

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FIRE ABOARD *KODIAK ENTERPRISE*  
NEAR TACOMA, WASHINGTON  
ON APRIL 10, 2023

Accident No.: DCA23FM026

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Interview of: MARGARITO "PRIMO" VASQUEZ, Lead Pipe Fitter  
Trident Seafoods

Trident Seafood Facilities  
Tacoma, Washington

Thursday,  
April 20, 2023

APPEARANCES:

CWO [REDACTED] Investigating Officer  
United States Coast Guard

LCDR [REDACTED], Chief of Investigation  
Sector Puget Sound  
United States Coast Guard

GREGORY HELLER, Special Agent  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives

CAPT DAVID FLAHERTY, [REDACTED] Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

LARRY ALTENBRUN, Attorney  
Nicoll Black & Feig  
(On behalf of Trident Seafoods)

MR. MARTIN, Interpreter

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:17 p.m.)

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2  
3 CWO [REDACTED] This is Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED]. Last  
4 name is spelled [REDACTED] The date is April 20th; the time is 1:17  
5 local. We're at Trident facilities to investigate the fire on  
6 board the *Kodiak Enterprise*.

7 In the room I have --

8 SA HELLER: Special Agent Greg Heller with ATF. My last name  
9 is spelled H-e-l-l-e-r.

10 LCDR [REDACTED]: Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED], chief of  
11 investigation, Sector Puget Sound. [REDACTED]

12 MR. VASQUEZ: Margarito Vasquez.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Spell your last name.

14 MR. VASQUEZ: My last name is spelled V, as in Victor, a-s-q-  
15 u-e-z, as in zebra.

16 MR. ALTENBRUN: Larry Altenbrun. I'm the attorney for  
17 Trident Seafoods. My last name is spelled A-l-t-e-n-b-r-u-n.

18 CWO [REDACTED] And you go by -- and also on the phone we have --

19 CAPT FLAHERTY: David Flaherty. Yeah, David Flaherty. Last  
20 name is spelled F-l-a-h-e-r-t-y. I'm the investigator in charge  
21 for the National Transportation Safety Board.

22 CWO [REDACTED] And also on the phone, interpreting, we have --

23 MR. MARTIN: Martin, M-a-r-t-i-n, interpreter ID 16630.

24 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. And Mr. Vasquez, you go by Primo?

25 MR. VASQUEZ: Yes. Primo.

1 CWO [REDACTED]: Okay. All right.

2 (Whereupon, Mr. Martin translated the questions from English to  
3 Spanish and Mr. Vasquez's answers from Spanish to English.)

4 INTERVIEW OF MARGARITO "PRIMO" VASQUEZ

5 BY CWO [REDACTED]

6 Q. All right. We're going to go through a little bit of  
7 background again just because we have the interpreter here and  
8 that, so --

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. So you came here on your own free will, you weren't coerced  
11 in any way?

12 A. (In English) Yes.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Mr. --

14 MR. VASQUEZ: (Through interpreter) Yes.

15 BY CWO [REDACTED]

16 Q. Okay. And are -- you're an employee with Trident?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. And how long have you been with Trident?

19 A. I've been with Trident more than 20 years, when Trident  
20 bought Tyson.

21 Q. Okay. And what is your position with -- what's your title  
22 with Trident?

23 A. I'm a pipe fitter. Lead pipe fitter.

24 Q. Okay. And is that a supervisory position?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And how long have you been a supervisor of the pipe fitters?

2 A. Around a year.

3 Q. Okay. And were you on board the vessel on Friday, April 7th?

4 A. Yes.

5 BY SA HELLER:

6 Q. Okay. There's a diagram in front of him. Can you ask him to  
7 point out what job he was working on, on Friday, the 7th?

8 A. (Indiscernible) some questions because I don't know that very  
9 well. What is this?

10 Q. That is a cut into the deck on -- no, I'm sorry. That is a  
11 tank vent end replacement.

12 I guess maybe it would be better if he describes to us just  
13 what was he working on, on Friday, and then we can help point it  
14 out on the diagram.

15 A. On Friday he worked morning, and we start at 6 a.m. in the  
16 morning, and we just welded that fuel vent tank number -- on tank  
17 number 2 on the starboard side, right -- the right side.

18 Q. Okay. Did he work on other vents that day as well?

19 A. Yeah, we -- that day we did a job on the vent, on the  
20 ventilation of the dryer.

21 Q. Were those the only two vents or did he work on others?

22 A. There were others, but we finished those the day before and  
23 also Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday.

24 Q. Okay. So the only welding -- or the only jobs were on the  
25 fuel vent and the dryer vent on Friday; is that correct?

1 A. There was another job done that day in the (indiscernible)  
2 room.

3 Q. Is that on the aft deck --  
4 (Crosstalk)

5 Q. Okay. Understood.

6 For the fuel vent and the dryer vent, was he doing the work  
7 himself or was he supervising someone else doing the work?

8 A. I was doing the dryer on the vent and the one on the  
9 (indiscernible) room was -- I was in charge of that job as well.

10 Q. Okay. Can he describe what work was done on the dryer vent?

11 A. There is another group that I think that they did work, cut  
12 weld with a Sawzall. They cut it out on Friday and then we get  
13 there to prepare it. We also installed a plastic ball that we put  
14 on the -- to prevent the air from entering so nothing goes into  
15 the tank. On the outside of the pipes we create a gate and we put  
16 a little top in place, a (indiscernible) top in place.

17 Q. Okay. When was the ball installed in the pipe? At the  
18 beginning of the day or some other time?

19 A. In the beginning of the day before starting to do what we  
20 call the hot work is when that is install to prevent anything from  
21 going inside, inside any tank, we install that.

22 Q. Did you have to wait to install the ball because the dryer  
23 was being used?

24 A. The ball was put by a welder and then I just made sure, and I  
25 hook it with a chain, and it was correctly put. When we started

1 working on the first day, I taught him how to put that correctly  
2 and I was -- after that, I was just making sure that it was placed  
3 correctly.

4 Q. Okay. What tools did he and the other welder use on the  
5 dryer vent?

6 A. So there's some sort of shield to prevent things from going  
7 inside and we had to put the ball back before using the grinder,  
8 so -- to prevent the hot things going inside. And when that was  
9 already welded, we used a TIG that does not contain any sparks, so  
10 it doesn't make any sparks.

11 Q. Okay. So the three tools were the Sawzall, the grinder, and  
12 the TIG welder; is that correct?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Were there any problems with the job or did it go smoothly?

15 A. Everything went smoothly.

16 Q. Thank you. Were there other employees doing fire watch while  
17 they were working?

18 INTERPRETER: Can you please repeat that, sir?

19 SA HELLER: Were there other employees doing fire watch while  
20 he was working?

21 INTERPRETER: Thank you.

22 MR. MARTIN: Can you please repeat it?

23 BY SA HELLER:

24 Q. Were there other employees doing fire watch for this job?

25 A. With the work that I was doing we got a fire watcher with us.



1 Q. Okay. Was that person on the deck with them or somewhere  
2 else?

3 A. No. He stay all the time close to the welder.

4 Q. Okay. Does he know where the dryer is for which this vent  
5 connects to?

6 A. Can you please repeat?

7 Q. Where is the dryer that is connected to the vent he was  
8 working on?

9 A. The dryers are on floor number 2, on the main deck and the  
10 second one (indiscernible) is where the dryers are.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Guys, I'm going to jump in for a  
12 second. I'm going to request that you ask your questions as  
13 though you're asking it directly to the witness by using his --  
14 say you as though the interpreter is not here. Because sometimes  
15 you use the word he and I'm not sure who you're referring to. So  
16 can we do it that way?

17 SA HELLER: Sure.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's okay?

19 BY SA HELLER:

20 Q. Okay. So did you go down to see the dryer that the vent was  
21 connected to?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. What time did you complete work for the day?

24 A. Well, the job ended when doing the -- when the -- when doing  
25 our work it ends around 3:30. But that day we did -- the only

1 thing that we did was the flapper and the vent and we ended around  
2 2, a little after 2. The rest of the day glued a piece of plastic  
3 on the flapper.

4 CWO [REDACTED] David, do you have anything?

5 MR. FLAHERTY: No, I don't.

6 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have a few questions when you're  
8 done. You can go.

9 BY CWO [REDACTED]

10 Q. Have you seen this document? It's Appendix A, Maintenance  
11 and Repair Hot Work Policy.

12 INTERPRETER: Sorry. Can you please repeat?

13 BY CWO [REDACTED]

14 Q. Have you seen this document? It's Appendix A, Maintenance  
15 and Repair Hot Work Policy.

16 A. Yes. We have looked and we have read all of it, yes.

17 Q. And was that given to -- training was -- were you given  
18 training on this document or did you just read it?

19 A. We have received training, but usually they gave us that so  
20 we can read it.

21 Q. Okay. And can you read and understand English?

22 A. He can read it 60 or 70 percent, but I can understand more  
23 that I can read, I bit more that I can read.

24 Q. Okay. Have you seen this document? It's Appendix B,  
25 Maintenance and Repair Fire Watch Training?

1 A. Yes. We've looked at it and we have courses about this.

2 Q. The temp welders that come to work, do you train them on  
3 these policies or have they reviewed them before they show up?

4 A. Here we have a person who trains them when they arrive with  
5 us. Where we are working, we give them a review and teach them  
6 the conditions that we have and we give them another review and we  
7 teach them how to use the things and what they have to do.

8 CWO ██████ Okay. I got nothing further.

9 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

10 Q. Primo, I'm just going to ask you a few follow-up questions,  
11 okay? You indicated that there were three jobs that you worked on  
12 that day: the dryer vent that you talked about, the boiler  
13 blowdown, and something with a fuel line or fuel tank.

14 A. (In English) It was a fuel tank, this (indiscernible) number  
15 2.

16 Q. Okay. And so, was that also up on the 03 deck?

17 A. (Through interpreter) The two jobs were on the deck, but  
18 there was another one that we are working that day that is the  
19 starboard boiler blowdown, but it was cooling room.

20 Q. But my question is where was the fuel -- the starboard fuel  
21 vent that you worked on, where was that located?

22 A. It was on the deck, on the right side. But it was on the  
23 vent of the tank number 2, on the right side.

24 Q. And so that work was -- can you show me on this diagram where  
25 that work was taking place? Was it on the same -- this is the

1 deck where you were doing the dryer vent. Is this the same deck  
2 over here?

3 A. Here is the other fuel vent. We finished that one around 8  
4 a.m., 9 a.m.

5 Q. Okay. So that was finished at 8 a.m. or 9 a.m.?

6 A. Yes, sir. Yeah, more or less.

7 Q. Yeah. And just for the record, you're pointing to somewhere  
8 in here; is that right?

9 A. *Si.*

10 Q. And so that the record reflects it, we're looking at the  
11 general arrangement diagram that has been marked up showing the  
12 jobs, and we're looking specifically at the 03 deck. There's a  
13 blue marking on the starboard side of that and it's just kind of  
14 barely aft of that blue marking. Okay?

15 You indicated that there were three tools that were used: a  
16 Sawzall, a grinder, and a TIG welder. Are you sure the Sawzall  
17 was used that day or was that the day before?

18 A. The day before a group came and cut a short -- and cut with a  
19 Sawzall a short check box. And the other day, it seems to me that  
20 it was Friday, that the welder guy cut with me, the cut  
21 (indiscernible), so he straighten.

22 Q. Okay. That dryer vent, are you aware of any efforts that  
23 were made to clean that vent out in the 2 or 3 or 4 days before  
24 Friday, April 7th?

25 A. Can you please repeat?

1 Q. Did anyone attempt to clean the dryer vent?

2 A. I hear a group, but I didn't look. He was the one that  
3 cleaned the vent, I think, who cleaned it, too. But I didn't go  
4 to look at it because he is the one who was cleaning it there.

5 Q. Who was that?

6 A. Sam Flores. The person who does the ABS, check the vents and  
7 everything about the ABS.

8 Q. Okay.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I got nothing.

10 CWO [REDACTED] All right. Anybody have any further questions?

11 Hearing none --

12 CAPT FLAHERTY: I'm good, thanks.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. Hearing none, we'll conclude the interview.

14 The time is 1:50.

15 (Whereupon, at 1:50 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:            FIRE ABOARD *KODIAK ENTERPRISE*  
                                      NEAR TACOMA, WASHINGTON  
                                      ON APRIL 10, 2023  
                                      Interview of Margarito Vasquez

ACCIDENT NO.:                DCA23FM026

PLACE:                        Tacoma, Washington

DATE:                         April 20, 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.

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Kay  
Tra

