

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

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EXPRESS SHUTTLE II :  
NTSB #DCA05MM002 :  
:  
INTERVIEW OF :  
TRAVIS FOSTER :  
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An interview in the above entitled matter was held  
on Friday, October 22, 2004, commencing at 1:30 p.m., in  
Tarpon Springs, Florida, before:

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



1 your responsibilities? What do you do?

2 MR. FOSTER: In the morning, I come in and make  
3 sure the strainers are cleaned on both, make sure they got  
4 engine oil, and (indiscernible) generators. Make sure they  
5 have water. Make sure that the night before, the deck hands  
6 cleaned the (indiscernible). Make sure they sprayed the  
7 (indiscernible) down. Just make sure the overall  
8 maintenance of the, you know, appearance of the boat is  
9 clean.

10 MR. CURTIS: Do you do maintenance on the vessel?

11 MR. FOSTER: I just -- water and oil. Make sure  
12 they have water and oil.

13 MR. CURTIS: You do that on a daily basis?

14 MR. FOSTER: Yes, in the mornings.

15 MR. CURTIS: Is that on every boat, or certain  
16 boats?

17 MR. FOSTER: Yeah, on the Pencil, the  
18 (indiscernible) and the Tin Can.

19 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

20 CAPTAIN CONNER: Can I interrupt for a second?  
21 Usually give a name for the vessel for the interview  
22 purposes.

23 MR. FOSTER: Okay.

24 CAPTAIN CONNER: Express Shuttle II.

25 MR. CURTIS: So, the three vessels are?

1           MR. FOSTER: It's Royal Express II, Express  
2 Shuttle II, and Express Shuttle I.

3           MR. CURTIS: Are there any checklists or record  
4 keeping that you've done that in the morning? What's the  
5 process?

6           MR. FOSTER: Yes, in the morning, I normally come  
7 on, take the end caps off the generators, make sure all the  
8 glass is cleaned off of there, put the end caps back on,  
9 check the strainers in the generators, and make sure there's  
10 no grass in them, fill up the radiators with water, make  
11 sure that they have oil inside of them to the full level,  
12 and then I normally do my walk of the boat.

13           I make sure that the night before, they cleaned up  
14 like they should've, and they've got a checklist that we're  
15 supposed to check off how much fuel the boat had on it that  
16 morning. We've got to do the check off to make sure that  
17 the water tank was filled with water that the generators had  
18 oil and water, and that the strainers were cleaned. I have  
19 to check off that the AC strainers were cleaned and that the  
20 mains have oil and water, and that they're filtered, their  
21 sea strainers cleaned.

22           MR. CURTIS: This checklist, what do you do with  
23 the checklist?

24           MR. FOSTER: We fill it out (indiscernible) bottom  
25 of the (indiscernible) and I normally lay it there for the

1 Captain to sign, and then, after he signs it, I turn it in.

2 MR. CURTIS: You turn it in to?

3 MR. FOSTER: To the dock master, which is -- he's  
4 got like a little like office space and on the right  
5 hand -- the left hand corner door when you walk in, it's got  
6 a (indiscernible) marked Captain Chris, and we put them in  
7 his (indiscernible) so they can be turned in to him.

8 MR. CURTIS: Do you know what the dock master does  
9 with them?

10 MR. FOSTER: As far as -- after it hits there, I  
11 don't know where it goes.

12 MR. CURTIS: I just want to step back a little  
13 bit, a little bit of your background, what you did previous  
14 to this and when you started here?

15 MR. FOSTER: Previous to this, I worked at a  
16 retail store. I was assistant manager there and I  
17 started - I don't remember the exact date that I started  
18 here, but I think it's been close to six months, seven  
19 months that I've been working here.

20 MR. CURTIS: In your job here, have you received  
21 any formal training here, or has it been learn as you go?

22 MR. FOSTER: It's been hands on. They bring you  
23 down there and show you what needs to be expected and what  
24 should be done of what your job is. I mean, as far as like  
25 taking the end caps off, and cleaning them, I was brought

1 down there and shown by other people that were shown by  
2 whoever, like the Captains, and whatnot.

3 MR. CURTIS: The inventory of spare parts on  
4 board, are you responsible for that or who stocks the spare  
5 parts?

6 MR. FOSTER: As of right now, yes.

7 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

8 MR. FOSTER: Before they use to have the senior  
9 deck hands (indiscernible) and we stopped that. I started  
10 doing it because everybody like (indiscernible) or lay paper  
11 towels. We have (indiscernible) on the boat, so, I took  
12 responsibility of that.

13 MR. CURTIS: Do you have a list that says, will  
14 have x number of this, x number of that, or do you just do  
15 it by eye?

16 MR. FOSTER: I normally do it by eye. We have a  
17 list, but I don't really fill the sheet out. I know what we  
18 need on the boat, on a normal basis, and what we use on the  
19 boat, on a normal basis.

20 MR. CURTIS: On the engine, in the instance of  
21 fuel oil supplied by lines, when they take the broken one  
22 off, do they save those anywhere, or are those thrown out?  
23 What happens to the parts that are taken off the engine?

24 MR. FOSTER: As far as I know, we just rip the tag  
25 number off -- the part number off the bag that a way we can

1 reorder another one and put it back down there.

2 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

3 MR. FOSTER: I think we just throw them away.

4 MR. CURTIS: On the Express Shuttle II, have you  
5 ever done any repair work to the fuel lines on those  
6 engines?

7 MR. FOSTER: Not myself, no.

8 MR. CURTIS: Never? Have you worked with anybody  
9 else that's worked on the --

10 MR. FOSTER: I've watched them do it, but I've  
11 never repaired it myself, no.

12 MR. CURTIS: When is the last time you saw them  
13 work on the fuel lines on that vessel?

14 MR. FOSTER: The last time they did -- the first  
15 day that I worked there, and one other time. I can't  
16 remember the day. It was a while ago though.

17 MR. CURTIS: Do you remember which engine, port or  
18 starboard?

19 MR. FOSTER: It was the port.

20 MR. CURTIS: The port engine? That's all I have  
21 right now. Nancy?

22 MS. MCATEE: Not right now.

23 MR. HARTLEY: Heath Hartley, Coast Guard. You've  
24 been with the company about six or seven months you say?

25 MR. FOSTER: Yes.

1           MR. HARTLEY: Do you ever serve as a deck hand?  
2 Your title's deck hand supervisor, does that mean you  
3 actually (indiscernible) for operations?

4           MR. FOSTER: I have once since I've been the deck  
5 hand supervisor, but before the deck hand supervisor, yeah,  
6 I was a deck hand.

7           MR. CURTIS: When you were employed with the  
8 company, could you kind of walk us through your orientation  
9 as a deck hand?

10          MR. FOSTER: The orientation, the first right that  
11 they give you, they give you a procedures list, things that  
12 are expected of you, and you are to follow one of the deck  
13 hands throughout the -- you know, your journey out on the  
14 first trip, and they show you, you know, how to tie up.

15          They show you what's expected of you in the morning, as  
16 far as cleaning and they -- they didn't let me start doing  
17 anything with -- as far as filter work or down there in the  
18 engine room until after I've had at least a couple months of  
19 experience into it. They wouldn't let me down in there and  
20 doing anything without, like, a Captain's supervision, or  
21 somebody showing me what needed to be done.

22          MR. CURTIS: For your deck hand training, if you  
23 will, did you receive any formal training on emergency  
24 procedures?

25          MR. FOSTER: Yes.



1           MR. CURTIS: What to do with passengers, what to  
2 do in case of a fire or abandon ship, or man overboard?

3           MR. FOSTER: Yes, we did all those drills. The  
4 one -- the man overboard, we've done. They throw over a  
5 life jacket and somebody points out to it, and we  
6 (indiscernible) to it. We've done that drill a couple of  
7 times. The fire drill, we've been through I don't know how  
8 many times.

9           MR. CURTIS: Can you explain the fire drill for  
10 me?

11          MR. FOSTER: Depending on which boat we were on,  
12 we're supposed to notify the Captain of what was going on.

13          MR. CURTIS: Okay.

14          MR. FOSTER: And then one guy was supposed to make  
15 sure that the fire hose valve was open. One guy was  
16 supposed to make sure that the pump is ready to be operated,  
17 and as far as from there on out, we were to follow the  
18 Captain's orders.

19          MR. CURTIS: You trained on where the fire valve  
20 is?

21          MR. FOSTER: Yes.

22          MR. CURTIS: The hook up, (indiscernible) --

23          MR. FOSTER: Yes.

24          MR. CURTIS: -- or the valve for the fire?

25          MR. FOSTER: Yes.

1           MR. CURTIS: How about the fixed firefighting  
2 system on that vessel, in particular? are you familiar with  
3 the operation of that?

4           MR. FOSTER: Yes, we had done it two or three  
5 times, gone over it. Like, on layovers when we're  
6 (indiscernible) two hours, they go through and they make  
7 sure everyone on the boat knows what turns what on, what  
8 shuts it off.

9           MR. CURTIS: Do you remember, how would you  
10 activate that system?

11          MR. FOSTER: Down in the engine room, there's  
12 (indiscernible) that were supposed to be open. The engine  
13 was supposed to be on idle speed, and if you're on the top  
14 deck, there was a valve to (indiscernible) that you had to  
15 open so it would come out of the hose, and the pump, the  
16 switch to the pump itself, is on the panel back by the bar.

17          MR. CURTIS: So, the CO2 system, did you receive  
18 some training on that as well?

19          MR. FOSTER: It -- yeah, they have it  
20 written -- it use to be written on the wall in permanent  
21 marker, which pins to pull in which order so that it would  
22 go off.

23          MR. CURTIS: Did you do some training on that as  
24 well?

25          MR. FOSTER: Yeah, they -- the Captain would spend

1 time with us, go down and explain (indiscernible) why we  
2 need to pull each pin in that order, for what reason.

3 MR. CURTIS: When was the last time you served as  
4 a deck hand for an operation?

5 MR. FOSTER: Probably through two weeks ago, it  
6 was on a Friday.

7 MR. CURTIS: Would you have any responsibility in  
8 training new deck hands?

9 MR. FOSTER: Yes.

10 MR. CURTIS: Does that fall under your title?

11 MR. FOSTER: Yes, somewhat, yes.

12 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

13 MR. FOSTER: That takes some of the guys, like,  
14 some of the guys that don't know how to tie up on the side,  
15 and you show them things. I show them, you know, just as  
16 far as like, cleaning, and tying up the boat, but they're  
17 not -- as of -- since I've started, they're not supposed to  
18 be doing anything down in the engine room. We take in  
19 responsibility for that.

20 MR. CURTIS: Whose responsibility? Would it be  
21 you as the deck hand supervisor --

22 MR. FOSTER: In the morning, yes.

23 MR. CURTIS: -- to train them on -- what about for  
24 emergency procedures?

25 MR. FOSTER: Yeah, for emergency procedures they

1 know that like when they do a changeover at 6:00, they know  
2 that the water is supposed to be checked. They know that  
3 the oil is supposed to be checked, and if there's a problem,  
4 they're supposed to notify somebody (indiscernible).

5 MR. CURTIS: For lifesaving type emergencies?

6 MR. FOSTER: Yes, we've --

7 MR. CURTIS: Who's responsible for training when  
8 the new person comes on board?

9 MR. FOSTER: The captains, we do them on layovers,  
10 after they, you know, did their first ride out, their first  
11 cruise, and they start whatever date, the following day, or  
12 whatever.

13 MR. CURTIS: Could you give us a time line? If a  
14 new person showed up to become a deck hand, to qualify as a  
15 deck hand, or whatever that process is, how long would it  
16 be, on average, before they receive some training specific  
17 to fire fighting?

18 MR. FOSTER: It should be the same day that they  
19 do their -- not their pre-hire cruise, but the next day that  
20 they start. It starts, you know, it's a lot to take in at  
21 first, but they have to learn, you know, certain steps as  
22 they go on within the first week.

23 MR. CURTIS: Is there any written documentation  
24 like written training that you received as a deck hand  
25 telling you how to fight fires, or how to go through the

1 emergency procedures --

2 MR. FOSTER: I know there's a log that's supposed  
3 to be signed --

4 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

5 MR. FOSTER: -- that's normally kept on the boat.

6 MR. CURTIS: But there's nothing given to you --

7 MR. FOSTER: No.

8 MR. CURTIS: -- for example that tells you this is  
9 the proper way to do something?

10 MR. FOSTER: But we have the procedures booklet  
11 that says how to do stuff, but I don't know if it states  
12 inside with the actual training for running the fire bilage  
13 and stuff like that.

14 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

15 MR. FOSTER: There was the log that showed  
16 that -- who was there and who was responsible for training  
17 us.

18 MR. CURTIS: All right, thank you.

19 MR. STEIN: Did you work on Sunday?

20 MR. FOSTER: Yes, I did.

21 MR. STEIN: Did you do the check Sunday morning?

22 MR. FOSTER: Yes, I did.

23 MR. STEIN: I have a document that Chris gave to  
24 me, Chris CONNER, that said "Daily Express Shuttle II Check  
25 Sheet." This one says 10/16/04, so it must've been on

1 Saturday, but typically, this is what the document would  
2 look like, is that correct?

3 MR. FOSTER: Yes.

4 MR. STEIN: And this is a document that you would  
5 have signed by the captain?

6 MR. FOSTER: Yes.

7 MR. STEIN: It looks like Saturday, Captain Mario  
8 was working, so this Sunday's check sheet would've looked  
9 similar to this?

10 MR. FOSTER: Yes.

11 MR. STEIN: You were working Sunday, and you did  
12 the checks on Sunday?

13 MR. FOSTER: Yes.

14 MR. STEIN: Did you notice anything unusual when  
15 you were down checking the engine room?

16 MR. FOSTER: No, sir, everything was filled. I  
17 believe that morning, I didn't even fill up the radiators,  
18 because they still had water in them. The oil was fine.  
19 Everything seemed to be up to par.

20 MR. STEIN: Any unusual smells, sounds, anything  
21 that might have --

22 MR. FOSTER: No, I didn't notice anything unusual  
23 that morning.

24 MR. STEIN: What time do you typically do your  
25 checks?

1           MR. FOSTER: I'm normally there at 6 o'clock in  
2 the morning, and I do one boat at the crew change, and then,  
3 I do the one that's at the main dock, and then I go back and  
4 do the one at the work dock.

5           MR. STEIN: For the Express Shuttle II that  
6 might've been what time would you have done that Sunday?

7           MR. FOSTER: Seven o'clock.

8           MR. STEIN: Seven o'clock, and then, who was the  
9 captain Sunday?

10          MR. FOSTER: That morning it was Captain Mario.

11          MR. STEIN: Captain Mario, and then he met you at  
12 the Express Shuttle II, and he signed --

13          MR. FOSTER: Yes.

14          MR. STEIN: -- (indiscernible?)

15          MR. FOSTER: Yes, he signed that morning sheet.

16          MR. STEIN: Then, that sheet then goes, typically,  
17 where?

18          MR. FOSTER: It's -- normally, after he signs it,  
19 we turn them in to -- the dock master has that thing that  
20 hangs on the wall that has a -- like a folder part for  
21 Captain Chris.

22          MR. STEIN: Okay, that's fine.

23          MR. FORD: This is Bob Ford. What's your work  
24 schedule?

25          MR. FOSTER: I work everyday except for Friday and

1 Tuesday, and it's supposed to be from 6 o'clock in the  
2 morning to 4:30 p.m.

3 MR. FORD: Are you on stand-by on your days off?  
4 Can you be called in?

5 MR. FOSTER: Yeah, I can be called in, but it  
6 hasn't happened since I've started.

7 MR. FORD: That's all I have, thanks.

8 MR. CURTIS: I'm Brian Curtis. Travis, just a  
9 question, have you noticed that the Express Shuttle II in  
10 your inventory controls that - that uses a lot of those high  
11 pressure fuel lines?

12 MR. FOSTER: No.

13 MR. CURTIS: Nothing out of the ordinary there?

14 MR. FOSTER: No, as far as the fuel lines being  
15 ordered that's been to a minimum. I mean, you might get one  
16 every three months.

17 MR. CURTIS: That's the only Caterpillar engine  
18 you have in the shuttle fleet, is that right?

19 MR. FOSTER: Yes.

20 MR. CURTIS: Any other ones?

21 MR. FOSTER: They're Detroit diesels.

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

23 MR. FORD: I just have one more. Bob Ford, again.  
24 How do you communicate between you and say, Captain Chris?  
25 Do you carry hand held's around?



1 MR. FOSTER: They're cells.

2 MR. FORD: Okay, that's it, thanks.

3 MR. CURTIS: I have one question. The date of the  
4 accident, were you working that day?

5 MR. FOSTER: Yes.

6 MR. CURTIS: Were you involved in any way? Did  
7 you go out to the scene?

8 MR. FOSTER: Yeah, when Woods got the call that  
9 the boat was, I guess, on fire, yeah, I rode out with him in  
10 the Trophy.

11 MR. CURTIS: Who took the Trophy? The Trophy is,  
12 just to clarify, is the company vessel?

13 CAPTAIN CONNER: Pleasure boat.

14 MR. CURTIS: Owned by you fellows, and so, could  
15 you just take us through that briefly? Who got called,  
16 where the call came from, and what did you do then?

17 MR. FOSTER: He had came in the morning, and me  
18 and one of the other deck hands were cleaning out --

19 MR. CURTIS: He being?

20 MR. FOSTER: Chris Woods.

21 MR. CURTIS: Okay.

22 MR. FOSTER: And me and the other deck hand, Ben,  
23 I was telling Ben how to clean out an oil pump, and he got a  
24 call on the Nex cell, and he walked away from us, because  
25 it's loud there, we've got an air compressor that runs, and

1 he couldn't hear. He grabbed me and he said we had to go,  
2 the (indiscernible) had problems. We went, untied the  
3 Trophy, took the Trophy out, and got out to the  
4 (indiscernible) it was already on fire by the time we'd gone  
5 out there.

6 MR. CURTIS: When you got there, I understand some  
7 people got on your vessel? How did that all work?

8 MR. FOSTER: When we first got there, we were  
9 looking for Captain Mario and the crew, and we didn't see  
10 them, and we were told by one of the sheriff's was that  
11 they'd gotten off safely, and we were trying to find them,  
12 and another boat, a little small boat, I can't remember who  
13 the guy worked for, but he was there, off duty, he was  
14 fishing, had picked them up and brought them over. Captain  
15 Mario, and Mike Mendes got on the Trophy, and they took Cory  
16 back to the dock to go to the ambulance.

17 MR. CURTIS: Did you stay out there for a while,  
18 or did you come back in? What did you do then?

19 MR. FOSTER: We stayed out there to help as much  
20 as we could, and they just kept telling us to get back that  
21 there was nothing we could do.

22 MR. CURTIS: Okay, good, I have nothing else. I  
23 want to thank you, Travis, for coming in, very helpful, and  
24 this concludes the interview. It's 1:45 p.m.

25 (Whereupon, at 1:45 p.m., the interview was

1 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 TRAVIS FOSTER

SENIOR DECK HAND, SHUTTLE EXPRESS II

Eve Jemison, Transcriber

