

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: SHANE HOEY, Marine Oiler  
Staten Island Ferry

St. George Ferry Terminal  
Staten Island, New York

Thursday,  
January 26, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BRIAN YOUNG, Senior Marine Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

CWO [REDACTED] Accident Investigator  
United States Coast Guard

BARRY TORREY, Director of Ferry Operations  
Staten Island Ferry

ROBERT BANDEN, Warranty Engineer  
Eastern Shipbuilding Group (ESG)

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

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I N T E R V I E W

(12:12 p.m.)

1 CWO [REDACTED] Good afternoon. This is Chief Warrant Officer

2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] That's spelled [REDACTED].

3 And before we begin, I want to ask you, sir, do you agree  
4 that we record this interview?

5 MR. HOEY: Yes.

6 CWO [REDACTED] Great. So today's date is January 26. Time  
7 on deck is 12:12. We are located at the St. George Terminal in  
8 Staten Island, New York.

9 And we will begin with introductions.

10 MR. FITZGERALD: Sure. Good morning. Dan Fitzgerald here  
11 with Freehill Hogan & Mahar on behalf of the party in interest  
12 Staten Island Ferry, New York City DOT. My last name is spelled  
13 F-i-t-z-g-e-r-a-l-d.

14 MR. BANDEN: Robert Banden, Eastern Shipbuilding, warranty  
15 engineer. Banden, B-a-n-d-e-n.

16 MR. HOEY: I'm Shane Hoey here at the ferry, a marine oiler,  
17 S-h-a-n-e, H-o-e-y.

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

20 MR. YOUNG: And this is Brian Young with the National  
21 Transportation Safety Board, Y-o-u-n-g.

22 CWO [REDACTED] Very good. Thank you all.

23 So we'd just like to begin now with the interview.

## INTERVIEW OF SHANE HOEY

BY CWO [REDACTED]

1  
2  
3 Q. Would you please start with just describing your maritime  
4 experience?

5 A. So this is my first job out of school. I went to SUNY  
6 Maritime for 4 years, and this is my second year working here at  
7 the ferry.

8 Q. Okay. When you were hired on were you hired on as a marine  
9 oiler?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. I see. And have you been able to work on board all  
12 the class vessels here at the ferry?

13 A. Yes, I have.

14 Q. Okay. Could you describe the training you received prior to  
15 being assigned to the *Sandy Ground* or the Ollis Class vessels?

16 A. Okay. I went on board with my normal crew, and we had a  
17 chief and two oilers helping out. So while they did the normal  
18 routine and operation, we follow them around, see everything  
19 that's important, get a good feel for it for 2 weeks. And then  
20 you'd ask questions, see how this works, what's this, what's that,  
21 and for 2 weeks that's what we did.

22 Q. Were you given any training materials?

23 A. Yeah. We received some -- a pamphlet highlighting important  
24 information, what we specifically need to know, and some notes  
25 were given out by the chief, like personal notes on equipment.

1 And that was it.

2 Q. And you were given your own personal copy of this material?

3 A. Yes. Everyone was.

4 Q. I see. In regards to actual underway time and trips during  
5 that training process, how many trips would you say that you  
6 completed?

7 A. I mean, we were on there -- I don't know how many trips, but  
8 we were on there for a good 8, 10, 12 hours most of the time for 2  
9 weeks.

10 Q. I see. Upon completion of training would you say that you  
11 felt confident and adequate -- that the training was adequate for  
12 you to perform your duties as a marine oiler on board?

13 A. I personally felt pretty good with the training.

14 Q. I see. As far as the training with the other class vessels,  
15 is it pretty similar, like that process that you had for the Ollis  
16 Class?

17 A. You -- I wouldn't say that -- in the beginning you definitely  
18 have a little bit more time to get used to things, because  
19 everybody was already used to it so it was like you could rely on  
20 the crew more. But here it was like you kind of had to --  
21 everyone was figuring it out at the same time, if you know what I  
22 mean.

23 Q. I see. Because of a newer class vessel --

24 A. Yeah. Everybody was trying to figure stuff out.

25 Q. I see. Would you say you have more time or more work

1 experience on the *Sandy Ground* versus the *Michael Ollis* or about  
2 the same?

3 A. I'd say more on the *Ollis*.

4 Q. More on the *Ollis*. Could you describe your typical day as a  
5 marine oiler, your duties and responsibilities, and then what does  
6 that look like in a typical day?

7 A. We start up the boat. Before that we clean the strainers,  
8 make everything's okay. We blow down, fuel if we have to, take  
9 care of any personal maintenance, start up, make rounds, routine  
10 operations, and just keep a good watch.

11 Q. In regards to fueling, was the fuel transfer system or any  
12 part of the fuel management system included in your training, your  
13 initial training?

14 A. We did -- I believe we fueled once or twice for my training.

15 Q. And did that include also operation of the -- down in the  
16 fuel manifold for lining up valves for your engines and --

17 A. Yeah. But it wasn't like, oh, we'll -- we kind of figured it  
18 out while we're doing it, like to get -- to balance the tanks.  
19 Like, oh, we'll do this halfway or we'll do this fully and  
20 we'll -- it wasn't -- I'd say it was pretty solid, though,  
21 training for the fueling.

22 Q. Okay. In regards to the fuel monitoring and fuel leveling  
23 while underway and while operating the vessels, do you -- are you  
24 part of that process? Like are you maintaining those levels --

25 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah. As an oiler, yeah.

1 Q. Could you explain that process and the procedures, what you  
2 would do for that?

3 A. At first, on the *Ollis*, we weren't playing with -- there were  
4 no return valves for choking it out. But then on the *Sandy*, they  
5 put returns. And we'll play with one return or we'll play with  
6 the purifier and try to get a steady rate going. And it was  
7 pretty -- for the *Ollis* Class it was pretty, pretty -- it was a  
8 lot easier than the other classes, like keeping it a steady level,  
9 I think.

10 Q. And could you elaborate on what choking out, what that --  
11 what you mean by that?

12 A. For the suction valves from the service tank, one of them we  
13 throttle in a little bit to keep it level.

14 Q. I see. So once the return valves were put on the *Sandy*  
15 *Ground*, you were able to figure out like your process on how to  
16 manage that?

17 A. Keep it steady, yes.

18 Q. Steady? Okay. For that process would you say that you're  
19 operating fill valves or return valves in order to level, level  
20 off?

21 A. Yeah, mostly the return, we play with on my crew, but not  
22 really the purifier that much.

23 Q. As far as the assignment or who is responsible for the whole  
24 fueling procedures, is it usually one person, one oiler, or --

25 A. It's usually one oiler.



1 Q. One oiler?

2 A. We'll like -- we'll make a note of that, you know, we --  
3 like, hey, I got the fuel, don't touch it, don't worry about it.

4 Q. I see. And then as far as the fuel oil purifier, you  
5 mentioned that being operational and online. Is that normally  
6 running?

7 A. Yeah, it's normally running.

8 Q. Okay. With the fuel tanks themselves, have you noticed any  
9 like inaccuracies with the levels, like level indicators or --

10 A. It's not that off. Like we'll do soundings, but they're not  
11 that off.

12 Q. They're pretty accurate, you would say?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Does that even go for the alarms, like the tank alarms  
15 themselves? Like when you get --

16 A. A high level?

17 Q. -- high level or -- well, what alarms have you seen?

18 A. I've seen a high level and a low level before.

19 Q. All right.

20 A. And I think they're set -- well, what they were set to was a  
21 pretty accurate reading.

22 Q. Okay. Would you say the procedures and the process for  
23 conducting the fuel leveling and monitoring on board the *Sandy*  
24 *Ground* is different from other vessels?

25 A. I mean, I know that there's no -- you have to pay extra

1 attention to that because there's no relief valve for that system.

2 Q. And is that something that you've seen on other --

3 A. On the other classes there is protection against that.

4 Q. Could you elaborate on that just to --

5 A. On the Molinari, if you close both returns by accident, if  
6 you're not paying attention, there's a relief valve that will  
7 bypass that pressure --

8 Q. I see.

9 A. -- into the tank.

10 Q. And is that just on the Molinari or --

11 A. It's on the Barberi as well.

12 Q. How are you collecting information of the fuel system during  
13 watch, for instance, soundings or levels? Are you recording it in  
14 a log or --

15 A. There is a logbook. In the beginning, we write down the fuel  
16 numbers. But as the oiler, you're always paying attention to the  
17 levels on the screens in the control room or the flags outside on  
18 the actual tanks.

19 Q. And you find the flags and the screens to be accurate as well  
20 compared to the --

21 A. Yes. They're very accurate.

22 Q. Okay. Would you say that they are offset or different from  
23 each other, the flags versus the screen?

24 A. Not like a -- not a significant amount.

25 Q. I see. Would you say the space and the lighting and the area

1 around the FOP and the fuel manifolds is sufficient for you to  
2 perform your job?

3 A. Definitely.

4 Q. Do you know what would happen if both fuel oil day tank  
5 supply valves were closed?

6 A. Well, the pressure has to go somewhere and -- I don't know.  
7 The weakest point of the system.

8 Q. So this would be if the -- the supply valves going to your  
9 running engines.

10 A. You mean the return? I'm sorry. You said the return valves  
11 closed?

12 Q. Not the returns, the supply.

13 A. The supplies?

14 Q. Yeah, yeah.

15 A. They'd stop.

16 Q. Okay. And you said if it was the return valves, it would --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Do you know what may have caused the fire on the *Sandy*  
19 *Ground*?

20 A. I mean, I've heard -- I heard it was a fuel leak with the  
21 filter, so I'm -- what the rumors are, I'm guessing they closed  
22 both return valves.

23 CWO [REDACTED] All right. At this time I'd like to open  
24 questions to the room.

25 BY MR. YOUNG:

1 Q. Good afternoon, Shane. My name is Brian Young. I'm with the  
2 NTSB, the National Transportation Safety Board. And you said you  
3 graduated from New York Maritime; is that correct?

4 A. Yes, I did.

5 Q. Did you graduate with a third engineer's license?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And what's your intentions? Do you intend on sailing as an  
8 oiler with the Staten Island Ferry, so do you intend on moving up  
9 towards an engineer position?

10 A. I intend on moving up to a marine engineering position.

11 Q. And is that a normal start for graduates out of the academy  
12 to start as an oiler and work their way up or do some people go  
13 directly to be an engineer?

14 A. Most people start off in a lower position at places.

15 Q. And how long do you expect to sail as an oiler before you  
16 start working as an engineer?

17 A. A couple of months.

18 Q. And how will that process take place? Would you apply for it  
19 or do they come up to you and say, you know, you do 6 months and  
20 is there an evaluation or what?

21 A. I received training to be a marine engineer and they said for  
22 the next bid I would bid as a marine engineer. But right now I'm  
23 working under my title as marine oiler.

24 Q. What license do you actually hold? Steam and motor or just  
25 steam, or just diesel?

1 A. Every rating unlimited.

2 Q. You do any other shipping on any other vessels other than the  
3 *Empire State* prior to taking on this job?

4 A. No, I haven't.

5 Q. Does the *Empire State* as a training ship have a fuel oil  
6 purifier?

7 A. It doesn't, but we would work with them for like marine labs.

8 Q. But there's not one in use at all times on board that  
9 training ship, correct?

10 A. No, but there is a lube oil purifier, and the same principle.

11 Q. Right. Understood. You had mentioned that when the Coast  
12 Guard was talking about how the fuel tanks on the *Sandy Ground* are  
13 trying to be -- the levels are trying to be maintained, you said  
14 that the *Sandy Ground* and the Ollis Class are easier to regulate  
15 than the other class vessels. Why is that?

16 A. I personally, I haven't had to adjust it that much, at all  
17 sometimes. Like I -- like other classes, like you'll have to  
18 adjust it a lot more. It'll go out of whack a little more than  
19 the Ollis.

20 Q. Do you know why that is?

21 A. I'm not sure.

22 Q. And I don't know if it was maybe misspoken but you said  
23 you -- sometimes you are regulating the suction valve from the  
24 service tank to regulate the levels. Would that be accurate or is  
25 that a mistake?

1 A. That was on the Ollis Class when it first came over, but then  
2 they changed it to the return valves. Like we would adjust those  
3 instead.

4 Q. And when you were talking about the suction valve from the  
5 service tank, is that the actual valve that's feeding the engines  
6 or just a separate valve that's feeding the purifier?

7 A. It was feeding the engines.

8 Q. Okay. And then after the vessel came out, another valve was  
9 added into the system. What valve would that be?

10 A. The return valves. They weren't --

11 Q. Would that be --

12 A. They weren't there before and then they added them.

13 Q. And that would be the yellow-handled ball valves?

14 A. No, the butterfly valves.

15 Q. Right. Right. There was only a check valve in the system  
16 but then a ball valve was added?

17 A. Right.

18 Q. Do you know why that was?

19 A. I don't recall.

20 Q. And you were talking about a relief valve on the Molinari and  
21 the Barberi. Where is that relief valve located within the fuel  
22 system?

23 A. For the Molinari it's the starboard side.

24 Q. Not so much where it is on the boat --

25 A. Oh. Well, it's --

1 Q. -- but where, like what part of the fuel system is it in?

2 A. The return. Is that what --

3 Q. It's in the return system?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And where does it return to?

6 A. The service tanks.

7 Q. After the service tank. And then the function of that, why  
8 would that relief or pressure-reducing valve be installed in that  
9 system?

10 A. For user error if they close the two valves.

11 Q. Are you aware if those pressure relief valves have ever been  
12 activated or have you heard about anything that you could hear  
13 blowing past or --

14 A. I haven't seen it been -- I haven't seen it where it was  
15 being used.

16 Q. And I know you're only here a year or so, but do you know if  
17 that was something that was original construction or was that  
18 something added after the fact?

19 A. I -- I'm not aware of that.

20 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Thank you for your time.

21 I'm all set.

22 CWO [REDACTED] All right. Anyone else have any other  
23 questions?

24 BY CWO [REDACTED]

25 Q. And then I just wanted to ask another thing. Just in regards

1 to the orientation on board the *Sandy Ground* or the Ollis Class  
2 vessel and how valves are labeled on board. How do you normally  
3 refer to the valves? Like port and starboard or --

4 A. Port and starboard.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And then most of them have a little plate on them that says  
7 what they are.

8 Q. Okay. So you don't have any issues with the labeling or the  
9 nomenclature and the orientation on board?

10 A. I wouldn't say so, no.

11 Q. Okay. So before we conclude, I wanted to ask if you agree  
12 to -- that I may be able to contact you at a later time for any  
13 follow-up questions if I have any?

14 A. That's no problem.

15 Q. Okay. And is there anything that you would like to add or --

16 A. No. That's all right. I'm good.

17 CWO [REDACTED] All right. So this concludes our interview.

18 Time on deck is 12:31.

19 (Whereupon, at 12:31 p.m., the interview was concluded.)  
20  
21  
22  
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 Shane Hoey

ACCIDENT NO.:               DCA23FM010

PLACE:                        Staten Island, New York

DATE:                         January 26, 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  
Transcriber

