

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

*
*
*
*
*
*

SHIPBOARD FIRE ABOARD THE *HOËGH*
XIAMEN IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA,
ON JUNE 4, 2020

Accident No.: DCA20FM020

* * * * *

Interview of: PATRICK TAMASITIS, Operations and Logistics Manager
Horizon Auto Logistics

Jacksonville, Florida

Friday,
June 19, 2020

APPEARANCES:

LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Jacksonville

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Jacksonville

MARCEL L. MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JOSEPH PANAGIOTOU, Fire and Explosion Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

PAUL STANCIL, Hazardous Material Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ROBERT DiGIACOMANDREA, Chief Investigator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

JOHN HENEGHAN, Regional Director
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

CLAYTON HATFIELD, Accident Investigator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

KEIRAN "KURT" STEWART, Accident Investigator
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

ERIC THIEL, Attorney
(On behalf of Grimaldi Deep Sea)

TODD BAIAD, Attorney
(On behalf of SSA Atlantic)

JULES MASSEE, Attorney
(On behalf of Horizon Auto Logistics)

SHEA MOSER, Attorney
(On behalf of the *Hoëgh Xiamen*)

MARK THOMPSON, Attorney
(On behalf of the *Hoëgh Xiamen*)

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Patrick Tamasitis:	
By LTJG [REDACTED]	6
By Mr. [REDACTED]	9
By LTJG [REDACTED]	12
By Mr. [REDACTED]	12
By LTJG [REDACTED]	13
By Mr. Muise	14
By Mr. Stancil	14
By Mr. Moser	15
By Mr. Baiad	16
By Mr. Thiel	27
By Mr. [REDACTED]	30
By LTJG [REDACTED]	30
By Mr. [REDACTED]	31

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 LTJG ██████████ All righty. Good morning everyone. It is
3 June 19th, 2020. We are here to conduct an interview with Patrick
4 -- I'm sorry.

5 MR. TAMASITIS: Tamasitis.

6 LTJG ██████████ Tamasitis, who is the Operation Logistics
7 Manager at Horizon Auto Logistics. We're going to do what we did
8 for the last interview, introduce ourselves and then -- around the
9 table, and then we'll go to the phone, and then we'll get started.

10 My name is Lieutenant ██████████ I'm the lead investigator for
11 the Coast Guard on the -- in the incident in question, which is
12 the fire on the *Hoëgh Xiamen*, which occurred on June 4th.

13 MR. ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ civilian investigator for the Coast
14 Guard.

15 MR. TAMASITIS: Patrick Tamasitis, Operation and Logistics
16 Manager, Southeast Region, Horizon Auto Logistics.

17 LTJG ██████████ Can you do us a favor and spell your last name
18 for everyone please?

19 MR. TAMASITIS: Sure. It's -- don't worry; I still have to
20 do it for my wife, too -- T-a-m-a-s-i-t-i-s.

21 LTJG ██████████ Perfect.

22 MR. MASSEE: Jules Masee, Hamilton, Miller & Birthisel on
23 behalf of Horizon.

24 MR. BAIAD: Todd Baiad, Bouhan Falligant in Savannah on
25 behalf of SSA Atlantic.

1 MR. MOSER: Shea Moser, Moseley, Prichard, Parrish, Knight &
2 Jones, the vessel owner.

3 LTJG [REDACTED] And then if the NTSB would like to go ahead,
4 please?

5 MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise, Office of Marine Safety at
6 the NTSB.

7 MR. STANCIL: Paul Stancil, Hazardous Materials Accident
8 Investigator, NTSB.

9 MR. PANAGIOTOU: Joseph Panagiotou, Office of Research and
10 Engineering, NTSB.

11 LTJG [REDACTED] If PHMSA would like to go ahead and introduce
12 themselves.

13 MR. HENEGHAN: Good morning. My name is John Heneghan. I'm
14 the regional director for the southern region office in Atlanta.

15 MR. DiGIACOMANDREA: Robert DiGiacomandrea, Chief
16 Investigator, PHMSA Southern Region.

17 MR. HATFIELD: Clayton Hatfield, Investigator, PHMSA Southern
18 Region.

19 MR. STEWART: Kurt Stewart, Accident Investigator at Oklahoma
20 City.

21 LTJG [REDACTED] All right, and then the parties in interest
22 that are on the phone?

23 MR. THIEL: Good morning. It's Eric Thiel, Banker Lopez
24 Gassler on behalf of Grimaldi Deep Sea.

25 LTJG [REDACTED] Okay. Is there anyone else on the line that I

1 missed?

2 MR. THOMPSON: And Mark Thompson -- yeah, Mark Thompson, HFW.
3 We are the London solicitors for vessel interests.

4 LTJG [REDACTED] Okay. Awesome. All righty. With all that
5 being said, I guess we'll get started.

6 INTERVIEW OF PATRICK TAMASITIS

7 BY LTJG [REDACTED]

8 Q. So if you could just briefly explain, sir, you know, what
9 your job title is what you do here, how long you've been here,
10 that kind of information.

11 A. Sure. I've been in this role for just over a year. I've
12 been with Horizon now for 4 years. Came from the United States
13 Navy. I am overseeing both our Jacksonville and Port Everglades
14 facilities and supporting our operations in Freeport, Texas, as
15 well.

16 Q. Okay. And when you say supporting operations and you're over
17 -- in charge here, what does, what does that actually entail?

18 A. I'm overseeing the operations and logistics of all cargo.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Also dealing with our -- raising contracts per line and OEM.

21 Q. Okay. So overseeing the cargo, could you kind of define what
22 that is please?

23 A. It's more or less growing -- business development in that
24 sense, more than what John was doing, which is handling of the
25 cargo.

1 Q. Okay. Great. So you interface with more of the individual
2 shippers than per say what John did -- does?

3 A. More of the -- yeah. So like, the operations managers for,
4 you know, Hoëgh, Grimaldi, Sallaum, Glovis --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- and the various OEMs that we deal with.

7 Q. Okay. Great. So if you could just please, you know,
8 describe a typical interaction with the -- with those operators
9 you described. Like, what do, what do you actually discuss, do --

10 A. Sure. So I'm, I'm working with -- for, for example, with
11 Michael Loeuis, I'm working on basically contracts, receiving
12 policies, their cargo on ground, based on volumes, right?

13 Q. Right.

14 A. And then, commercially, what they're working on and what
15 we're working on for them.

16 Q. Okay. Great. So is that just the business side, or do you
17 also -- do you discuss, like, quantities, movements, that sort of
18 stuff?

19 A. We deal with that as well, yeah.

20 Q. Okay. And then who would you say you most often work with
21 out of this port here in Jacksonville?

22 A. As far as customer?

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. It's Grimaldi.

25 Q. Grimaldi is by far the biggest?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. If you had to just put a rough percentage on the amount of
3 Grimaldi cargo that you guys handle?

4 A. Sixty-five percent.

5 Q. Sixty-five percent. Okay. And then specific to the vessel
6 *Hoëgh Xiamen*, did you have any -- do you have any recollection of
7 what you did to manage -- or manage the cargo for that shipment?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Was there anything different about it?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Anything special?

12 A. No.

13 Q. And I know -- so you're, you're discussing with them the, the
14 cargo. What -- I guess, what -- typically, what kinds of cargo
15 are they shipping, and do you know where it's going?

16 A. For Grimaldi?

17 Q. Yes.

18 A. It's used POVs.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And it's runners, non-runners, forklift units --

21 Q. Okay. And --

22 A. -- for West Africa.

23 Q. West Africa? And do you have any knowledge of, when it gets
24 to West Africa, is it all being sold to one buyer, or how does
25 that -- you just --

1 A. I do not know.

2 LTJG [REDACTED] Okay.

3 BY MR. [REDACTED]

4 Q. So does Horizon handle just automobiles?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. There's other cargo that, that they handle?

7 A. Various -- yes, we have various commodities.

8 Q. Okay. What -- just examples?

9 A. High heavy machinery, dozers, right, various track pieces,
10 wheel pieces that you could drive -- Caterpillar, for example, is
11 a big, big customer.

12 Q. Okay. So some type -- so, I guess Horizon handles some type
13 of transportation? So I mean, what I'm asking --

14 A. RORO --

15 Q. -- is, what I'm asking is --

16 A. -- roll on/roll off.

17 Q. -- you guys don't deal with any kind of, like, bulk shipping,
18 like, like fluids, cargo containers, any of that kind of stuff?

19 It's mainly just vehicles and --

20 A. Correct. It's roll on/roll off cargo.

21 Q. Okay. So does Horizon, does Horizon have anybody that kind
22 of oversees the regulatory side and what the requirements are for
23 vehicles going on and off of, of these, of these vessels?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay. So Horizon pretty much trusts the shippers, like,

1 whatever they're requesting, that they're going to be within
2 regulations?

3 A. Correct. We do our due diligence per their guidelines and
4 our receiving guidelines, but yes, it's, it's up to the steamship
5 line for what they ship.

6 Q. Okay. So when you have these interfaces with the shippers,
7 they give you, they give you their, their plans and policies of
8 how they want those pieces of cargo to be prepared prior to going
9 onboard the vessel?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. And that's -- like, you said you have several interfaces
12 with, with Grimaldi, with Mike, right?

13 LTJG [REDACTED] Mike Loeuis.

14 BY MR. [REDACTED]

15 Q. Mike Loeuis. So is that every, every time a new vessel comes
16 in, do you have that, that interface and kind of go through --

17 A. Myself and John, yes.

18 Q. Okay. So that's every vessel that, that comes in, you guys
19 have a new interface. It's not, hey, we're going to have 10
20 vessels coming in over the course of the next 6 months, and this
21 is what we're going to do?

22 A. No, we do not. I would say it's every vessel.

23 Q. Okay. And then how is -- how, how are those interactions?
24 Are they face-to-face, are they email?

25 A. Mostly by phone.

1 Q. Okay. Phone.

2 A. And, and for Mike and I, it's email as well.

3 Q. Okay. So about how far before the vessel arrives do these
4 interactions start?

5 A. It's almost daily.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. We're doing, we're doing three vessels a month for them.

8 Q. Okay. So you guys speak almost daily. Like -- so for the
9 *Hoëgh Xiamen*, do you know when you guys first started discussing
10 the --

11 A. No, I do not.

12 LTJG [REDACTED] Let him finish his question.

13 MR. [REDACTED] Yeah.

14 BY MR. [REDACTED]

15 Q. So on average, would you say it would be, like, several,
16 several weeks before the vessel arrives that you start making
17 preparations?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. And they send -- like, what all would, would a shipper
20 send to you?

21 A. Right. So they send an initial load list, where we begin to
22 stage the vehicles, and then following that, they add add-ons, and
23 then after that is the cuts.

24 Q. Okay. Then, just so I understand the, the hierarchy here, so
25 you receive that information, you pass that information to John,

1 who was just sitting here earlier?

2 A. No, that would be John and I receiving that information.

3 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. Go ahead. Yeah.

4 BY LTJG [REDACTED]

5 Q. So part of the dealings with the shipper, right, for
6 Grimaldi, for example, or Hoëgh, it doesn't really matter, you
7 receive their receiving instructions, correct? Which outlines the
8 condition of the vehicles, the checks, correct?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. And that is part of your business arrangement with the
11 shipper, correct? Is -- they're paying you a certain amount of
12 money. It doesn't matter how much, but they're entrusting Horizon
13 to make sure that the receiving criteria is met for the vehicles?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Okay. So it's not the individual truck drivers that come up?

16 A. No.

17 LTJG [REDACTED] Okay.

18 BY MR. [REDACTED]

19 Q. All right. So for the *Hoëgh Xiamen*, were you here in
20 Jacksonville when, when that incident happened?

21 A. Yes, I was.

22 Q. And were you aboard the *Hoëgh Xiamen* at any point?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Do you normally board the vessels at any point?

25 A. No, I do not.

1 Q. Do you have any interaction with the folks onboard the vessel
2 at all? Like the captains, crew, any of those?

3 A. Michael and his team come down and, and I will communicate
4 with the port captains, yes.

5 Q. Okay. So the port captain, but not the actual crew of the
6 vessel?

7 A. No.

8 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

9 BY LTJG [REDACTED]

10 Q. You said you were in the Navy before you started working with
11 Horizon?

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. Did you have any experience with the loading of hazardous
14 stores, cargo segregation, anything like that while you were in
15 the Navy?

16 A. (No audible response.)

17 Q. No? Okay.

18 LTJG [REDACTED] I'm --

19 MR. [REDACTED] I'm kind of drawing a blank here because we -- I
20 think we got --

21 LTJG [REDACTED] I think we've got most --

22 MR. [REDACTED] -- a lot of questions with John so --

23 LTJG [REDACTED] -- it, yeah.

24 MR. TAMASITIS: John is our guy.

25 MR. [REDACTED] Yeah.

1 LTJG ██████ Yeah. I guess we'll -- hey, we'll turn it
2 over to the NTSB. We'll circle back if we think of anything, but
3 if you all got anything, please go ahead.

4 BY MR. MUISE:

5 Q. Sir, this is Marcel Muise with the NTSB, and sir, I just have
6 a couple of questions about the facility there. Did -- are you
7 aware of any pre-incident plans the fire department might have for
8 Horizon's facility at Blount Island?

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. Have you ever trained with them? Have they ever been invited
11 to, to board a car carrier?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. Are you familiar with the Coast Guard's Harbor Safety
14 Committee?

15 A. No, sir.

16 MR. MUISE: Okay. That's all I have.

17 Anything, Joe?

18 MR. PANAGIOTOU: I don't have any questions. Thank you.

19 MR. MUISE: Paul?

20 MR. STANCIL: Yeah, just a couple.

21 BY MR. STANCIL:

22 Q. Sir, is any of the cargo consigned through Horizon classified
23 as dangerous goods?

24 A. No, sir.

25 Q. Never, that never happens?

1 A. No, sir.

2 Q. Okay. Are the shippers that are sending the vehicles into
3 you, are they classifying the cargo as far as the description of
4 the cargo?

5 A. It's, it's marked on the dock receipt whether it's a forklift
6 unit, non-runner, or runner.

7 Q. And that's as far as it goes?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 MR. STANCIL: Okay. That's all I have.

10 LTJG ██████████ All righty. I guess we'll turn it over to the
11 parties in interest. I think we'll do the same as last time and
12 go around the table here, and then we'll go to the phone.

13 Okay. So, Mr. Moser, you want to --

14 BY MR. MOSER:

15 Q. I just want to confirm who at Grimaldi you interact with. I
16 think you said Michael Loeuis, is that correct?

17 A. Correct. There's others as well.

18 Q. I'm sorry?

19 A. There's others as well.

20 Q. Who are those others?

21 A. Elias (ph.) -- I can't remember his name, Jamie (ph.), the
22 various port captains that they have, and some -- not very
23 frequent, but Juliano Petracellis (ph.) as well.

24 Q. Who is John White's superior?

25 A. Myself.

1 Q. Are you tasked with making sure John White and his crew do
2 their job?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Are there situations where Horizon employees are found to not
5 be following the guidelines when they're checking in these cars in
6 the yard?

7 A. Not that I'm aware of.

8 Q. There's never been a situation where someone has been fired
9 or disciplined or in any way brought in to talk to for not
10 following that checklist and not doing the things correct to check
11 it in?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. Is there any way -- what does Horizon do to ensure that those
14 folks are following those guidelines?

15 A. Based on their check-in process that they know that -- their
16 expertise, and John Oak (ph.) supervises that. And then, if there
17 is any incidence, it'll be brought to my attention.

18 Q. And there have been no incidents brought to your attention?

19 A. No, sir.

20 Q. Is that correct? Thank you.

21 MR. MOSER: That's all.

22 BY MR. BAIAD:

23 Q. Good day, sir. My name is Todd Baiad. We met earlier. I'm
24 a lawyer in Savannah and I represent SSA, the terminal.

25 A. Okay.

- 1 Q. And I have some questions for you.
- 2 A. Sure.
- 3 Q. You served in the Navy. How long were you in the Navy for?
- 4 A. Seven and a half years.
- 5 Q. Okay. Were you an officer or enlisted?
- 6 A. I was an officer.
- 7 Q. Okay. And so what rank did you obtain?
- 8 A. I was a lieutenant.
- 9 Q. Okay. And where did you serve?
- 10 A. I served here in Mayport on board the *USS Stephen W. Groves*,
- 11 the *USS Philippine Sea*, and then I worked at N10 for Chief of
- 12 Naval Personnel in Washington, D.C.
- 13 Q. Okay. How long have you been with Horizon?
- 14 A. Four years.
- 15 Q. Okay. And before that, what did you do?
- 16 A. I was the operations assistant at headquarters under Anthony
- 17 German (ph.), Chief Operating Officer.
- 18 Q. Okay. Where do you actually live? Are -- you live here in
- 19 Jacksonville?
- 20 A. I do, yup.
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. I'm based in Jacksonville. I oversee Port Everglades and
- 23 here.
- 24 Q. Okay. Did I understand what you said earlier, do you, do you
- 25 have kind of overall responsibility for the procedures that

1 Horizon is to follow when they're checking cars, like the ones
2 that were loaded onboard the ship?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Okay. Did you help draft those procedures?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And some of the procedures make sure that there is no
7 -- there's not too much gas in the tank, correct?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Okay. And what happens in instances where you find that
10 there's more than an eighth of a tank in gas? What do you all do
11 then?

12 MR. MASSEE: Answer if you can.

13 MR. TAMASITIS: Sure. So we -- per Grimaldi's instructions,
14 it says no less than an eighth of a tank, and then per the CFR
15 manual, it says no more than a quarter of a tank, but that's in
16 purview to the steamship line, if they want that cargo loaded.

17 BY MR. BAIAD:

18 Q. Okay. What happens if I'm, I'm working for Horizon, and I go
19 check the car, and I see it's got three-quarters of a tank of gas?
20 What am I supposed to do?

21 A. Likely John would check with Grimaldi to ensure that, that
22 can be loaded, but that's not always the case.

23 Q. Okay. If it's -- when you say it's not always the case, tell
24 me, tell me what are the other possibilities then?

25 A. That it would just -- it would be staged and loaded.

1 Q. Okay. So you would agree with me that, that is a possibility
2 here, that cars onboard the ship would have had more than the
3 required -- or more than the permitted gas in it, in violation of
4 Grimaldi's instructions?

5 A. In violation of Grimaldi's instructions?

6 Q. Yeah. I mean, they give you receiving instructions for the
7 amount of gas that's permitted to be in the automobile, correct?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. And I believe what you just told me is that there are
10 instances where that is not always followed, correct?

11 MR. MASSEE: Yeah, I don't think that's what he said.

12 MR. TAMASITIS: It's more than an eighth of a tank, per the
13 instructions, from my understanding.

14 BY MR. BAIAD:

15 Q. Okay. So there's a -- it has to have a certain amount of
16 gas, and not --

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Okay. Is there, is there any requirement about how little
19 gasoline it's supposed to have or how few? It's just a -- it's a,
20 it's a floor, not a ceiling, is that what you're telling me?

21 A. From my understanding.

22 Q. Okay. And what do you base that understanding on?

23 A. Grimaldi's instructions.

24 Q. Okay. When was the last time you've looked at Grimaldi's
25 instructions?

1 A. Recently.

2 Q. Okay. And when you say recently, how recently?

3 A. The past week.

4 Q. Okay. And on what occasion did you look at Grimaldi's
5 instructions within the last week?

6 A. We're always continually looking at all of the instructions.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Especially when they update them.

9 Q. Okay. What about -- there was also a discussion about making
10 sure the hoods were open. Do you recall that when I was --

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. -- talking to your colleague? Okay. What is, what is your
13 understanding as to what the policy is about making sure hoods get
14 open on these automobiles?

15 A. All hoods need to be opened.

16 Q. Okay. And that's -- and you would agree with your colleague
17 who said if a car got turned over to SSA where a hood couldn't get
18 opened, that would be a violation of what Horizon was required to
19 do in accordance with Grimaldi's instructions, correct?

20 A. Correct --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- and it would be cut.

23 Q. Okay. And if one of your employees tendered a car to SSA
24 where the hood couldn't be opened, they would be violating not
25 only Grimaldi's instructions, but Horizon's own internal ones I

1 assume, correct?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay. And what do you understand the purpose of making sure
4 that the hoods can be opened before you turn them over to SSA?

5 A. To make sure we can access the battery.

6 Q. Okay. Are you aware of a situation at any point in time
7 where Horizon has turned over a car to SSA stevedores, or any
8 other stevedore, where the hood could not be opened?

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. Okay. You had mentioned, when you were talking earlier,
11 about -- and I, and I highlighted this word, "due diligence," you
12 did due diligence with what the shipping line provide you in terms
13 of instructions. Did I hear you correctly?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. What, what other -- what due diligence are you doing?

16 A. I'm sorry, I don't -- as far as going through the guidelines
17 that they've given us?

18 Q. Yes.

19 A. We're making sure that our guys are doing -- going through
20 what they are being told through the instructions on each piece.

21 Q. How?

22 A. As John mentioned, from memory and from understanding and
23 training.

24 Q. Okay. Do you ever oversee any training to any of the
25 individual employees of Horizon to make sure that they're

- 1 complying with Grimaldi's instructions?
- 2 A. Am I at the trainings?
- 3 Q. Are you aware of them? Are you at them?
- 4 A. Yes. We have well documented the training.
- 5 Q. Okay. How often do you guys train?
- 6 A. We are doing -- John and his team are doing internal safety
7 meetings and training meetings, it is every 2 weeks, and then we
8 have a supervisor meeting quarterly.
- 9 Q. Okay. Well, but are these meetings specific to making sure
10 the receiver's guidelines are being followed?
- 11 A. No, sir. It's on different topics throughout the terminal.
- 12 Q. Okay. Of these meetings, how many relate to making sure
13 these guidelines get followed?
- 14 A. I'd say once a quarter.
- 15 Q. Okay. So I'm understanding you correctly, is that once a
16 quarter for each different shipper or just once a quarter
17 generally to make sure --
- 18 A. For each different -- it varies for steamship line, correct.
- 19 Q. Okay. So you work for four different steamship lines, is
20 that right?
- 21 A. (No audible response.)
- 22 Q. And so you're telling me once a quarter you go over these --
23 each individual steamship's guidelines?
- 24 A. So the first quarter, we'll go over Grimaldi; the second
25 quarter, we'll go over Sallaum and Glovis.

1 Q. So it's fair to say you go over Grimaldi's once a year,
2 correct?

3 A. Unless the instruction is updated, and then it's emailed and
4 gone over with every employee, correct.

5 Q. Okay. When was the last time Grimaldi's instructions got
6 updated --

7 A. I --

8 Q. -- before the ones that are in effect right now?

9 A. I don't want to speculate. I, I can't remember off the top
10 of my head.

11 Q. Okay. Do you recall when the last training session you gave
12 on Grimaldi's receiving instructions to your employees?

13 A. I don't want to speculate on that as well.

14 Q. Okay. But you would have believed it would have been within
15 the last year?

16 A. Within the last year for sure, yes.

17 Q. Okay. And is that -- who, who gives that training seminar?

18 A. John.

19 Q. John does. And did you, did you sit in on it?

20 A. The last one? No, I did not.

21 Q. Okay. Have you sat in on any other -- whether it's Grimaldi
22 or some other shipping lines --

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. And tell me what he goes over.

25 A. He goes line by line through the instructions.

- 1 Q. Okay. Anything else he does?
- 2 A. No, sir.
- 3 Q. How long does that meeting last?
- 4 A. Anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour.
- 5 Q. Okay. Are there notes or, or minutes of those meetings?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Okay. And do they -- does the company have copies of those?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. And, and if I were to ask for them, what would they be
10 called?
- 11 A. Those are tailgate safety meetings.
- 12 Q. Okay.
- 13 A. Per (indiscernible) instruction.
- 14 Q. Okay. When did you first become aware of the fire onboard
15 the ship here in Jacksonville?
- 16 A. I was on a conference call with our sales team, and I was
17 made aware that the vessel was smoking from -- this was after the
18 ramp was up.
- 19 Q. Okay. And did somebody call you, email you, text you?
- 20 A. To be honest with you, they yelled through the, through the
21 trailer. Yeah. I heard somebody yell, there, there's a fire
22 onboard.
- 23 Q. Okay. So what did you do after you heard that?
- 24 A. I contacted our president and chief operating officer.
- 25 Q. Okay. And what did you all talk about?

1 A. I just informed them of the fire, and they told us to keep us
2 updated.

3 Q. Okay. And what did you do after that?

4 A. I stuck around until probably about 6:00, and then I went
5 home.

6 Q. Okay. Did you have any discussion with anybody about what
7 might have happened?

8 A. No, sir.

9 Q. Okay. Did you have any email communications with anybody
10 about what might have happened?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. Did you talk to anybody from Grimaldi about what might have
13 happened?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. No text messages, no emails, no anything?

16 A. No, sir.

17 Q. Nothing with Mike -- with Michael Loeuis?

18 A. No, sir.

19 Q. Okay. What about with anybody from SSA? Any discussions
20 with them about what might have happened?

21 A. No, sir.

22 Q. Okay. Other than talking to your COO that first time, when
23 you found out what happened, did you do anything else to
24 investigate what might have happened onboard the ship?

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. Okay. What about the next day?

2 A. No, sir. I met with Travis from SSA, but that was only to
3 assist him around the yard.

4 Q. Okay. Okay. Anything else you can recall doing?

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. Okay. Have you had any email communications with anyone
7 other than your lawyer about what might have happened onboard the
8 ship?

9 A. With regards to what happened? No, sir.

10 Q. With regard to why the fire started -- any, anything at all
11 to do with this incident.

12 A. I've kept my president and chief operating officer and my
13 direct boss, general manager of US, I've kept them updated on the
14 status of the fire. That's, that's it.

15 Q. Okay. And anybody else you have emailed with about this
16 incident?

17 A. No, sir.

18 Q. Okay. What about text message?

19 A. The president, COO, and general manager.

20 Q. Okay. Your colleague earlier mentioned that Hoëgh is the
21 parent corporation to Horizon, is that correct?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Okay. And has that always -- how long has that -- there have
24 been a parent/subsidiary relationship, to your knowledge, with
25 respect to Horizon and Hoëgh?

1 A. From the start of Horizon.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Which was 2015.

4 MR. BAIAD: Okay. That's all the questions I have right now.
5 Thank you.

6 MR. TAMASITIS: Thank you.

7 LTJG [REDACTED] All right. Mr. Thiel? If you want to go
8 ahead?

9 MR. THIEL: All right. Thank you.

10 BY MR. THIEL:

11 Q. This is Eric Thiel on behalf of Grimaldi. One question I
12 have for you is you were asked a lot of questions concerning the
13 shipper and the shipper guidelines. Do you know who the shipper
14 was for any of the vehicles that were loaded on the *Hoëgh Xiamen*?

15 A. Sir, I believe he meant the steamship line, but I don't want
16 to speculate. Correct?

17 MR. [REDACTED] Yeah.

18 MR. THIEL: Okay. So you weren't referring, you weren't
19 referring to Grimaldi as a, as a shipper, but as a steamship line?

20 MR. [REDACTED] Yes. Yes. That, that -- I apologize if I made
21 that --

22 MR. THIEL: Okay. So the shipper would be -- all right. I
23 just wanted to be clear. So the shipper would be the one who is
24 actually sending the vehicles, for instance, on trucks to be
25 received by Horizon, right?

1 MR. [REDACTED] Yes.

2 LTJG [REDACTED] Okay, wait --

3 MR. MASSEE: That's not the witness talking. That's --

4 MR. [REDACTED] Yeah. Sorry. That's me. I'm -- all right.

5 I'm sorry. I'm going to stop talking.

6 MR. TAMASITIS: Yes, sir. This is Patrick.

7 MR. THIEL: Okay. That -- I'm sorry.

8 MR. TAMASITIS: I, I'm under -- I'm aware. I was going to
9 correct the lieutenant, but I didn't. The shipper, yes, is the
10 direct customer or the forwarder, and the steamship line is the
11 steamship line.

12 BY MR. THIEL:

13 Q. Okay. So the, the shipper is the person or entity that sends
14 the vehicles to be received by Horizon, by usually truck?

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. Okay. You mentioned -- or you were just asked some questions
17 from Mr. Baiad about policies with regard to fuel in tanks. Does,
18 does Horizon have a policy about fuel in tanks or vehicles that
19 are being shipped?

20 A. I'd have to review the instruction; not off the top of my
21 head.

22 Q. Right. And so you -- do you recall if there's any policy
23 concerning or that limits the amount of fuel that can be shipped?

24 A. No, sir.

25 Q. All right. Are, are you aware of any policy about rejecting

1 vehicles when they are received by Horizon due to the amount of
2 fuel in the tank?

3 A. With regards to Grimaldi, there is. It has to be more than
4 an eighth of a tank. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Okay. It has to be more than an eighth for Grimaldi. Does
6 the Horizon -- does the terminal Horizon reject any vehicles
7 because there's too much fuel in the tank?

8 A. No, sir.

9 Q. How did you first become aware of the fire?

10 A. I was told, once the smoke was visible.

11 Q. Who told you?

12 A. One of our employees here.

13 Q. Do you recall who it was?

14 A. I believe it was Kara Morris (ph.).

15 Q. Did you say Karen?

16 A. Kara.

17 Q. Kara. All right. And she saw smoke coming from the vessel?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Okay. Did you speak to anyone at Grimaldi concerning the
20 shipment prior to the vehicles being loaded on the vessel?

21 A. I talked to Michael about load lists and -- but no, not to my
22 knowledge, nothing above that.

23 Q. Okay. So the only person you would have spoken to at
24 Grimaldi regarding this shipment was Michael, the port captain?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Right. And you discussed the load list?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. All right. Did you discuss any issues with regard to any
4 vehicles that were being loaded on this vessel?

5 A. No, sir. That would have been John.

6 MR. THIEL: Okay. All right. Thank you. I don't have any
7 further questions.

8 MR. TAMASITIS: Thank you, sir.

9 LTJG [REDACTED] Do you have --

10 BY MR. [REDACTED]

11 Q. Do other lines have gasoline requirements that go the other
12 way, where you can't have too much gas in the tank?

13 A. I'd have to review the instructions, sir.

14 Q. Okay. So sitting here today, you don't know that one way or
15 the other?

16 A. No, sir.

17 Q. Do you know what the purpose of having at least an eighth of
18 a tank of gas is? Why they would require that, you know, at least
19 that much fuel?

20 A. To ensure it gets to the vessel.

21 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

22 LTJG [REDACTED] I actually do have one follow up.

23 BY LTJG [REDACTED]

24 Q. You said prior to this job you were, you were assisting
25 Patrick -- I mean, excuse me, you helped the chief operations

1 officer at the corporate level?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Okay. And while you were there, you said that you helped
4 write the guidelines for Horizon?

5 A. I assisted him.

6 Q. Assist. Now, to your knowledge, during that process, what
7 regulatory codes or international codes or laws were used to
8 inform that drafting of those guidelines?

9 A. I can tell you that Anthony used the CFR, the Coast Guard
10 guidelines, but not off the top of my head, I couldn't tell you
11 specific guidelines.

12 LTJG [REDACTED] Okay. Great. I guess if PHMSA has any
13 questions, please go ahead.

14 MR. HENEGHAN: This is John Heneghan. I'm going to be
15 deferring to Kurt, our accident or incident investigator, if he
16 has anything to ask. Thank you.

17 MR. STEWART: This is Kurt. I, I don't have anything to add.
18 Thank you.

19 LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

20 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

21 BY MR. [REDACTED]

22 Q. I just want to go back and kind of recap a little bit what we
23 talked about as well for, for kind of the quality assurance of
24 Horizon here. I mentioned it with John. So, when the folks
25 receive the vehicles, they do a walk around the vehicles, they go

1 over, and they're staged. To the best of your knowledge, is there
2 any quality assurance for the condition of those vehicles, spot
3 checks, any things like that, that you know of?

4 A. We're constantly riding around the yard, spot checking, to
5 make sure that units -- and then, of course, once we stage for the
6 vessel, there's another round of spot checking, correct.

7 Q. Okay. So maybe I'm confused. So when, when the vehicles
8 come off the trucks --

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. -- they go into an area.

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Then, when they're getting ready to be loaded on the ships,
13 they are staged into a second area?

14 A. Correct. And to help the stevedore loading. Yeah.

15 Q. And so potentially that would be a second person in that
16 vehicle moving it, staging, not necessarily the same --

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. -- person? Okay. And in those spot checks, to the best of
19 your knowledge, there is -- has there ever been anything found --
20 any personal items, other than items for the vehicles, found
21 inside of those vehicles?

22 A. No, sir.

23 Q. So to the best of your knowledge, there has never been any
24 kind of, like, paint cans --

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. -- cardboard, any of that stuff?

2 A. No, sir.

3 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

4 LTJG [REDACTED] All right. Any outliers? All right. With
5 nothing heard, I'd like -- sir, first of all, thank you for taking
6 the time to answer our questions, and we really appreciate your
7 help. And this will conclude the interview.

8 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

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: SHIPBOARD FIRE ABOARD THE *HOEGH XIAMEN* IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA,
ON JUNE 4, 2020
Interview of Patrick Tamasitis

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA20FM020

PLACE: Jacksonville, Florida

DATE: June 19, 2020

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.



Linda S. Dehn
Transcriber