow up a little bit.

So I called on the radio, and I told the captain that I was going to have to hit the second fire suppression system. So I went back into where my main office is, right outside the door,

and I broke the glass and hit the second fire suppression system.
Q. Okay, on the second shot, did that work?
A. We had believed that it worked because the fire was pretty much out before the fire department got there. It was just smoking. But we couldn't go in to see because after you hit the fire suppression system, you have to let it smother out. So we had believed, yes, we believed that the fire was out.
Q. Okay, and then what happened?
A. Coast Guard wouldn't let us on the boat after that. When the Coast Guard and Fire Department made it, we couldn't step foot on the boat. When we left the boat, we -- when we left the boat, everybody got off the boat after we hit the second fire suppression system. Captain called abandon ship. But anytime we had MV -- two Marathon boats, one boat holding the tow and one boat that was spraying water on the second deck.

So we abandoned ship and got into the boat that was spraying water on the second deck. It's the MV Kentucky from Marathon. Everybody got onto that boat, and we just kind of like kept the metal cool on the outside. And that's all we could -- that's all we could really do. We did that from a distance.
Q. Okay, understand. So let's back up a little bit, and -- so the fire (indiscernible) didn't work (indiscernible) do the shutdown. So you said you shut off the fuel. Did you shut off anything else?
A. No, I shut off the fuel, that's it. I shut off the fuel and

all of my emergency shutdowns. Those are the emergency shutdowns that I hit on the starboard side. I shut off every emergency generator, the (indiscernible), the main engines, I shut off all of them.

Q. Okay. Is there a shutdown for the ventilation?

A. Yeah, we have -- we have sleeves up on the second deck where we had shut down for the ventilation. It's done manually. On the second deck, we'll shut them down, and we'll just make sure all our windows and all our seals are tight.

Q. So I -- okay, I understand you're shutting down the vents, but the actual supply fans themselves, what shuts those down?

A. The board, the board that was burnt in the back.

Q. So we -- when you look at the video, you've got the supply fan sitting overtop, almost overtop of the port engine, and it looks like that's what was fanning the fire. So did -- did the ventilation shut down because the, I guess, the electrical circuits melted, or is there like a push button, or is it activated by the fix fire? What shuts that fan off?

A. The fan had already been shut off because my panel board had melted. Once my panel board melted, that's why my fire pump and none of that worked. Everything shut down, everything dealing with the fan because that's where my switch is for the fan.

Q. Okay, understand. So what can you -- can you do -- can you explain to me how your fixed fire suppression system works?

A. It's two little red boxes in, like, right beside the

engineer's room. And you break the little glass in it, and you'll pull, like, a lever. It's like a little -- one of these little metal strings attached to it. And when you pull it, you'll full a little snag, and you'll jerk on it. And it'll be -- it'll kind of, like, pop loose. It'll break loose.

Q. Okay. Do you know anything about the actual system itself and how it works?

MR. STAINES: Do you understand his question?

MR. WASHINGTON: No.

MR. STAINES: Can you explain your question a bit better so we can try to understand.

BY CWO [redacted]:

Q. Okay, so I know in -- that you broke the glass, and you pulled the lever. And the lever actuates -- actuates the system. But do you understand how the system actually works? Like, what's the cycle of events when you pull -- when you pull that lever, you know, there's a cable that will operate something to spark the system, generate it to eventually produce a suppression extinguishing agent. Do you understand, like, how that system actually works? There's a series of events that actually happens before your extinguishing agent actually comes out.

MR. STAINES: Are you asking him if he's familiar with the agents that actually cause the fire to be suppressed once the system is activated? Is that what you're asking?

CWO [redacted]: Well, I'm asking if he understands how the

system actually works. So when you -- when you pull that, it goes down into, I think, a CO2 bottle. And then the CO2 bottle will actually activate whatever specific agent. There's, like, time delays involved, pressure switches. So I'm asking if he understands the actual fire suppression system and how it works. Does that make sense?

MR. STAINES: Do you understand? Just give the best answer you can. If you need to ask him a question, ask him a question.

MR. WASHINGTON: Okay, so are you saying, like, from the time that I pull the lever, what does one lever and what does the other lever trigger?

BY CWO [redacted]:

Q. So have you gone down to the bottles and looked -- and looked at the bottles and how the system is set up? It was in the (indiscernible) of the engine room.

A. Yes, sir, we have your two tanks sitting down by the water tanks in the engine room, yes.

Q. So do you under -- if you went down there and you looked at it, could you explain to me how the system works while you're looking at it?

A. No.

Q. Okay, that's fine. Do you know what kind of extinguishing agent is in those bottles, and what effect does it have on the fire?

A. I know it smothers out the fire. It's like a brain fart

right now though.

Q. That's okay. One second.

MR. STAINES: He's drawing a blank right now on the agent. I can tell you the answer if you want.

CWO [redacted]: Yeah, Tony. If you could go ahead and tell me what that is.

MR. STAINES: Based on what I've learned, and believe me, I know very little about engines and the suppression systems, but I was told yesterday, the agent is sapphire. Does that make sense?

CWO [redacted]: What did you say the name of the agent was?

MR. STAINES: Sapphire, is that right?

CWO [redacted]: Okay, I'm not -- I'm not saying it's wrong. I'm not familiar with that particular name. It may be (indiscernible) something else.

MR. YOUNG: Excuse me -- excuse me for interrupting. This is Brian Young with the NTSB. Derek and I were on board the *Captain Kirby Dupuis* a few days after it arrived in New Orleans, and we were able to take a look at the fire extinguishing, the suppression system. And we saw two larger round, cylindrical pressure tanks, and one larger pressurized bottle.

And it turns out that the initial releasing bottle, when the first lever is pulled, is nitrogen. And nitrogen sets off a series of events through a time delay, and then after the second lever is pulled, the extinguishing agent is Novac 1230, 1-2-3-0. And there is a specific 60-second delay that supposedly has a

siren to advise anybody in the engine room to get out and delay the release of the extinguishing agent to make sure there's no people in the engine room. So is that something that you may have been familiar with, Mr. Washington?

MR. WASHINGTON: Yes, I was familiar with the alarm and things like that before it dispensed out the fire extinguishing agent.

MR. YOUNG: So I just wanted to, you know, explain that there is a placard outside the two bottles down in the auxiliary machinery space, as well as by those two pull stations outside your office. And there's one that's labeled cylinder release, and the other one is a valve release.

MR. WASHINGTON: Yeah.

MR. YOUNG: Right, just so you -- to refamiliarize yourself. So I'll let Mr. [redacted] continue with his questions.

CWO [redacted]: Thank you, Brian.

BY CWO [redacted]:

Q. Okay, on the fixed system, do you guys do training on it or do you incorporate that into your drills?

A. If we do fire drills, but we never actually got to pull the system.

Q. Right, do you -- do you -- do you talk about the system, how it's supposed to operate, how it works, what effect it might have?

A. Yes, when we do fire drills for an engine room fire.

Q. Do you know when the last time was that you did an engine

room fire drill?
A. I mean, we do drills every Sunday, but an engine room fire drill, I can't recall.
Q. Okay. Would you be able to recall whether you've done one on that trip that you had been on since September?
A. No, not that I recall.
Q. Okay. Give me one second. So on the fixed firefighting system, do you -- in the room with the levers, is there -- is there any type of instruction there that explains how to operate it?
A. Yes, there's two little placards on top of -- it's on, printed on to the front of the little glasses that you have to break. It's printed right below them on the red -- on the red little deals before you break the glass. It'll let you, like, it'll tell you what's there.
Q. Okay, so can we -- can we go back -- go back to when initially you hit the lever? So you initially hit the lever, and then you came back at a later point, you hit the second lever, is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. And do you recall in the instructions for the fixed firefighting system that it's in the room where the levers are -- does it -- does it say operate one and then operate the second one? Or is there, I guess, two different -- two bottles down there? Does one lever operate one bottle, and the other lever

operate the second bottle?

A. Yes, one lever -- one lever operated one bottle and the other lever operated the second bottle. But I don't recall if it's operate this first or operate this second, I don't recall.

CWO [redacted]: Hey, Brian, since you seem to be on top of how that system operated, do you -- do you recall, or can you elaborate on what the instructions had?

MR. YOUNG: Sure, what I can do, and, Tony, you might and should be able to see my screen. I'm going to share the instructions from the auxiliary machinery space outside the bottles on this Zoom screen, or, I'm sorry, Teams screen. Are you able to see that?

MR. STAINES: Yeah, it's not very clear. We'd have to walk up to the screen and look at it more clearly.

MR. YOUNG: I'll zoom it in.

MR. STAINES: I see that. It says evacuated, secured.

MR. YOUNG: So it says, in case of fire, evacuate all personnel from the protected space, secure all openings and shut down ventilation, and for a remote, manual actuation, which would be the two levers outside the chief's office, it says to locate remote pull boxes located outside of chief's office on the main deck, frame 31.

Step two, break glass and pull handle hard in pull box labeled cylinder release. And step three is to break glass and pull handle hard in box -- pull box labeled valve release. These

actions will cause the release of nitrogen gas, sounding sirens in the protected space, shutting down ventilation and propulsion engines, and initiating a time delay to allow for the evacuation of the engine room.

After a 60-second delay, the system will discharge NOVEC 1230 fire suppression fluid into the engine room. So that's the instructions for a remote release.

CWO [redacted]: Thank you.

LT [redacted]: Hi, this is [redacted] here with [redacted]. I just wanted to just make sure that we're all on the same page here after hearing the instructions. So it sounds like there's two different thought processes here. And one is the way the fire was fought initially, which was pulling one of those levers, which was only half of what needed to be done to deploy the system.

And then there was -- I don't know if it was 15-minute break prior to, where Mr. Washington went and attempted to fight the fire and ensure different things were being conducted in other spaces around the vessel and then came back and deployed the second lever. And at that point, it would have been when the clean agent, this sapphire, was deployed from the actual banks.

So the question is, is the training that's being conducted teaching them that both levers have to be pulled in order for the system to be activated, or was there a thought that each one of those levers constituted a portion of the clean agent to be

deployed to where it can be split 50/50? So I don't know if that method had gotten across during the training process or it had not, but it seems like there's two different trains of thought between how the fire should be fought and what the actual manufacturer's instructions are.

MR. STAINES: This is Tony Staines. That colloquy is very difficult to follow in terms of it's a question. Maybe if you want to ask a question, break it down and ask him -- he's already told you what he did, but maybe, apparently, you need some clarification as to, you know, what he did and when he did it with respect to the two fire suppression systems that he addressed. I don't know where you -- I don't know where you got the 15-minute difference in doing something, and I'm lost -- I got lost on that as well.

So Mr. Washington will be happy to answer your question if you want to ask him questions again to try to help you understand what occurred. And I don't know where you're getting two thought processes from. Maybe you have one and someone else has another, but again, please ask a question limited to a question as opposed to a colloquy, so he can answer your question, thank you.

BY LT [redacted]:

Q. Is the instruction that (indiscernible) for firefighting, did it include the two-stage activation of the fixed firefighting system?

A. Yes.

Q. How long was the gap between pulling the first lever and the second lever for the fixed firefighting system?
A. In between 15 and 20 seconds when I deployed the fire extinguishers through the window.
Q. For lever one and lever two in that area?
A. Lever one came -- lever one came first. I deployed a fire extinguisher, and then lever two came. So 15 to 30 seconds.
Q. The first lever that you pulled, and then you went and deployed portable fire extinguishers, or you pulled both and then went and deployed portable fire extinguishers?
A. Pulled the first lever, deployed portable fire extinguishers and pulled the second lever.
Q. So in between pulling lever one and lever two, you vacated that space and deployed the portable extinguishers through the side engine room doors?
A. Through a window, through a broken window.
Q. Right. So there was a time gap between pulling the first lever and the second lever. And in that time gap, portable fire extinguishers were deployed through the window?
A. Yeah, within that 15 seconds of pulling the first lever and the second lever.
Q. I guess I'm just confused. If the portable fire extinguishers were deployed in between pulling the two levers, or both levers were pulled and then the portable fire extinguishers were deployed?

A. The fire extinguishers were deployed between pulling the two levers.

Q. Mr. Washington, when you came on board the vessel initially, did you go through any type of familiarization or indoctrination training to the firefighting equipment on board the boat?

A. I don't understand.

MR. STAINES: He didn't understand your question, can you rephrase it?

BY LT [redacted]:

Q. So when you first -- you first came to start working on the vessel, did you have any training, familiarization, with the firefighting equipment on board the vessel?

A. Yes, I had -- I had training.

Q. On that specific vessel?

A. Yes, I've been on that vessel for over a year.

Q. Okay, and in the engineering training that you're going through, is there anything that (indiscernible) fixed firefighting suppression system?

A. Yes, there is, but I haven't got as far as my whole package filled out. Now, like I said, I was going through my training. I have a package that I have to complete.

Q. Right, no, I understand, I'm just trying to understand if there's anything in the package that addresses the fixed firefighting system in detail.

A. Yes.

LT [redacted]: Brian, I'm going to go ahead and let y'all go with any questions, and at the end, I'll come back with anything I can think of.

MR. YOUNG: Okay, sounds good. At this time, Mr. Johnston will ask his question from our side, and then I'll follow up with my final few follow-up questions.

BY MR. JOHNSTON:

Q. All right. Good morning. Good morning, Mr. Washington. Good morning, Mr. Staines. Thanks for talking to us this morning. I just have a few questions. I think if you'll bear with me here, I'm going to just try and fill in where the Coast Guard asked a lot of the questions I was going to ask. So I'm going to flip through some of mine and just -- and just fill in some of the blanks.

So at the very beginning when you were alerted to the fire, you said you were -- were you in your birthing area and it's adjacent to an engineering control space? So that's how you heard the alarm through there?

A. No, we have alarms throughout the whole boat.

Q. And there was one in your birthing -- there was one in your birthing area?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay, okay, and that was what time did you hear the alarm, about?

A. About in between 6:30 and 7:00, in between that timeframe.

Q. Okay, and what time did your -- were you scheduled to go on watch that day?
A. I was scheduled to go on watch at 7:00.
Q. Okay, and who was -- so who was on watch when the alarm went off? Really, were you the first one alerted to the fire, or was there other crew that had been alerted to it as well?
A. No, the wheelman -- the wheelman, Clay Hunt, he seen the fire on the camera, and there was another deck crew member that was on board, Eric Levin (ph.). That's the one I met in the hallway.
Q. Okay, and the camera, it's a camera that looks into the engine room. And then where is the display for the camera?
A. The front starboard side, but it looks back at the port and the starboard main engines. It's kind of angled to the port main engine, but you can see both main engines down there. Just like, you know.
Q. Okay, and then it feeds a display, I assume. Is it -- where's the display for the camera? Where does someone see it?
A. In the wheelhouse.
Q. Okay, it's on the bridge of the wheelhouse. Okay, okay. Thank you. I just want to flip through some of these. So what -- what firefighting equipment is on board the vessel?
A. We had spare fire extinguishers down in the front hole, but all our fire -- most of our fire extinguishers are in the engine room. We have a big 50 on the dolly inside of the other engine room. We have two of them right in front of the generators, one

in the rudder room, and then we have two in the lower engine room. Those are my engine room fire -- firefighting extinguishers, but I couldn't get to neither one of those. So I had to use the extra fire extinguishers that we had down in the front hole to deploy down into the window.

Q. So the majority of the fire extinguishers were in the engine space and the machinery space. And then you had some additional fire extinguishers throughout, sort of, the main cabin area of the vessel?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. So going back to the fire, the supply fan on top of the engines, you said that those deactivated because of the electrical circuits being burnt. How would those normally be shut off?

A. By the panel board. Like, I would go back there, and I would shut the panel board down, and they'll shut off.

Q. Okay, is there -- is that the only place to turn on and off the supply fans over the engine? Is there a remote activation anywhere else?

A. No.

Q. No, that's it? Okay. And the damper vents up on (indiscernible) capability for those?

A. Would you ask that again? You froze up.

Q. Oh, I'm sorry. So you talked about on the top deck above the engine room, there's the vents on the stacks with the fans over

the engines. Are those only able to be closed manually, or is there a remote access where you can -- you can open and close the vents?

A. Only close manually.

Q. Okay, okay. And you talked about the -- you talked about the fire stations and the fire pumps. How many fire station fire pumps are there on the vessel?

A. We have a total of seven.

Q. Okay, and you said you tried to turn on one of the fire pumps, and it had become inoperable due to the fire. Was that the case with any of the other ones that you tried? Did you try any of the other ones?

A. Yeah, I tried fire monitor one and fire monitor two. We had both of the hoses stretched out on the bottom deck, on the starboard and the port side. But the starboard and the port main door. But we tried the starboard one, it didn't work on fire monitor one. It didn't work on fire monitor two. And the fire nozzle on the third deck wouldn't even shoot water.

Q. Okay. So what steps did you take after when you found out that the fire pumps, fire monitors, weren't operable?

A. I had no choice but to hit the fire suppression system.

Q. Okay, and we talked about -- and that's the one that's located outside your engineering space, with the pulls?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. And we talked about that. Let me just got through a

few more here. So talk about that fire suppression system. When you activate it remote, through those pulls that are located on that bulkhead going into the engine room, do you have any -- do you have any indication that's given to you, you know, be it, like, a little alert or a sound or something that you can see, that would you give you positive indication that what you're releasing from those tanks was successful, that you had completed its intended purpose?

A. Yes, because when I released the first tank, I went and fed the fire extinguishers into the window and came back and released the second tank, and it white smoke.

Q. So you could see --

A. That the fire was kind of, like, dying out.

Q. After the second one, you could see the white smoke?

A. Yeah, you could see the white smoke.

Q. From the fire being presumably extinguished?

A. Yes.

Q. And was there any indication after the first one that it had been successful?

A. No, it was only -- I mean, it was 15 to 30 seconds in between. Like I said, I was feeding fire extinguishers, but I (indiscernible) the second one.

Q. Okay. Yeah, I understand. Thank you. So are there -- are there any steps that are important to take prior to releasing one of these fixed fire suppression systems for it to be most

effective?

MR. STAINES: I don't understand your question, but maybe -- do you understand it? What do you mean by steps?

MR. JOHNSTON: I mean, is there a -- is there an engineering configuration of the systems on board that needs to be accomplished prior to the release of a fixed fire system to, you know, enhance the effectiveness of the system such as --

MR. STAINES: You froze again.

MR. JOHNSTON: Okay, I'm sorry guys. I'll go back. So what I'm asking is, is there -- is there any sort of engineering configuration of the ship and the systems on board that needs to be accomplished prior to deploying the fire suppression so that it -- so that it's going to be more successful?

MR. WASHINGTON: Yes, make sure everything is sealed off. That's what the deck crew was going around doing, shutting all the vents and making sure everything airtight was sealed.

BY MR. JOHNSTON:

Q. Okay, yeah. So you were in communication with the deck crew --

A. Yes.

Q. -- when you were getting to pull the fire pulls in there, and then they had given you confirmation that, yes, they had completed what they needed to complete?

A. Yes, the deck crew went around and shut everything down and alerted the wheelhouse that I was going to pull the system.

Q. Okay.
A. Alerted the wheelhouse.
MR. STAINES: Mr. Johnston, one other thing, too, I just remembered. Can he add something to that answer?
MR. JOHNSTON: Of course, yeah, of course.
MR. WASHINGTON: I called the captain and let him know to alert the wheelhouse and let the captain know I was going to pull the first fire suppression system, and that's when I pulled that one. After they had shut everything down, they had closed all the vents, and everything was sealed up airtight.
MR. JOHNSTON: Okay, cool. Yeah, thank you.
BY MR. JOHNSTON:
Q. Okay, the windows on the upper deck of the wheelhouse -- not the wheelhouse, I'm sorry, the engine room, are those fixed windows or are they able to be opened and shut? Is that something that needed to be shut before the release of the fire suppression?
A. Yes, the window was shut. All the windows was shut. They slide and shut, and they go airtight.
Q. Okay.
A. The reason was it was a little crack in the window because the flames had gotten so hot where the boxes was on the second deck right beside the starboard window, and it started to crack the window.
Q. Okay.
A. So (indiscernible) for me to deploy those fire extinguishers.

But we didn't have the window open. Everything was already sealed.

Q. Right, when you released the fire suppression?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And is that -- so the steps that are taken before the release of a fire suppression, is that captured in any company policies or procedures or perhaps in the training that you've been taking?

A. Yes, we -- we -- the steps that I followed to make sure everyone was clear, and everything was closed, and everything shut down, yes, that's company policy and procedure.

Q. Okay. And is that -- would that be something that would be covered in a fire drill?

A. An engine room fire drill.

Q. Okay.

A. In case of hitting the fire suppression system.

MR. STAINES: You froze again, Derek.

MR. JOHNSTON: I'm sorry, I don't know what's going on.

BY MR. JOHNSTON:

Q. So, I know you talked about the fire drill. Y'all did drills every Sunday, but did you say you remember the last time that your crew did a engine room fire drill?

A. No, I don't recall the last time we did a engine room fire drill.

Q. Do you recall doing one on the Captain Kirby on your current

hitch or any of the previous hitches?
A. Yes, whether it was an electrical fire in the wheelhouse, things like that, or fire out on the barge, we do fire drills like that, but not all of them are going to be in the engine room every time.
Q. Right, of course. Okay. So other than the training you've already talked about, do you have any -- do you have any other formal firefighting training that you may have completed?
A. (Indiscernible) for my tankerman license.
Q. Okay. Did it address a similar instance to what you experienced?
A. Well we didn't have a fire suppression system at Delgato (ph.). We just -- I mean, that was for barge fires.
Q. Oh, okay. So it was a little different.
A. Yeah.
Q. Okay. Okay. So I'm going to switch gears here. I just have another set of questions that I -- if you could remember your three days prior to the accident, could you describe your watch schedule, when you were on, when you were off, how much rest you got, how much time you were working, if you recall anything out of the ordinary that happened, if you remember?
A. I normally work standard watch, standard Coast Guard watches, six hours on, six hours off.
Q. Okay. What times were your watches normally? Were they the same over the three days prior to the accident?

A. Yes, my normal -- my normal watch was from 6:00 in the morning until 11:00, or 5:00 in the morning until 11:00, and then 5:00 at night until 11:00 at night.
Q. And you had that same watch schedule the two or three days leading up to the fire?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. Was there anything out of the ordinary that happened on board, any emergencies, or any other things that would have required you to work outside of your watch schedule?
A. No.
Q. Okay. So typically, how long are your hitches on the *Captain Kirby*?
A. Normally, my hitches are 28 days. We do 28 and 14s. I do two weeks on deck, and I do two weeks inside of the engine room.
Q. Okay, and how long into the hitch were you the day of the fire?
A. In the engine room, the two weeks that I do in the engine room?
Q. Yes, yeah.
MR. STAINES: Are you asking how long was he actually, prior to the incident, on watch or working as the engineer or how long he'd been on the boat?
MR. JOHNSTON: Both.
BY MR. JOHNSTON:
Q. How long had you been on the boat? When did the hitch start

and then, so two weeks later, you started as the engineer?
A. I had been on the boat since September, but my -- I was just about to complete my two weeks for being in the engine room. Which mean the crew change day would have been the next day.
Q. Okay.
A. I was -- I was 12 days in on my -- 13 days in on my engineering days.
Q. Okay, and then you would have gone and been on deck for the remainder of the hitch?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay.
MR. STAINES: Sorry. (Indiscernible.) The question that was asking about the three days leading up to the incident. Can he tell you what they were doing in those -- what primarily they were working on in those three days?
MR. JOHNSTON: Okay.
MR. WASHINGTON: We were getting ready for a (indiscernible). We were getting ready for a (indiscernible). The day before -- the day before, me and the deckhand (indiscernible) the helm. We went downstairs and made sure everything was straightened, and we took out the trash and things like that. Took all those things out and made sure the last-minute things were did because, like I said, the whole week we had been preppy for a (indiscernible) to make sure everything was good.
BY MR. JOHNSTON:

Q. Can you explain what happens at a sire audit?
A. They'll come around there and do an inspection, make sure everything is running properly and make sure everything is in good working form, and the rest of it is, like, bridge work, wheelhouse work. But they'll make sure the engine room and that everything is cleaned and in proper working and things like that.
Q. All right.
A. (Indiscernible) and things like that. They'll just come and check everything out.
Q. And did -- was that scheduled to be completed or was it completed prior to the incident?
A. It was scheduled to be completed the day of the fire.
Q. Okay, so they did not come onboard?
A. No.
Q. No? Okay. I think that's all the questions that I have.
MR. YOUNG: All right. Thanks, Mr. Washington. This is Brian Young with the NTSB. Do you need a break? I only have a few questions before I'm wrapped up, or are you prepared to continue on?
MR. WASHINGTON: Yeah, you can continue.
MR. YOUNG: All right. Appreciate your time.
BY MR. YOUNG:
Q. Do you have any sort of Coast Guard license?
A. Yes.
Q. What is the license, is it a tankerman, engineer?

A. Tankerman license, and I have my (indiscernible) license.
Q. And after your training, do you intend to get an engineer license?
A. Yes, I have my tankerman and my PIC license, but, yes, I do intend to get my engineer license. But with my tankerman license, my PIC license, I'm pretty much in-line for that.
Q. When it comes to doing maintenance on the engines on the *Captain Kirby Dupuis*, when there's scheduled for routine maintenance, as you were saying, maybe a 500- or 1000-hour maintenance, who conducts that maintenance?
A. I do.
Q. And what are some of the tasks associated with a 500-hour maintenance interval?
A. On my 500-hour, I just do a filter change, no oil change. I do a filter change on my brake oils and my oil filter. That's the 500-hour. On my 1000-hour, I completely drain the engines of all the oil, my gears and my main, change all my filters, and fill all those engines back up with oil and make sure -- and change my fuel filters, too.
Q. And which of those maintenance items had you most recently completed prior to the fire?
A. 1000 hour.
Q. And when you were working on that maintenance item, did you notice anything strange, or was it very routine for a 1000-hour maintenance item?

A. No, it was routine for 1000 hour. Like, I've been doing it for a year, so it's been the same thing constantly for a year.
Q. Okay. Are you aware if the lube oil in the sumps gets sent out for any sort of analysis? Do you ever take samples and send it off the boat?
A. Yes, we take samples and send them off the boat.
Q. Do you recall the last time that was completed?
A. We should have a copy of it in our (indiscernible) computer on when the last time it's completed.
Q. Okay. So there is some sort of a maintenance tracking program you use on a computer?
A. Yes.
Q. And did you say it was Synex (ph.)?
A. Yes.
Q. Synex, okay, and does that program tell you when it's time to do certain maintenance items?
A. Yes.
Q. When there are larger items, such an overhaul or bearing replacements or turbocharger overhauls, who does that, on major maintenance items such as bearing replacements, who would do that?
A. A specialist would come in and do that.
Q. Okay, and do you recall the last time you have seen a specialist do any maintenance on the main engines?
A. The one that I had did on the starboard, starboard main engine. When Sean came, he worked (indiscernible), and he

replaced the harness, the wire harness in my (indiscernible).
Q. Okay. Do you recall any other specialists that had done any work on the port engine in your year aboard the *Captain Kirby Dupuis?*
A. No.
Q. Okay. And does your maintenance program track the hourly use every day of the engines? Do you have to put in the hours, the running hours?
A. Yes.
Q. And would your maintenance program tell you when it was time to do major interval overhauls?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay, and then what would you do? How would you advise your company or Caterpillar that, let's say, the engine was coming due for a major overhaul?
A. Call my port captain, and he'll make the calls that he needs to (indiscernible) so they can come and do the overhaul.
Q. Okay. But in your time as an engineer or an engineer-in-training, you haven't had to, other than the starboard engine with an injector and a harness, have you had to request any Caterpillar technicians?
A. No.
Q. Okay. How frequently do you make rounds in the engine room?
A. Every hour.
Q. And when you are off watch, who makes the rounds?

A. The deckhand that's on watch.
Q. Okay, and do they and yourself do a written round every hour, or is it just a visual?
A. Yeah, I'll go around and do a visual. It's a company policy. It's a hearing, smelling, and seeing, and I'll do that check every hour. And it's the same thing that the deck crew will do every hour, the hearing, the smelling, and the seeing.
Q. And who would have done the last round in the engine room prior to the failure?
A. Eric Levin.
Q. Okay, and do you remember, or did he let you know if he saw, smell, or heard anything strange in that last round?
A. He would have let me know if he would have saw anything.
Q. Okay.
A. That's what -- they come and knock on my door and tell me what's going on down there, what they see, and that's how they --
Q. And that morning, did he report anything abnormal to you?
A. No.
Q. Okay, and do you have any sort of computer system or monitor that tracks the engine performance and generates alarms that you would hear?
A. Yes, the panelboard sitting right in front of the -- right in front of the door on the starboard side, inside of the engine room, inside of the upper engine room.
Q. Okay, and if there was an engine alarm, let's just say it was

a low lube oil pressure alarm, is that something you would hear in your room?

A. Oh, yeah, we have -- we have alarms set up with a blue light on it, and it flashes, and it'll wake you up.

Q. Okay, and did any of those alarms wake you up prior to the smoke detector or fire detector that morning?

A. No, the only thing we heard was the fire alarm.

Q. Okay. I know there were some questions about what type of firefighting equipment you have, and we understand there's a lot of fire extinguishers and fire hoses and two fire pumps. Does your vessel have self-contained breathing apparatus, SCBAs?

A. No.

Q. Okay, and how about a fireman's outfit? Like, the heavy jacket and the pants and boots, do you have a set up like that?

A. No.

Q. Okay. After the fire detection system alerted you that there was a fire in the engine room, do you recall hearing the general alarm?

A. No, because the panelboard was broken.

Q. Okay. How about a public announcement, PA, from the captain?

A. Everything electrical was already burnt.

Q. Okay.

A. So, yes, we heard him over the VHF radio, but that eventually went out, too.

Q. Okay. Do you remember after the alarm went off, if the

entire crew was mustered together? Did you have some sort of a gathering of the entire crew that everyone was accounted for?
A. The entire crew was already in the galley by the time I came and tried to go -- when I tried to go through the engine room door the first time, I led the crew back into the galley. And that's when we ran out the hoses. So they was already there within 30 seconds, 15 to 30 seconds, they was already mustered in the galley. And that's our muster location, the galley.
Q. Okay, is that something you've practiced during your drills is that everyone gets together at a certain location when the alarm sounds?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. When you are conducting normal operations, and you're steaming or maneuvering, do you keep the engine room windows open or closed?
A. My engine room, I keep my engine room windows open.
Q. Open? And what's the reason for that?
A. To keep the engine room cool.
Q. Okay.
A. I have blowers, but to keep my engine room a little bit cooler, I keep them open.
Q. And how about your ventilation fans? We looked and saw that you had two supply fans, one port and one starboard, and you had two exhaust fans, one port and one starboard. When you're steaming or maneuvering, how do you typically have the ventilation

system set up?
A. They're normally blowing into the engine room.
Q. So would you normally have both supply fans on?
A. No, just one.
Q. Okay.
A. Just one supply fan on.
Q. And which one do you typically run?
A. The port.
Q. So how about the exhaust fans?
A. Yes, I run my exhaust fans, too, but my port, the supply fan is only on on my port.
Q. So then do you run both exhaust fans?
A. Yes.
Q. So one port-side supply fan is pressurizing or supplying air into the engine room, and two exhaust fans are sucking out?
A. Yes.
Q. And what's the starboard supply fan doing?
A. I never cut -- I barely cut the starboard one on because when I go down there, it's too much wind. You can't --
Q. Okay. How, and we -- I understand that the fire melted the switchboard so that the supply fan and the two exhaust fans most likely stopped. How were you made aware that the louvers or the dampers up in the stacks were closed?
A. My deckhands had closed them. The deck crew had closed them.
Q. They did? And do you think that's -- you remember that

that's something you all have trained on, to close the dampers?
A. Yes.
Q. And when did you train on that or during what scenario?
A. Huh?
Q. During what scenario did you train to close the dampers?
A. For a engine room fire.
Q. Okay, and how do they close those dampers?
A. They have little levers on the front that they'll slam down on, and it slams down the dampers.
Q. Okay, and somebody reported to you that that was complete?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay, and then you said you went around the exterior of the vessel, and you pulled a bunch of levers to shut the fuel supply to the engines and the generators? Okay. When you pulled the first lever for part of the fire suppression system, did you hear any sort of alarms or sirens?
A. No, I don't -- I don't recall hearing any alarms or sirens.
Q. Okay. Could you hear any product discharging from the extinguishing system? Did you hear any whooshing or a high-pitched noise or anything different?
A. No, all I -- I just -- no, no, I didn't.
Q. Okay. And then, just to clarify, too, somebody went around and closed all the windows in the engine room. But it sounds like the fire, the heat of the fire, may have broken open at least one window or more?

A. Yeah, the starboard, the starboard window.
Q. It was cracked? And did it crack enough that you could open (indiscernible)?
A. It had cracked (indiscernible).
Q. Okay. Was it open enough that you could fit a fire extinguisher cone or nozzle into it?
A. Just the nozzle. It was a small enough crack just for the nozzle to fit in there, not a complete fire extinguisher.
Q. Okay, and when you are steaming or maneuvering, what is the status of the engine room doors? Do they typically stay open to keep the place cool, or do you keep them shut?
A. In the heat of the summer, yes, they'll -- I'll open one side. But it was starting to get cool, so I just had my windows open.
Q. Okay. And I just want to clarify, I'm a little bit confused. It sounds like you joined the *Captain Kirby Dupuis* sometime in September. And is it true you have remained aboard the vessel since September, or did you get any breaks?
A. I joined the *Kirby Dupuis* in August, in August of 2019, yeah, 2000 -- yeah, I think I joined the *Kirby Dupuis* in August of 2019.
MR. STAINES: How long had you been aboard the vessel? I'll ask him if you don't mind. How long had you been aboard the vessel, *Kirby Dupuis*, working straight time as of the time of this incident?
MR. WASHINGTON: Oh, since September.

BY MR. YOUNG:

Q. Okay. So are you doing a 28 on, 14 off, or have you just been continuously staying on since September?

A. Continuously staying on since September.

Q. Okay. So there isn't a normal 28/14 rotation? That's what I'm confused about.

Q. Yes, it is a normal 28/14 rotation.

MR. STAINES: But he spent (indiscernible).

BY MR. YOUNG:

Q. So during your 14 days off, you continued to stay aboard the vessel?

A. (No verbal response.)

Q. Okay. I just wanted to clarify. It wasn't making sense to me. Okay. Do you have any ideas as to what may have caused the fire, based on your experience?

A. No.

Q. Okay. Has you -- have you heard of any sort of lessons learned or any notices from the company saying here's what's happened and to share some of the lessons learned to other vessels in the fleet?

A. I don't understand.

Q. Have you seen or heard about a safety report from the company or some sort of a notification to pass along information regarding this incident to other vessels?

A. Yes.

Q. And how did you hear about that?
A. Email.
Q. Okay, and do you remember what the email said or what they were talking about?
A. Letting everybody know the status of the *Kirby Dupuis.*
Q. Okay.
A. And what happened and how we can prevent it.
Q. And what did it say on how you can prevent it?
A. It was just saying, the email was sent out a week, I mean, a day after. The status of the boat came out, and I was just --
Q. Okay, I was just --
A. -- them sending an email.
Q. Okay. I was just interested to see if there were any lessons learned that were shared to other vessels and other crews. Okay.
A. I don't know.
Q. Thank you. I appreciate it. I don't have any other questions, but thank you, again, for your time. I really appreciate it. I'll pass it back to the Coast Guard and see if he has any follow-up questions.

CWO [redacted]: No, Brian, I don't have anything at this time. Do you have any questions for us, Mr. Washington, or, Tony?

MR. STAINES: You know, I have -- I don't think you've asked him, and he shared with me when I talked to him. On the, I think it was the day before, and I'll let Mr. Washington tell you and clarify. I think it was the evening before the incident when he

was on watch, that he and the deckhand, did you all add engine to one -- excuse me, add oil to one of the engines?

MR. WASHINGTON: Yeah, the (indiscernible) engine.

MR. STAINES: Tell them what y'all did.

MR. WASHINGTON: We added oil to the port and the starboard main engine.

MR. STAINES: About what time was that?

MR. WASHINGTON: Around 8:30, 8:15 to 8:30, we added oil to both main engines, and that's a -- that's a normal daily routine to add oil to the main engines or whatever when we check the sights.

MR. YOUNG: And is that something you do every night or every day?

MR. WASHINGTON: Not -- we don't add oil every day or every night, but that's something that we do check. And if we do need to add oil, we'll get into a good position where we can add oil.

MR. YOUNG: And did you remember that it was an abnormally extra-large amount of oil that you had to add to the engine, or was it normal?

MR. WASHINGTON: No, it wasn't a lot. It wasn't a large amount at all.

MR. YOUNG: Okay. And is it true that you have to ask the captain to take the engine out of gear prior to adding oil, and then add up through the top off the -- up by the cylinder head?

MR. WASHINGTON: Yes.

MR. YOUNG: Okay, and was there anything abnormal that evening before when you were adding oil?

MR. WASHINGTON: No.

MR. YOUNG: How about at the time of the fire, what kind of engine load was on the port engine?

MR. WASHINGTON: Like 12, I don't recall. I don't recall that.

MR. YOUNG: So, yeah, thank you. That's all good for me from my questions.

CWO [redacted]: This is [redacted] from the Coast Guard. Hey, what was the vessel doing at the time the fire started? Were you guys underway? Were you pushing?

MR. WASHINGTON: Yes, we was underway, pushing.

CWO [redacted] Okay. So what's a normal RPM range?

MR. WASHINGTON: 1275, 1290 RPMs.

CWO [redacted] One other question, so you were adding oil. Do you guys track every time that you add oil to the engine?

MR. WASHINGTON: Yes.

CWO [redacted] And is that logged somewhere? Is that written down?

MR. WASHINGTON: Yes, it's logged into the computer.

CWO [redacted] Okay.

MR. YOUNG: Do you remember where you were heading to? What was your final destination this trip?

MR. WASHINGTON: We were headed to Johnson Fleet (ph.) in

Ohio, Steubenville, Ohio.

MR. YOUNG: And where were you coming from?

MR. WASHINGTON: Paducah, Kentucky.

MR. STAINES: If you gentlemen need any records of any sort that we've discussed today or haven't discussed today, just send me an email. I'll be happy to provide you what we have.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you very much. Appreciate it. If there are no other questions, I'm going to stop the recording. Mr. [redacted] you're all set?

CWO [redacted] Yeah, I'm good. Thank you.

MR. YOUNG: Okay, the recording is going off. It's 11:26.

(Whereupon, at 11:26 a.m. ET, 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 *CAPTAIN KIRBY DUPUIS* NEAR BELLEVIEW, KENTUCKY ON NOVEMBER 9, 2021 Interview of Richard Washington
ACCIDENT NO.:	DCA22FM002
PLACE:	Via MS Teams
DATE:	December 14, 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.

[redacted]

Sarah Collins
Transcriber