

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

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:
EXPRESS SHUTTLE II :
NTSB #DCA05MM002 :
:
INTERVIEW OF :
CORY BYRD :
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An interview in the above entitled matter was held
on Friday, October 22, 2004, commencing at 10:20 a.m.,
before:

BOB FORD, NTSB
BRIAN CURTIS, NTSB
NANCY MCATEE, NTSB
LT. ERIC STEIN, USCG
LT. HEATH HARTLEY, USCG
CHRIS CONNER, SUN CRUZ

EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT NUMBER

MARKED FOR IDENTIFICATION

Exhibit No. 2 (photo)

14

P R O C E E D I N G S

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MR. CURTIS: Good morning, it's October 22, 2004.

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We're here to interview deck hand Cory Byrd in regards to the accident involving the Shuttle Express II, which occurred on October 17, 2004.

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We've been through the way we want to conduct the questioning today with Mr. Byrd, so, what I'd like to do first is go around the table, and we'll identify ourselves for the transcriptionist, and I'll start with myself, asking questions, and we'll go around. If at any time you need to take a break, feel free to stop.

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I'm Brian Curtis, marine engineering accident investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

MR. HARTLEY: I'm Lieutenant Heath Hartley, U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Safety Office, Tampa, Chief of Port Operations.

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MS. MCATEE: Nancy McAtee, fire and explosion specialist, NTSB.

MR. CONNER: Chris CONNER, Port Captain, Port Richey Casino.

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MR. FORD: Bob Ford, investigator in charge, NTSB.

MR. STEIN: Lieutenant Eric Stein, the senior investigating officer at the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Tampa.

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1 MR. CURTIS: Okay, Cory, we'll start out. You
2 were on the vessel the day of the accident, so, if we could
3 just start. I'd just like to get everything that happened
4 during that day from the time you reported to work. Any
5 times you can remember, any details, great, but we try to
6 put together a timeline here. So, we need any details and
7 time, and just go through the entire accident, what happened
8 to you, and right up to the point you were, you know, all
9 said and done.

10 MR. BYRD: I arrived to work pretty early. It was
11 probably about, maybe, quarter after, 20 after 7 o'clock. I
12 normally get there early, get the boats ready. When I
13 arrived there, the senior deck hand, Travis, he was working
14 on the engine room, and told me he had all that stuff done
15 so I didn't have to worry about it. So, I went around my
16 regular business, getting AC strainers, just getting the
17 boat prepared.

18 We set off at approximately 8:30, 9:00, not
19 exactly sure the exact time we set off. Dropped off our
20 load, came back. On our way back, I'd say, about right
21 before we got into the mouth of the river, I heard a noise
22 coming from the starboard engine. Looked over, saw --
23 looked out the hatch and I saw smoke coming out the hatch.

24 So, I run upstairs. I told Captain Mario that
25 there was smoke coming from the engine so he can cut off the

1 engine, or whatever he has to do. Run back down stairs. Me
2 and the other deck hand, we moved all the table and chairs
3 out the way, tried to see where the smoke's coming from.
4 So, we try to lift the hatch, got the hatch up, maybe a good
5 inch at that. Fire shot out.

6 So, I had him run up and tell the Captain we had a
7 fire in the starboard engine. While, in the meantime, he
8 was doing that I went and got the fire extinguisher. Took
9 out the pin, took off the little clip, tested it, make sure
10 that it worked. He came back down, try to lift it, lens too
11 high.

12 Captain Mario came down, and they both try to lift
13 it. The fire was too strong, they couldn't hold it.
14 When -- really wasn't too much we didn't do, and I remember
15 smoke by -- at that time, smoke's pretty -- it was pretty
16 thick in there. So, we're running back and forth trying to
17 get air.

18 So, I remember going to the front of the boat.
19 Captain Mario's out there calling in on the Nextel telling
20 the Coast Guard and whoever else he was calling in. He had
21 grabbed the fire hose, told me to go turn on the switch on
22 the switchboard to turn on the fire hose. Went back there,
23 turned it on, came back. By that time, by the time I got
24 back to the bow of the boat, I guess it -- the fire was a
25 little too big.

1 I believe it was Petty Officer Rob that came and
2 picked us up, and he had told us fire was getting pretty
3 big. We could not see too good because smoke was pretty
4 heavy. So, we boarded his ship, or his vessel. They got
5 onto the (indiscernible). He took me to the -- to the dock
6 and I met the ambulance there. It went kind of quick so,
7 it's hard --

8 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

9 MR. BYRD: -- to really place it all in time.

10 MR. CURTIS: That's fine. So, you went to the
11 hospital, actually, afterwards, and were you there for some
12 time?

13 MR. BYRD: They kept me overnight for -- at first
14 they were telling me I should've left in about five, six
15 hours because my oxygen levels were real low. My blood
16 pressure was high, but they kept me overnight for
17 observations, because -- I don't know exactly what T waves
18 are, but something in my heart was off, and they were
19 concerned so they kept me overnight.

20 I was released the following morning about, I'd
21 say -- actually, about noon. Ended up going back the
22 following day, chest pain. They said it's just bruised
23 cartilage in my ribs from stress. I don't know. I still
24 have chest pains, but it comes and goes. I don't know if
25 it's cartilage, but (indiscernible) the doctors, I'll take

1 their word for it.

2 MR. CURTIS: You're the only one that came in on
3 that private vessel? The other two got off on the Trophy?

4 MR. BYRD: Yes, sir.

5 MR. CURTIS: The Trophy was, I believe, that's a
6 company vessel?

7 MR. BYRD: Yes.

8 MR. CURTIS: They've gone out?

9 MR. BYRD: Yes, it's a small -- small row.

10 MR. CURTIS: What maintenance would you do on the
11 engines in the morning, previous to leaving?

12 MR. BYRD: What maintenance? We'd check the oil
13 and make sure the engines and generators have oil, make sure
14 they have water. On the generators, do the same thing, oil
15 and water. We'd do the end caps and the C strainers, and
16 that's about most of what we had to do on that. Anything
17 further, I believe it's mechanics and them, or, I guess, the
18 ERT's do that.

19 MR. CURTIS: They do that? How frequently do they
20 check the engines?

21 MR. BYRD: We do that every run. I, personally,
22 when I'm running, I check it once in the morning during
23 layover, and when we get back. So, about three times on my
24 shift.

25 MR. CURTIS: You say you have RT's? Were those

1 there?

2 MR. BYRD: ERT, I guess there specifically -- I'm
3 not exactly what they're for.

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: I could clarify that. It's a
5 nickname, emergency response team. It's the maintenance
6 guys we have.

7 MR. CURTIS: How frequently do they do their
8 maintenance checks? Daily?

9 MR. BYRD: I believe the senior deck hand, really,
10 he does that in the morning, but if he's not there before I
11 am, then I get it done, and he'll go behind me and make sure
12 it's done right, but that morning I didn't have to worry
13 about it because he was there before I was. Normally, I'm
14 there early. He had it all finished and I didn't have to
15 worry about it. So, I didn't. That's my boss, so I figured
16 I'm not going to have to do it.

17 MR. CURTIS: You didn't notice any stronger smell
18 of diesel fumes or anything the day of the accident?

19 MR. BYRD: Not at all.

20 MR. CURTIS: Previous to that?

21 MR. BYRD: No. The day before we had -- I
22 remember we had a problem with a fuel line, but we hadn't
23 fixed that. Captain put on a new one. They wrapped it up.
24 There was no more leak in it. (Indiscernible) changed all
25 the air filters, and it seemed to be running fine.

1 MR. CURTIS: That was the day previous to the
2 accident?

3 MR. BYRD: I believe so.

4 MR. CURTIS: Do you recall which fuel line you
5 changed that night?

6 MR. BYRD: I know it was on the starboard engine.
7 I don't know too much about mechanics. I remember the
8 shape of it, but that's about it.

9 MR. CURTIS: That was actually broken off?

10 MR. BYRD: No, I guess it was just loose, because
11 it was just running out the -- where you tighten it up, the
12 bolt to the --

13 MR. CURTIS: Did you notice if it sprayed a lot of
14 fuel out, a little, or?

15 MR. BYRD: Yeah, a pretty good amount. There was
16 some fuel in the filters. There was fuel on top of the
17 engine. We had it cleaned up, and we changed everything,
18 disposed of everything before we put passengers back on. We
19 pretty much made sure it's safe for -- to carry people.

20 MR. CURTIS: After that the engine performed okay?
21 You didn't notice any --

22 MR. BYRD: Oh, yeah, it ran smooth and we didn't
23 have no problems with it, because we had ran it the rest of
24 the night, and there's no problem.

25 MR. CURTIS: Pumping bilges, how frequently you

1 check them, when you pump them?

2 MR. BYRD: The bilge pumps? We check those in the
3 morning, during layover, and stuff, and probably -- it's my
4 first run being first deck hand, so normally it's the person
5 above me normally checks all that and they do the pumping.
6 I might go down there and check in and be like yeah, it
7 needs to be pumped out, and depending at which dock we're at
8 and if it's got oil in it, or what it has in it. If it has
9 oil or fuel or something, then we pump it into one of the
10 big tanks up at the workshop, but --

11 MR. CURTIS: I'm trying to clarify, in my mind,
12 the pumps. Are you familiar with physically where the pumps
13 are, and which pump is which? Fire versus bilge pump?
14 Could you explain that to me?

15 MR. BYRD: Honestly, no.

16 MR. CURTIS: From the time you noticed the fire,
17 until the time you evacuated the vessel, I realize it's
18 difficult, but what would you estimate for a time frame that
19 - that took? The time you noticed it until you got off the
20 vessel?

21 MR. BYRD: Maybe 15, 20 minutes. It could've been
22 more.

23 MR. CURTIS: As far as your work history there,
24 when did you start?

25 MR. BYRD: I've been there approximately two

1 months, and I've been on boats my entire life. I grew up
2 here in Florida, so I've always been on the water. I'm
3 pretty familiar with them.

4 MR. CURTIS: You started, say, August? Something
5 like that?

6 MR. BYRD: Yes, about that. It probably was
7 September.

8 MR. CURTIS: Was there any orientation type
9 training you got? What did they give you for training when
10 you started?

11 MR. BYRD: When I started -- well, before I
12 actually started, they had to do a pre-hire where you go out
13 and just do everything that they do. Make sure that you'll
14 be able to last. They're pretty good on that and my first
15 few days, I'd say about three or four days, they had
16 me -- just teaching me all the stuff I'd have to do. The
17 engine work, check -- how to check the oil, how to check the
18 water (indiscernible) caps, AC strainers, stuff like that.
19 Just routine stuff that I needed to know. Switchboards, I
20 mean, it took me a little bit to get everything down, but
21 that's why -- I was new so, it was expected. That's fine.

22 MR. CURTIS: I've got a question. I guess they
23 serve alcohol on the shuttle?

24 MR. BYRD: Not at all.

25 MR. CURTIS: Not on the shuttle?

1 MR. BYRD: No.

2 MR. CURTIS: When you checked the fires, when you
3 first noticed it? I'm trying to clarify which hatches you
4 checked it with, and which ones were left open or closed.
5 If you could just go through that?

6 MR. BYRD: The starboard hatch right over the
7 engine, we could never get that fully opened. I have to
8 apologize for leaving it out. I did open up the back hatch
9 to see if I could see where the fire was. Smoke's too
10 thick. I don't exactly remember if I closed it up or not.
11 I mean, it was pretty quick. I was trying to get the fire
12 extinguisher, do what I was supposed to do, according to the
13 fire procedures on the sheet.

14 MR. CURTIS: Do you recall how many extinguishers
15 there were on the vessel, portable extinguishers?

16 MR. BYRD: I can't recall, but then I just grabbed
17 the one that was closest near to me. There was one right on
18 the port side, right near the bar. So, I just grabbed that
19 and I tested it, and it worked, and went to try to see if we
20 can get the hatch up, and put it out, put it out, the base
21 of the flames, but we couldn't get to the fire.

22 MR. CURTIS: Drills on board, how frequently do
23 you do fire and emergency drills?

24 MR. BYRD: Honestly, I've never been involved in a
25 fire drill. I've personally, sat down and read over all

1 their emergency procedures, myself. Just I wanted to make
2 sure I knew them, personally. I've never been part of the
3 drill.

4 MR. CURTIS: Were you trained in where the life
5 jackets were --

6 MR. BYRD: Oh, yeah.

7 MR. CURTIS: -- and where the emergency equipment
8 was?

9 MR. BYRD: I knew where all the life jackets were
10 and the boats were, but other than that I've never really
11 did a drill. I've heard of them doing drills, but I,
12 personally, haven't gotten to them.

13 MR. CURTIS: I'll stop there and pass it along.

14 MR. HARTLEY: Okay, thank you. Heath Hartley,
15 U.S. Coast Guard. How long have you been employed with this
16 company?

17 MR. BYRD: I'd say approximately two months.

18 MR. HARTLEY: August sometime or other? You had
19 mentioned that you were present during the fuel line change
20 out --

21 MR. BYRD: Uh-huh.

22 MR. HARTLEY: -- on, I believe, Saturday evening?

23 MR. BYRD: Yes.

24 MR. HARTLEY: If we showed you a picture, maybe
25 you could sort of orient yourself to what side of the motor

1 you think the fuel line was being repaired on?

2 MR. BYRD: I know it was on the -- if you're
3 facing towards the bow, it was on the starboard side of the
4 engine.

5 MR. HARTLEY: (indiscernible) clarify
6 (indiscernible) it's kind of looking at, so?

7 MR. BYRD: It would've been -- this is the front,
8 I believe, right?

9 (Exhibit Number 2 was marked
10 for identification.)

11 MR. HARTLEY: You can circle that. For the
12 record, this will be photo number 2, Mr. Byrd's identifying
13 the location where they'd done the work Saturday night.

14 MR. BYRD: Okay that area right there. There was
15 only one fuel line.

16 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

17 MR. CONNER: Can I see that please? Thank you.

18 MR. HARTLEY: You mentioned that yourself and the
19 other deck hand helped with the clean up of some fuel that
20 was on the engine and airing tanks?

21 MR. BYRD: Yeah, the filters. We changed the
22 intakes out --

23 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

24 MR. BYRD: No, it wouldn't be too good if we got
25 fuel into the (indiscernible).

1 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

2 MR. BYRD: Those things (indiscernible) real
3 quick.

4 MR. HARTLEY: Was it routine for you just to
5 assist in some minor capacity like engineering stuff?

6 MR. BYRD: No, I was going to assist the Captain
7 if he needed it. I noticed that the intakes needed to be
8 changed. So, I already knew how to do that so, I just went
9 ahead and did that with the other deck hand. The other
10 stuff, we had an engineer (indiscernible) the vessel come on
11 too, but by that time, I believe Captain Ron already had the
12 job done, had it put on and replaced.

13 MR. HARTLEY: Okay, let's move forward to the day
14 of the incident, just after you dropped the passengers off,
15 and you were making your way back in, explain to me what
16 would you be doing after you finish the morning run. You're
17 heading back to the dock.

18 MR. BYRD: Just making sure the boat was tidied
19 up. Make sure everything's cleaned up, got ice --

20 MR. HARTLEY: Is this what you were doing that
21 morning? Tell me exactly what you were doing.

22 MR. BYRD: Honestly, I'd worked the night before,
23 so, I was kind of in the bathroom because I ate something a
24 little funky, but I was doing my regular clean up. I want
25 to be honest. Just regular clean up, be in the bathroom,

1 came back and I heard a noise.

2 MR. HARTLEY: What did it sound like, this noise?

3 MR. BYRD: It was almost like something dropped,
4 or like grinded. It was weird. Like almost like if you
5 dropped a tool into a toolbox and (indiscernible). It was
6 more like two noises. Like I said, at first I thought we
7 had hit bottom or something, but I heard the noise coming
8 from the engine, so I figured it's the engine instead of a
9 problem with the rudder or something.

10 MR. HARTLEY: Were you inside the main cabin
11 area, the salon --

12 MR. BYRD: Yes.

13 MR. HARTLEY: -- at the time? Was there anybody
14 else present?

15 MR. BYRD: Yeah, the other deck hand, Mike.

16 MR. HARTLEY: Could you tell what side of the
17 engine compartment it was coming from?

18 MR. BYRD: Oh, yeah.

19 MR. HARTLEY: Starboard? Port?

20 MR. BYRD: No, starboard, because right after I
21 heard it, I looked over and I saw smoke, thick white smoke
22 coming from it, and I guess it had just started -- smoke
23 just coming out of it, because it wasn't too far out of the
24 hatch, maybe six inches or something.

25 MR. HARTLEY: Do you know if the Express Shuttle

1 II was equipped with smoke or heat detectors?

2 MR. BYRD: Honestly, I don't know.

3 MR. HARTLEY: Had you ever heard of smoke alarm,
4 like a detector alarm, on the bridge, or anywhere else in
5 the vessel?

6 MR. BYRD: No, I know we have bilge alarms, like
7 if the water gets too high (indiscernible).

8 MR. HARTLEY: Right, okay, thank you.

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: Chris Conner, Port Richey Casino.
10 Did you -- you say you heard a noise, did you ever hear the
11 engine speed back up?

12 MR. BYRD: Not at all. It sounded like it idled
13 for a second, but I couldn't tell if that was the starboard
14 engine idling or the port engine idling, so I had ran
15 upstairs and told Captain Mario about the noise and the
16 smoke, and figured he would either cut off (indiscernible) I
17 believe he had said it stalled out, or did something like
18 that.

19 CAPTAIN CONNER: It had already stalled?

20 MR. BOYD: That's what he had said. He said it
21 just wasn't working, when I went out there.

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: So, after you came in the channel
23 and made the turn and slowed down on idle, you never heard
24 the engine speed back up?

25 MR. BOYD: No.

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: That's all I have.

2 MS. MCATEE: Nancy McAtee, NTSB. I have a couple
3 of questions. I'm going to kind of bounce around, so --

4 MR. BOYD: That's fine.

5 MS. MCATEE: -- they're not along the same line.
6 On the hatches, I just wanted to clarify, the back hatch,
7 you opened, but you can't remember if you closed it, is that
8 correct?

9 MR. BOYD: Honestly, yes.

10 MS. MCATEE: And the starboard engine hatch that
11 they were opening, did it get closed every time that it was
12 opened, do you recall?

13 MR. BOYD: I don't know if it got closed all the
14 way, but it was pretty heavy. I mean, we couldn't even --
15 every time it got lifted, it didn't get lifted more than an
16 inch.

17 MS. MCATEE: And so then, you'd set it back down,
18 the fire came out?

19 MR. BOYD: Yeah, it really got dropped. It was
20 definitely closed.

21 MS. MCATEE: After you reported the fire to the
22 Captain and you came back with a fire extinguisher, do you
23 remember, can you guess how long you were down there exposed
24 to the smoke?

25 MR. BOYD: I was probably exposed to the smoke for

1 a good 15 minutes, because I had the other guy go and tell
2 the Captain that there was a fire. I went up there the
3 first time and told him that there was smoke.

4 MS. MCATEE: Other times that you've been on this
5 boat, do you recall any other problems with the engine,
6 other than the repair that you did on Saturday?

7 MR. BOYD: Nothing other than I -- maybe a couple
8 times a fuel line, and that was -- it would've been like the
9 second, and that was just (indiscernible) fuel line.
10 Nothing ever like major that caused us not to run it.

11 MS. MCATEE: On Saturday, and then the one other
12 time it was a fuel line?

13 MR. BOYD: Yeah.

14 MS. MCATEE: Once you got off the boat, did you
15 get a chance to see where the fire had spread to? Did you
16 see where it came out of and engulfed --

17 MR. BOYD: Once we got off the boat, we just
18 pretty much drove off, maybe 50 yards away. The entire boat
19 was engulfed in flames. That's why we had -- we got off
20 just in time.

21 MS. MCATEE: That's all I have, thank you.

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: I have one more question. Chris
23 Conner, again. You said also that you were the only one who
24 went to the dock with the pleasure boat guy?

25 MR. BOYD: Yes.

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: So, Mario and the other deck hand
2 got off of --

3 MR. BOYD: They got off, I believe, it was Woods
4 and Travis on the Trophy, because Captain Mario had
5 requested -- go onto the Trophy, so, Petty Officer Rob or
6 Ron, I don't exactly remember his name, brought him over to
7 the boat, because (indiscernible) the channel. They boarded
8 that and he brought us into the dock (indiscernible).

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: You said also that you were
10 checking fluids, if somebody didn't show up. Has there ever
11 been a day that Stan or Travis wasn't there to do those
12 engine checks? In the morning?

13 MR. BOYD: I've gotten there quite a few times,
14 because I always show up at 7:30, and I always -- like, I'm
15 always there early, so, if they're not on the boat, I go
16 down there and check them anyways, and they'll come --
17 eventually come and --

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: Recheck?

19 MR. BOYD: Yes. (Indiscernible).

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: That's all I've got.

21 MR. STEIN: It's Lieutenant Eric Stein, with the
22 Coast Guard. I'm going to go back to Saturday night again,
23 when you did the fuel line work. Where did that part come
24 from?

25 MR. BOYD: The extra fuel line?

1 MR. STEIN: Yes.

2 MR. BOYD: We have all the fuel lines stored in
3 the fuel room, which is towards the front of the boat a
4 little bit more.

5 MR. STEIN: Was it packaged or just sitting on the
6 shelf, or how --

7 MR. BOYD: No, we have them -- all our fuel lines
8 are in a big plastic bin, or cupboard, and they're all in
9 their packages, labeled.

10 MR. STEIN: Who actually changed the fuel line?

11 MR. BOYD: Captain Ron did.

12 MR. STEIN: Captain Ron? He removed a fuel line
13 from a bag and used a fuel line in that?

14 MR. BOYD: Yes.

15 MR. STEIN: Is that correct?

16 MR. BOYD: That's correct.

17 MR. STEIN: You mentioned earlier that you're a
18 first deck hand and this was your first time as --

19 MR. BOYD: Yeah, this was my first time being, I
20 guess, (indiscernible) because I've been here longer than
21 Captain Mike or, it's not Captain Mike, deck hand Mike, and
22 I was pretty much, I guess, the first mate on board. I
23 don't exactly know. I was running the boat.

24 MR. STEIN: How do you get to that point?

25 MR. BOYD: Just doing the work, just learning

1 (indiscernible) and learning everything on the boat that you
2 really need to know, and not out there (indiscernible)
3 senior deck hand. I haven't been there long enough, but
4 I've definitely been there long enough and I know my way
5 around the boats enough to run the boat with another deck
6 hand that doesn't happen as much experience.

7 MR. STEIN: Yes.

8 MR. BOYD: I definitely felt like I was qualified
9 enough for it. I had all the confidence and experience to
10 do it.

11 MR. STEIN: You mentioned also that you
12 familiarized yourself with the fire procedures because you
13 hadn't received any training, but what were the fire
14 procedures on the vessel, and where were they posted?

15 MR. BOYD: They were posted on different spots on
16 the boats. On the (indiscernible) the one that had the
17 accident, I believe, there was one towards the back, towards
18 the bar. There was one up front next to the closet. There
19 might've been a couple other posted, but there's quite a few
20 of them that had what to do in (indiscernible), fire, and
21 something else.

22 I don't exactly remember, but I noticed the fire
23 one, and it pretty much just said make sure to close all the
24 hatches to the fire. Don't let any air, get the fire
25 extinguishers, put out the fire at the base, make sure any

1 passengers have their life vest on, if it gets too bad, and
2 stuff like that. I haven't -- I couldn't exactly tell you
3 step by step.

4 MR. STEIN: Were you familiar with any of the
5 firefighting systems on the ship besides the extinguishers?

6 MR. BOYD: Not at all, other than the fire house
7 out front.

8 MR. STEIN: The fire hose, okay.

9 MR. FORD: Bob Ford, NTSB. Just so I can get it
10 straight in my own mind, the sequence of events. I just
11 want to try to walk you through it. I don't want to put
12 words in your mouth. Okay, you heard a noise?

13 MR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

14 MR. FORD: You looked at one of the hatches?

15 MR. BOYD: That's correct.

16 MR. FORD: You saw white smoke?

17 MR. BOYD: That's correct, it was white smoke.

18 MR. FORD: You went to the hatch and lifted it?

19 MR. BOYD: We tried to.

20 MR. FORD: Tried to, okay. You're not certain if
21 you put the hatch back down?

22 MR. BOYD: That one I do know that hatch went back
23 down. I'm not certain if I closed the hatch --

24 MR. FORD: Yes.

25 MR. BOYD: -- in the back where you enter the

1 engine room.

2 MR. FORD: Yes, okay. You went to the wheel house
3 to see the Captain?

4 MR. BOYD: Yes.

5 MR. FORD: And what did you tell him, again?

6 MR. BOYD: That there was smoke coming from the
7 starboard engine.

8 MR. FORD: Okay, so, now then you went back to the
9 space?

10 MR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

11 MR. FORD: And then you saw more smoke?

12 MR. BOYD: Yeah, but there was a lot more smoke
13 coming out by that time.

14 MR. FORD: You went and got an extinguisher?

15 MR. BOYD: Yes, well, actually, no, by that time
16 me and the other deck hand had moved all the tables and
17 chairs to open it up to see if we could see if there was a
18 fire.

19 MR. FORD: The big main hatch now?

20 MR. BOYD: Yes.

21 MR. FORD: Okay.

22 MR. BOYD: The main hatch, and opened it up, like
23 not even an inch, and fire shot out. I told him to go up
24 and tell the Captain we have a fire in the engine room.

25 MR. FORD: Yes.

1 MR. BOYD: I went and got the extinguisher.

2 MR. FORD: Yes.

3 MR. BOYD: He came back down, he tried to lift it,
4 while I tested the extinguisher --

5 MR. FORD: You say he, the other deck hand, Mike?

6 MR. BOYD: Yes, the other deck hand, excuse me.

7 MR. FORD: Yes, that's all right.

8 MR. BOYD: He came back down, he tried to lift it,
9 and fire shot out every time.

10 MR. FORD: Yes.

11 MR. BOYD: And Captain Mario came down and tried
12 to do the same thing with both of them while I'm -- I got
13 the extinguisher. I shot, maybe, in there for a split
14 second. I mean, they couldn't hold it, fire was just --

15 MR. FORD: Yes.

16 MR. BOYD: -- I'm not one to sit there and get
17 burned, and watching them get burned, you know. They
18 dropped it.

19 MR. FORD: Do you know what type of extinguisher
20 it was?

21 MR. BOYD: I know the contents. It seemed to be
22 like a powder. It was orange, I do remember that.

23 MR. FORD: Where did you get it? Where was it
24 located? Where was it stowed on the boat?

25 MR. BOYD: It was stored on the port side, and it

1 was like, almost parallel with the bar.

2 MR. FORD: At that time, now, smoke has engulfed
3 you, pretty much?

4 MR. BOYD: Yeah, the boat was pretty filled with
5 smoke about that time.

6 MR. FORD: Did you hear the boat that was coming
7 alongside or did you just look out and see?

8 MR. BOYD: No, because we had, like I said before,
9 we were running in and out a couple times, trying to figure
10 out what to do.

11 MR. FORD: Yes.

12 MR. BOYD: Like, just catch our breath, mainly.

13 MR. FORD: Yes.

14 MR. BOYD: Because we would have to get air,
15 there's a lot of smoke in there, and we just saw a couple
16 guys. One, I believe, the Petty Officer, he had said he was
17 calling in the Coast Guard. There was a few other people
18 out on boats, and they were calling it in too.

19 MR. FORD: Yes.

20 MR. BOYD: But, I -- you could see him just pull
21 up on the boat next to ours. We knew he was there because
22 we'd run out to the front -

23 MR. FORD: Yes.

24 MR. BOYD: -- before we loaded it, trying to get
25 the fire hose towards the end of the incident --

1 MR. FORD: Yes.

2 MR. BOYD: -- and he was already there, telling us
3 we needed to get on. We were trying to, pretty much, do
4 what we had to do.

5 MR. FORD: I think I have it clear. This next
6 thing I want to walk you through, it's what we call a 72-
7 hour profile, and we look at things (indiscernible) fatigue,
8 things like that and we're not trying to attack you. I was
9 19 once, also. I know what I did at 19. So, but since you
10 were involved with the Saturday night change out, yours is
11 going to be a little longer. So, we're going to start with
12 you Wednesday night, Thursday night, Friday night, and
13 Saturday night.

14 MR. BOYD: Okay.

15 MR. FORD: So, if you could start with, say,
16 Wednesday, and it doesn't have to be everything you did.
17 You know, if you woke up at a certain time, was there a lot
18 of physical activity during the day? Were you out playing
19 baseball or something? Just your basic schedule.

20 MR. BOYD: Honestly, I couldn't tell you my
21 schedule, because I just got switched. My schedule's been
22 switched quite a few times the past couple of weeks.

23 MR. FORD: Yes.

24 MR. BOYD: I do believe I worked in the morning on
25 Wednesday. I do know I had Thursday off. I had -- didn't

1 really do anything too physical, because I'm trying to save
2 my strength for work.

3 MR. FORD: Yes.

4 MR. BOYD: And Thursday, I was on stand-by 6:00 to
5 2:00 -

6 MR. FORD: Yes.

7 MR. BOYD: -- on the work dock. So, if they
8 needed me, they'd call me in. So, I was home all night.

9 MR. FORD: Yes.

10 MR. BOYD: Friday, I worked. I got up, the normal
11 time, probably about 10:00. 11:00, when I work at -- or when
12 I work at night. So, I sleep in a little later.

13 MR. FORD: Yes.

14 MR. BOYD: I worked 6:00 to 2:00 Friday. Same
15 thing Saturday, and Saturday was when we had a problem with
16 the fuel line, and got up the next morning, I only got a few
17 hours sleep, but I don't sleep too much anyways, and got up
18 Sunday. Got up and went to work about quarter after, 20
19 after 7:00.

20 MR. FORD: Saturday, you were on that late shift,
21 so you must've gotten home late?

22 MR. BOYD: I got home, probably, about 2:00. I
23 got off at 2:00, so, I mean, I live five minutes away from
24 (indiscernible), so it was just a couple minutes afterwards.

25 MR. FORD: So, 2:00 a.m., Sunday, and then you

1 said you went to bed right away?

2 MR. BOYD: Oh, yeah.

3 MR. FORD: Then, you got up at what time?

4 MR. BOYD: I got up at approximately 6:45.

5 MR. FORD: 6:45?

6 MR. BOYD: I took a shower, and got ready, and
7 just drove straight to work.

8 MR. FORD: You said you ate something, which kind
9 of upset your stomach?

10 MR. BOYD: Oh, that was the night before. They
11 got some weird funky cheese steaks.

12 MR. FORD: Did this influence your sleep schedule?

13 MR. BOYD: No, not at all.

14 MR. FORD: You're not on any medications or
15 anything like that I take it?

16 MR. BOYD: No, not at all. You all said you
17 wanted to know what I was doing.

18 MR. FORD: That's right. On Sunday, did you feel
19 well rested?

20 MR. BOYD: I was a little tired, so, before I came
21 -- I did stop at Hess and I grabbed a little breakfast
22 sandwich and a Powerade.

23 MR. FORD: Yes, how about Saturday night when you
24 were assisting with changing out the filters?

25 MR. BOYD: Did I eat anything?

1 MR. FORD: No, how did you feel? Were you --

2 MR. BOYD: Oh, I was fine.

3 MR. FORD: -- starting to drag?

4 MR. BOYD: Oh, no, I was fine.

5 MR. FORD: Okay.

6 MR. BOYD: I like to work, so.

7 MR. FORD: Just give a little information on how
8 you were hired at the company. What did you have to go
9 through?

10 MR. BOYD: I saw the ad in the paper. I went
11 down, filled out an application. They called in, I believe,
12 two days later, said go out on a pre-hire. I went out on
13 the pre-hire, went back, took a drug test, and they called
14 me back, I believe --

15 MR. FORD: They -- afterwards -- started?

16 MR. BOYD: I believe I started on a Wednesday. I
17 went out on the pre-hire on a Monday.

18 MR. FORD: All right, you also say you assist with
19 doing some of the work with the engines like changing
20 filters, is that correct?

21 MR. BOYD: Yeah, the air intake filters?

22 MR. FORD: Right, yes. Is that on the job that
23 you've learned, or growing up you've learned? You've been
24 around diesel engines -

25 MR. BOYD: That was on the job I've learned. I

1 mean I've done that on cars.

2 MR. FORD: Yes. So, you're like the
3 (indiscernible) mechanic, they call them, where you've
4 learned engines through just working on them.

5 MR. BOYD: I'm not too familiar with engines, but
6 I do know certain stuff, and if I don't know it, I'm not
7 going to do it. I'll let someone else know that hey, I
8 think this has a problem, or something like that -

9 MR. FORD: Yes.

10 MR. BOYD: -- like someone that's more
11 experienced, but the air filters, I mean, it's pretty
12 simple. You take off the end, and replace the filter.

13 MR. FORD: Yes.

14 MR. BOYD: Put a new filter on, put some ties on
15 it, and put it back on, and make sure it's covered.

16 MR. FORD: Who showed you how to do that?

17 MR. BOYD: I couldn't exactly tell you who. I was
18 trained by quite a few people.

19 MR. FORD: But it was somebody at the company -

20 MR. BOYD: Oh, yes, absolutely

21 MR. FORD: -- on one of the boats that you --
22 Okay, thank you.

23 MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, NTSB. Do you know,
24 when you change a fuel line, what they do with these old
25 fuel lines? Do you throw them away, or do they go back

1 to --

2 MR. BOYD: I believe the fuel lines, we save the
3 package that it came in, and we take the -- keep the old
4 one, and I believe the Captain takes the --

5 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

6 MR. BOYD: That night, I believe he took them up
7 with him to the bridge, because we had two captains on board
8 that night.

9 MR. CURTIS: Once again, I don't want to put words
10 into you, but did you think, as far as the fuel lines, did
11 you see them frequently failing? If there was a problem in
12 the engine, what would it be?

13 MR. BOYD: If there was a problem with the engine?
14 Honestly, I really couldn't tell you. The fuel line, I've
15 only seen that happen like twice. I haven't seen the
16 (indiscernible) really mess up. From what I thought that
17 was our best boat. It always seemed to run really good.
18 I've seen them change out a prop, maybe, low tide or
19 something, but that's about it.

20 MR. CURTIS: So, you worked on all the vessels?

21 MR. BOYD: I've worked on all the vessels except
22 the one which is the pontoon boat.

23 MR. CURTIS: And you've never been involved in a
24 drill on any of the vessels, you're saying?

25 MR. BOYD: No.

1 MR. CURTIS: That's all I have.

2 MR. HARTLEY: Heath Hartley, U.S. Coast Guard.

3 When you went to get the Captain, I think you said you were
4 the first deck hand to go and --

5 MR. BOYD: Inform him.

6 MR. HARTLEY: -- alert him?

7 MR. BOYD: Yes.

8 MR. HARTLEY: Did you go all the way into the
9 bridge?

10 MR. BOYD: Yes.

11 MR. HARTLEY: Did you notice any alarms ringing?

12 MR. BOYD: No.

13 MR. HARTLEY: What was his mannerism when you went
14 to the bridge? Did he realize anything was going on?

15 MR. BOYD: He seemed pretty alert. I guess he
16 already knew somewhat about the problem, he was trying to, I
17 guess, figure out what was wrong with the starboard engine
18 up there.

19 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

20 MR. BOYD: Like he said -- he said it was stalled
21 or something like that. I mean, I was waiting to hear --
22 for him to give directions. He didn't, but I went back
23 downstairs to try to do what we're supposed to do and that's
24 try to figure out where the fire is, and extinguish it.

25 MR. HARTLEY: So, when you told him, there's

1 smoke, what did you say to him?

2 MR. BOYD:: I told him that we have smoke coming
3 out of the starboard engine hatch.

4 MR. HARTLEY: What was his response?

5 MR. BOYD: He said -- I believe he said the engine
6 had stalled. I honestly, I don't remember exactly what he
7 said.

8 MR. HARTLEY: How long would you estimate that you
9 were up in the wheelhouse with him?

10 MR. BOYD: Maybe 20 seconds, 30 seconds.

11 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

12 MR. BOYD: He just said something about the engine
13 stalling or not working. I told him about the smoke and
14 went back down and -- trying to lift the hatch, fire came
15 out, and I (indiscernible).

16 MR. HARTLEY: Did he direct you at all to grab an
17 extinguisher?

18 MR. BOYD: No, I mean, that's pretty much, you
19 should know already to do that. I already knew that.

20 MR. HARTLEY: How much more smoke accumulated from
21 the time you left to go to the wheelhouse, to come back
22 down?

23 MR. BOYD: Quite a bit.

24 MR. HARTLEY: Would you say a little? A lot more?

25 MR. BOYD: A lot more. I mean, that boat, it went

1 up pretty quick.

2 MR. HARTLEY: Where was all the smoke coming from?

3 MR. BOYD: It was coming from the starboard engine
4 side. Most of it was coming out through that hatch, and
5 through the sides. It was just leaking up, and eventually
6 it was just coming through all the hatches, and I guess, I
7 couldn't really see on the outside, but a lot of it, from
8 the person that was on the -- or Petty Officer, he said
9 that's what he noticed before we even, I guess, had the
10 problem with the boat. He said he had noticed smoke coming
11 out of the side.

12 MR. HARTLEY: Can you recall whether or not the
13 jump down hatch in the back was open?

14 MR. BOYD: I couldn't recall. It's always closed
15 for safety reasons so people don't fall down there.

16 MR. HARTLEY: Right.

17 MR. BOYD: Now, I did open it to see if I could
18 locate the fire, but I don't know if I put it down or not.

19 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

20 MR. BOYD: The other hatches, I do know, were down
21 just as every time we try to --

22 MR. HARTLEY: Right.

23 MR. BOYD: -- the fire.

24 MR. HARTLEY: You mentioned that two captains were
25 on board Saturday night. What does that mean?

1 MR. BOYD: I believe one was training, because
2 Captain Ron was training him, and we were docked up to the
3 vessel, so, he was out there while, I guess, looking over
4 everything while Captain Ron came down to fix the fuel line.

5 MR. HARTLEY: So, he ran with Captain Ron that
6 evening?

7 MR. BOYD: Yes.

8 MR. HARTLEY: On the evening shift?

9 MR. BOYD: Uh-huh.

10 MR. HARTLEY: There was not a second shuttle
11 running on Saturday night?

12 MR. BOYD: -- night, I don't -- I don't remember.
13 Yeah, actually, I think there was two of them running
14 Saturday night. There was only one of them running Friday
15 night.

16 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

17 MR. BOYD: But Saturday night, there was, I
18 believe, two of them.

19 MR. HARTLEY: Who would the other captain be?

20 MR. BOYD: Captain Ron and Captain Mario. I don't
21 know the -- Captain Mario wasn't (indiscernible). I don't
22 know the name of the new captain. I haven't really talked
23 to him.

24 MR. HARTLEY: All right.

25 MR. FORD: Bob Ford again, one question. As

1 senior mate, do you keep the inventory of supplies on board,
2 is that correct?

3 MR. BOYD: I'm not a senior mate, I'm just a deck
4 hand. I said I haven't gotten up to a senior mate.

5 MR. FORD: Oh, okay.

6 MR. BOYD: No, I believe the -- it used to be the
7 senior mate's position, but I think it was given to the head
8 deck hand.

9 MR. FORD: Okay.

10 MR. BOYD: Travis, so, he takes care of inventory
11 now.

12 MR. FORD: I guess these senior mates, then,
13 aren't traveling? You don't have a senior mate on each
14 boat, then, they're like assigned to shore?

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: We use to have what we call the
16 senior mate.

17 MR. FORD: Yes.

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: And now they're -- we've got the
19 man that does maintenance in the morning.

20 MR. FORD: Yes.

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: We've kind of labeled him as
22 their overseer, which would be the senior, senior guy that
23 oversees all the crew on the shuttle.

24 MR. FORD: Yes, so, he would check the inventory?

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah.

1 MR. FORD: That's all I have.

2 MR. CURTIS: I guess that's it. I appreciate it,
3 Cory. This concludes the interview of Mr. Byrd, the time is
4 now 10:55 a.m.

5 (Whereupon, at 10:55 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

DEPOSITION SERVICES, INC., hereby certifies that the attached pages represent an accurate transcript of the electronic sound recording of the proceedings of the National Transportation Safety Board Interview regarding the Express Shuttle II, NTSB #DCA05MM002.

INTERVIEW OF CORY BYRD

DECK HAND, SHUTTLE EXPRESS II

Eve Jemison, Transcriber

