

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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ENGINE ROOM FIRE ABOARD THE  
STATEN ISLAND FERRY *SANDY GROUND*  
NEAR STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK  
ON DECEMBER 22, 2022

Accident No.: DCA23FM010

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Interview of: VINCENT D'EUSANIO, Chief Engineer  
Staten Island Ferry *Sandy Ground*

Staten Island, NY

Thursday,  
February 9, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BRIAN YOUNG, Marine Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

██████████ ██████████ Chief Warrant Officer  
U.S. Coast Guard

BARRY TORREY, Director of Operations  
Staten Island Ferry

DANIEL FITZGERALD, Esq.  
Freehill, Hogan & Mahar, LLP  
On behalf of New York City DOT/Staten Island Ferry

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:46 a.m.)

1  
2  
3 CWO ██████████ Good afternoon, this is Chief Warrant Officer  
4 ██████████ ██████████ that's ██████████ ██████████, and we are  
5 here at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal, St. George Terminal  
6 located on Staten Island, New York. The time on deck is 11:46 and  
7 we will begin with introductions.

8 MR. TORREY: I'm Barry Torrey, Director of Ferry Operations.  
9 Last name is T-o-r-r-e-y.

10 MR. FITZGERALD: Dan Fitzgerald with the law firm of  
11 Freehill, Hogan & Mahar on behalf of the party in interest, New  
12 York City DOT/Staten Island Ferry.

13 My last name is spelled F-i-t-z-g-e-r-a-l-d.

14 MR. D'EUSANIO: Vincent D'Eusanio, I'm a chief engineer here  
15 at the Staten Island Ferry.

16 It's V-i-n-c-e-n-t D-apostrophe-E-u-s-a-n-i-o.

17 MR. YOUNG: Good morning, this is Brian Young with the  
18 National Transportation Safety Board. Y-o-u-n-g.

19 CWO ██████████ And just to verify today's date, it is  
20 February 9th, 2022, and we will go ahead and begin.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Twenty-three.

22 CWO ██████████ Delete my last. Twenty twenty-three.

23 For the record, Chief, do you agree that we record this  
24 interview?

25 MR. D'EUSANIO: Yes, that's fine.

1 CWO [REDACTED] All right.

2 INTERVIEW OF VINCENT D'EUSANIO

3 BY CWO [REDACTED]

4 Q. And we would like to begin with just discussing your personal  
5 maritime experience.

6 A. I graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in 2003.  
7 From there I went to shipping with AMO. I sailed predominantly on  
8 the gas turbine classed LMSRs, the *Watson* class, did that through  
9 Operation Iraqi Freedom, so we did a lot of runs from East Coast  
10 and Gulf Coast of the States out to the 5th Fleet back and forth.  
11 And then in the interim -- I was 4 months on, 4 months on over  
12 there. In the interim I would do either piston pulls, like little  
13 vacation jobs, stuff like that. I worked with the SL-7s, some  
14 diesel, the MPS ships, Maersk container ships.

15 I started working here as a marine engineer in 2006. I was a  
16 marine for 11 months, moved up to chief, and then I've been a  
17 chief since April of 2007 and since that time I've worked on the  
18 boats, I've been a port engineer on the operations side and I've  
19 been a port engineer on the maintenance side. I worked with the  
20 shipyard, the port marine engineer title, I did that, so I was in  
21 and out of the shipyards. And then I'm a naval reservist, so I  
22 went on a deployment. When I came from my deployment, I came back  
23 onto the vessels as an operating chief and I've been back on the  
24 vessels since -- October of 2015 is when I came back from my first  
25 deployment.

1 Q. Okay. And you have work experience on both the *Sandy Ground*  
2 and the *Michael Ollis* ferries, correct?

3 A. So I have limited on the *Sandy Ground*, I believe one or two  
4 watches.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And only a few watches on the -- on the *Ollis*, as well.  
7 Currently, since October of last year, I've been working on the  
8 overnight shift, so I predominantly work the *Molinari* class  
9 because that just seems to be the run that is on the shift that  
10 I'm on. But when the *Ollis* class has substituted in, I've done a  
11 few watches here and there on them.

12 Q. I see. As far as your training that you received in  
13 preparation to take your positions on the *Sandy Ground* or the  
14 *Michael Ollis*, could you describe what training you received?

15 A. Yeah, so first set of training, we went over there and we  
16 just did walk-throughs while the boat was out of service, so plant  
17 down, just walking through, getting familiarization top to bottom  
18 of the decks, the intermediate decks, fan rooms, all the engine  
19 spaces, propulsion rooms.

20 Did that until we were comfortable, was given handbooks, set  
21 of notes, did basically your EOM, to just read through, go  
22 through. And then we went on there and I worked with one of the  
23 chief engineers to do operational training, so plant running, do  
24 the startup, get under way. I went through some of the hey, this  
25 could happen, this is what's been happening, what we've seen. I

1 was one of the latter engineers to train on it, just because again  
2 working the overnight shift, I was -- I didn't fill in right away,  
3 so when I got on it, it had already had some run time. So  
4 actually, I think that was better for me because they had some  
5 lessons learned, little things like hey, this has happened when  
6 we've seen the DMSD system was -- had to get tweaked in the  
7 beginning.

8       So I got to work in and see some of that. And after we did  
9 that and I felt comfortable, had a talk-through with the two  
10 chiefs that were training, they signed me off on my  
11 familiarization training and then I was good to stand watch when  
12 it fell into my shift.

13 Q. I see. And how long was that time span, would you say, total  
14 of training and evaluation?

15 A. Three days, a week, about that, like because it wasn't full  
16 days, sometimes it was -- I would just go to the startup and  
17 checkout, but in terms of time, it was more than ample.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I mean, it wasn't -- like I said, it was shift work.

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. Sometimes when it was out of service we would get over there  
22 and walk through and then when they were doing their startup, I  
23 would go start up with them and then go back to, you know --  
24 because they had their crew, I was just doing the startup to learn  
25 the ins and outs.

1 Q. I see. Was the fuel oil transfer system part of your  
2 training, as well?

3 A. Yeah, the whole fuel oil system. On these boats, service  
4 transfer, they all kind of blend, so to say. I mean, it's not  
5 your typical ship where you have, you know, quality storage tanks,  
6 you got your two tanks, two tanks. So yeah, we went through the  
7 entire fuel system, transfer service, up to the emergency, back  
8 and forth.

9 Q. Okay. And at the completion of training did you feel  
10 confident that the training was adequate for you to do your  
11 position and job as a chief engineer onboard?

12 A. Yeah, it was more than adequate.

13 Q. Okay. In regards to the two ferries, *Ollis* and *Sandy Ground*,  
14 are there any differences in the fuel systems that you've observed  
15 or seen?

16 A. No, not that I know of. And that doesn't mean there's not,  
17 it just means, again, the limited experience I've had on it --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- it's a standard fuel system.

20 Q. All right. Could you describe your responsibilities as a  
21 chief engineer onboard?

22 A. On any of the ships?

23 Q. For the *Sandy Ground* or the *Ollis*.

24 A. Yeah, just the leader of the below-deck team, ensure that  
25 standard watch-keeping rules are in effect, making rounds, safety,



1 to get me from A to B.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. I would describe it as a typical watch-standing evolution.  
4 For the most part we do, you know, maintenance, but it's typically  
5 preventative. Sometimes corrective, but not major. But  
6 predominantly you're a watch-stander during maneuvering shift. So  
7 the main thing is to just keep the four people doing an attentive  
8 watch and making sure we're getting to and fro.

9 Q. I see. In regards to the fuel management onboard, such as  
10 monitoring fuel tank levels or operating fuel manifold valves, how  
11 is that done onboard during your -- your shift?

12 A. So during steady state operation?

13 Q. Correct, like just the --

14 A. Yeah. So during steady state operation, once we get the  
15 engines aligned and running, typically -- so each class is  
16 different, but on the *Ollis* class, typically, once we get it  
17 dialed into the number we want to keep the tanks at, whatever the  
18 gallons may be, we just keep to just the returns to ensure we keep  
19 them relatively even. *Molinari* class, the same thing.

20 *Molinari* class, you might have to change it a few more times  
21 just based off of configurations of engines because, since you  
22 have three engines on there and you run two, the return rate may  
23 be different. But predominantly, once it's set you're good to go  
24 for the day. The key is just to not overcompensate either way and  
25 then you could pretty much run it. And on the *Ollis* class, what

1 I've seen on the *Ollis* is you got to do it a little -- choke it in  
2 a little more on one side but just make sure you're good because  
3 of just, again, once you have the -- the lay of the land, see how  
4 the piping and what engines are running and return rate, it should  
5 be good to go. Typically, oilers monitor that and I know -- so on  
6 our shift, the four guys, the two oilers, typically we have one  
7 monitor, so he knows what he adjusted, or she, on either side.

8       So last night I had one oiler, he took the fuel, so he  
9 cleaned the fuel purifier, he ran the purifier and then he -- once  
10 he dialed in, we kept the same engines all night so we didn't have  
11 to touch it again. But if one guy makes the adjustments, we're  
12 good to go because he knows if he -- half a turn open, half a turn  
13 close.

14 Q. Okay. And is that pretty much your process, your procedure  
15 for, you know, your crew that you would have on -- you know, at  
16 the time?

17 A. It is.

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. Yeah, and if you have a steady crew it's easy because you  
20 have your set things. If not, we usually have that discussion.

21 Q. Okay. With keeping like the one oiler monitoring it and  
22 operating --

23 A. Yeah, and it's usually an internal discussion, though, they  
24 set it when they get there.

25 Q. Okay.

- 1 A. So last night I had one guy who was in on overtime, not  
2 normal to the crew, and he turned to me and said hey, I'll get to  
3 lube oil this stern to New York at Staten Island.
- 4 Q. Okay.
- 5 A. You get this, this and this and then stand it.
- 6 Q. Okay. And would you say that process would be the same on  
7 the *Sandy Ground* and the *Michael Ollis*, if you were --
- 8 A. If I was the chief?
- 9 Q. Yeah.
- 10 A. Yeah, that would be the process on all nine ferries.
- 11 Q. Okay. Do you have any issues with nomenclature or labeling  
12 of the fuel valves and on the manifolds or any of that?
- 13 A. No.
- 14 Q. Okay. Have you observed it being confusing, you know, with  
15 having to port and starboard versus a New York end and a Staten  
16 Island end?
- 17 A. No, I've seen it the other way. Some people, when they first  
18 get here, get a little confused with New York, Staten Island,  
19 Jersey, Brooklyn. When you get here --
- 20 Q. Yeah.
- 21 A. -- and then it becomes -- you get it.
- 22 Q. Once you get acquainted and --
- 23 A. Once you know. And then the rest is, for lack of sounding  
24 like arrogant, but --
- 25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. -- when you hear enough and you walk out, you know which way  
2 you're facing, New York is forward, so okay, that's port, that's  
3 starboard.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. But I think the nomenclature has not been an issue for  
6 somebody who -- like I said --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- normally it's when you first get here, sometimes it's --

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. -- Jersey side versus Staten Island or Brooklyn.

11 Q. But from what you've seen, once you get familiar, it's -- you  
12 know, it hasn't been an issue that you've seen. And then, you  
13 know, in regards to the fuel oil purifier, is there any difference  
14 in -- in what you do with the fuel oil purifier from vessel to  
15 vessel or that's still the same? So like, for instance, going  
16 from *Sandy Ground* to the *Ollis*.

17 A. No, it's all the same.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. The only difference is like I said, each class of vessel, you  
20 just pick what your level wants to be, whether you say 2500 in the  
21 tanks or -- you know. And then the operation is the same. Once  
22 you have your level decided, you just keep your flow rate to meet  
23 your level based off of your consumption.

24 Q. I see.

25 A. If that makes sense.

1 Q. Yes, yes. For the fuel level monitoring and your tank level  
2 indicators, have you experienced any issues with -- with those  
3 TLIs or monitoring the levels themselves?

4 A. No. What I ask is that -- and I do it, as you're in the  
5 engine room, just walk by the flags just because it's a -- it's a  
6 check on yourself. They all have multiple ways of looking at it,  
7 so if a TLI goes, you just -- but for the most part, all the TLIs  
8 are -- so we're checking these things three, four times a day,  
9 matching --

10 Q. Um-hum.

11 A. -- with (indiscernible) because of switching watches.

12 Q. Yeah, okay.

13 A. So every chief is coming in, so when I check that thing, I'm  
14 checking it, the guy before me checked it so we know whether or  
15 not it's off. Typically, it's not off by enough to say there's a  
16 problem. It would either go bad, so it would be out of sight high  
17 where you know it's a TLI issue, not a level issue.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. But predominantly because you have chiefs coming in three  
20 times a day, you're catching whether or not the tanks are going  
21 awry or if they're going high or low based off of the sounding.

22 Q. Okay. From what you've seen, have you experienced a high  
23 level alarm and a low level alarm?

24 A. On a daily steady state operation, we've seen high level now  
25 and again because if we're laid over and we keep everything

1 running, the engines might come up. I've never seen low. Like I  
2 said, working in the yard and stuff, I've seen alarms, so I know  
3 that they work, I've tested them for CLIs (ph.).

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. ABS stuff. But steady state operation, I've never personally  
6 witnessed the tanks hit a low and if it's hit a high, it hasn't  
7 been a crazy, out-of-sight high, it's been okay, we just took a  
8 3-hour layover but we didn't shut down because they were doing  
9 testing or something and the levels came up, or we've pressed them  
10 up. Today we fueled, so I pressed up the day tanks to open room  
11 in the storage tanks.

12 Q. I see.

13 A. But never an out of control that I've personally witnessed.  
14 CWO ██████████ Okay. All right, at this time I'd like to  
15 turn it over to Mr. Young.

16 BY MR. YOUNG:

17 Q. Good morning, Chief, thanks a lot for your time today.

18 A. No worries.

19 Q. Just a few follow-ups on what we were talking about  
20 previously. When it comes to training, you said that it was a few  
21 days of walking around and looking at some of the systems. Was  
22 there any sort of, let's say, a qualification or something that  
23 you had to show the trainers that you were comfortable with some  
24 of the machinery or was it just all a verbal check-off?

25 A. It was all verbal and then there was nothing written until

1 the end, when they were comfortable that I could walk them through  
2 the systems and essentially prove that I knew where I was going  
3 and what I was doing. They had a sign-off that they gave me and  
4 both the trainer and myself signed it.

5 Q. Okay, so they actually witnessed or talked through the system  
6 in your presence, showing that you were comfortable with the  
7 operation?

8 A. Yes, and during that period, I was -- again, my personal  
9 experience was I got signed off while we were in the control room  
10 because we sat there having that conversation and there were  
11 questions from both ends, like hey, okay, that happened, where is  
12 this again or what is that and we went through it.

13 Like I said, it was verbal, I didn't have a test or anything,  
14 but it was -- it was Michelle Mergollo (ph.) who signed me off as  
15 the trainer and the chief, so she signed under the observer, I  
16 signed under the observee and then I also walked out with -- she  
17 had schematics that were given to all of us, so I had the book  
18 with the schematics and the engine operator manual.

19 Q. Okay, that's great. And if there were any changes to the  
20 operating handbook that you got, how would you be notified about  
21 that?

22 A. So that, I mean, that's the million dollar question here. I  
23 guess it would have to be through word of mouth or typically  
24 through the port office. So if I'm coming on a boat, there's  
25 typically a port engineer who comes on and makes the round, so I

1 would ask him hey, you know, what's changed or they would tell me  
2 what's changed.

3 Q. Okay. And I'm just asking about procedures, like if there  
4 were any changes to different procedures that you had been trained  
5 on, how --

6 A. Oh, if there is a process or a procedure change, there's  
7 typically an SMS alert and a memo that goes out. So I know there  
8 was just one that went out either early this week or late last  
9 week on there was a change to our vessel load plan, so there was a  
10 memo that went out with the alert, it showed what the new verbiage  
11 or process for it is, what the old one was and tells you the  
12 thing.

13 And then if there is a -- what we get is if there's an 835 or  
14 any finding from audits, ABS, Coast Guard, typically whatever the  
15 Coast Guard and ABS gets as their write-up, we get it e-mailed to  
16 us from the senior port engineer and then again, if there's any  
17 process change, then we would get the alert through it.

18 Q. And that'll all be through e-mail?

19 A. Yeah, through either e-mail or hard copy, it gets printed out  
20 and posted to each boat.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And again, that's like process procedure or something that  
23 was brought up, like if they're going to change like this tank  
24 plan or the vessel load plan, things like that.

25 Q. Okay. And do you know if there have been any changes made to



1 the original training documentation that you trained on? For the  
2 *Ollis*-class vessels.

3 A. To the handouts, I do not know if there was anything to that.  
4 Again, I haven't been on the boat, the last time I was on there we  
5 used the EOM just to go through some stuff in one of the drills,  
6 but I haven't been given any update from training. With regards  
7 to the fuel, the last thing was the alert on the vessel, the load  
8 plan. The stability load.

9 Q. Understood. You said you also had worked as a port engineer  
10 for Staten Island ferries. Did you have any design or input  
11 towards the new vessel construction?

12 A. No, I was -- I was out of there by the time that went in. I  
13 left shortly after the drive reinstall on the *Molinari* class.

14 Q. I'm trying to jog your memory, when you were working on other  
15 vessels outside of the ferries, I know you had some gas turbine  
16 time, but say diesel ships or even some of the SL-7s, the steam  
17 plants, do you recall typically how the fuel systems are operating  
18 there when it comes to day tanks, storage tanks, and maintaining  
19 levels of purifiers? What do they typically do on deep draft  
20 vessels with the level in the day tank?

21 A. So, for the most part, everywhere I was at before I came  
22 here, we would just let it overflow and like I'll talk about the  
23 LMSRs, they had a settling tank and a storage tank, so we would  
24 pump from the settler into the service and then the service  
25 overflowed into the settler. The storage tanks would then be part

1 of the transfer system, we would transfer from the storage into  
2 the settler as that tank got low, but you typically kept the  
3 storage tanks pressed up. The SL-7s were a similar -- a similar  
4 setup. A couple of the diesel ships I was on, it kind of just  
5 depended on what we were burning. If we were burning heavy, we  
6 might've kept them at a different level depending on what the  
7 viscosity or how we had the heaters running. But traditionally,  
8 we didn't concern ourselves with higher levels in our day tanks  
9 because they overflowed to our settlers.

10 Q. And is that a similar design with the *Ollis*-class vessels, if  
11 the day tank was to overflow, it would go to the storage tank?

12 A. Yeah, and the same with all of them, really, the storage  
13 tanks overflow to the overflow tank, the day tanks overflow to the  
14 storage tanks.

15 Q. Okay. And is there any issue or problem with running with a  
16 full day tank on the *Ollis* class?

17 A. No, I don't believe so.

18 Q. What about using the two day tanks as opposed to using one,  
19 what do you think about that? What's the advantage in using two?

20 A. It's just the lineup, I don't know, it's what we do, I mean,  
21 port and starboard and we let them ride out. It keeps a full head  
22 on both, I guess it's backup. Stability.

23 Q. Do you think --

24 A. It's port and starboard, so if I leave one full and one  
25 empty, I have to worry about stability. Also, if our purifier

1 fails, we don't -- we don't have a settler here, so if our  
2 purifier fails, we're taking straight from storage and putting it  
3 in via the transfer pump minus the *Newhouse* and *Barberi*, they have  
4 a backup coalescer because they had a coalescer installed prior to  
5 a purifier, so when the purifier came on, the coalescer became the  
6 backup.

7 The *Molinari* class, the *Ollis* class, if the purifier goes,  
8 then you're subject to having to use your transfer pump to pump  
9 from your storage into your day. So off the top of my head,  
10 that's -- those are the two I got for you.

11 Q. That makes sense. No, I was just wondering why the -- it's  
12 operated in that way, would that make sense? What kind of fuel  
13 are you burning?

14 A. DFM, Number 2 diesel here. It's clean.

15 Q. And it's ultra-low sulfur, right?

16 A. Ultra-low sulfur, it's relatively clean.

17 Q. If you were to shut all the engines down and leave the supply  
18 valves open on both day tanks, if there were two different levels  
19 would they equalize themselves?

20 A. Yes. If I shut down all my engines, the day tanks will  
21 equalize and once they equalize they pretty much stay, even with  
22 the boiler and the generator running. Yeah, if I keep the boiler  
23 and the generator running, they return back to the tank. It  
24 doesn't do enough to screw up the levels. It's when you get the  
25 mains on.

1 Q. Do you have any idea what percentage of the fuel is getting  
2 returned from what you're burning?

3 A. No, I used to, but -- I know we did a study back in the day  
4 on the *Molinari* class where we had fuel sensors hooked up and it  
5 was -- we were looking for fuel leaks and that was around the time  
6 we did the tier 2, so I don't know if they have that study and  
7 stuff, but I couldn't tell you a percent at this point.

8 Q. Okay. And when you are using both day tanks, burning off  
9 them, replenishing with the purifier and returning from the  
10 engines, what level difference gives you concern, how many gallons  
11 difference do you start to get concerned?

12 A. So I don't traditionally worry about the gallons. Because  
13 we're looking at TLIs, I look more at the inches. If I start to  
14 see 3, 4 inches I get concerned. However, a gray area, I know  
15 that's the best answer, but if I get there and they're 3 inches  
16 off and 4 hours later they're 3 inches off, then I know the flow  
17 rate is okay, they just started at 3 inches off. If I get there  
18 and they're dead even and in 3 hours they're 4 inches off, then I  
19 have a flow rate issue.

20 So like I said, gray area, a tough answer, sorry, but I  
21 traditionally -- I attempt to catch the fuel rate and make the --  
22 sorry, the flow rate and keep the flow rate right, and I attempt  
23 to do that with the returns because the purifier I can increase or  
24 decrease, but that's not going to change because it's dropping  
25 into both tanks. The returns, depending on the configuration of

1 the engines, may be getting more to one than the other. And  
2 that's just because they're not symmetrical onboard the vessel  
3 when you have Number 3 and then you have the generator on one side  
4 and the boiler on the other.

5 Q. Do you think the fuel oil purifier is sized enough where it  
6 could maintain and keep a level at the same time when you're  
7 burning?

8 A. Yes, we have no issues with that. Actually, we choke it in  
9 more often than we run low.

10 Q. If you get on watch and you establish your team, as you said,  
11 as the leader of the below-deck team, how do you choose who's  
12 going to be the fuel oil monitor?

13 A. Typically, it's chosen amongst them; however, there's an  
14 experience factor. So again, I work overnight and I've had the  
15 opportunity here to have a lot of different engineers and oilers,  
16 but I have one oiler that I'm with every night. So when we bid  
17 the jobs, it's two people on the boat because we typically get the  
18 small class. We've been working the bigger class, so we get two  
19 fill-ins, so to say. So my oiler does it every night because we  
20 have a comfort level. So there is an experience factor.

21 I also try to get the new guy with the old guy so that they  
22 learn it. We've seen -- and again, it could be because it's not  
23 common outside, but guys come here and they don't understand the  
24 -- the return because they might come from somewhere like I did,  
25 you keep them pressed so the return doesn't matter because they're

1 both always full, or they don't typically use purifiers, they just  
2 worry about their filters so they're not watching flow rate that  
3 way. So we just try to get some experience on it. But if I have  
4 a well-adapted crew and it's the four of us every day, they pretty  
5 much have it chopped up as to who's doing what. And there's  
6 nothing that says they can't both do it. I just like -- if I  
7 touched it, I know what I did to it. If I touched it, you -- I  
8 might tell you I choked in on it, but you might not know how much.  
9 So a quarter turn to you might be different than me.

10 Q. Do you ever have the marine engineer monitor and maintain the  
11 fuel level or is it always an oiler?

12 A. So it's traditionally always an oiler. If I have two new  
13 oilers, I'll ask the marine just to do an extra -- extra set of  
14 eyes on it.

15 Q. And this has been a very odd time over the past few years,  
16 especially with COVID, but have you seen any issues with being  
17 able to keep oilers and engineers and crews? Are you experiencing  
18 any issues with crewing?

19 A. What do you mean, like leaving me, personally? Everybody  
20 loves me here.

21 (Laughter.)

22 MR. D'EUSANIO: Staffing, listen, it's been tough everywhere,  
23 right? I mean, so I've been here since 2006 and I'll just tell  
24 you, to me, and this is not the company line, but to me, this  
25 place is like a sine wave. The day I started, I was the TBA

1 Number 6 marine and there were six more marines than there were  
2 bid jobs for marines. And then there's been times where we've had  
3 two or three marine jobs open and then it recycles and in the  
4 last, I'd say COVID aside, in the last 10 years we've hired a lot  
5 of oilers or we've hired a lot of Academy and Fort Schuyler  
6 graduates as oilers and they work their way up and when everything  
7 happened with COVID, it kind of slowed down.

8 In terms of turnover, when you hire 22-year-old kids, there's  
9 going to be turnover a lot. Was it COVID? I don't know. But  
10 right now we're in one of the dips and I have a feeling when  
11 everything opens up and comes to fruition, we'll probably be -- it  
12 depends on if we go the other way. Like I said, it's a sine  
13 thing. And then what happens is I've learned it here, it's a  
14 tough spot.

15 Like I used to joke with some of the guys, I said look, this  
16 is -- picture getting in on a ship and every 90 days the whole  
17 crew leaves, only here you stay for 30 years. So whatever your  
18 reputation you make in those 90 days, it don't go away with you,  
19 just watch what you're doing. But what I learned from that saying  
20 is they all retire in a bunch, too, and so I was moved up, I was  
21 the Number 18 chief and then in 3 years I was the Number 12 and 6  
22 years later I'm Number 11. Now, when the next wave goes, I'll  
23 jump another five spots. So again, we'll hit that low period  
24 again, that's it.

25 Q. It sounds like you do work with a lot of the same people on

1 your team quite often, is that correct?

2 A. So two of us are steadfast, me and my oiler, and then the  
3 reason I have guys that bounce in and out is because, like I said,  
4 when we bid our jobs, I don't know if you guys went through that,  
5 but when we bid our jobs, the bid I'm on, it's only a chief and an  
6 oiler, so a marine and a second oiler don't bid with us. So being  
7 we've been working on the larger-class ferry, that manning  
8 document calls for a marine engineer and another two oilers, so we  
9 have to have people pulling with us.

10 And the SOP has pretty much been two guys from the night crew  
11 or the afternoon crew stay late and they do the first half of the  
12 watch with us, two guys from the morning crew come in early and  
13 then they split. So me, personally, it's -- I don't know,  
14 everybody has a different feeling on that. Me, personally, I'm  
15 okay with it. I actually like it better to have that because I  
16 have people invested in the watch.

17 When I get on, they've been here for 8 hours when I got here,  
18 so they know exactly what's happening and what's not happening.  
19 And then the guys that come on, although they're getting on,  
20 they're walking into us that have now been there for 4 hours, so  
21 we have an idea of what's going on, we take them and they're  
22 invested because they're about to stay for 8 hours after we leave,  
23 so they want to make sure they're doing right. So I actually  
24 welcome that way in this situation. If I was going to my boat or  
25 our watch's boat, the little boat, it would be the two of us every



1 night together, pending one of us on vacation or out sick. But  
2 traditionally we have a core group. Before this shift, when I  
3 worked on the other shifts, it was the same four guys,  
4 traditionally, every day minus vacations, sick time and stuff like  
5 that.

6 MR. YOUNG: Thank you very much for your time and answering  
7 all the questions, I appreciate. Thank you.

8 BY CWO [REDACTED]

9 Q. I just have a couple more questions, Chief. When you  
10 mentioned returns, were you talking about return valves and the  
11 transfer system?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. So each engine has a return, but then each tank has a return,  
15 as well --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- for the whole system.

18 Q. And those valves would be operated as part of the fuel  
19 leveling --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- of the tanks? Okay. And just from, you know, what you  
22 may have heard or what you know, do you know anything about what  
23 might've caused the fire on the *Sandy Ground*?

24 A. So I wasn't there, so I don't know. I mean, there's a lot of  
25 rumors, but --

1 Q. Would you be willing for us to contact you at a later time if  
2 we had any follow-up questions?

3 A. Yeah, that's fine.

4 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. So I'd like to open it up to the room  
5 for any other remarks or questions.

6 (No response.)

7 CWO [REDACTED] And as well as you, Chief, do you have any  
8 other remarks, anything else to add?

9 MR. D'EUSANIO: No, I'm all good, thank you.

10 CWO [REDACTED] All right. All right, that concludes our  
11 interview. The time on deck is 12:20.

12 (Whereupon, at 12:20 p.m., the interview concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

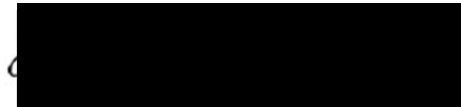
IN THE MATTER OF:           ENGINE ROOM FIRE ABOARD THE  
                                  STATEN ISLAND FERRY *SANDY GROUND* NEAR  
                                  STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK  
                                  ON DECEMBER 22, 2022  
                                  Interview of Vincent D'Eusanio

ACCIDENT NO.:               DCA23FM010

PLACE:                        Staten Island, NY

DATE:                         February 9, 2023

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.



---

David A. Martini  
Transcriber

