UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Investigation of:	*	
	*	
LOSS OF THE SUBMARINE *TITAN*	*	
IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN	*	Accident No.: DCA23FM036
ON JUNE 18, 2023	*	
	*	

Interview of: JOHN DWYER, Retired
United States Coast Guard

Puget Sound, Washington

Monday,
July 24, 2023

APPEARANCES:

[redacted] Lieutenant, Recorder
Marine Board of Investigation

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I N T E R V I E W

LT [redacted] And do you have any questions before we get started just based off of --

MR. DWYER: No.

LT [redacted] So if it's okay with you, we'd like to record this.

MR. DWYER: Yeah.

LT [redacted] Let you know that it is recorded. So it is currently July the 24th at -- have to look at this -- 1305 Pacific Standard Time, and we are here at Sector Puget Sound, Seattle, Washington. So this is going to be related to the incident of the *Titan* submersible where it's had an implosion approximately 435 miles off of the coast of Saint John's Newfoundland, Canada, on June 18, 2023. Are you presently represented by counsel here today, sir?

MR. DWYER: No.

And if we could go around the room, I'm going to ask for everyone to spell their last name and introduce themselves.

MR. NEUBAUER: Good afternoon. I'm Jason Neubauer. I'm the Chair of the Marine Board of Investigation into the Titan submersible (indiscernible). And my last name is N-e-u-b-a-u-e-r.

MR. [redacted] That's [redacted] and I'm a legal advisor to the Board.

LCDR [redacted] I'm Lieutenant Commander [redacted] and I am part of the Marine Board Team.

MR. [redacted] and I'm with the Coast Guard Investigative Services assisting the Board.

MR. MUISE: I'm Marcel Muise, M-u-i-s-e. I'm the NTSB investigator assigned to this incident.

MR. DWYER: I think we've met at some --

MR. MUISE: I think so too.

MR. DWYER: Might have been the (indiscernible).

MR. MUISE: Yes.

MR. DWYER: Yeah, okay.

LT [redacted] And for the record, my name is Lieutenant [redacted] I'm the recorder for the Marine Board of Investigations. [redacted] is [redacted]

MR. DWYER: Now, are you guys all -- you're all from parent units, right? I mean other than you, Jason? I mean --

MR. NEUBAUER: We're probably a mix. I brought Lieutenant [redacted] from Headquarters. She's in the ops investigations.

MR. DWYER: Okay.

MR. NEUBAUER: [redacted] with our International Prevention Law Division at Headquarters. And then [redacted] is in the process of transferring to our investigations COE in New Orleans. So it's kind of a team outside of the district.

MR. DWYER: Okay.

MR. NEUBAUER: I believe we have one more person on the line.

MR. DWYER: Oh, yes, sorry.

LT [redacted] Mr. [redacted] if you'd like to introduce yourself.

MR. [redacted] Hi, good afternoon. My name is [redacted] I'm with investigations COE, also a technical advisor for the MBI.

MR. DWYER: Great.

LT [redacted] And if you could spell your last name for me, sir.

MR. [redacted] I'm sorry. It's [redacted]

LT [redacted] And at any point you may change, modify anything that you elect to say during the interview. If you recall things at a later time, please notify us, and we can reach back out to you to gather that information. You may also appeal the final result of the Report of Investigation that may result -- anything that was said that may have impacted that as a result of this interview.

And at this time, do you have any questions?

MR. DWYER: No.

LT [redacted] All right. And we will begin the interview.

INTERVIEW OF JOHN DWYER

BY MR. NEUBAUER:

Q. Thank you again, sir, for being here with us. Just want to start off, and just -- if you could provide us a little bit of your relevant background with regards to Coast Guard prevention marine safety.

A. Started in prevention in 1977 up in Alaska. Did three years at the district office there. Transferred down here to MIO

Seattle, which then became -- Puget Sound, which then became MSO Puget Sound -- Seattle. Went to different -- ended up in Sector Puget Sound. I retired in 2000 -- July 31, 2020 as the officer-in-charge of marine inspection. I was the OCMI from 2000 to 2000 and -- or excuse me -- 2010 to 2020. Prior to that I was either chief of prevention, chief of inspections. We had a bunch of different titles as we went through various organizations. But I was responsible for the inspection program for most of the sector.

Q. And while you're at the sector and responsible for the inspections programs, what kind of vessels were being inspected here?

A. Puget Sound is known for having a wide variety of vessels. We had oceanographic research vessels, tank vessels, freight. Basically the best way to describe it is we did everything except offshore oil and gas, and we did finally get into offshore oil and gas with the *Artic Challenger* in 2010 I think it was. But mostly we did a lot of various Subchapter H vessels. We did freight and tank barges. You name it. Pretty much everything.

Q. And prior to your position as the, as the chief of inspections or the officer-in-charge of inspections what qualifications did you hold as a marine inspector?

A. Hull engineering, tank, freight, barge, T boat, just about not quite almost all of them; a wide variety of those. And then I also held investigation quals. I was the number one for the investigation shop when I was on active duty as a lieutenant. And

then I was licensing as well. So everything except ports and waterways.

Q. And then you would -- as the officer-in-charge of marine inspections if -- you -- basic overall is in charge of all the vessels, right?

A. Correct.

Q. Can you get a little deeper into that, and how that, how that works, and how, how necessarily the chain of command goes from the inspectors up to the officer-in-charge of marine inspections?

A. Sure. Trying to think of a way to be succinct about it. But the -- my responsibility was as a second- or third-level supervisor as the officer-in-charge of the inspections. You had the inspectors that would go out and do the inspections. They were both junior and senior inspectors. There were branch chiefs that were responsible for overseeing the junior and senior inspectors. I was the, and still am, the only civilian OCMI since Bureau of Marine Inspection application. Also it's a little bit different, but I reported to the chief of Prevention Department, who reported to the sector deputy and the sector CEO. So that's how I fit in where the latest. As far as decisions on inspections typically we would as normal for Coast Guard would expect the inspector to make the decision normally on his or her own. If there was something that they needed to consult they'd start with the -- usually the branch chief for domestic vessels. We were

broken into domestic vessels, foreign vessels, Facilities Branch also reported to me. Fishing Vessel Branch also reported to me as well. Does that give you enough or do you need more?

A. Fine. Thank you. Appreciate that. Thank you. So who -- when all these different types of vessel classifications or whatever regulatory who determines who goes out on those inspections?

A. I mean, the dispatcher. It starts with a call into the dispatcher requesting an inspection. And so the dispatcher then goes and looks to see who has got the correct qualifications to do those inspections or the inspection that was requested. If there's a shortage of inspectors or if there's a question as to whether he or she is qualified, that's taken up with the next level supervisor, the assistant chief. But typically it works pretty, pretty easily. In fact, it always has going way back it's a pretty straightforward process. The dispatcher has a list of who is qualified to do what, and assigns them accordingly. And then trainees are assigned as well. The training officer has a role in apportioning out the trainings they participate.

Q. And specifically dealing -- not specifically dealing with OceanGate, but in talking about submersibles, how would the dispatcher determine who would be able to go out to --

A. Well, submersibles, as you guys can imagine, and the reason partly for this panel is that submersibles are a whole different kettle of fish. We had experience, significant experience in

submersible inspection. We did the *Atlantis* submersibles that were either built up in Vancouver or down in Tukwila which is south of Seattle here. Those were all built in accordance with the guidance at the time, and exceptional follow-up with headquarters. So John Winters was our primary lead inspector and -- for submersibles, and we kept him on there for continuity and expertise on the job. I think it's a good way to demonstrate that although you've got normal assignments of inspectors to do freight boats, ferry boats, tank ships, barges, whatever, for certain vessels, and submersibles are a good example, we would have more restrictive assignment. We didn't put just anybody on the submersible. And we had success with that. We had a lot of experience with the program; probably more so than most other units in the Coast Guard.

Q. Would you say that Mr. Winters was the most qualified to --

A. Yeah. Over the years he was. I mean, he certainly, he was originally a military inspector, marine inspector here; did one tour here, transferred out, came to another unit I think up in Alaska, returned here, and assumed that role then with -- became a civilian employee, and stayed on the inspection team for the submersibles. Another inspector was Russ Berg (ph.), Al Jones. These are name from way, way back in the past like the early '90s and all that. And if I remember correctly, we also helped participate in the drafting of NVIC 593, gave some ideas on that. It was sent out for comment if I remember right, which is not

unusual for headquarters to do that just to get some field validation.

Q. And with that process, again, as you being the -- time I don't -- so were you --

A. Yeah. At that time I was chief of inspections.

Q. Chief of inspections.

A. Yeah.

Q. As a chief of inspections when and how would you be notified throughout the process? Do you get a -- do you get provided a weekly update? Are you reviewing -- are you doing plan review? How does that work?

A. No. I mean, we use the Marine Safety Center for plan review. In fact, if I remember correctly, MTH had to be involved as well because some of the, the -- some of those requirements were new. Mr. -- now or retired Captain John Venture (ph.) when he was lieutenant commander at headquarters was responsible for the first guidance for submersibles and operation. And then he transferred out here, and did three years as I think it was chief of inspection or chief of prevention. And then he, he pleaded up to be XO, and then from here transferred to Philly as CO. But John Venture was, was also a source of expert knowledge. He was available here in case we needed policy determinations, that type of thing.

Q. You used the term MTH. What is -- I'm sorry.

A. I'm dating myself. Sorry.

Q. Yes.
A. That is a -- it's Maritime Technical and Hazardous Materials Division. It was predecessor to MSE, I guess, is the current. So but we had some engagement with them, but not an awful lot. Just some -- they had some field validation stuff that they wanted to do. But most of it was with Marine Safety Center, and then things got even more grounded, and properly supported with NVIC 593. Lot easier to figure it out.
Q. And then with -- so the *Atlantis*. But you said there was, there was two. Is that -- am I correct --
A. Correct.
Q. -- or you can correct me.
A. No, no, not at all. Atlantis was built -- the first one was done up in Vancouver. And, in fact, the subsequent testing of the viewing ports was done in Vancouver in their office up there. We would periodically go up there, and validate that. And that also was an example of I mentioned earlier headquarters and (indiscernible) being involved. *Atlantis* would go and subject the view ports for these vessels which were inspected, certificated and operating in Hawaii for the most -- most recently. And they would -- once that interval was reached then they would petition headquarters to go beyond that. And so the field validation was ours saying, yeah, they did the testing in accordance with the standard and all that. Then headquarters would decide about the extension for the testing integral for the view ports. The hulls

that were built down in Tukwila, I don't have a real strong memory of those other than they, they were built for *Atlantis*, went through the certification process. We did a lot of testing, non-destructive testing for those holes down there because they're all welded holes.

Q. And both of those were -- metal or ferrous?

A. Yes.

Q. And you talking about the recert -- not recertification but the -- for the view ports to -- for those to be periodically tested throughout their lives or their -- is that analysis from the PVHL ASTM; is that from the standards there or?

A. That to my remembrance is that was the case. And then they, as I said, when they would reach a milestone then they would -- we would say, okay, you going to replace them? They would say, no, we're going to want more. We're going to want further extension of shelf life. That's when that decision went back to headquarters. But it was supported by the testing. So --

Q. And that would all be conducted third party?

A. We went up occasionally to Vancouver just to confirm that the process was ongoing, and was following the requirements, but they did have class society oversight as I remember too.

Q. So after the two *Atlantis* submarines or submersibles that were built here locally were there any other prior to OceanGate?

A. Nothing that came to fruition. We had some inquiries, but that was -- that's all I remember. You know what I mean? This is

quite some time ago; 10, 15 years ago. But all I remember was that there were -- we had some interest. One of the reasons that we were anticipating the OceanGate process or going through the process was that we hadn't had somebody do a submersible in a while. So it was an opportunity for us to renew our experience with constructing those vessels.

Q. And you remember how that process started?

A. With?

Q. With OceanGate.

A. In anticipation of coming here today I tried to see if I could figure out which way it was, whether it was the chicken or the egg. By that I mean did -- I seem to remember OceanGate that we found out that they were doing that, and we invited them to come in here and meet with us. And there was -- we explained the process, the NVIC, the guidance, how everything works. We described out own expertise in terms of having like with John Winters and others that had the experience with submersibles. And that it was not going to be a teach the Coast Guard moment. I mean, that the Coast Guard Sector Puget Sound had the requisite ability and expertise to go ahead and complete the inspection process. If I remember right, we then were invited to go out to a tour of their facility at Paine Field. It was a -- like a one hour here's what we do and all that. And then really as I remember it, it just never happened after that. And I can remember asking, hey, what's going on with OceanGate? Are they

going to complete the process and submit an application for inspection? And my remembrance is that that just never happened. We ended up with oceanographic research vessel determinations for one or two of the vessels, if I remember right.

Q. So when they initially came in to, to discuss their operations here -- this building, here within the sector, who was it who attended on the OceanGate?

A. I remember that the gentleman who passed away in the accident was there. I do specifically remember him. There were a couple other people, but I don't know who they were or certainly can't remember at this point.

Q. And what was Mr. Stockton Rush?

A. Yes.

Q. And then when you -- what was the time differential between when they came here and when you went to OceanGate?

A. Probably a week or two. It was, hey, come on out, see what we're doing. They were trying to reassure us in terms of how they were doing stuff. We went out there and looked, and said, yeah, this is all nice, but we've got to go through the, the NVIC and the inspection process.

Q. Were you kept in the loop throughout the process? As you stated you had to come back and ask where are we at in the process.

A. Well, that was me asking my staff, my inspectors, have you heard anything from OceanGate? And, frankly, they hadn't. And

that was -- I remember being disappointed, and frustrated the OceanGate would not go into the process and do, do the inspection routine as the NVIC and the other guidance called out. I mean, it was disappointing to us. Because I was looking forward to that. If you're in this business for a while you enjoy the big projects, the more complex ones. And this was that kind of opportunity for us. And then they just didn't, didn't respond was far as doing the inspection.

Q. Did any of your inspectors ever tell you -- did they ever have any communication with Mr. Rush as to why they didn't go forward?

A. I heard that it was the 150-foot limit that was in the NVIC. I know that John Winters kept in periodic touch with them it seemed, but that they really didn't like that limit in terms of how deep they could go. As you remember the *Atlantic* submersibles were only going down to like 50 feet if that. And although they were built to go deeper, but that was their operating plan.

Q. And were you involved as the OCMI in determining what OceanGate, what OceanGate should do to ensure that they're designed as an ORV to include ops plans and things like that?

A. Well, the oceanographic research vessel designation is limited. It says you've engaged in oceanographic or limnologic research or instruction. It doesn't go into a lot more detail than that. The expectation if you look at it is that they're doing something looking at the ocean bottom. But it doesn't --

there's not a lot of specific requirements in 46 CFR, Part 3. In the *Marine Safety Manual*, I mean, it talks about submitting an application, and then submitting within 60 days of biannual renewal you're supposed to submit it again. We do and have done oceanographic research vessel designations for, like, University of Washington, Western Washington University. We would -- we looked for something similar from OceanGate. There was also interest by OceanGate in doing something down in Catalina Island in California. That we worked through the OCMI reps. It's Sector LA/LB. And I remember correctly, and again this was quite a while ago, but if I remember correctly there was difficulty -- and I think this was -- I remember something of a discussion with Section LA/LB saying that they didn't feel that OceanGate was lined up correctly with what oceanographic research vessel was, and whether it would enable them to designate them with a letter. I don't know how that ever turned out. I don't remember that.

Q. Do you know who that would have been, or do you remember who that --

A. No. No. I mean, that was 10, 12 years ago something like that. But I just remember that there was -- we described to OceanGate here's what you have to do. You've got to talk to the people down there at Sector LA/LB.

Q. And that's how the process -- that process would work?

A. Yeah, which is -- that's normal for any inspection process. I mean, you kind of start with well whose area are they operating

in, and start talking to them.
Q. Did they ever operate out of Puget Sound with the designation that you guys had given to them?
A. I believe they did. I don't know. I remember my inspectors saying they were doing some operations. At the time as I understood it they were in compliance with the letter designation. But I don't remember them ever seeking renewal of that letter, and I think at that point they may have gone south to either Catalina or to -- I think they went to the Bahamas at some point as well.
Q. Do you remember roughly about what year, what year this was?
A. 2017, '18, somewhere maybe. I, I --
Q. Were you ever aware or were you ever made aware from your inspectors that the OceanGate was carrying passengers while operating in the U.S.?
A. No. Not passengers for hire. We would have stopped that. There was -- at least as far as operating in our zone. I mean, that was the whole point of the designation letter was to serve as equivalent for a certificate of inspection for a vessel that's under 300 gross tons. So, no. We -- I don't remember anything in terms of inspectors -- in answer to your question, I don't remember any of the inspectors coming back saying, hey, they're carrying passengers.
Q. After -- were you ever made aware after the application for certification had gone for plan review was denied by the Coast Guard of Mr. -- when he applied for the -- to get a COI or -- and

that was denied?
A. Denied?
Q. Or it was due to the 150-foot.
A. Yeah. No, I don't -- I, I take issue with the term denied. I mean, it was basically that we said here's what you need to do. 150 foot was part of that. It's in the NVIC. And as along with quite a few other requirements, meeting class standards whatever those happen to be in terms of whether they use DMV or ABS. But it was basically we said, hey, if you want to engage the passenger carrying submersible, you're going to have to meet these requirements. So it wasn't, it wasn't denial. It was just here's, here's what the -- where the goal posts are.
Q. Thank you for clarifying that. After he was provided the clarifying standards of what he needed to do to meet the standards, did you, did you ever have any discussions with him?
A. I didn't, no.
Q. And that would have been Mr. Winters?
A. Yeah. If anybody had a discussion with him it would have been John. But I think as it was related -- as John related to me he said basically, yeah, this, you know, that's -- it's going to be a problem for them. They want to go beyond 150 feet.
Q. Have you ever gone back to OceanGate ever since that one time?
A. No.
Q. Have you ever heard of any of your inspectors going to

OceanGate and seeing other submersibles or submarines there?
A. I heard that John had done a drive-by, and had seen the *Titan*, but I -- there was -- at the time I asked him what the story was; he says they're not going to operate here.
Q. And did he tell you how he knew that?
A. My assumption is he went in and chat with them, says what's going on? But I, I don't know that for sure. You guys have talked to John at some point?
Q. Yes.
A. Okay, good.
Q. Have you as the OCMI ever certified any submersibles?
A. Not me as the OCMI, no. Those were done prior to me being the OCMI.
Q. Okay.
A. But we, we did have the submersibles that were built down in Tukwila and then, of course, up in Vancouver.
Q. Were any of those ever that you have ever done ever were they made of non -- were they made of non-ferrous material? Were they made of carbon fiber or anything like that?
A. No. No. They were all welded to, to -- that I was involved with. In fact, I don't know that we ever issued a certificate because the certificates were predicated on the operating plan which had to be submitted to the local (indiscernible). That was not us, but because they were going to operate over in Hawaii or down in the Caribbean. So --

Q. Do all of your -- or did. Sorry. Did all of the ORVs that you designated were they required to submit operating plans?
A. Abbreviated operating plans. I mean, they basically had to describe what they were doing. We've had some that we rejected because they included instructions which if you look at the NVIC it, it, you know, you can't be accompanying oceanographic research with celestial navigation for example and all that. We had a -- it was a -- Seattle Maritime Academy had a vessel that they wanted to get oceanographic research vessel, but they were married up with the celestial navigation and other instruction. You can't -- if you look at the NVIC or the *Marine Safety Manual*, you can't do that. So --

MR. NEUBAUER: That's all the questions I have right now.

Mr. Muise.

BY MR. MUISE:

Q. To get to ORV -- there's an ORV built in your zone. Do they still need a either a federal document number or a state registration?
A. Yeah. They've got to have something.
Q. How about a hull identification number? Would they need one of those?
A. No. We ended up with state numbered vessels or documented vessels, but not with the hull identification like he had for rec boat.
Q. Okay. Do you know if any of the OceanGate vessels had state

numbers or CODs?
A. I don't think they ever did as far as I -- at least as far as my experience.
MR. MUISE: All right. That's all I have.
MR. NEUBAUER: Mr. [redacted]
BY MR. [redacted]
Q. For the ORV designation letter if one of them, like, one of the vessels got that from Seattle, could they -- or Puget Sound, could that vessel just kind of operate anywhere nationally for two years or would they have to check in?
A. Well, there's no check in. I mean, it's basically 60 days prior to the expiration they have to submit for renewal.
Q. Sure.
A. And that was our experience, like, for Western Washington University (indiscernible), those, that's what they would do. We would get something in on that. There's no monitoring required for the Coast Guard. There's nothing that says you've got to check on these guys or see what the story is.
Q. Sure. So technically under that letter, under our current program operate around (indiscernible) international waters?
A. I'd argue that point. My understanding of the way that it works is that they have to make the local OCMI happy. That's the process. And that's the only jurisdiction that -- at least what we did was we did not go and give ORV letters to vessels operating outside of our zone. So the understanding was that -- and I think

we gave one letter to one of the OceanGate vessels, if I remember correctly. But it was with the understanding they -- operate here, and that was of course also why when they decided to go down to California we referred them to the OCMI down there.

Q. From your experience do you have any concerns with the ORV program as it was at the time or as it still exists?

A. I guess I would say that in terms of programs it doesn't have a lot of exposure. It's sort of a small program in terms of how many letters people issue, various OCMIs will issue. I think that I would not include submersibles in that program because I think that those vessels require an extremely high degree of inspection expertise, and as well as their own operating expertise in terms of the operating plan that's approved by the NVIC. Right now Passenger Vessel Act when it was amended in 1990 allowed or restricted the people, the passengers for hire to one person on the submersibles, and I'd change that to zero. I'd say that if you're a submersible regardless of whether it's passenger for hire or not you should be inspected.

Q. Okay. So even a recreational -- or ORV?

A. No, not -- I was talking about submersibles. But as far as ORVs the existing program could benefit from a little more discussion in terms of locals and my responsibilities, and what to do if a vessel decided that they wanted to operate in a different zone.

Q. And so I want to make sure I understand that your -- the

point you made about the zero passengers is that -- can you clarify what you mean by that?

A. Yes. I was being a little bit brisk with that. Right now it says -- the law says that if you carry at least one passenger for hire you're supposed to be inspected as a submersible, a submersible.

Q. Sure.

A. By saying zero, I would, I would say -- and a good parallel or example for this is steam powered vessels. If you look in the law it says that steam powered vessels are supposed to all be inspected even if they're recreational. Now I think the Coast Guard stepped back on that a little bit from a policy standpoint. It has allowed recreational steam powered vessels to not be inspected. But it shows you the similarities in what I would recommend for submersibles that are in operation.

Q. Thank you. So the point is any submersible built and operated around the U.S. should -- the Coast Guard should take a look?

A. Right.

Q. And then do you think from your experience at -- with the ORVs and including the submersibles is the, is the policy consistent around the, the Coast Guard nation-wide? Like, are they handled the same? You mentioned you make some courtesy notifications to another OCMI, but is that with your experience is that standard? Is that reciprocated?

A. No. I mean, we didn't have any new vessels or existing vessels that came back and operate in the zone. Now, we had a relationship with Hawaii because we were building submersibles here that were going to be used and operated over there. We had a relationship with Sector LA/LB because OceanGate wanted to go down there and operate, unlike Hawaii, I don't know that that ever came to fruition. But I remember Sector LA/LB having concerns about what was going on in terms of the operation that was proposed for their area. And that was why I -- when you asked earlier about transference of a letter of designation to a different zone, that's why I -- because there's an -- or a requirement in there for the OCMI to validate the operating plan to me that precludes the letter of designation issued in one zone from serving for another. You have to get the local OCMI's authorization.

Q. And then, sir, were you ever aware of OceanGate submersibles operating in the Miami area, Sector Miami?

A. No. Not until after the fact, after they'd been operating down there.

MR. [redacted] That's all I have right now.

Mr. [redacted] do you have any questions?

MR. [redacted] No, sir, none.

MR. NEUBAUER: [redacted]

Okay. Well, I think we're at a point where we'd like to kind of just huddle for a break, sir, and make sure -- see if we have any more questions based on -- if you'd give us like 10 to 15

minutes.

MR. DWYER: Sure.

(Off the record.)

(On the record.)

MR. NEUBAUER: [redacted] you want to start, start us off on the --

MR. [redacted] Yeah, yeah, will do. So, we're -- sir, thank you again for joining us back here in session.

MR. DWYER: Sure.

MR. [redacted] After the first round of questions we've just talked. We have a few, Captain Neubauer, Mr. Neubauer has a few more questions we just want to go through, and again we really appreciate --

MR. DWYER: Sure.

BY MR. NEUBAUER

Q. So there's a couple -- we're investigating an OSHA whistleblower report against OceanGate in this area. And do you recall ever having the contact with OSHA --

A. No.

Q. -- in regards to OceanGate?

A. No. And that's, that's not to say we never had contact with OSHA, but it wasn't for OceanGate at all. I mean, we worked with OSHA. I worked with them when I was doing investigations, and we had (indiscernible). We worked with OSHA on a couple other projects, but I don't know of anything with OceanGate with OSHA.

Q. And when, when you say you're working with

OceanGate (verbatim), it's like the safety inspectors, maybe not whistleblower program? Because they have a dedicated whistleblower investigation program.

A. I don't remember anything with OSHA on OceanGate at all.

Q. But I mean like any other whistleblower type activities --

A. No.

Q. -- time?

A. No. I saw, saw some articles in the press. We never -- at least I never saw anything like that. Because we would have taken action. We've had some complaints for other vessels at other times, but and we follow-up with those. That's part of the Coast Guard's job. But not for OceanGate.

Q. Okay. And to clarify that though, would a, would a complaint come in like a safety complaint come in to OSHA, and then they would contact the local unit here? Would that be --

A. They had done it that way in the past. Sometimes it was done with a, a local, you know, local OSHA inspector talking to the local Coast Guard inspector, that kind of thing. But, again, not with OceanGate.

Q. Does the, the leadership when you have the higher inspections types CID chief of inspections or the prevention chief ever periodically meet with OSHA do you know? Does that happen like from a safety standpoint here in Puget Sound?

A. Not in any kind of a regular basis. There were -- I think we had some engagement on some fishing vessels, the diving tests that

I -- commercial diving tests that I talked about. I personally worked with OSHA on some of those, but it was not by any means routine that I've -- that I know of.

Q. So when a, when a major issue would come up then there would be interaction to the --

A. Oh, yeah, yeah. I mean, if, if -- we did have some sort of relationship with OSHA, but it wasn't on a day-to-day basis, you know. It was circumstances warranted.

Q. And then thinking back to OceanGate were you ever aware of like a higher level engagement between OceanGate and either the command structure of Sector Puget Sound or maybe the district?

A. No. That would be news to me.

Q. And then just thinking back to the experience you have with submersibles is there anything, like, any -- do you see any gaps or issues that you think that we should address now looking back on this? Like from a systems standpoint. From the regulatory or interagency work, whatever --

A. Well, one thing we did touch on earlier was the specific qualifications to inspect a submersible under construction. I think the Coast Guard should think about for not just submersibles but other very restricted type of special use vessels the Coast Guard should do more of what they have done in some case. There was some precedent not for submersibles but other vessels where Coast Guard Headquarters would go and find a local inspector that had expertise in that, and send him or her to a unit that didn't

have that expertise. And so we've done that. I'd probably just highlight that more, publicize that as an option. When I was in the last year of prior to my retirement that was a program I saw more of which I think is welcome and is what we should be doing. As far as the submersibles, if that, that's highlighted or that expertise issue is highlighted because there's so few of them being built that you just don't -- Sector Puget Sound was an anomaly in terms of having expertise, in terms of constructing submersibles. And we had a -- we, ourselves, had a big gap. The ones that were built in Tukwila there was quite a -- there was a number of years after that before we did any more submersibles. I don't know if that's the case (indiscernible), but that's something I'd look at.

MR. NEUBAUER: Thank you.

Are there any other questions from any of the Board Members?

BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

Q. Just one question. You said Paine Field, but the, the facility is located down at Port of Everett. Is that -- are we talking about the same place?

A. Paine Field is --

Q. Or --

(Simultaneous comments.)

A. -- the airport up at Everett.

Q. -- where Boeing is?

A. Correct.

Q. Yeah. I believe the company is in Port of Everett. Did they move or were they located --

A. They were at Paine Field for a while. I don't know if -- I saw similar stuff about Port Everett which is probably no means the same place.

Q. Do you remember going there? Was it in the, was it in --

A. I didn't go to -- I don't remember myself going to Port Everett. I do remember going to Paine Field.

Q. Okay.

A. I think it's just leased quarters I think. I imagine it just moved.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have one final question.

MR. NEUBAUER: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- final question but --

BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

Q. So with the oceanographic research vessels and with, with this sub -- with the submarines, did you require them to carry a merchant mariner credential? Not you personally, but as per guidance.

A. No. There's discussion in the manual about -- people being onboard and having credentials, but it was -- there's no requirement in the uninspected vessel oceanographic research letter program that I know of for people to have MMDs or licenses. I might be wrong on that, but I don't remember that as a

requirement.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. NEUBAUER: (Indiscernible)?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, sir.

MR. NEUBAUER: No.

Well, sir, is there anything else you'd like to Board that --

MR. DWYER: Yeah, I -- hopefully my recollection is not as faulty as I think it is, but I mean in terms of being able to recall exact dates and all of that.

MR. NEUBAUER: Sure.

MR. DWYER: I can recall policy questions, interpretations, that type thing. But as far as the dates, it was some time ago when this all happened over here. So hopefully you're able to get what you need.

MR. NEUBAUER: We understand that. And then if you, if you find a day later that is tighter and want to clarify, we accept that. Otherwise, we'll know it's kind of an approximate.

MR. DWYER: Yeah. I haven't looked at it recently because -- probably (indiscernible) for three years, but I understand the MISLE description was pretty decent, and there's decent background in MISLE for --

MR. NEUBAUER: For the *Titan*?

MR. DWYER: Yeah.

MR. NEUBAUER: Actually there was no background.

MR. DWYER: Not -- I'm sorry. Not the *Titan* but the other

vessel, *Cyclops*.

MR. NEUBAUER: Oh, for *Cyclops* and *Antipodes* --

MR. DWYER: *Antipodes*.

MR. NEUBAUER: -- there was MISLE --

MR. DWYER: Good. Okay. Yeah. That was something we tried to work on just to make sure that was properly done.

MR. NEUBAUER: But they were in MISLE.

MR. DWYER: Good.

MR. NEUBAUER: Well, I think that concludes this interview, sir. Greatly, again, greatly appreciate your time and consideration to assist the Board in investigation.

And at 1406 this interview is concluded.

(Whereupon, at 2:06 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	LOSS OF THE SUBMARINE *TITAN* IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN ON JUNE 18, 2023 Interview of John Dwyer
ACCIDENT NO.:	DCA23FM036
PLACE:	Puget Sound, Washington
DATE:	July 24, 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.

[redacted]

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

Errata

Interview with Mr. John Dwyer

Loss of the submersible *Titan*
DCA23FM036

Page/ Line	Original	Correction
5/7	indiscernible	Duck
6/17	Mr. Neubauer	LCDR [redacted]
8/20	CEO	CO
11/18	pleaded up	fleeted up
12/18	indiscernible	Marine Safety Center
13/4	holes	hulls
13/5	holes	hulls
13/11	PVHL	PVHO
17/13	Section LA/LB	Sector LA/LB
19/8	DMV or ABS	DNV or ABS
20/23	indiscernible	OCMI
21/13	Mr. Neubauer	LCDR [redacted]
22/5	Mr. Neubauer	LCDR [redacted]
22/15	indiscernible	UW
25/19	Mr. [redacted]	Mr. Neubauer
25/21	Mr. [redacted]	Mr. Neubauer
29/16	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER	Mr. [redacted]
30/12	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER	Mr. [redacted]
30/13	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER	LCDR [redacted]
31/3	indiscernible	NTSB