

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

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EXPRESS SHUTTLE II :
NTSB #DCA05MM002 :
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INTERVIEW OF :
VINCE ACHRIS@ CONNER :
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An interview in the above entitled matter was held
on Friday, October 22, 2004, commencing at 2:23 p.m., via
telephonic conference, with:

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

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. CURTIS: Good afternoon, it's about 2:23 p.m., October 22, 2004, and we're here Mr. Chris Conner regarding the Express Shuttle II accident of October 17, 2004. Mr. Conner is the Port Captain in the company, and we'll go around the table and identify who we are, and who we're affiliated with. I'm Brian Curtis, marine engineering accident investigator with the NTSB.

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

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

MR. STEIN: Lieutenant Eric Stein, Senior Investigating Officer, Coast Guard, Marine Safety Office, Tampa.

MR. KOLOKITHAS: Bill Kolokithas, owner of Paradise of Port Richey, and owner of the vessel.

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

MR. CURTIS: Okay, Chris, let's start out, your job title is?

CAPTAIN CONNER: Port Captain.

MR. CURTIS: Port Captain, and your responsibilities? I realize they're broad, but if you give

1 us the responsibilities?

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: Upkeep and maintenance of
3 vessels, overseeing crew, vessel safety, daily operations.

4 MR. CURTIS: Operations manager, essentially?

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes, maybe.

6 MR. CURTIS: Let me just get your background, when
7 you started with the company, and any marine background up
8 through, and if you can, the years roughly, just months,
9 whatever, so we can get a good profile?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: I graduated high school, and was
11 brought up in the fishing business from (indiscernible) off
12 shore shrimping, fishing, so forth. I went to work. Well,
13 I went into the service, and then went to work here, I
14 think, in >96. The year after the -- >97.

15 MR. KOLOKITHAS: It opened in >95.

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: Okay, then I went to work here in
17 >96, and I worked a couple of years here, and then took a
18 year off, and then came back to work, which must've been
19 about >98, >99, and I've been here ever since.

20 MR. CURTIS: In that capacity?

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, I started out running the
22 vessels, and then running shuttles, and then another fellow
23 left the company three or four years ago, and I took over
24 his spot.

25 MR. CURTIS: So, you've been Port Captain about

1 four years?

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: Roughly.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible) the
4 hierarchy of the company.

5 MR. CURTIS: That's the first question that I have
6 is, I've heard Paradise. I've heard Sun Cruz. If you could
7 just define the company and how it's situated, and what the
8 name of the company, and is it a parent company?

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: I'm not administrative in that
10 capacity, but the company started out as Paradise of Port
11 Richey, and there's situations going on with partners of the
12 company that forced the name change, I'm assuming. It went
13 to Port Richey Casino.

14 MR. CURTIS: Just some rough dates when these
15 occurred?

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: I have no idea. You'd have to
17 catch up with administration on that subject.

18 MR. CURTIS: As Port Captain, in regards to
19 maintenance of the vessel, say, for instance, the Captain
20 says, my starboard engine on this vessel needs work. How
21 would he convey that to you, and what do you do, and what's
22 the trail, and the paper trail as well?

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: Depending on what the problem is.
24 If it's something at sea, then it needs immediate
25 attention. He'd just call me on the Nextell and tell me. I

1 would then get a hold of the Captain reps. Get them lined
2 up to be there first available to assist the problem and get
3 it fixed.

4 MR. CURTIS: Say, for instance, we had a blown
5 piston, something big happens. Does the Captain, formally,
6 on paper, put that in writing to you?

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, something of that nature
8 would be an inoperable operation, so he would call me
9 immediately on the phone, and the situation's handled like
10 that.

11 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: I mean, in other words, if he's
13 got a indicator light that's not working, he would put it on
14 paper so I could get a new bulb tomorrow B

15 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: B- or tonight, or whatever, but
17 something of that nature, we'd have immediate phone contact.

18 MR. CURTIS: Say, something of the nature of
19 engine failure, do you write a report when that happens, or
20 not necessarily?

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: A maintenance log of a sort of
22 what's happened, and what we've done to correct it, after
23 the fact.

24 MR. CURTIS: Caterpillar must give you maintenance
25 reports. Are those filed?

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: In the office.

2 MR. CURTIS: In your office? Regarding this
3 vessel, have you noticed a higher rate of fuel lines being
4 damaged or cracking on this vessel, have you ever noticed
5 that?

6 CAPTAIN CONNER: More, there has been more on the
7 starboard engine than port. Rate, I don't know. I mean I
8 don't remember what rate, you know, every so often one would
9 break, and we would change it.

10 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: But, I can't tell you how often.
12 The records might indicate that the maintenance records,
13 and I'm not sure that they're always in there. If it's
14 something that happens underway, they would change the line,
15 and call me. I would order a new one, and put it back in
16 the inventory like the other fellows have indicated before.

17 MR. CURTIS: Is there a written policy what's
18 recorded, where it's recorded, and where it's kept, as far
19 as if there's a maintenance problem, the captain should
20 report B-

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: On his daily Captain's report at
22 the end of the evening. Lieutenant Stein's got a copy of
23 one of those.

24 MR. CURTIS: And it's filed daily?

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

1 MR. CURTIS: At the end of his shift, rather?

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

3 MR. CURTIS: And he submits that to?

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: He just puts it in my mail box in
5 the office, my little shop office.

6 MR. CURTIS: From that you see what maintenance
7 may need B-

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

9 MR. CURTIS: -- to be done on the vessel?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: Right.

11 MR. CURTIS: Say, it is a bulb out on this vessel,
12 who do you give it to, and how's it handled from there?

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: One of the three fellows that was
14 in here before, Chris Woods or Stan. They'd say, hey, this
15 needs to be done today. This bulb is out, you know.

16 MR. CURTIS: You're the one that determines, okay,
17 this is beyond their capabilities, we're going to call in --

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: In most cases.

19 MR. CURTIS: As far as the bigger maintenance on
20 the Caterpillars, does this Ring Power, do they do most of
21 your maintenance?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: Uh-huh, yes they do.

23 MR. CURTIS: Is it exclusive?

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: Pretty much so, yeah, I mean
25 they're the CAT expert, so we go to them as often as we can.

1 Actually, we've had to wait on them, to get them there.
2 They didn't have anybody available.

3 MR. CURTIS: Do they have a one tech they usually
4 send here, or is does it depend who's B-

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: It's just luck of the draw.

6 MR. CURTIS: Do you know if they've ever done any
7 recording of vibrations on these engines, port compared to
8 starboard or any of that?

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: Not to my knowledge.

10 MR. CURTIS: I'll stop now, and pass it around the
11 table.

12 MS. MCATEE: Just a couple questions.

13 MR. CURTIS: That's Nancy McAtee.

14 MS. MCATEE: Nancy McAtee, NTSB. You mentioned on
15 the CAT engines, that the starboard seemed to have more fuel
16 line breaks than the port. Did you find that you're
17 Caterpillar engines had more fuel breaks compared to the
18 diesel Detroit's that you have?

19 CAPTAIN CONNER: I've never had a fuel line break
20 on a Detroit.

21 MS. MCATEE: Okay.

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: They're internal.

23 MS. MCATEE: So, this was a problem that was
24 unique to the CAT's then?

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah, actually, the Detroit's are

1 internal jumper lines fed from a fuel gallery in the head.

2 MS. MCATEE: So, it's a different design?

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

4 MS. MCATEE: My other question was, the fire
5 detector system, were you familiar at all with --

6 CAPTAIN CONNER: Somewhat.

7 MS. MCATEE: -- the operation? How did you go
8 about testing it?

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: The only time I tested it was
10 with the Coast Guard, with fake smoke.

11 MS. MCATEE: So, then the alarm would go off, and
12 then that's --

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: Reset.

14 MS. MCATEE: How did you reset the system?

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: It had a switch on the panel B

16 MS. MCATEE: Okay.

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: -- that silenced it, and when you
18 turned it back to the operating position, it was reset.

19 MS. MCATEE: Okay, that's all I have, thank you.

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: I'm pretty sure that spring
21 loaded where it wouldn't stay silenced.

22 MS. MCATEE: You would hold it for awhile and
23 then --

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah.

25 MS. MCATEE: Okay.

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: To the best of my recollection.

2 MS. MCATEE: So, you might have to go to the
3 circuit breaker panel, and wait for the smoke to clear, and
4 then -- okay.

5 MR. HARTLEY: Heath Hartley, with the Coast Guard.
6 Good afternoon, Captain. Are you the holder of a Coast
7 Guard Merchant Mariner document?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

9 MR. HARTLEY: What's the limitations of that?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: 500 ton.

11 MR. HARTLEY: Master (indiscernible).

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: Master.

13 MR. HARTLEY: 500? Any radar towing endorsements?

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: I don't think the radar's still
15 up to date, but yes, I did have that at one time.

16 MR. HARTLEY: What issue were you on, sir?

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: Second.

18 MR. HARTLEY: So, you first got your license,
19 maybe?

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: Eight, nine years ago.

21 MR. HARTLEY: >95?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: Eight, yeah, >96, >95, >94,
23 somewhere in that neighborhood.

24 MR. HARTLEY: How often do you operate under the
25 authority of that license?

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: Almost every day.

2 MR. HARTLEY: So, you're operating the shuttles as
3 well?

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: The morning shuttle, I take the
5 crew offshore, at 7:00 a.m.

6 MR. HARTLEY: Is that for crew?

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: Crew only.

8 MR. HARTLEY: Crew only, but for passengers?

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: Very seldom, I do that.

10 MR. HARTLEY: Very seldom? Would you fill in for
11 one of your captains?

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: I would fill in, if need be.

13 MR. HARTLEY: Yes?

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: But I haven't had to do it in a
15 long, long time.

16 MR. HARTLEY: Could you approximate when the last
17 time you had to?

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: Oh, I take that back. Three or
19 four Saturday nights ago, I came and ran a shuttle.

20 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: But prior to that it had been
22 months.

23 MR. HARTLEY: Very rarely?

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: Very rarely.

25 MR. HARTLEY: Let's switch some gears, can we go

1 to human resources and that side of the operation, being the
2 operations manager, for lack of a better title --

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: That was his words.

4 MR. HARTLEY: Okay, being the Port Captain that
5 you are, and hiring new crew members, what's your role in
6 that?

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: For deck hands, I don't play a
8 role in it. That goes directly to Stan, to interview first,
9 put them on the boat as a pre-hire, the captain on the
10 vessel also interviews him at that time.

11 MR. HARTLEY: What's your role in insuring that
12 the master is fulfilling his responsibilities in training
13 the crew?

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: A firm hand, verbal.

15 MR. HARTLEY: Would it be your responsibility or
16 someone else's, to provide some guidelines, some operating
17 procedures, manual, for the crew, and the captains, for
18 basically, the members of the company? Would you be
19 responsible for maybe updating procedures, or making sure
20 they're current --

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: Possibly.

22 MR. HARTLEY: -- and being used?

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: Possibly.

24 MR. HARTLEY: Do you currently have an operations
25 procedure manual? Some type of --

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: Uh-huh.

2 MR. HARTLEY: -- a documentation that says, hey,
3 this is what you're responsible for doing and knowing B

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

5 MR. HARTLEY: -- and training under?

6 CAPTAIN CONNER: Uh-huh.

7 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: I don't have a copy of that with
9 me. You have some of what it is.

10 MR. HARTLEY: I have the deck hand procedures.

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: And there's another pamphlet that
12 also goes over a little bit of training and safety --
13 shipboard safety and so forth. I'll have to produce that.

14 MR. HARTLEY: We'd like a copy of that. That
15 would be great, sir, thank you. Have you had any direct
16 responsibility in training new crew members, maybe captains?

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: Not in a long time.

18 MR. HARTLEY: Not in a long time?

19 CAPTAIN CONNER: I did all that when I was running
20 the vessel daily.

21 MR. HARTLEY: Are you familiar with the fixed
22 (indiscernible) fire extinguishing system on the Express
23 Shuttle II?

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: Uh-huh.

25 MR. HARTLEY: Was that a Coast Guard approved fire

1 extinguishing system? As far as you knew?

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: As far as I know it was, yes.

3 MR. HARTLEY: Obviously, you weren't there for
4 it's initial crew or the construction --

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

6 MR. HARTLEY -- so, you didn't see this, but where
7 were the controls for operation located?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: In the fuel room, on the bottle
9 itself.

10 MR. HARTLEY: Was there a placard? An emergency
11 instructions placard B

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

13 MR. HARTLEY: -- that could explain to the reader
14 how to operate the system?

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: Actually, it was painted on the
16 wall in stencils.

17 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: Pull pin, lift handle, exit room.

19 MR. HARTLEY: I'll stick with the machinery for
20 just a second, or the systems. Nancy asked about the smoke
21 detection and heat, the fire detection system, was that also
22 approved, Coast Guard approved?

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: I assume it was. A Coast Guard
24 inspected it yearly, and passed it.

25 MR. HARTLEY: It would register in the

1 wheelhouse --

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

3 MR. HARTLEY: -- audibly?

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: And visually.

5 MR. HARTLEY: And visually? Was there a diagram
6 of sorts or anything for the master to know, okay, where
7 that smoke detector went off at? On the placard?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: On the control panel, to the
9 right hand side of the steering wheel, about knee high, on
10 the dash, the control panel was mounted, and it had placards
11 beside each light, what compartment. I think there was
12 three, the fuel room, engine room, and salon. To the best
13 of my recollection.

14 MR. HARTLEY: Was there any, like, framed chart or
15 diagram? How many smoke detectors are on board, do you
16 recall?

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: Three --

18 MR. HARTLEY: Just three?

19 CAPTAIN CONNER: -- is the best I remember.

20 MR. HARTLEY: Heat detectors?

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: I don't know that.

22 MR. HARTLEY: Possibly?

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: I don't remember. It seems to me
24 like the engine room had a heat detector, and then two smoke
25 detectors, but I can't, again, I don't B

1 MR. HARTLEY: Okay, jumping back to some training
2 stuff, other than the ship's log, or the vessel's logbook,
3 for training documentation, is there any other documentation
4 held by the Port Captain's office or back in administration,
5 once training is completed or documented? Is there any way
6 to verify that through your office?

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

8 MR. HARTLEY: All the training and documentation
9 is captured by the master, and kept on the vessel log --

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

11 MR. HARTLEY: -- and in this case, we don't have
12 the vessel log?

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

14 MR. HARTLEY: All right, thank you, sir.

15 MR. STEIN: It's Lieutenant Eric Stein, with the
16 Coast Guard. Just throughout the process of interviewing
17 some of your port engineers, and your deck hands, and the
18 masters, there's a lot of people putting their hands on the
19 engines, and effecting fuel line change outs, and a number
20 of other procedures. What's the typical threshold for you
21 to call in Caterpillar versus letting a deck hand, or
22 letting one of your masters conduct engine repairs? Where's
23 the threshold for you?

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: Let me say this. If it was
25 anything determined to be internal, we would not touch it,

1 i.e., loss of power, greatly reduced, excessive smoke from
2 the exhaust, we would make an assessment in that direction
3 and we wouldn't touch anything internal. For instance, fuel
4 lines outside, it's obvious, you can see that
5 (indiscernible). We would change stuff like that.
6 (Indiscernible) we would change, and tell her what
7 (indiscernible) put a new (indiscernible) in and so forth.
8 Nothing internal.

9 MR. STEIN: Do you keep the repair manuals for the
10 Caterpillar engines?

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: I think you asked me this Sunday,
12 and there was a set of manuals on the boat B

13 MR. STEIN: Yes?

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: -- and I do have, right at my
15 desk where we were talking Sunday, there is a small manual,
16 but I still haven't gone back to see if that's repair or
17 just parts.

18 MR. STEIN: Are the folks that are putting their
19 hands on the engines, using these manuals in their repairs,
20 or are they going based on - on the job experience?

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: OJT, and again, they're not going
22 into anything internal. So, I don't know that a manual
23 would help for the minor things we do.

24 MR. STEIN: Have you personally changed any fuel
25 lines --

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: Absolutely.

2 MR. STEIN: -- on the engines? You know which
3 engine? Both? Either one?

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: Over the last several years, I'm
5 sure both sides, both engines.

6 MR. STEIN: What's the Caterpillar procedure,
7 typically, for doing that? Do you know? Could you tell me
8 out of the manual what the normal procedure might be?

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, not out of a manual, I can't.

10 MR. STEIN: Okay.

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: I can tell you how the CAT guy
12 does it.

13 MR. STEIN: Just OJT? You just learned it through
14 OJT yourself?

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

16 MR. STEIN: How did you get that OJT to feel
17 comfortable changing a fuel line?

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: Well, I've got 25 years in
19 seagoing on some description of a vessel, and just pick
20 stuff up over the years like that through mechanics and OJT.

21 MR. STEIN: Your experience is through OJT as well
22 then? No formal --

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

24 MR. STEIN: -- engineering training?

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

1 MR. STEIN: Mr. Hartley had touched on new hires.
2 Are there any experience factors that you look for - for
3 bringing new folks on the job? So, you're bringing in an
4 engineer, you know, is there any experience, qualifications
5 that you're looking for, or are you comfortable? I don't
6 know where you are on the hiring process, but once you have
7 somebody in your shop, is it all OJT, or is there experience
8 that they're bringing to bear? Maybe you can kind of
9 explain that process a little bit to me?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: Well, I wouldn't hire an engineer
11 that come out of a corn field, for instance. For lack of
12 better terms.

13 MR. STEIN: I resent that because I came out of a
14 corn field. I grew up on a farm.

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: No pun intended. No, what I mean
16 by that is, I wouldn't hire a guy that's applying for an
17 engineer's position that has no background whatsoever,
18 whether it be back yard mechanic in his home or some
19 knowledge of how to turn some kind of nut or bolt, or say,
20 yeah, I could change that hose, and perform that duty.

21 MR. STEIN: Okay, that's fair. I'm going to
22 switch gears a little bit. Would you know where the remote
23 fuel shut off might have been for this particular vessel,
24 the Express Shuttle II, or was there a remote shut off B

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: There was no remote. Oh, for a

1 remote fuel shut off?

2 MR. STEIN: Remote fuel shut off.

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah, right behind the fuel room,
4 between the engine room bulk -- actually, it was just
5 forward of the engine room bulkhead, on the first deck.
6 That's a hatch about 18 by 10, maybe, with the fuel shut
7 off's in it.

8 MR. STEIN: How is that labeled?

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: Emergency fuel shut off.

10 MR. STEIN: Was it a placard, or was it stenciling
11 on the bulkhead?

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, it was a placard.

13 MR. STEIN: It was a placard? What color?

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: Red and white.

15 MR. STEIN: Red and white, okay. Would that be
16 part of the deck hand training procedures to learn about
17 that? I mean is there anything in your written safety
18 policies that talks about remote fuel shut off, or deck
19 hands --

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: Not to my knowledge.

21 MR. STEIN: No?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: Not to my recollection.

23 MR. STEIN: Okay.

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: The captain would be affluent in
25 that situation.

1 MR. STEIN: That's all I have for now. I'll pass
2 it along.

3 MR. FORD: It's Bob Ford. Is this company a
4 member of the Passenger Vessel Association?

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

6 MR. FORD: You are a member? Okay, who do you
7 directly report to?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: Mr. Kolokithas.

9 MR. FORD: How many people are under you?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: Direct supervised under me --

11 MR. FORD: Yes.

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: -- about eight or nine.
13 Captains, six or seven captains, and the deck crew that you
14 interviewed today, the maintenance fellows.

15 MR. FORD: Yes, okay. Who attends the Coast Guard
16 inspections for the company?

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: Generally, I do.

18 MR. FORD: Did you attend that last one?

19 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes, I did.

20 MR. FORD: Can you tell me what they did when they
21 inspected the boat?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: I don't know what you're after.
23 I mean they came on with -- like normal, with their T-boat
24 inspection booklet B

25 MR. FORD: Yes?

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: -- and went through the booklet,
2 checking life saving equipment, machinery space B

3 MR. FORD: Yes?

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: -- excuse me, highwater alarms,
5 flares, all safety equipment --

6 MR. FORD: Yes?

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: -- nothing out of the ordinary.

8 MR. FORD: Did they lift the hatch into the engine
9 spaces?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: I don't think they lifted the
11 hatch to the engines, but the access hatch was lifted and
12 they ran it.

13 MR. FORD: When they come on board, do they ask to
14 see invoices of recent repairs?

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

16 MR. FORD: You wear a lot of hats, obviously. I
17 mean you have the safety, you have a lot of the hiring, you
18 have the deck. Are you on call 24 hours? Just about, okay.

19 Do you ever go to a 24-hour operation? I mean, I'm not
20 sure what the laws are on these casinos, but do you ever
21 have 24-hours of gambling on the big boat?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, we don't.

23 MR. FORD: How do you keep all your paperwork
24 records straight?

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: I've had pretty good luck with

1 the girls in the office.

2 MR. FORD: Yes?

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: They help me out quite a bit.

4 MR. FORD: Okay.

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: I mean, anything I need, you
6 know, I can forward to them to help with, they do.

7 MR. FORD: Going back to Coast Guard inspections,
8 do they take you out then, and say, let's do a man overboard
9 drill, or fire drill, or do you just have your captains do
10 that?

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: I don't recollect doing that at
12 all.

13 MR. FORD: Yes?

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: The last inspection.

15 MR. FORD: How about preventive maintenance type
16 program where you have the CAT's and the manufacturer says,
17 do certain things. Do you have a preventive maintenance
18 program?

19 CAPTAIN CONNER: We try to stick by CAT's.

20 MR. FORD: Yes?

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: We can't always, but we do try to
22 stick by what CAT recommends. We use their oil and their
23 filters, and try to have the valves adjusted when they
24 suggest hour wise, and so forth.

25 MR. FORD: How do you keep track of that? Who's

1 keeping -- you?

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: The best I can, yeah.

3 MR. FORD: Not to sound insulting.

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

5 MR. FORD: We call it a seat of the pants
6 operation. It's up in your head.

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: Right.

8 MR. FORD: Have you ever heard of, or looked into,
9 or have you dealt with the PVA at all as far as getting a
10 formal preventative maintenance program? Have you heard
11 any B

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, I haven't. I didn't know it
13 was available.

14 MR. FORD: Okay, that's it.

15 MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, NTSB. I'm going to ask
16 this question. I probably already know the answer but, what
17 is your typical work schedule?

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: (Non-verbal response.)

19 MR. CURTIS: That's what I thought.

20 MR. FORD: Just tell us when you're off.

21 MR. CURTIS: I need something.

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: Actually, I start about 6:30 in
23 the morning.

24 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: And generally, believe it or not,

1 by about 4:00, 4:30, I'm done, on site, and my boss has
2 helped me out with that lately. In the last year or two or
3 three, he's kind of made it where I've had weekends pretty
4 well off, unless something major happens. Of course, Sunday
5 wasn't a good day.

6 MR. CURTIS: Right, okay. These questions are
7 going to kind of jump around because they kind of follow up.
8 A bunker, I understand, is it every afternoon when they get
9 in?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: Every morning, the Shuttle IV
11 would start.

12 MR. CURTIS: We'll be interested in getting a
13 sample from your facility as a matter of --

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: From the fuel distributor?

15 MR. CURTIS: Local, and we'll look in that the --

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: (Indiscernible) fuel oil.

17 MR. CURTIS: There's some confusion on our behalf.

18 The schedule of the shuttle, what time it leaves in the
19 morning, could you just go through that with us, just so we
20 have a clear understanding of --

21 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah.

22 MR. CURTIS: -- when they get each step of the
23 way, roughly, what time it happens?

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: I leave the dock at 7:00 a.m.

25 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: With the crew. We make it to the
2 Royal Casino I about 7:30, 7:40, transfer crew, and I'm back
3 at the dock. Stan, or one of the other fellows, are
4 meanwhile, getting the shuttle that's going to run that day,
5 ready to go, to carry passengers. They leave the dock at
6 9:30.

7 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: The first run is about a 3-mile
9 run off the light, off the sea buoy, because that's where
10 the big boat camps overnight. That's to make the crew run
11 simple and quick in the morning. They drop the passengers
12 off there on the first run.

13 MR. CURTIS: At roughly?

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: 10 o'clock, 10:10.

15 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: They're back to the dock, they
17 reload, leave at 11:00. Meanwhile, the Casino boat is
18 exiting to the gaming area. So, the second run is about an
19 hour from the dock, and drops customers off. Then, the
20 shuttle lays over, becomes out of service until 2 o'clock,
21 14:00. They pick up at 14:00, come back to the dock at
22 15:00, and leave at 15:30, and are back to the dock about
23 17:30. They layover for an hour and a half at that point.
24 They leave at 19:00, off shore 20:00, roughly, back to the
25 dock at 21:00, and they don't leave again until 23:30.

1 MR. CURTIS: Where is the ship change? At what
2 point in time?

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: Captains?

4 MR. CURTIS: Yes, on the shuttle?

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: Usually at 6:00 p.m.

6 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: 6:30, somewhere in the
8 neighborhood.

9 MR. CURTIS: The large boat, does that come in
10 every night --

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

12 MR. CURTIS: -- or what's it's schedule?

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, it lays offshore. The
14 customers get off, and the rest of the crew, at 11:30, 12
15 o'clock, and then we've got a skeleton crew and a cleaning
16 crew on there that stay on the vessel all night, a master
17 engineer, deck hands.

18 MR. CURTIS: When does that come in for fueling,
19 and how often does that come into the docks?

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: About once a month.

21 MR. CURTIS: During the drills, do you know if
22 they actually run the fire pump --

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

24 MR. CURTIS: -- at each drill?

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: I don't know that at each drill

1 they do, but they do run the fire pump about once a month.

2 MR. CURTIS: There, again, that would be kept in a
3 log on the vessel, and not necessarily shore side?

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah, it would be on the vessel.

5 MR. CURTIS: Are there hard and fast written
6 procedures for the drill, or is that up to the captain's
7 discretion?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: Captain's discretion, different
9 scenarios.

10 MR. CURTIS: Another clarification, how many fuel
11 shut off's, there's basically two tanks, so there's only a
12 port and starboard shut off?

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

14 MR. CURTIS: Is that a return type system, where
15 they're returning fuel back to the tank --

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

17 MR. CURTIS: -- the second line was?

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: And there was a ball valve on
19 each, feed and return.

20 MR. CURTIS: You mentioned a few minutes ago, the
21 valve adjustment. Who would do the valve adjustment? Would
22 that be your people or would that be CAT?

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: Caterpillar help.

24 MR. CURTIS: They do all that type, okay.

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: We touch nothing internal.

1 MR. CURTIS: That's all I have right now, Nancy?

2 MS. MCATEE: Just one more question. Nancy
3 McAtee, NTSB. Are you aware of a battery back up for the
4 alarm panel?

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

6 MS. MCATEE: That's all I have.

7 MR. HARTLEY: Just to clarify, this is Heath
8 Hartley, from the Coast Guard. We have four fuel feed lines
9 going?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: Two.

11 MR. HARTLEY: Two for each tank?

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: One for each tank, and a return
13 line.

14 MR. HARTLEY: And the generators get their fuel
15 from?

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: The main feed off the -- the main
17 engine feed.

18 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

19 CAPTAIN CONNER: Extends on to the generator. I
20 think you have a diagram of the way the layout is in the
21 engine room.

22 MR. HARTLEY: Probably.

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: Somewhere out?

24 MR. HARTLEY: Yes, and as a matter of fact it has
25 four feed lines. Two port and two starboard, two mains, and

1 two generators.

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: I didn't remember it that way. I
3 don't remember it being four feed lines.

4 MR. HARTLEY: So, if you open up, and what I'm
5 getting at is the fuel shut off hatch, if you look at that
6 hatch, how many handles are there?

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: There are four.

8 MR. HARTLEY: There were four?

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

10 MR. HARTLEY: So, they're four fuel shut off's?

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: Four ball valves --

12 MR. HARTLEY: Two port and two starboard?

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

14 MR. HARTLEY: One in each main, and one in each
15 generator?

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah.

17 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: I didn't remember it that way, is
19 what I'm telling you, though. I was thinking that the
20 return line also had a ball valve shut off going back to the
21 tank, and that the generator fed off the main feed from each
22 engine.

23 MR. HARTLEY: To your knowledge, were the
24 captains, the two captains that are currently licensed and
25 operating, were they knowledgeable and practicing with fuel

1 shut off, as far as training goes, with their crew members?

2 Do you know of any?

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: To the best of my knowledge,
4 yeah. They all know where it's at, and know how to use
5 them, us.

6 MR. HARTLEY: How about ventilation? Perhaps you
7 could clarify for us, we had not good luck in figuring out
8 the engine room ventilation on that vessel.

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: What would you like to know about
10 it? Where was it?

11 MR. HARTLEY: Well, where was it, and how did it
12 work? Was it power or natural?

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: It was hand pulled.

14 MR. HARTLEY: Like a dampener (phonetic sp.)?

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes, there on outboard side of
16 both engine spaces, the dampener was a flopper in the
17 intakes. It had cable pulls to show.

18 MR. HARTLEY: Where would one shut off if need be?
19 Did you have to go into the engine space?

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, it wasn't in the engine
21 space. It was outside the salon area.

22 MR. HARTLEY: In the salon area?

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: Just outboard of both engines.

24 MR. HARTLEY: Okay, but on the main deck?

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

1 MR. HARTLEY: Was that clearly labeled?

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes, in red and white placards.

3 MR. HARTLEY: What did it say?

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: Ventilation, to stop ventilation,
5 pull handle.

6 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: Or something of that nature. I
8 think it said ventilation shut down, pull handle.

9 MR. HARTLEY: All right, thank you, Captain.

10 MR. STEIN: This is Lieutenant Eric Stein, with
11 the Coast Guard. If you clarify for me, Chris, why Ring
12 Power was called in for the first place, to do the head
13 change? I don't know if we've got to that. Just taking a
14 step back, before they even started the repair, why we
15 called them in - in the first place?

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: Excessive smoke out of the
17 starboard engine.

18 MR. STEIN: Were you not able to use the Express
19 Shuttle II until that was repaired?

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: We took it out of service until
21 they got there and checked it, and found that there was a
22 cracked head, and then, of course, obviously, it was out of
23 service until they fixed it.

24 MR. STEIN: Was that with passengers on board, or
25 how did you discover that you had a problem on that engine?

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah, the Captain noted it on his
2 way in with customers.

3 MR. STEIN: Did that create smoke in the salon?
4 Explain for me, how that happened.

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: Exhaust smoke, excessive white,
6 grayish exhaust smoke, the normal B

7 MR. STEIN: But not in the engine room, itself?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, no.

9 MR. STEIN: This was exhaust?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: Outside in the exhaust port.

11 MR. STEIN: I see. Then, because of that you took
12 the vessel out of service? So, the performance of the
13 vessel wasn't, obviously, optimal, but you were still able
14 to safely use the vessel?

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: He didn't indicate that there was
16 any loss of power at the time, on his way in.

17 MR. STEIN: Then, based on that report from your
18 master, determined that you'd call Caterpillar in to look at
19 the engine --

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah, it was --

21 MR. STEIN: -- and probe for the problem?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: -- a complete odd abnormality. I
23 mean the engine runs clean and all of a sudden it's
24 billowing smoke.

25 MR. STEIN: Billowing smoke, okay, thanks for

1 clarifying.

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: Uh-huh.

3 MR. FORD: It's Bob Ford, again. Because you wear
4 so many different hats, I'm sure you have things that break
5 out, and where you sectionalize. Where would you put
6 personnel in the keeping you up at night? I'm sure keeping
7 them on schedule, the safety issues, hiring, firing, are you
8 having a problem, or do you have a problem with personnel?
9 Keeping them, or it's not one of your worries?

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: Sure, it's a worry.

11 MR. FORD: Yes?

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: You know, I mean, you've got to
13 have enough people to operate, first of all.

14 MR. FORD: Yes.

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: And you need people that have
16 some capability of getting in out of the rain, if you will.

17 MR. FORD: Yes.

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: On their own.

19 MR. FORD: Yes.

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: So, yeah, it's a concern. It
21 always is a concern.

22 MR. FORD: Yes.

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: Maybe you need to clarify the
24 rest of your question.

25 MR. FORD: Is it an ongoing problem where you have

1 to discipline people, bring in new people constantly try to
2 retrain --

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah.

4 MR. FORD: -- because if you have a merry-go-
5 round, then, you're never going to get a good operation.

6 CAPTAIN CONNER: There's a pretty good turnover.

7 MR. FORD: Yes?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: Not so much discipline as it is
9 they're mostly a younger crowd of people that tend to work,
10 and they just don't stay.

11 MR. FORD: Yes.

12 CAPTAIN CONNER: They work awhile, and then
13 they're going to McDonald's or wherever, you know.

14 MR. FORD: Foot loose and fancy free.

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: Most of the time, it's the
16 younger bunch of people that apply.

17 MR. FORD: Right, okay, so, they're just kind of
18 moving on through with at this point, and it's not that they
19 just don't want to do the job, they just leave on their own?

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: The job is pretty easy, really.

21 MR. FORD: Yes?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: You know, it's just -- I don't
23 know why they don't stay, really.

24 MR. FORD: How about the captains? The same with
25 the captains?

1 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, we keep captains a pretty
2 good long time.

3 MR. FORD: Yes?

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: A fellow they referred to
5 yesterday, I think that left, or this morning.

6 MR. FORD: John Henry?

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: Well, yeah, he was here a couple
8 of years, and we had another fellow leave before he did
9 that's been here that I trained from a deck hand.

10 MR. FORD: Yes.

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: Progressed and went and got his
12 license and became a captain.

13 MR. FORD: Yes.

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: He was here a long time. It's
15 really not a big turnover.

16 MR. FORD: Have you ever had a major problem with
17 a captain where you had to really fire them?

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: Insubordination.

19 MR. FORD: How long ago was that?

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: A couple of year's ago.

21 MR. FORD: None of your recent captains?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

23 MR. FORD: What was the insubordination?

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: He just wanted to run his own
25 show.

1 MR. FORD: None of your boats have life rafts,
2 correct? They're all the RBA's?

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

4 MR. FORD: Okay, that's all I have.

5 MR. CURTIS: Just back to the vessel out of
6 service for that piston failure. Did he file a report to
7 you and the captain, or just verbally that we need work done
8 on the way in, and --

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, he called me on the way in on
10 the Nextell, and said, hey, we've got smoke billowing out of
11 the exhaust, and --

12 MR. CURTIS: Do you have any record of when the
13 vessel went out of service, or are you just nothing written
14 when it went out of service?

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: What they did --

16 MR. CURTIS: Do you know?

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: Wednesday, which would've been
18 the 13th or whatever this prior Wednesday was.

19 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: In the afternoon.

21 MR. CURTIS: Okay, that's all I have.

22 MR. HARTLEY: Heath Hartley, with the Coast Guard.
23 How old were the motors in that vessel, sir?

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: I have no idea.

25 MR. HARTLEY: Those CAT's? Any idea if they had

1 warranty coverage or just until a warranty plan? Warranty
2 work?

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: The port engine had a warranty,
4 because we had taken it out some however long ago, and had
5 it rebuilt by Caterpillar, and bought a warranty on it when
6 they did it.

7 MR. HARTLEY: Do you know how long?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: No.

9 MR. HARTLEY: (Indiscernible.)

10 CAPTAIN CONNER: Maybe three years left, two years
11 left on the warranty or something like that.

12 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: The starboard engine had no
14 warranty, but I don't know when they were installed. We
15 didn't buy the boat, or build the boat. It was the hull
16 that was in there when we bought it.

17 MR. HARTLEY: So, for warranty work, would you go
18 on and consult with CAT first, obviously?

19 CAPTAIN CONNER: Oh, yes.

20 MR. HARTLEY: And that's what you were getting at
21 for as far as internal repairs, maybe?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: It wouldn't make any difference
23 if it was warranty or not. We don't internally work on our
24 engines.

25 We hire certified people to do that other than, like I said,

1 water pumps, or a fuel line, is external, or something of
2 that nature.

3 MR. HARTLEY: Are you familiar with the warranty
4 itself, for the port motor?

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: In what capacity?

6 MR. HARTLEY: Like, what would void a warranty?
7 What type of work would void your warranty, for example?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: I really don't know that.

9 MR. HARTLEY: If you have it, we might get it out
10 and see --

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah, they've got a copy of it.

12 MR. HARTLEY: -- those types of things, and you
13 know, I'm sure they have some recommendations, and what you
14 should and shouldn't do. How to effect a warranty screen.
15 Is there somewhere you can get that information? I'm sure
16 you could --

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: Probably call CAT.

18 MR. HARTLEY: -- talk to CAT, right. Do you
19 intend to do that?

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: I have no CAT's left to worry
21 with.

22 MR. HARTLEY: If, in the future --

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

24 MR. HARTLEY: -- tend to repair fuel lines and --

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes, we could obtain that.

1 MR. HARTLEY: It would tend to be something that
2 you would consider doing --

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

4 MR. HARTLEY: -- as the office manager?

5 CAPTAIN CONNER: Uh-huh.

6 MR. HARTLEY: All right, thank you.

7 CAPTAIN CONNER: Uh-huh.

8 MR. KOLOKITHAS: You're not going to like me for
9 this. First of all, on our big boat, we have Caterpillar
10 (indiscernible).

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: I stand corrected.

12 MR. KOLOKITHAS: Do you know if we've ever broke a
13 fuel line on there?

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, not to my knowledge.

15 MR. KOLOKITHAS: (Indiscernible) fuel lines on that
16 boat?

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, not that I can remember, no.

18 MR. KOLOKITHAS: On the port motor that we had
19 Caterpillar rebuild that was a port right they put in? Do
20 you -- have we worked on that motor since they rebuilt it
21 and put it in?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: Not that I can remember.

23 MR. KOLOKITHAS: I mean, has Caterpillar done
24 anything --

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, I don't think we've touched

1 it since they rebuilt it.

2 MR. HARTLEY: And this is on the big boat?

3 MR. KOLOKITHAS: No, this is -- I'm going back --

4 MS. MCATEE: It's on the shuttle.

5 MR. HARTLEY: Okay, I don't know, okay, the
6 Express Shuttle II.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Opposite engine
8 (indiscernible).

9 MR. KOLOKITHAS: The one that we had --

10 MR. FORD: Yes.

11 MR. KOLOKITHAS: -- they took out, they rebuilt it
12 in their shop, brought it in their shop, brought it back,
13 and put it back in.

14 MR. FORD: What year was that done?

15 MR. KOLOKITHAS: Last year, I believe, or this
16 year?

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: The beginning, yeah, some part in
18 the beginning of this year.

19 MR. KOLOKITHAS: Right, they pulled it out, they
20 rebuilt it, and (indiscernible).

21 MR. FORD: Yes.

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: Crank, line, board, the whole
23 nine yards, in their factory.

24 MR. KOLOKITHAS: Give him the cost of it.

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: \$62,000.

1 MR. KOLOKITHAS: They had to totally rebuild that
2 engine, and then we put it back in.

3 MR. FORD: Yes, okay.

4 MR. KOLOKITHAS: And we haven't had any problems
5 with that engine since then. On the night before they came
6 to work on the motor, I believe the Captain called you on
7 the Nextell. (Indiscernible) that night?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)

9 MR. KOLOKITHAS: Can you tell him how that worked?
10 Did Caterpillar come down to the boat, and what happened,
11 to get it -- to get the boat repaired the next day, by the
12 next afternoon for the cruise?

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: I didn't get a hold of CAT that
14 night. It was the next morning, which was Wednesday
15 morning. Caterpillar sent the mechanic out to assess the
16 situation. He couldn't assess it at that time by himself.
17 He sent back to Caterpillar for a boarscope (phonetic sp.).

18

19 Then, they boarscoped, pulled injectors out
20 boarscope, and found the crack in the head. They
21 couldn't -- their machine shop wasn't opened to take dowels
22 out of the head or something of that nature that was
23 available. So, it was the following morning, which was
24 Thursday before they got that head ready and back to us, and
25 reinstalled.

1 MR. KOLOKITHAS: That was on the inboard side?

2 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

3 MR. KOLOKITHAS: (Indiscernible.)

4 MR. FORD: Well, I'd like to follow up. Bob Ford.
5 You said they rebuilt the port engine.

6 CAPTAIN CONNER: Right.

7 MR. FORD: What brought that about?

8 CAPTAIN CONNER: Caterpillar said it got fuel in
9 the oil, and spun a bearing on the crack, and there was
10 nothing they could do with it in a boat, so we had to get it
11 out, and take it to them.

12 MR. FORD: This, while it was operating, you had a
13 problem, you called in Caterpillar, and that's what they
14 identified?

15 CAPTAIN CONNER: Right.

16 MR. FORD: It wasn't that they just came down
17 to --

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: No, right.

19 MR. FORD: Okay, and did they do any work on the
20 starboard engine to see if there was any similar problem?
21 Did they look --

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: Not to my knowledge.

23 MR. FORD: Okay.

24 MR. CURTIS: Brian Curtis, Chris, if we wanted to
25 get our hands on all the service records going back years

1 here, would you have those in your office, or would
2 Caterpillar have those here?

3 CAPTAIN CONNER: I'm sure CAT would have them, and
4 I'm quite certain our office will have them.

5 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

6 CAPTAIN CONNER: But I can't speak for the
7 administrative part over there. Once they leave me, how
8 long they keep records, and so forth, but I would assume
9 that sometime back, they would have them anyway.

10 MR. CURTIS: How far back does your relationship
11 with Ring go, is this years back that you've been using
12 them, pretty much exclusively?

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: I think since we bought that
14 boat, I think. Bill might be able to answer, but >98 or
15 >99.

16 MR. KOLOKITHAS: Somewhere in there, >99
17 (Indiscernible) than the >98. We don't use no one else
18 other than Caterpillar.

19 MR. CURTIS: Right, okay. Along those lines, if
20 we wanted to find out the number of fuel lines purchased,
21 would that be in your records, or we'd need to go through
22 Caterpillar, probably?

23 CAPTAIN CONNER: Probably CAT, yeah. I would say.
24 I don't know if my office would have that or not.

25 MR. CURTIS: Okay, that's all I have.

1 MR. FORD: Bob Ford again. You say you have CAT's
2 on the big boat? Are these, obviously, bigger CAT's? Are
3 they bigger engines?

4 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah.

5 MR. FORD: Will the same mechanic work on the
6 bigger CAT's as on the smaller ones, if you give them to the
7 same people?

8 MR. KOLOKITHAS: Yeah, he would call Caterpillar.

9 MR. FORD: But I mean the same tech, you wouldn't
10 know if it was the same tech?

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah, I wouldn't know that.

12 MR. FORD: Okay, that's all I have.

13 MR. HARTLEY: Heath Hartley, Coast Guard. Would
14 engineers or deck hand supervisors be replacing fuel lines
15 on the big boat out off shore on the big CAT's, or are they
16 currently under their practice?

17 CAPTAIN CONNER: Heath, I haven't ran them and
18 that's because we've never broke one on there, but if that
19 happened. If he had one at his disposal, I would recommend
20 that he put it on.

21 MR. HARTLEY: Following what guidelines?

22 CAPTAIN CONNER: He's got a Caterpillar book on
23 the boat.

24 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

25 CAPTAIN CONNER: For those bigger CAT's, and I'm

1 sure it lists that in there, however, if it was a situation
2 that wasn't taking immediate necessity that it was done, I
3 could have CAT go take care of that. In that we don't bring
4 the boat back and forth every night, it gives you some time
5 to work with. There's three engines, three main engines in
6 the boat.

7 MR. HARTLEY: I think you said there's an engineer
8 on board as well?

9 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yeah, unlicensed engineer.

10 MR. HARTLEY: Okay.

11 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

12 MR. HARTLEY: But someone dedicated as an
13 engineer --

14 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

15 MR. HARTLEY: To fill that role?

16 CAPTAIN CONNER: Yes.

17 MR. HARTLEY: Okay, thank you.

18 CAPTAIN CONNER: Uh-huh.

19 MR. CURTIS: I guess that's it. Thanks a lot,
20 Chris. The time now is 3:10 p.m., and this concludes the
21 interview of Captain Chris Conner.

22 (Whereupon, at 3:10 p.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 VINCE ACHRIS@ CONNER

PORT CAPTAIN, PORT RICHEY CASINO

Eve Jemison, Transcriber