

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: STEVEN ADAMS, Marine Oiler
Staten Island Ferry
Sandy Ground

Staten Island Ferry, St. George
Terminal

Thursday
December 29, 2022

APPEARANCES:

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

BRYAN YOUNG, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

BARRY TORRE, Assistant Commissioner Operations
Staten Island Ferries

DAN FITZGERALD, Attorney
Representing NYC Ferry, Party-in-Interest

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Steven Adams:

By CWO [REDACTED]

4

By Mr. Young

25

I N T E R V I E W

(3:25 p.m.)

1
2
3 CWO [REDACTED] Good afternoon. This is Chief Warrant Officer
4 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm here at the Saint George Ferry Terminal to
5 conduct an interview of the marine oiler -- please state your
6 name.

7 MR. ADAMS: Steven Adams.

8 CWO [REDACTED] The marine oiler who was onboard the *Sandy*
9 *Ground* during the engine room fire that occurred on December 22,
10 2022. The time on deck I have 1525.

11 And in attendance we have --

12 MR. FITZGERALD: Dan Fitzgerald with Freehill, Hogan and
13 Mahar, on behalf of NYC Ferry, Party-in-Interest.

14 MR. TORRE: And Barry Torre, Assistant Commissioner
15 Operations for the Staten Island Ferry.

16 MR. YOUNG: Good afternoon. This is Brian Young with the
17 National Transportation Safety Board.

INTERVIEW OF STEVEN ADAMS

18
19 BY CWO [REDACTED]

20 Q. All right. So we'll go ahead and begin, sir. So from what
21 we know your position onboard you're the marine oiler, and you're
22 the number one --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- marine oiler, right?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Could you give us a little background of your experience, the
2 time you had on the vessel, and your time with the Staten Island
3 Ferry?

4 A. Well, the time (indiscernible) new boats we had a period of I
5 think it's two weeks breaking in on these boats. Prior to that we
6 just keep changing boats, boats, boats, boats, right? So you go
7 back there, and these new boats the first thing we do we walk
8 around, and try to check everything to our best ability to see if
9 everything is correct. If we find something, report it to the
10 marine engineer and the chief engineer, the licensed officers.
11 That's -- and the time on the ferry he was I can say a pleasant
12 one, and it was good to me.

13 Q. How long have you been with DOT and Staten Island Ferry
14 division?

15 A. It's about 17 years 8 months.

16 Q. 17 years 8 months. How many, how many years as a marine
17 oiler? Was it the whole time?

18 A. No. I was an engineer, and then they bumped me down for
19 whatever reason I don't know. They didn't give me no confirmation
20 or nothing.

21 Q. Okay. So you were an engineer before, and then --

22 A. No. I was an oiler first.

23 Q. An oiler first. Okay.

24 A. Then I was engineer, marine engineer for approximately 26 to
25 7 years. They bumped me down. They gave me a letter say that --

1 stating that they don't need my service no more, and they say I'm
2 a (indiscernible) and oiler. So I had to stay like that, and I'm
3 happy.

4 Q. Okay. Before working for Staten Island Ferry what was some
5 of your previous maritime experience?

6 A. My previous maritime experience I work in deep sea in those
7 big super carriers. I was in the (indiscernible) 2003
8 (indiscernible), and I made I think it's three or four trips --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I spent almost 18 years working at deep sea.

11 Q. I see. Okay. At the time of the incident, the crew you were
12 with onboard at the time was that the normal crew that -- or shift
13 that you're normally on?

14 A. Normally is the correct shift 4B.

15 Q. 4B.

16 A. But our chief engineer didn't come in at that day. So we had
17 a different chief which, you know, Trevor, Trevor filled in

18 Q. Okay. So from what you can recollect, what happened? If --
19 can you just walk us through that from what you remember what
20 happened at the time of the incident?

21 A. Well, first of all when we went aboard the boat and make our
22 check we look at the tanks first.

23 Q. Which tanks?

24 A. The day tanks, port and starboard, that feed in the engines
25 and the generator.

1 Q. Okay. And one tanks had 500 gallons prior to the next tank
2 low.

3 Q. Do you know which one was what?

4 A. I can't remember, sir.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Can't remember. I know I saw on the screen where 500
7 (indiscernible). We keep it, me and my partner, try to keep,
8 maintain it 2,000 gallons all the time. We don't go to three-
9 quarters our maximum.

10 Q. I see.

11 A. We keep it to a minimum. If it going down speed up
12 (indiscernible) keep a close eye on everything.

13 Q. Okay. Now, when you say speed up the --

14 A. Increase, increase the fuel on the purifier. That purifier
15 is a machine that purify the diesel --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- take out the water, the sludge, everything, before it go
18 to the day tanks. So clean fuel will go to the engine.

19 Q. I see. You mentioned the 2,000. Was this 2,000 gallon?

20 A. 2,000 gallons.

21 Q. And that's normal, what would be a normal operation?

22 A. Yes, yes. That's normal.

23 Q. Okay. During that watch was there anything that you observed
24 to be abnormal or out of the ordinary with the fuel system?

25 A. No, sir. Only that.

1 Q. Only -- other than --

2 A. Only that.

3 Q. Only that.

4 A. Only that.

5 Q. Were there any alarms that you --

6 A. Well, I, I knew alarms was coming on, and the chief he do
7 what he had to do. I just can't remember.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But I remember he was on the phone with whoever authority. I
10 don't know.

11 Q. I see.

12 A. But we went out there, and I was at number one engine, and my
13 partner was at number three engine, and the alarm was going on.
14 So we acknowledge it, and read on the HMI screen it was faulty
15 alarm. So we cleared it. We cleared it. And then my partner
16 shine his light -- smelling diesel, smelling diesel. So I
17 (indiscernible) the reading is low. So when we went on the
18 platform I see number three and number four duplex filters which
19 is the fuel system start to spray fuel. So immediately Eddie go
20 to the control room. That's when I see his direction was going.
21 So I went and I (indiscernible) pads what we call diapers. And
22 when I coming back towards number two and number three engine I
23 see number one, number one main engine duplex strainer spraying a
24 lot more. So that's what I intend to cover, cover the fuel. And
25 when I go to cover it the pressure was so much that I could not

1 hold it. And I smell smoke. And when I look number two engine on
2 fire. And I went straight to the control room, and I say chief,
3 chief, fire outside. I say (indiscernible) Novec (indiscernible),
4 and that was it. And he said to us, this was his words, you guys
5 evacuate. And we came through the, through the escape hatch and
6 (indiscernible) and we was standing by the -- back there with the
7 fire hose, but I didn't hold on to the hose. My partner hold on
8 to the hose because I was coughing so much with the smoke I
9 inhale. So I had to go outside and get fresh air. And then after
10 it clear up I assist the, the crew on deck to organize the
11 passengers to go back upstairs and lifejackets. I stay there
12 until (indiscernible) for the crew, and the guys take the
13 passengers when the small ferry came and offload the people safe
14 and sound. And thank I praise God that happened.

15 Q. And that was, that was, you know, good news to hear, you
16 know, of the safe evacuation. And I just wanted to revisit the
17 part where you said you saw the fuel spray onto number one main
18 diesel engine filters, right? And you said the duplex --

19 A. The duplex --

20 Q. -- filters --

21 A. -- the filters --

22 Q. Right.

23 (Crosstalk)

24 A. -- spewing fuel --

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. When I hold, when I hold it down so it (indiscernible) back.

2 Q. So was this a, a horizontal direction type of spray? Was
3 this vertical or --

4 A. It was like, like (indiscernible) hose right here. I adjust
5 the nozzle.

6 Q. Like a wide --

7 A. Yeah --

8 Q. -- wide spray?

9 A. Wide spray.

10 Q. I see.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Number one.

12 MR. ADAMS: Number one.

13 BY CWO [REDACTED]

14 Q. Number one main engine. Okay.

15 A. Number one. And, Barry, all I smell was smoke. And when I
16 look up over my head was the fire number one -- number two engine.
17 So I did -- I tried to escape, and go and tell the chief right
18 away because it was so damn scary.

19 Q. And then just to verify the other main engines and the, the
20 filters on the other ones. Did you see fuel spray or fuel leaks
21 on the --

22 A. I saw fuel coming out the duplex filters. That's what I saw.

23 Q. On the which, which mains?

24 A. Number three and number four.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Number two I could not see good because number two is out of
2 sight.

3 Q. I see.

4 A. I couldn't see it. I run for my life.

5 Q. And did you see an actual ignition of, of a flame --

6 A. Officer I'm telling you what I see. I was there holding a
7 pad on (indiscernible) on number one engine, and I smell smoke.
8 And when I look over my head I see the fire.

9 Q. So there was already --

10 A. I run for my life. And I report to the chief, and chief tell
11 all of us evacuate.

12 Q. Okay. There's other than the fuel difference, right, you
13 said between the two day tanks was there anything else when you
14 came on watch that you noticed out of the ordinary with --

15 A. No, sir.

16 Q. -- maybe --

17 A. No, sir. I know nothing else.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. That's all we found out.

20 Q. Okay. So when you identified that difference of fuel levels
21 what was the plan for that you guys had discussed or what was the
22 plan to level the fuel --

23 A. Well, I (indiscernible) and we mentioned to the chief
24 (indiscernible) which they are the license guys. We don't do
25 anything without notifying those guys.

- 1 Q. And I'm sorry. Could you re -- who are these guys?
- 2 A. The marine engineer --
- 3 Q. Okay.
- 4 A. -- and chief engineer.
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. Those are the guys have the Coast Guard license.
- 7 Q. I see.
- 8 A. Okay. We notify them, and when -- normally when you see that
- 9 we making first trip, and after coming back the second trip going
- 10 back we see how the fuel playing out, which tank is using more
- 11 fuel, and then we adjust the valves and the manifold like how they
- 12 teach us to do. A tweak, a tweak. If this one is too full they
- 13 close it, a tweak, and watch the level 'till it balance back.
- 14 Q. And what valves would that, would that be that you're
- 15 tweaking? Which are -- what actual valves on the system?
- 16 A. That's the return, return, the return valve.
- 17 Q. Is that the ball valve? How would you describe it?
- 18 A. It's a ball valve with a handle. That's it. I know. That's
- 19 (indiscernible).
- 20 Q. Okay. Just so I understand that you said ball valve with a
- 21 handle and the return valve.
- 22 A. That's the same valve. That's the same valve.
- 23 Q. And the return valve to what, to what system or what tank?
- 24 A. Port the return valve. We have the port and starboard tank
- 25 at each side.

1 Q. All right. So if we have -- you can show us as far as -- you
2 made these adjustments?

3 A. Sir, we do make adjustments, but when the time is right, when
4 the time is right. We don't just going to adjust valves like
5 that. We speak to the chief engineer, and the, the marine
6 engineer, and they instruct us what to do.

7 Q. Were you instructed or was that a -- something that you were
8 told to make an adjustment on?

9 A. The chief told us that we have to solve that ourselves.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. That's his words. Because he was doing something else on
12 the, the screen something else. I don't know. He --

13 Q. But was, was there a specific instruction to --

14 A. I can't --

15 Q. -- adjust the --

16 A. -- remember, sir. I can't remember. Sir, I can't remember.

17 Q. Okay. So what I'd like to also mention too here, sir, is we
18 have some footage from the incident that we would like to play
19 back, and I'd like to see if you're able to recall during that
20 time if you can explain to us what's going on during that time
21 with the footage.

22 A. I'll try. I don't know.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's all we ask. And we have --
24 because we did this with the chief, and your co-worker, and we
25 kind of have a sense, but, you know, we -- there are some things

1 -- we have some follow-up questions on that. We're hoping you can
2 shed some light on.

3 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

4 Q. Where are you from originally?

5 A. I was born here, but my parents took me to the [REDACTED] when
6 I [REDACTED].

7 Q. Which --

8 A. [REDACTED]

9 Q. You were born in --

10 A. [REDACTED]

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm trying to get to the point where
12 we see him walk out of the control room and have a conversation.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah (indiscernible).

14 (Crosstalk)

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- vision. Mine's not so great, but
16 if you --

17 (Crosstalk)

18 CWO [REDACTED] And then I don't know if you heard that,
19 Brian, but we're just running through the footage again so that we
20 can discuss it here. So that's what we're doing right now.

21 MR. YOUNG: Understood. Thanks.

22 (Crosstalk)

23 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

24 Q. Are you looking at the tank levels?

25 A. Yes, yes.

- 1 Q. What are you, what are you doing now? What is your intention
2 now? You just left the engine control room. What are you --
3 pause that for a second. What are you looking at right there?
- 4 A. Looking at the level, the (indiscernible) indicator level at
5 the tanks. Even though we see it on the computer screen --
- 6 Q. You just want to see --
- 7 A. -- we do both readings.
- 8 Q. All right. So what is your intention? So you're looking at
9 that level, and then what are, what are you going to do?
- 10 A. I (indiscernible) I have to look at (indiscernible).
- 11 Q. Okay. Do you recall seeing anything out of the ordinary here
12 at this time?
- 13 A. No, no, no. I don't see anything.
- 14 Q. And how about this area now to the left here? Where would
15 you be at?
- 16 A. Oh, this way?
- 17 Q. Yes. To the left.
- 18 A. Now, Barry, that stick is a (indiscernible) indicate
19 (indiscernible).
- 20 Q. Understood.
- 21 A. So we try to unlock it to see if it stick, right?
- 22 Q. Yeah.
- 23 A. (Indiscernible) on the right side, and it shows the level, at
24 the level of the tank.
- 25 Q. What are you and Eddie talking about here?

1 A. Well, we discussing, we discussing about the fuel. We, you
2 know, they train us to, you know, tweak the valves as I told you
3 already, which one to tweak, which one to open, but we had to
4 watch both sides. Which the engines -- some engines
5 (indiscernible) more on one side than the other side.

6 Q. (Indiscernible).

7 A. (Indiscernible) generator on that side.

8 Q. So can you explain to them which valves do you tweak to, to
9 adjust the flow? Is it in this picture?

10 A. No. It's on the manifold. It's up above valve -- handle is
11 below.

12 Q. It's below down here?

13 A. Yeah, somewhere at the last (indiscernible) on this side.

14 Q. Do you know, do you know what the nomenclature, like, what
15 the, the name of that valve would be?

16 A. It's just the return, the return valve, return line on the
17 pipe.

18 Q. Return?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. On the return side of the --

21 A. Yes. That's all I -- we know.

22 Q. So you're talking about making adjustments now?

23 A. Yeah. We discussing, we discussing. We don't do things like
24 that. We have to discuss. We work together, and we're not sure.

25 We go speak to the marine engineer and the chief engineer.

1 Q. We can't see here. Do you remember the position of the, of
2 the ball valve at this point?

3 A. No. To be honest, I can't remember.

4 Q. So all you can do is --

5 A. I can't remember (indiscernible). I'm so shaken up that it's
6 unbelievable.

7 Q. Now at this point have you adjusted that ball valve or not
8 yet?

9 A. Not yet.

10 Q. Not yet.

11 A. I don't think so. I shouldn't say not yet. I cannot --

12 Q. We'll see how it plays out.

13 (Crosstalk)

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You disappear, and you walk. You're
15 not showing the screen.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, it will -- we'll put it on the,
17 the footage here.

18 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

19 Q. So you said you guys go back in the engine control room to
20 talk to the bosses.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. You said. Whose making rounds? The engineer?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The other engineer.

24 Mark?

25 Alex.

1 MR. ADAMS: I think Alex is making the rounds.

2 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

3 Q. But you guys are in that vestibule talking right now you
4 think?

5 A. What?

6 Q. Are you in the vestibule between the, between the engine room
7 and the control room right now?

8 A. Yeah.

9 (Crosstalk)

10 Q. So you guys are still trying to figure it out, right?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. You still have that discrepancy now, right?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Nothing's changed. But Eddie did make an adjustment already,
15 right?

16 A. I'm not sure. So I'm not sure.

17 Q. You don't -- you remember what you're saying there?

18 A. Sir?

19 Q. That's all right.

20 A. I can't remember nothing. What I can remember I told you
21 already.

22 Q. You're putting your protection back in. You're going
23 somewhere. He's going somewhere.

24 (Crosstalk)

25 Q. There's you. There's Steven, right, coming down? Do you

1 know where you're going now?

2 A. That way.

3 Q. So what's that way?

4 A. That's, that's number four engine, between number four
5 engine.

6 Q. One second. Is it, is it now at this time? Are you making
7 an adjustment now to that ball valve?

8 A. Making adjustment where?

9 Q. We can't see you, but what are you doing right now? What are
10 you --

11 A. I think I went --

12 Q. What are you doing at this --

13 A. -- to the other side trying to look at it, to look at the
14 level.

15 Q. On which tank?

16 A. That's the starboard tank.

17 Q. When you left that engine control room my question is do you
18 remember where you were going?

19 A. Well, I --

20 Q. Because we can't see you now.

21 A. No, I, I think I was going to the next, next side to look at
22 the level, to look at the next tank level.

23 Q. Did you adjust that ball valve or adjust -- make any
24 adjustments?

25 A. I can't remember. Only thing I want to do I go back to

1 Trevor the marine engineer to discuss it first.

2 Q. Let me ask it this way. Is it possible when you left that
3 engine control room that you made a -- you might have made an
4 adjustment on the valve?

5 A. Sir, I just can't remember.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I cannot remember.

8 Q. But at least your understanding is to help throttle it you
9 would sometimes make change to that ball valve?

10 A. Yeah. You don't make much just tweak it little, little with
11 your hand, you know.

12 Q. And this is, this is that return valve you mentioned, right?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do we have a photo of that? It might
16 be helpful just to verify we're talking about the same valve.

17 MR. YOUNG: I'm texting a picture of the valve to the Coast
18 Guard right now.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Roger. I heard that.

20 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

21 Q. You have oil. You see the oil dripping? Can you see that?

22 A. Oh, yeah.

23 Q. So that's number two.

24 A. That's number two. I was on number one, Barry. I could not
25 see that, but I know I was walking (indiscernible).

1 Q. Now at this point you're over by the one, and it's spraying.

2 A. It's spraying.

3 Q. And you're trying to cover it?

4 A. Yeah. And I smell the smoke, and when I look up I see the
5 fire. And I am scared for my life, and run talk to the chief.

6 (Crosstalk)

7 Q. What are you doing there? You've already observed the
8 spraying.

9 A. Yes, yes, yes.

10 Q. What valve is that?

11 A. That valve is a valve, the main valve, the main valve. Open
12 it, the main valve, make sure everything is open. I mean we
13 couldn't close that. If you close that the whole (indiscernible)
14 right? I'm not too sure.

15 Q. But you're opening that valve?

16 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

17 Q. Yeah. Do you remember if you were opening or closing motion
18 there? And then also I -- just real quick, this is a, this is a
19 picture of the, of the valve. So you're saying that is -- it's
20 adjusted. Would this be the valve there?

21 A. This valve, this valve, that valve.

22 Q. That valve there?

23 A. That valve.

24 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

25 Q. You were saying ball valve, that valve?

1 A. Yeah, yeah.

2 Q. And that's the -- you said that's the return?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. So you would sometimes make adjustment to that?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Okay. I think what we're trying to determine is -- coming
7 quick now -- oil spraying. Now, wait, you're going --

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He's opening it.

9 (Crosstalk)

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So that's counter, right, counter
11 clockwise?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Counter clockwise.

13 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

14 Q. But then you go under here, and do you, do you adjust those
15 other valves? Right here, which is where that ball valve --

16 A. Yeah, I think I, I -- I can't remember. We, we went to
17 Trevor and (indiscernible) that's all I remember.

18 BY MR. TORRE:

19 Q. I'm sorry. This is Barry. If we could just go back. That
20 valve that you just adjusted towards me you're opening that valve.

21 BY CWO [REDACTED]

22 Q. It looks like a counter, a counter clockwise motion --

23 A. Yeah.

24 (Crosstalk)

25 Q. So that valve was closed?

1 A. No. It wasn't -- we don't keep those valves closed. Those
2 valves (indiscernible).

3 Q. But now you want it to fully open.

4 A. Yeah, fully open.

5 Q. And then just to verify the valve that, that right there
6 would be for the service tanks, right?

7 (Crosstalk)

8 Q. And then you go underneath. And we're already spraying now,
9 correct?

10 A. (Indiscernible) fuel already --

11 (Crosstalk)

12 A. Walking in the fuel. All my clothes are soaked oil fuel.

13 Q. At this point are you trying to cover? Because you said you
14 were trying to cover the spray coming from one.

15 A. Number one --

16 Q. Is that where you're going right now?

17 A. (Indiscernible).

18 Q. You can see now Eddie's returned to the control room. But I
19 don't -- now, you are -- you -- that's what I'm asking. Are you
20 trying to cover that filter right now --

21 A. Yeah. I believe so.

22 Q. You have nothing in your hands. You go back to the valve
23 again, give it another turn.

24 A. No, I hold the valve, and I look at it. I didn't touch it.

25 I mean --

1 Q. Were you --

2 (Crosstalk)

3 Q. When you went back to the valve you were just kind of doing a

4 -- were you checking just to make sure --

5 A. I just checking to see whether it's right.

6 Q. You want to see if it's fully open.

7 A. This time, this time (indiscernible) and the floor was full,
8 full of fuel walking in.

9 Q. You're still trying -- the oil is spraying, but you're going
10 to see, I guess, some flames, and then you're going to --

11 (Crosstalk)

12 Q. You're going to boogie back into the engine control room.

13 You're going back down with another rag it looks like. More rags.

14 A. Right. (Indiscernible).

15 (Crosstalk)

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There's a lot of fuel here.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Number two main, right?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Number two main, correct.

19 But you see what I'm saying? This door here leads to number two
20 main. There's a little vestibule area, then it goes out to number
21 two. See the fire -- here.

22 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

23 Q. Now you are still standing on the other side of that engine?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Yeah.

1 A. See (indiscernible).

2 Q. You're reporting the fire. You're telling him there's a fire
3 on number two here at this point?

4 A. I told him --

5 Q. You said you went back out there. So did you guys evacuate
6 then?

7 A. Evacuate. I go back and made sure the doors, Barry, the two
8 doors on that side closed.

9 CWO [REDACTED] That's, yeah, that's as much as I was going to
10 have played back there.

11 BY CWO [REDACTED]

12 Q. So is there anything else with the fuel alignment or in the,
13 in any of the fuel system that you saw that may have stood out to
14 you during that time that whole process that you're going looking
15 at both tanks and trying to level them out? Was there anything
16 with perhaps the FOP or perhaps with anything else with the valves
17 that stood out to you?

18 A. I don't know. I don't know. All I know was that's
19 (indiscernible) that's all.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I know (indiscernible).

22 CWO [REDACTED] So Brian.

23 MR. YOUNG: Yep. Thanks.

24 BY MR. YOUNG:

25 Q. Thank you, Mr. Adams, for your help today. I just have a few

1 follow-up questions. There was one part that you talked about
2 when you came back to the control room after the spray, and the
3 chief engineer had some words, and you said those were his words.
4 What were those words? I didn't understand.

5 A. What are his words? I can't remember exactly what he said.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I just can't remember, sir. Sorry about that.

8 Q. No problem. There was a picture that people were looking at
9 with some valves, and there was a yellow handle ball valve, and
10 underneath it it's labeled fuel oil service. Is that the one you
11 were adjusting?

12 A. That's the -- the return valve is that one we adjusted, the
13 return, the one with the handle.

14 Q. Right. And is that the valve that you were adjusting to
15 control the levels?

16 A. That's the one to adjust the level of the tanks.

17 Q. Okay. And did you make adjustments to the yellow valve on
18 both port and starboard tanks or just one of the tanks?

19 A. I only remember one tank. That's all I --

20 Q. Is that -- okay. Is that the one closest to the purifier?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. And was that one higher or lower than the other tank?

23 A. That tank was at -- I can't remember, sir. To be honest, I
24 can't remember.

25 Q. Okay. And do you know if anybody else was making changes to

1 the other yellow return valve or --

2 A. Sir, I don't know. I can't remember.

3 Q. Okay. Did you ever look at the position of the other number
4 two tank return valve?

5 A. I, I -- I'm not sure. I'm not sure, but I think it was in
6 the right position that, you know, I can't say yes, I can't say
7 no. I can't remember.

8 Q. Okay. I understand. And if you were to look at that picture
9 again, the yellow handled valve is going vertical up and down
10 along with the pipe would you think that that valve is fully
11 opened or fully closed?

12 A. It has to be open. It can't be closed.

13 Q. Have you ever seen those yellow valves in a closed position
14 on either the *Ollis* or the *Sandy Ground*?

15 A. No, no, no. From my recollection I never see them closed.

16 Q. Okay. And when you were making adjustments, how many clicks
17 would you adjust at a time? Would you go maybe one or two clicks
18 or more?

19 A. We only do like a half at a time, a half at a time.

20 Q. So half of a click or halfway to be in closed position?

21 A. So it's either click close or click open. That's how they
22 train us to do.

23 Q. Okay. And do you recall during your training if this was the
24 way they taught you how to control the fuel oil levels in the day
25 tanks?

1 A. Well, that's what my -- that's what I remember.

2 Q. Okay. And do you remember when it was that you were trained
3 on how to operate this system?

4 A. Sir, I just do what they told me. I don't touch anything
5 unless I report to the marine engineer or the chief engineer so
6 they will come and assist us. They do it themselves.

7 Q. Okay. And is this the way that you remember being taught
8 how to control the fuel oil levels in the tanks?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And was that during a class or more like on-the-job training?

11 A. In that class.

12 Q. In the class. And was that many days of class work or was it
13 a few hours? Do you remember?

14 A. It was just a few minutes, few minutes.

15 Q. And was the training in a classroom setting or was it onboard
16 one of the vessels?

17 A. It was onboard. We were on the boats.

18 Q. Okay. And it was this, this class of vessel, correct?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Okay. And do you have a normally assigned vessel or do you
21 bounce between vessels?

22 A. We keep changing vessels. We're assigned to a vessel, but we
23 keep changing vessels.

24 Q. Okay. And about how many times have you worked aboard the
25 *Sandy Ground*?

- 1 A. About two, three times.
- 2 Q. Okay. And how about the *Ollis*, the sister vessel? Have you
3 been working aboard that vessel for awhile?
- 4 A. Maybe one or two times or three times the most.
- 5 Q. Okay. Would you say --
- 6 A. Not for long. Not for long period of time; two days.
- 7 Q. Okay. And would you say that you're pretty familiar with the
8 fuel oil piping system and understand how the system works?
- 9 A. Well, just as what they teach me that's what I know. I don't
10 know anything else, sir.
- 11 Q. Okay. Do you know what would happen if that yellow valve for
12 the return system was closed? Do you know what the effects might
13 be?
- 14 A. Sir, you have to ask the chief engineer and the marine
15 engineer about that question.
- 16 Q. Okay. But you're not -- you don't understand what might
17 happen if the valve was closed all the way? You don't know that?
- 18 A. As I said, I don't do anything unless I notify the chief
19 engineer and marine engineer, the licensed engineers. I ask
20 questions. I don't know nothing else.
- 21 Q. Okay. And on other similar vessels, the *Ollis* or your
22 previous times onboard the *Sandy Ground* were you ever adjusting
23 levels or was this the first time you have ever adjusted fuel
24 levels?
- 25 A. I adjust fuel level on the *Ollis* with the assistance of the

1 marine engineers.

2 Q. And do you remember -- recall that you were adjusting the
3 fuel levels --

4 A. No, sir, no, sir, no, sir.

5 Q. It was different?

6 A. It's not different, but I can't remember.

7 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Well, thank you very much for your time
8 and answering all of our questions. I don't have any other
9 questions. Thank you.

10 MR. ADAMS: You're welcome, sir.

11 CWO [REDACTED] All right, thank you, Brian.

12 I don't think we have any other more questions here, and just
13 before we conclude today just want to verify that this was the --
14 to the best of your recollection the events what had happened
15 onboard, and what you have told us today?

16 MR. ADAMS: That's all I know, sir.

17 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

18 MR. ADAMS: That's all I know.

19 CWO [REDACTED] So the interview is concluded. Time on deck
20 is 1607.

21 (Whereupon, at 4:07 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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 Steven Adams

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM010

PLACE: Staten Island Ferry, St. George Terminal

DATE: December 29, 2022

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.



Katherine Motley
Transcriber

Interview Errata
 Sandy Ground DCA23FM010
 Interview of: Stephen Adams
 Position: M/Oiler

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
13	#7	We do both Readings	We both adjust fuel day Tanks Value

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEED. _____
 Initials

Stephen ADAMS
 Printed Name of Person providing the above information


 Signature of Person providing the above information

5/5/2023
 Date