

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

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

Accident No.: DCA23FM010

* * * * *

Interview of: GEORGE BEAUFILS, Marine Oiler
Staten Island Ferry

St. George Ferry Terminal
Staten Island, New York

Thursday,
January 19, 2023

APPEARANCES:

CWO [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Accident Investigator
United States Coast Guard

BARRY TORREY, Director of Operations
Staten Island Ferry

DANIEL J. FITZGERALD, Attorney
Freehill Hogan & Mahar, LLP
(On behalf of Staten Island Ferry)

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of George Beaufiles:		
By CWO [REDACTED]		5
By Mr. Fitzgerald		20

I N T E R V I E W

(12:03 p.m.)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CWO ██████████ Good afternoon. This is Chief Warrant Officer ██████████ ██████████ That's spelled ██████████ We are conducting an interview today, on January 19, 2023, at the St. George Terminal in Staten Island, New York. Time on deck is 12:03. And we will begin with introductions.

MR. FITZGERALD: Good morning. My name is Daniel Fitzgerald. I'm with the law firm of Freehill Hogan & Mahar. I'm here on behalf of the party in interest New York City DOT and Staten Island Ferry. My last name is spelled F-i-t-z-g-e-r-a-l-d.

MR. BEAUFILS: My name is George Beaufils. I work for the Staten Island Ferry.

CWO ██████████ And could you please just spell your name out?

MR. BEAUFILS: Oh. First name G-e-o-r-g-e; last name B-e-a-u-f-i-l-s.

MR. TORREY: And I'm Barry Torrey, last name T-o-r-r-e-y, director of ferry operations for Staten Island Ferry.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: George, how do you spell -- B-e-a-u?

MR. BEAUFILS: F-i-l-s.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: F-i-l-s?

MR. BEAUFILS: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.

CWO ██████████ Thank you.

And just for the record, I just wanted to verify with you

1 that you agree for us to record the interview?

2 MR. BEAUFILS: Yeah.

3 CWO [REDACTED] All right.

4 INTERVIEW OF GEORGE BEAUFILS

5 BY CWO [REDACTED]

6 Q. So could you please discuss your maritime experience,
7 maritime background?

8 A. So I went to high school, maritime high school, New York City
9 public high school, New York Harbor School. That's where I got
10 all my maritime background from. From thereon, I went to
11 Kingsborough Community College. I did a degree of maritime
12 technology, associate's in applied science. Then after that, went
13 to Brooklyn College, graduated with a bachelor's. Then I went to
14 Seafarer's International Union, SIU. And then, yeah, so deep sea
15 and left -- or left SIU and then applied to the Staten Island
16 Ferry. Here I am.

17 Q. What was your bachelor's degree in?

18 A. At Brooklyn College? Bachelor of science in applied
19 mathematics.

20 Q. Okay. And then when you were employed here with the Staten
21 Island Ferry were you put as a marine oiler?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. And could you say when that was again when you were
24 first employed?

25 A. I just made 2 years. So it's --

1 Q. So you've been with the agency for about 2 years?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. How many trips have you done on the *Sandy Ground*?

6 A. I have to look in my calendar. I -- so every day I write
7 down the name of the boat, the chief engineer, the time we start,
8 the time we finish, my hours, and then my OT, overtime hours. So
9 I have to go to my calendar and check.

10 Q. Sure. That's fine. Would you say that you've had more time
11 on the *Sandy Ground* or the *Michael Ollis* or would you say it's
12 about equal?

13 A. I have to check.

14 Q. Okay. No problem. And you do work on the other vessels as
15 well?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Could you describe the training process that you went
18 through to be trained for the Ollis Class vessels?

19 A. I think I had like 3, 3 or 4 days of training. The training
20 officer, he's a oiler. He trained us on like, you know, starting
21 up the lube oil purifier, you know, lining the valves up, lining
22 up the fuel purifier, you know, the machinery in the engine room.
23 It was a really long time ago. Yeah, the whole training process
24 is kind of a blur.

25 Q. Sure. No problem. How long would you say was the training

1 process? Or how much training did that include before you were
2 assigned to the -- or any of the Ollis Class vessels?

3 A. Like how many training days?

4 Q. Yes.

5 A. I'll say maybe like 3 or 4 training days.

6 Q. Just dedicated to training --

7 A. The Ollis Class.

8 Q. Okay. Did that training consist of classroom, you know, or
9 was it all on board on the vessel?

10 A. All the training was on board on the vessel. They gave us
11 like a packet with, you know, all the machinery that's on board
12 the vessel, you know, small minor details that's important for us
13 that we should know. But, yeah, the training was on board the
14 vessel not in a classroom. It was hands on.

15 Q. What was the evaluation process, you know, for the training
16 to evaluate your knowledge, you know? So were you -- was there
17 like practical exercises you had to do to perform or was it, you
18 know, kind of you actually operating, doing the procedures
19 themselves?

20 A. So the training guy will show us, you know, how to line
21 something up. And then we'll watch him. In terms of like an
22 evaluation, like it's not like a A, B or C like you, you know, you
23 got a 90, 100 percent. There's really no evaluation or critique.
24 But, you know, after watching the training officer, you know,
25 operate machinery, we'll, the next day, you know -- yeah, that's

1 about it.

2 Q. Okay. And did you have just one training officer or
3 multiple?

4 A. Well, me, as being unlicensed, my training officer was an
5 oiler. Yeah.

6 Q. I see. And then you mentioned that you were given like a
7 training manual or training material, you said. So you had a copy
8 of like vessel procedures or equipment?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. Following the training, did you feel confident and did
11 you feel that training was adequate for you to perform your duties
12 as a marine oiler?

13 A. Not really. I felt like as I worked the boat, you know,
14 that's when I really learned. Yeah.

15 Q. Would that be something like on-the-job training, you would
16 say? Like as you gained more experience or --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So like not, not that I was being trained in, but actually
20 like just, you know, working the boat. That's when I actually
21 like learned more and felt comfortable.

22 Q. Was there a means for you to address any concerns or some
23 areas in the training that you weren't sure of? Like was there a
24 process for you to address that or go to somebody like, for
25 instance, a training officer or --

1 A. If I had -- if I ever had any concerns, I'm sure I could have
2 brought it up, but I don't think I ever had any concerns.

3 Q. Okay. So you did the training, got assigned to your duties
4 on board and, you know, just pretty much started working from
5 there?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. How about now? Do you feel confident now and
8 adequately knowledgeable to perform your duties?

9 A. Yes. Yes.

10 Q. Have you noticed anything -- any differences between what was
11 presented in training versus the actual system or configuration on
12 board the vessels?

13 A. Well, I mean, during training -- well, they did make some
14 changes to the boat.

15 Q. Such as?

16 A. So the returns, they put ball valves on the returns of the
17 fuel coming from the main engines going to the day tanks, they put
18 returns. So when we was training it was just hard pipe, no
19 valves. I guess as time went on, they put ball valves on the
20 return lines so you could have better control of balancing the day
21 tanks, the true levels.

22 Q. So was that part of your training, to learn about those ball
23 valves or return valves?

24 A. Well, the ball valves were installed after the training.

25 Q. I see.

1 A. Yeah. I mean, there's really -- you don't really need -- I
2 mean, I'm not trying to sound like cocky, but like, you know, from
3 my experience with being on a Molinari Class, you know, adjusting
4 the returns going to the day tanks from the main engines, you
5 know, you can take that skill and transfer it to the Ollis Class
6 and you don't really need training on, you know, balancing the day
7 tanks --

8 Q. I see.

9 A. -- of the main engine returns, the fuel from the main engines
10 going to the day tanks. It's transferrable skills really from the
11 Molinari Class to Ollis Class.

12 Q. So when you did receive the training on the fuel oil transfer
13 system during that timeframe you did leading up to your assignment
14 on board, did that training include how to monitor the fuel levels
15 and conduct operation of the valves on the fuel manifold and
16 things like that, and even the fuel oil purifier?

17 A. Repeat the question. Did they --

18 Q. Did the training include how to monitor the fuel levels, like
19 the day tank levels, what to do in order to maintain and manage
20 levels?

21 A. I can't recall. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay. So have you noticed any differences between the
23 *Michael Ollis* and the *Sandy Ground* pertaining to their fuel
24 transfer systems?

25 A. Any differences?

1 Q. Yeah, any differences?

2 A. No. I'll say it's the same.

3 Q. It's the same. So how you would manage and conduct your
4 process on the *Sandy Ground* would be the same as the *Ollis*?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Could you describe what a typical day looks like for you as a
7 marine oiler, from when you start your shift and throughout?

8 A. It depends. Am I doing -- am I working the morning shift or
9 afternoon shift?

10 Q. Okay. So how about today? Today is a morning shift for you?

11 A. Yeah, today's a morning shift, so we do a startup.

12 Q. I see.

13 A. So we -- so on a Barberi Class -- do you want me to describe
14 my, like my morning routine for the Barberi Class?

15 Q. Actually, can you describe it for the *Sandy Ground*?

16 A. Oh, for *Sandy Ground*?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. So for the *Sandy Ground*, so on Mondays and Fridays we
19 normally clean the sea strainers. So since today's not a Monday
20 or Friday, you know, first thing, open up the -- well, first
21 thing, you know, I'll take my soundings, bilge and slop. Open up
22 the sea strainers; there's two sea strainers. I'll clean the fuel
23 oil purifier as part of my duty as -- for working morning, a
24 morning job, cleaning the fuel oil purifier. Then making sure the
25 valves are lined up. You know, both ends of the storage tank,

1 storage tank valves are closed. On the -- the day tank valves
2 open.

3 Q. These are for the fuel, right? For the fuel?

4 A. Yeah. Yeah. And then the returns, I don't touch the returns
5 until, you know, we start up the main engines, and we just go from
6 there. We act accordingly. If the day tanks are fine, I don't
7 touch it. If one day tank is higher than the other, then I will
8 adjust the return accordingly, you know, just a little bit, but --

9 Q. And how is that done? Like how -- what does that procedure
10 or process look like for you to adjust or manage that?

11 A. So the normal setup on the New York end, the return going to
12 the New York day tank is the ball valve is all the way open. We
13 only throttle the Staten Island end return valve, ball valve of
14 the return going to the day tank. That -- so the Staten Island
15 end usually is around 45 degrees, and depending on the level, you
16 will either, you know, open it or close it more.

17 Q. Okay. So when you mean open and close them all, what do you
18 mean by that? Can you give me the --

19 A. That one ball valve of the --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's saying ball now not all.

21 MR. BEAUFILS: A ball valve.

22 BY CWO [REDACTED]

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Ball valve, yeah.

25 Q. Ball valves. For the fuel day tanks?

1 A. Just for the Staten Island end day tank. The New York end
2 day tank stays fully open.

3 Q. Okay. And this is the -- not the supply valve but the
4 return?

5 A. The returns from the main engine going to the day tank.

6 Q. I see. Okay.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And then, you say Staten Island end and New York end. Is
9 that how you typically refer to the locations? Do you also refer
10 to them as port and starboard?

11 A. Yeah. We refer to them as port and starboard, yeah.

12 Q. Okay. But for you, you normally say Staten Island end?

13 A. No. I normally say port and starboard.

14 Q. I see.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay. Have you had any issues with the labeling or the
17 nomenclature between the locations? Are you able to, you know,
18 accurately know what you're identifying?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. Do you feel that the labeling and identification is
21 adequate for you to perform your duties?

22 A. Yes. Yes.

23 Q. How do you monitor the actual levels? What do you have as
24 resources and tools to do that for the fuel tanks?

25 A. TLI level indicators. They're in the control room for all

1 the tanks on board the vessel, and they just -- they give us the
2 amount, you know, in gallons and in feet, you know.

3 Q. I see. Are they pretty accurate, these TLIs?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. As far as the -- who's responsible for the overall monitoring
8 and leveling of the fuel? Who normally is overseeing that?

9 A. Like overall responsibility?

10 Q. Or like who is -- who's the one like -- is it something like
11 you as the oiler, you're involved with that so you do the
12 operation of the valves and looking at the levels and managing
13 that process or does it switch between, you know, individuals
14 within that shift?

15 A. I mean, the overall responsibility is the chief engineer.
16 But as oilers, you know, it's our -- it's in our job description
17 to monitor the day tanks and to, you know, keep the day tanks even
18 and, you know, adjust them accordingly.

19 Q. So would you say from what you've seen in your experience,
20 one oiler or more, or two oilers or maybe the engineer be involved
21 with that procedure?

22 A. I've seen -- or in my experience, you know, it has been times
23 where it's two oilers and the marine that are involved in, you
24 know, keeping the day tanks equal.

25 Q. Okay. Could you explain the relief process between the two

1 shifts? So when you finish your shift and oncoming shift is, you
2 know, taking over, what does that process entail?

3 A. So we usually have a half an hour relief. You know, I'll
4 tell the oncoming shift, you know, the lube oil purifier is on,
5 you know, a certain engine. And then I'll tell them if we did any
6 PMS. I'll tell them if we had any issues. And I'll tell them
7 have a safe trip. That's pretty much it.

8 Q. Okay. As far as the levels of the fuel tanks, are they taken
9 down or recorded or written anywhere, you know, during your shift
10 and while you're monitoring the levels?

11 A. The chief engineer, that's the first thing he does when --
12 first thing he does, yeah, he writes down the amount of fuel in
13 the day tanks and the storage tanks. So like, for example, me, my
14 first day is Friday. Two a.m., he come in, that's the first thing
15 he does, he writes down the fuel levels.

16 Q. I see. So do you feel that the working area, for example,
17 lighting, space, is adequate by the fuel manifolds and fueling
18 equipment for you to perform your duties?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. Do you know of any other ways that maybe other shifts
21 or other below deck crew members conduct the fuel management?

22 A. Well, some individuals, they like to -- so on the port day
23 tank, the fuel comes from the purifier into the port day tank.
24 They like to throttle that valve, which is a butterfly valve.
25 They like to put it at maybe 45 degrees or, you know, depending on

1 the level of the day tanks.

2 Q. This is the return valve, correct?

3 A. No, no. This is a -- this is not a return valve. This is --
4 so the purifier takes suction from the storage tank. It goes
5 through the purifier and into the day tank.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Yeah. The fuel going from the purifier into the day tank,
8 they like to throttle that valve. Yeah. It's a butterfly valve,
9 nothing to do with the return from the main engines.

10 Q. I see.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. So with the -- with all engines running, for instance, the
13 main engines and the generators, and if you had both fuel oil day
14 tank supply valves closed, what do you think would happen?

15 A. Fuel oil day tank supply valves?

16 Q. Supply valves.

17 A. So that's coming from the purifier?

18 Q. It'll be the supply valves coming from the fuel oil service
19 day tank.

20 A. To the --

21 Q. To the machinery. Yeah, to your engines.

22 A. Say that again.

23 Q. Do you know what would happen to the engines that are
24 running, like your main engines or your generator engines, if both
25 fuel oil day tanks -- so you have the -- you said you got the port

1 and starboard, right, or the --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- Long Island and New York end, if those supply valves
4 supplying the engines were --

5 A. All the -- all right. So the main engines taking suction
6 from the day tanks?

7 Q. Yes. Yeah. If those valves were closed, the both of them,
8 do you know what would happen?

9 A. You're going to starve the main engine of fuel oil.

10 Q. How about if it was both return valves closed?

11 A. Return valves closed. So from the main engine to the day
12 tanks?

13 Q. Correct.

14 A. Yeah, you're going to pressurize the system. There's nowhere
15 else for the fuel oil to go.

16 Q. Do you know what are the tank level limits on the fuel tanks,
17 like the parameters for high and low?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Or any of the alarm settings for whether high or low?

20 A. Not by heart.

21 Q. Do you recall any issues with the tank level alarms?

22 A. Well, not with me on the boat, but there has been issues. I
23 can't recall if it was the *Sandy Ground* or *Ollis*, but there has
24 been issues.

25 Q. Was that pertaining to accuracy of the alarm or the alarms

1 themselves or --

2 A. I really can't recall. Yeah, I don't know the full story
3 behind it.

4 Q. So normally you get a tank level low alarm or a tank level
5 high alarm, are those pretty accurate when they do activate and
6 show up?

7 A. The only way for me to know for sure is I'll have to sound
8 the tank; you know what I mean? Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. The -- and where would you sound, do soundings from?

10 A. On main deck.

11 Q. On main deck?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Do you know if anyone's ever modified the parameters for the
14 tank levels?

15 A. No.

16 Q. No? And then as far as your rotation with shifts and crew
17 rotation, is it pretty consistent or steady or how does it
18 normally work for you as far as when you get assigned different
19 shifts?

20 A. Different shifts?

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. Well, if we're missing -- if like, so like there was a point
23 where like the 2C -- I'm on the 2C. So like I'll probably be on
24 standby, so they'll -- they assign me to a different boat. If
25 there's not enough people to man the boats, you know, I get

1 reassigned. You know, like, for example, like on a Saturday or a
2 Friday, you know. But, I mean, it all depends on manpower.

3 Q. I see.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And would you say that training is consistent between the
6 other vessel platforms as well, not just the Ollis Class but the
7 training you get on the other class vessels?

8 A. Is the training consistent? Was that the --

9 Q. Yeah. Is it similar, like how you had described being able
10 to be on board and have a visual and then doing the performance,
11 is that pretty standard for what you've done on the other class
12 vessels as well?

13 A. The training, so like when I first started like the training
14 is, I guess -- it's a lot of things thrown at you.

15 Q. Could you just elaborate a little bit more? Like what do you
16 mean? Is that just the amount of --

17 A. It's a lot of knowledge.

18 Q. -- information? Okay.

19 A. Yeah, it's a lot of information that's thrown at you for 2
20 weeks. Like when I started this job, I had 2 weeks of training.
21 And, you know, you're bouncing around from, you know, different
22 boats to different boat doing a startup, doing a shutdown on, you
23 know, a different class. Yeah, so I'd have to say yeah.

24 Q. I see.

25 CWO [REDACTED] So at this time I wanted to open it up to the

1 room for --

2 MR. FITZGERALD: Sure.

3 BY MR. FITZGERALD:

4 Q. Just -- George, I want a quick clarification here, and just
5 make sure the record's clear at least when you talk about training
6 here. So you explained a pretty extensive training system; is
7 that correct?

8 A. Extensive?

9 Q. Yeah. I mean, is it -- well, it seems like it. You know,
10 you just mentioned a 2-week training. Would you agree with me
11 that the training you received was pretty extensive?

12 A. Yeah, when I initially started this job, yeah, it was 2
13 weeks.

14 Q. Gotcha. All right. And then they showed you all the
15 different systems and how to do the different jobs, correct?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And did you feel like you were prepared to start working as
18 an oiler with the understanding, look, you'll get more comfortable
19 with time and experience? But at least when you started the job
20 as an oiler, did you feel like you were ready to move to ahead?
21 With the understanding that, look, you'll get more comfortable as
22 you get more, you know, like --

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. But what I'm saying, but when you -- you know, when you left
25 the training status and said, all right, now you're working as an

1 oiler, you felt good about yourself?

2 A. Somewhat, yes.

3 Q. You still had a little reservation?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Okay. But you did have an opportunity to voice any concerns,
6 right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And you never voiced any concerns, right?

9 A. No.

10 MR. FITZGERALD: Okay. Thanks, George.

11 CWO [REDACTED] Any other --

12 So I just wanted to ask you before we conclude do you have
13 any final remarks or anything you want to mention that you think
14 we may need to know or like to know?

15 MR. BEAUFILS: No.

16 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. So with that said, would you be in
17 agreement to be contacted at a later time if I had any follow-up
18 questions, to be able to contact you at another day and time?

19 MR. BEAUFILS: Yeah.

20 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. All right. So this concludes our
21 interview. Time on deck is 12:33.

22 (Whereupon, at 12:33 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
23
24
25

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 George Beaufiles

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM010

PLACE: Staten Island, New York

DATE: January 19, 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.

Kay M
Transc



