

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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ENGINE FAILURE ABOARD *

OSV *OCEAN INTERVENTION* * Accident No.: DCA21FM012

ON APRIL 21, 2021 *

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Interview of: JOSEPH SOILEAU, Port Engineer
Oceaneering International

Via Telephone

Wednesday,
May 19, 2021

APPEARANCES:

BRIAN YOUNG, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

██████████, Chief Warrant Officer (CWO)
United States Coast Guard

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:00 p.m.)

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2
3 MR. YOUNG: The recording is on. It's May 19th at 1:00. My
4 name is Brian Young. I'm with the National Transportation Safety
5 Board. I'm working with the United States Coast Guard doing a
6 joint investigation on the engine failure aboard the *Ocean*
7 *Intervention* back in December of 2020. My last name is Young, Y-
8 O-U-N-G. With the United States Coast Guard?

9 CWO [REDACTED]: Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED]. The last name
10 is [REDACTED].

11 MR. YOUNG: Great, and Joe if you mind introducing yourself,
12 please?

13 MR. SOILEAU: Joseph Soileau, S-O-I-L-E-A-U. I work for
14 Oceaneering International.

15 MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Joe. As we talked before, thank you
16 for joining in today with this interview. We're -- just to have a
17 few follow-up questions regarding your role with Oceaneering, the
18 vessel itself, the incident, and maybe what the results were of
19 the repair. And as we discussed as well before, we are recording
20 this interview and we would just like you to acknowledge that you
21 understand that we are recording it for the purposes of having a
22 transcript made.

23 MR. SOILEAU: Understood.

24 MR. YOUNG: Okay, thanks.

25

1 INTERVIEW OF JOSEPH SOILEAU

2 BY MR. YOUNG:

3 Q. Can you talk a little bit just about your job as Port
4 Engineer, and how it relates to the *Ocean Intervention*?5 A. All right, so for my company, my role is that I oversee,
6 manage shipyard projects, whether it be mobilization,
7 demobilization, special projects, special surveys, or intermediate
8 dry dockings, which just you go around. We did an intermediate
9 dry docking, and we did a -- repair, an engine that had a failure,
10 so we did a repair, and got that out during this project.11 Q. And was that the engine failure? Anything prior to the
12 December incident? Or is, was this the one we're talking we
13 about?14 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm sorry, this is the one we're talking
15 about.16 Q. Oh, okay. So, and as, as a Port Engineer, how long have you
17 been doing this job as a Port Engineer for Oceaneering?

18 A. For Oceaneering, going on eight years.

19 Q. And did you have any previous experience --

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. -- in the marine industry?

22 A. Yes, sir. I've been working in the marine industry all my
23 career.

24 Q. And did you sail in the merchant fleet?

25 A. No, sir. No, sir.

1 Q. So would it be fair to say it's mostly shoreside support in
2 the marine industry?

3 A. Exactly. Shore support, shoreside support.

4 Q. And currently, how many vessels are you responsible for?

5 A. We have -- let's see, seven, we have seven vessels currently,
6 that belong to Oceaneering.

7 Q. And are all of those vessels under your guidance, or are
8 there other Port Engineers that support those vessels?

9 A. My marine manager actually supports the vessels. I just get
10 assigned to what project, and what vessel, at whatever time that
11 he would like for me to oversee. In addition, Blair Matherne, I'm
12 sorry he couldn't be on the call for jury duty, he does them as
13 well. Other guys in our group, depending on where we all are, and
14 what projects we're on, if we have another one going on
15 simultaneously. So ultimately, at any given time, yes, I could
16 oversee any one of the specific vessels.

17 Q. Okay. So it's pretty much the *Intervention* may not always be
18 your, kind of, responsibility, but it may just be as projects come
19 up, and you get assigned to those specific projects.

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. Okay, okay. And just when we're talking about the vessel,
22 are the Oceaneering vessels classed by ABS?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. And for my report, it always asks who the owner is, and who
25 the operator is? Is Oceaneering International both the owner and

1 operator of the *Ocean Intervention*?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Okay. Great. Soon after the accident I received a few
4 documents from Oceaneering, and the Coast Guard, just identifying
5 some of the maintenance that had been completed aboard the vessel
6 and it was on a bit of a -- it looks like a computer program. Is
7 that some sort of package unit you use to track the maintenance
8 aboard the vessels?

9 A. Yes, I -- that's more on the Blair Matherne side but -- so
10 from what I understand of it is that that's a system that was put
11 in place, I think it's (indiscernible) ISM. I believe they're
12 going, slowly moving over to another program, Helm Solutions, I
13 believe it's called.

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. But ultimately, yeah, that's a maintenance tracking program
16 that was built and put together.

17 Q. Okay. And had that been used throughout the fleet?

18 A. On the older vessels, yes, and like I said, some of them have
19 been replaced since then with Helm. The *Intervention* hasn't been
20 replaced yet due to not having availability to meet with the
21 vessel, train the crew, and start implementing it.

22 Q. Okay. Due to operational since he's busy working?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Does that make sense? Okay.

25 A. Right, right.

1 Q. Understood. And previously we talked about the number of
2 vessels in the Oceaneering fleet. Did you say it was seven,
3 total?

4 A. Let's see. One, two, -- six; it will be six total.

5 Q. Okay, six. And do you know off the top of your head, if most
6 or all of them are equipped with Caterpillar diesel engines? Or
7 is there a mix?

8 A. There's a mix, there's a mix. They're not all equipped with
9 Caterpillar.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. One, two, three, one, two, three; three for sure that I'm
12 aware of are equipped with Caterpillar diesel (indiscernible)
13 engines.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Diesel electric engines.

16 Q. And for the CAT engines aboard the Oceaneering fleet, who do
17 you use for major maintenance as a technician? Is it Louisiana
18 CAT?

19 A. Force Power.

20 Q. Force Power? Okay, and is that the same company or techs
21 that overhauled and repaired the engine after the incident?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Force Power. And have they been working with Oceaneering for
24 a while as a, kind of a, long-standing relationship?

25 A. I've been there almost right at eight years, and as long as I

1 can remember, it's always been Force Power.

2 Q. Okay. Can you recall if there's a good -- working
3 relationship between Oceaneering and Force Power?

4 A. I'm sorry. It cut out a little bit, repeat that question?

5 Q. Does Oceaneering and Force Power have a good working
6 relationship?

7 A. Well yes, sir.

8 Q. And they are contractors, right? They're not Oceaneering
9 employees?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. Okay. When, getting into a little bit of the engine failure
12 part of the interview, and once the engine failed, were you on the
13 notification tree? Were you notified pretty quickly?

14 A. No, sir. Due to the type of work the vessel does, there's a
15 limited, there's a -- there are limited management who corresponds
16 back and forth, so, no I was not. I was notified after my manager
17 was notified.

18 Q. Okay. So the manager was notified and through a chain of
19 command, you were notified?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. And for the Oceaneering vessels, is there some sort of a
22 notification process, such as a -- safety concern form, or some
23 type of accident report that would have been filled out? Or was
24 it a phone call? Do you recall?

25 A. I'm sure that the first initial thing would have been a phone

1 call, if I'm not mistaken it was, and then the process follows
2 from there.

3 Q. Okay. And that -- is that process part of the Safety
4 Management System that there is a notification procedure?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. And if you could describe, as you understand it, the events
7 that took place that afternoon in Hawaii on the *Intervention* with
8 the engine failure? We have read the Chief Engineer and the
9 crew's statements, and we kind of have an understanding of, you
10 know, what may have happened, but it seems like, if you don't mind
11 starting with what you understand with engine hunting issues that
12 they were looking at?

13 A. Yeah, I'm not that familiar with moments prior to it, and my
14 expertise isn't the mechanical side of the engines. That would be
15 more of a Blair Matherne or Darren McGuire could speak more on
16 that. I just don't know enough about it, what causes it, or why
17 it was doing it, or anything like that, and technically, I didn't
18 read any formal reports yet, you know that's other group, other
19 parties in the group who go through all that. Like I said, I just
20 go down there and manage the, the vendors, the tasks, the calls to
21 schedule, meet the deadline.

22 Q. Okay. So more of a project manager, and not as much as the
23 technical/engineering side of it? Would that be correct?

24 A. Yeah, I mean, you know, a title is just a title, in my
25 opinion. Whether you call me a project manager or a port

1 engineer, I just, I manage the project.

2 Q. Okay, okay. Were you present for the engine repair?

3 A. Do -- when you say engine repair, do you mean -- we cut the
4 deck, swapped the engine out, put the new one in, and sent the
5 other one off? Or are you referring to tearing apart the old
6 engine and rebuilding it, the damaged engine and rebuilding
7 another one?

8 Q. I guess both, actually, so like, maybe it's a two-part
9 question. And that helped --

10 A. Right.

11 Q. Go ahead.

12 A. Yeah, so I was present for cutting the deck open, removing
13 the failed engine and all the parts and components, and installing
14 the new engine, and putting the boat back together. After that,
15 the engine was sent back to the mainland, to Houma, to Force
16 Power, which Blair Matherne was part of the disassemble, the
17 failure analysis, and reassembled the -- of another engine for our
18 spares.

19 Q. Oh, okay, and is that somewhat standard procedure for engine
20 overhauls is to swap them out completely on the vessels, instead
21 of rebuilding in place?

22 A. No, no, no. We'll typically overhaul an engine in place.
23 This one just had a hole in the side of the block so we, we
24 couldn't overhaul that, of course, --

25 Q. Right.

1 A. -- and it had to get sent back to Louisiana to get started on
2 the failure analysis as soon as possible. No, we couldn't get the
3 key people down to Honolulu like we needed to. We wanted to get
4 it, the analysis, done as soon as possible to see if there was
5 any, if there were anything that they could have picked up on that
6 caused it that we could have corrected on any of our other
7 vessels, you know, before something would happen with them.

8 Q. Right. Okay. And from what we understand, that, that engine
9 that was brought back to Houma has been looked at and, you know,
10 there was a report with some findings on it. Were you involved
11 with that, or was that also Blair that was there?

12 A. No, I was still in Hawaii at that time. Blair was involved
13 with it.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I do believe they did generate a final report, which I think
16 [REDACTED] I think you had received a copy of it as well, of the
17 findings.

18 CWO [REDACTED]: Yeah.

19 BY MR. YOUNG:

20 Q. Okay. All right, maybe we will talk to --

21 A. But no, I'm --

22 Q. -- Blair after this.

23 A. I wasn't, I wasn't part of that, that (indiscernible).

24 Q. Okay. And based on what you, or what Oceaneering has seen as
25 a result of that engine inspection, have there been any changes

1 made to the other engines aboard the *Ocean Intervention*?

2 A. Yes. So what we did as an improvement, we added to both the
3 Number 1, and Number 3, we installed pre-lube (ph.) pumps which we
4 didn't have before as a corrective action.

5 Q. And what was the reason for that, for adding pumps to the two
6 engines?

7 A. So my understanding is for that split second of constant
8 starting of engine; you know once the engine's, and then I'm going
9 to try to explain this as best as I can from how I understand it,
10 which again Blair would be able to explain a lot better, you know
11 when the engine's not running and sitting there basically gravity
12 takes, pulls the oil back into the pan, you know, most of it
13 drops. So without a pre-lube pump, you have just that split
14 second of something being dry right when the engine turns over
15 before the oil starts circulating and pumping where it needs to
16 go. So installing the pre-lube pumps, that prevents that from
17 happening. I guess -- so basically you wouldn't have a dry start.

18 Q. Okay. So these pumps would run prior to the start, and then
19 once the engine came up to --

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. -- they'd probably shut themselves off?

22 A. Correct.

23 Q. Okay. And, just to be clear, was it done on all the engines
24 on the *Ocean Intervention*, or just one and three?

25 A. No, just the one and three because they were the only ones

1 that had the capability of installing pre-lube pumps. These
2 smaller Caterpillar, I want to say, it, it's not equipped to deal
3 with installing a pre-lube pump. I don't have the exact size of
4 the engine off the top of my head, in front of me. I don't want
5 to say the wrong size of these.

6 Q. Oh, okay. So it's -- their --

7 A. But it -- but the center engine, the Number 2, it's not, it
8 doesn't have the ability to install a, a pre-lube pump.

9 Q. Okay. Is it a different model than the other two engines?

10 A. It's a Caterpillar -- it's just, I -- I'm not -- I don't
11 want, if I'm not mistaken, maybe it's a 3512 and the two outboards
12 are 3516. The two larger generators, the one that are used the
13 most.

14 Q. Okay. And how about across your fleet? Do you have any
15 other 3516s that you're aware of?

16 A. Yes. We actually have another vessel that was in port that
17 we sent Force Power to the vessel to do overhauls, and they also
18 included pre-lube pumps on the vessel. It's the sister ship to
19 the *Ocean Intervention*.

20 Q. And is this something that Oceaneering decided that would be
21 a good idea to put these pre-lube pumps on to each of the engines,
22 or was this something from Force Power, or what this something
23 that was raised to the level of Caterpillar, say, whether it's
24 their headquarters, or their management?

25 A. No. Force Power made the recommendation, and we went with

1 it. It can only help, it can't hurt, --

2 Q. Right.

3 A. -- and it's, it's more feasible, more -- makes more sense to
4 spend that little bit of (indiscernible) than to spend -- to do
5 what we have to do (indiscernible).

6 Q. Understood. Are you involved at all with the oil analysis,
7 say lube-oil analysis aboard the *Intervention*? Or would that be
8 more of a Blair topic to discuss?

9 A. It'd be more of a topic to discuss with Blair. We do. When
10 the vessels are working overseas, they do take their analysis and
11 whenever they are actually in port, they do send them over to us,
12 and we send them off to get analyzed. But the specific oil
13 analysis prior -- the last one that was taken prior to that engine
14 failure, seems to have gotten lost or misplaced with UPS.
15 (Indiscernible) our agent, (indiscernible), there's a lot still --
16 they're still trying to locate the analysis -- the oil analysis,
17 the oil samples.

18 Q. And was that the -- kind of the regularly scheduled lube-oil
19 analysis that they were, was lost?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. I saw on the report that after the incident, that it looks
22 like there were some fuel-oil analyses being done as well as some
23 analysis for the vibration damper. Do you know if those have been
24 completed yet?

25 A. I can follow-up, you know. I want to say I spoke to Blair,

1 and they did get the analysis report for the vibration damper, and
2 it did come back good. I would have to follow-up with that
3 question with Blair. I don't want to say, yeah, it came back and
4 it's -- it just seems like I remember having a conversation and
5 that, I thought he said it did come back good.

6 Q. Okay. And maybe we will talk to Blair to try to hit him with
7 a few of these more technical engineering terms. I appreciate you
8 filling us in as much as you can, but understand, maybe, Blair is
9 -- this is more of his expertise.

10 A. Yeah, we, you know, our manager put together a team that have
11 a specific expertise and it works great until you get asked so
12 many questions you can't quite answer.

13 Q. Of course, yeah, yeah. No problem.

14 A. But yeah, Blaire would be the -- he's real sharp with it.

15 Q. Okay, and --

16 A. He's our, he's our maintenance and repair manager.

17 Q. Okay. And he's tied up at jury duty? Is that for a while?

18 A. He is tied up in jury duty. [REDACTED], what you could do is
19 shoot him an email and I know he was on the original, but I, I
20 don't think he jumped into it because I, you know, it's, it was
21 basically the questions addressed to, you know, who managed it,
22 and then the mechanics who did the work, but if you send him
23 something, I'm sure he can set something up with you guys once his
24 jury duty complete. I -- and I'm almost positive he'll be in jury
25 duty all week.

1 Q. Okay, okay. I'll work with [REDACTED], and we'll see if we can
2 try to get an interview scheduled with him so we can ask him a few
3 more of these technical questions, and maybe, again this might be
4 for him, but just want to see if you had heard anything, but when
5 the engine was being torn apart in Houma, and, you know, as they
6 were getting deeper into the engine, does it ring a bell to you,
7 or did anyone say; This is something that's very, very unique? Or
8 we've seen this before? Or is this common issue with this model
9 of engine? Is that something that you have heard?

10 A. I want to say that I did hear that it was a common issue.
11 That it was a common issue for that, that type, that model, and
12 that they're fix was to install pre-lube pumps.

13 Q. And the common issue, I think, were just -- didn't really
14 specify it, but the issue of the erosion, the cavitation erosion,
15 or the bearing cavitation for the connecting rod. Is that what
16 they were concerned about?

17 A. No, I mean, that -- I believe that's just the common wear. I
18 know they -- I want to say they were getting close to their hours,
19 not at the -- not at the hours the needed to do the overhauls, but
20 they were getting there, so you will start having some wear on
21 some of those bearings as time goes.

22 Q. Do you see any --

23 A. And again, that's going to be more Force Power and Blair that
24 can speak a little bit more on that whole process.

25 Q. Okay. And has Oceaneering made any recommendations to adjust

1 the maintenance schedule for these inspections or overhauls on
2 these engines?

3 A. That will be a Blair question because since, you know, he is
4 the maintenance manager, so that would be something that he and
5 Darren would have discussed internally, and to see what intervals
6 they would change it to if it needed to be.

7 Q. Okay, okay. Great. I don't know. [REDACTED], if you have any
8 questions, or not, at this point?

9 CWO [REDACTED]: Excuse me. No, Brian, I think I'm pretty good.

10 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Well, I'm sorry, Joe, I kind of thought
11 with the title, that you may have been more involved with the
12 engineering aspect of this, but I appreciate you advising us to,
13 you know, maybe connect with Blair and we'll reach out to him when
14 he's available. Do you have any questions for us?

15 MR. SOILEAU: Yeah, no, I'm sorry I couldn't help you more.
16 You know, I understand a little of it, and I learn more during
17 every project, but --

18 MR. YOUNG: Sure.

19 MR. SOILEAU: -- as far as my expertise, you know, I can
20 change an alternator on a vehicle, and a battery, that's about as
21 far as I can do, but as far as the details and functionality and
22 how everything works, and when it gets changed, and all that,
23 Blair can tell you that off the top of his head. It's just
24 something he's always done from -- a good bit of his career.

25 MR. YOUNG: Okay. We will absolutely reach out to him, and

1 I'm going to pause and stop the recording, so it will be off
2 record.

3 (Whereupon, 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: ENGINE FAILURE ABOARD
 OSV *OCEAN INTERVENTION*
 ON APRIL 21, 2021
 Interview of Joseph Soileau

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FM012

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: May 19, 2021

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.

 <

Deborah Dowling Sweigart
Transcriber