

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

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Accident No.: DCA23FM010

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Interview of: TERRENCE MELVILLE, 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 Ferry Operations
Staten Island Ferry

DANIEL J. FITZGERALD, Attorney
Freehill Hogan & Mahar, LLP
(On behalf of Staten Island Ferry and New York City
Department of Transportation)

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Terrence Melville:

By CWO [REDACTED]

4

I N T E R V I E W

(11:11 a.m.)

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2
3 CWO [REDACTED] Good morning. This is Chief Warrant Officer
4 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] We are conducting an interview today, January
5 19, 2023, at the St. George Terminal in Staten Island, New York.
6 Time on deck is 11:11. Name is spelled [REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED]. And we will begin with introductions.

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

12 MR. MELVILLE: Good morning. My name is Terrence Melville,
13 and I'm an oiler with the Staten Island Ferry, DOT. First name
14 Terrence, T-e-r-r-e-n-c-e; last name Melville, M-e-l-v-i-l-l-e.

15 MR. TORREY: Good morning. I'm Barry Torrey, T-o-r-r-e-y.
16 I'm the director of ferry operations for the Staten Island Ferry.

17 CWO [REDACTED] All right. Very well.

INTERVIEW OF TERRENCE MELVILLE

18
19 BY CWO [REDACTED]

20 Q. So we would like to begin with discussing your personal
21 experience as far as your maritime experience and background.
22 Could you just describe --

23 A. Okay. I started in this field in 1989. I worked on the
24 ocean-going vessels, bulk carriers. Then I went to a few tankers.
25 And then after, I was on the passenger line ships. But this is

1 mainly in Europe. It's mostly European companies. Then in 2013,
2 I was employed here with the Staten Island Ferry.

3 Q. And you were employed as a marine oiler?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. And you haven't held any other positions?

6 A. Yeah. Well, while I was in Europe I was an engine mechanic.
7 Then after, when I left there, I was a foreman in the engine room.

8 Q. I see. And then when did you say it was that you started
9 employment here with the Staten Island Ferry?

10 A. 2013.

11 Q. Okay. Do you know how many trips you've done on the *Sandy*
12 *Ground*?

13 A. I don't know the exact figure offhand, but I have it because
14 we normally record every time.

15 Q. I see. And you are working on all the vessels here in the
16 fleet?

17 A. Yes. I work on the *Sandy Ground* on and I worked on the
18 *Ollis*, the Molinari Class, Barberi Class boats. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay. Could you describe the training process for the Ollis
20 Class vessels?

21 A. Well, the -- we had a -- they did it by the different crews.
22 And we go for 1 week. We did a 1-week break-in and then they gave
23 us a walk-around with the two main guys that was -- they're
24 training the boat, with Frank Roda and Matthew Antonio (ph.). So
25 we probably -- the other crews that came on would go around with

1 these two main guys that actually did the full training with
2 the -- on the Ollis Class.

3 Q. And then for that week timeframe, what did you do? Was that
4 classroom? Was that on board?

5 A. On board. We did everything on board. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. And what did that entail as far as what you did as a
7 trainee?

8 A. Okay. We learned the different systems, about the engines
9 and the purifier systems and the fuel system, bilge system, and
10 handling of the logbook, doing all the logs.

11 Q. So were you given an opportunity to perform --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- the actual operation?

14 A. Yeah, yeah. They told us first and then they would go with
15 you to see how you would do and handle while in the training.

16 Q. After completing the training, did you feel confident and
17 feel that that training was adequate for you to perform your
18 duties on board as an oiler?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Was there any differences in training from what you've
21 experienced between the different class vessels or between the
22 different vessels themselves or has training been consistent?

23 A. Consistent.

24 Q. Was there any other materials provided to you for training?

25 A. Yes. They gave us information, like literature with the

1 different systems and the procedures and operations, the different
2 equipment. Yeah.

3 Q. Was this given to you? So provided for your own personal --

4 A. Yeah, yeah. Everybody had their own personal.

5 Q. Did you notice any difference in the engineering systems
6 between the *Michael Ollis* and the *Sandy Ground* or are they all
7 similar?

8 A. Pretty much similar, yeah.

9 Q. How were you trained in regards to the operation and
10 management of the fuel transfer system on board the *Sandy Ground*?

11 A. Okay. Well, as I said, we went around with these two guys
12 and they showed us all the valves, the manifolds, and the
13 different operations if you're going to be fueling or if you're
14 going to -- you're running the purifier in a normal day-to-day
15 basis, you know.

16 Q. I see.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Could you describe your typical duties and responsibilities
19 for when you come on shift? Just explain like what that looks
20 like when you start in the beginning and throughout.

21 A. Okay. I'm going to start from when we take shift the first
22 day, which is on Monday, because I'm Monday to Thursday. So when
23 we get in we normally would get the main sea strainers done. Then
24 we do the auxiliary strainers. Then we would take a sounding in
25 the bilge and the slop tanks because you have to -- the chief

1 engineer that recorded the bilge and the slops. Then you check
2 eye levels, you check around to see if anything is leaking or
3 whatever.

4 Q. I see.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And then you normally stay with the same shift?

7 A. Yeah, yeah.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. We have -- there's four guys in that crew.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Yeah. So --

12 Q. And that crew stays --

13 A. Yeah, yeah.

14 Q. -- the same for the most part? Okay.

15 A. Unless you're coming in for overtime on another day, then you
16 make a shift change on another crew.

17 Q. So as far as the standard configuration of fuel valves for
18 underway, could you explain to me what's the operation of the
19 valves, like valve position and how you line them up for underway?

20 A. Okay. Well, underway we keep the fuel valves filling from
21 the purifier to the -- that's providing the day tank, you keep
22 those fully open. And the return lines, they fully open, too.
23 But from time to time you might have to make a small adjustment to
24 whichever tank is going a bit offset.

25 Q. Okay. So if a tank's offset, how do you do that? How would

1 you monitor levels and --

2 A. Okay. The filling valve for the tanks that's going to the
3 day tanks, it's a butterfly valve, but they have notches on them.
4 So sometimes you -- you can see how is going. So from being
5 there, you know if you can close it a notch or two to balance it
6 back.

7 Q. Which valve is this?

8 A. On the day tanks.

9 Q. On the day tanks?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. The supply valve?

12 A. Yeah, for the day tanks that's going from the purifier.

13 Q. I see. And was that part of the training --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. -- that -- to the --

16 A. Yeah, because we do it on the other vessels, too. That is
17 not only on that vessel. Because at some point in time you're
18 going to have a shift in the fuel, so we would adjust. Yeah.

19 Q. What are you normally looking at as far as levels, what
20 levels need to be at? What is that -- what are --

21 A. Well, on the *Ollis* they want it to be like over 1,000
22 gallons. That's for normal operation. But most of the vessels,
23 the chief engineers they want you to keep it 1,000 or above, you
24 know.

25 Q. And what do you, what do you use and what do you have for

1 monitoring the levels or looking at the tank levels?

2 A. We have the gauges on the tanks and we have the gauges on the
3 screens in the control room.

4 Q. How accurate are those --

5 A. They're accurate.

6 Q. They're accurate? Even between the control room --

7 A. Yeah, not much -- yeah, it's not much --

8 Q. Difference?

9 A. Not much difference.

10 Q. I see. Do you notice any difference in the fuel management
11 and how you operate the fuel transfer system between the *Sandy*
12 *Ground* and the *Ollis*, or does it seem to be the same?

13 A. It's pretty much the same, yeah.

14 Q. Do you have any issues with the labeling or nomenclature of
15 the valves and the equipment in the engine room?

16 A. No.

17 Q. So nothing's confusing to you as far as the --

18 A. Because when we got on board, as I said, when we are doing
19 the training, they let you know the location of which -- the port
20 tank and the location of the starboard tank, so -- we did that all
21 in the training.

22 Q. I see. So how would you normally refer to each side? Do you
23 refer to it as port and starboard or --

24 A. Port and starboard.

25 Q. Okay. Do you refer to them at all as New York or Staten

1 Island ends?

2 A. Some guys might do that, but I refer to them as port and
3 starboard so I don't get the --

4 Q. I see. How do you collect the information for when you're
5 doing like your levels or soundings, you know, as far as recording
6 it? What do you do for that while on your shift?

7 A. Well, we would check the screen in the control room and then
8 you still would double check outside to make sure that the --

9 Q. Locally? Like you would see --

10 A. Yeah. Yeah.

11 Q. I see.

12 A. So you go locally and you get from the screen as well.

13 Q. But are you writing down like every shift --

14 A. Yeah, yeah. We normally would -- actually the marine is the
15 one taking the fuel log because they have to send that information
16 up to the -- I believe they send that information out to the port
17 office and to the assistant captain upstairs.

18 Q. When you say marine, do you mean --

19 A. The marine engineer.

20 Q. Marine engineer. Okay. And then overall, do you feel like
21 there is sufficient lighting and space working environment at the
22 fuel manifolds and for the fuel equipment, do you feel like that's
23 adequate for you to do your --

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. So do you know what would happen to the running engines --

1 so, for instance, like the main diesel engines, generator engines,
2 if both fuel oil day tank supply valves are closed?

3 A. Then the purifier is going to dump or -- because it's got
4 nowhere to go.

5 Q. I see. So you're saying the FOP, or the fuel oil purifier,
6 would --

7 A. Yeah, that would dump and that fuel will go to the storage
8 tank. That's if the day tanks are filling from the purifier, if
9 you close it. But I don't think anybody's going to close
10 (indiscernible).

11 Q. I see. Do you know what would happen to the running engines
12 if both fuel oil and day tank return valves were closed?

13 A. Yeah, you'd have a backup of pressure somewhere.

14 Q. You mean on the return side or on the fuel system?

15 A. Yeah, the fuel system. I assume. But again I
16 (indiscernible).

17 Q. So in regards to that whole, you know, transfer process and
18 leveling process for fuel, is there one person or more handling
19 that process or operation, or how have you experienced it being
20 done?

21 A. Yeah. Well, it's a team. When you come in you see who's
22 going to responsible for the purifier today, whether it's the oil
23 purifier or the fuel oil purifier, so you don't have a mix-up, you
24 know. Because one guy would -- you know, guy adjusting the fuel
25 and the other guy would be doing the lube oil clarifier. So you

1 don't have too many hands touching. Yeah.

2 Q. Yeah. So you try to streamline it, right? So you have one
3 person, right?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And then the individual or whoever is conducting this,
6 they're communicating with the other engineers or the chief
7 engineer?

8 A. Yeah, yeah. If you -- whatever adjustment you make, you let
9 your partner know and you -- well, the team. Whatever you do in
10 the engine room, you got to let the team know, well, this is what
11 was done and --

12 Q. Okay. As far as the fuel tank level alarms, like the day
13 tanks and storage tanks, do you know what those limits are set at,
14 like high and low parameters?

15 A. Okay. You would have a low level alarm on this -- if it goes
16 down like below 7- or 800 on the *Ollis*, because each boat is
17 different. And the high level alarm is there on the screens where
18 I think if it goes maybe over 2,700 gallons, I think you have a
19 high level alarm.

20 Q. I see. Have you noticed any issues with the tank level
21 alarms on the vessels, that you've seen?

22 A. No.

23 Q. So when you get an alarm it's usually accurate?

24 A. Yeah, yeah, it's accurate. Right.

25 Q. Okay. And have you seen or experienced anyone modifying the

1 levels or the limits at all?

2 A. No.

3 Q. No? Okay. So you're probably aware of, you know, the issue
4 with the *Sandy Ground*, you know, it's -- you know, I'm sure you've
5 heard about what's happening. You know, do you have any thoughts
6 on what may have caused that fire on the *Sandy Ground*?

7 A. No.

8 CWO [REDACTED] And at this time I'd like to open it up to the
9 room.

10 MR. FITZGERALD: I'm set.

11 MR. TORREY: I'm all set.

12 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. Thanks.

13 BY CWO [REDACTED]

14 Q. Just one last question we like to ask, sir, before we
15 conclude. Is there anything else you would like to add or -- you
16 know, or --

17 A. No, that's fine.

18 Q. -- or think we should know? Okay. All right. Well, that
19 concludes our interview here. And actually -- excuse me, sir. I
20 just want to ask, would you be willing to be contacted at a later
21 time if we had further questions after today?

22 A. Not a problem.

23 CWO [REDACTED] All right. All right. Well, that concludes
24 our interview. Time on deck is 11:28.

25 (Whereupon, at 11:28 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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 Terrence Melville

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



