

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of:

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NEW DELHI EXPRESS

* Docket No.: DCA-06-MF-013

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Interview of: CAPTAIN STEVE NAPLES

Bayonne, New Jersey

Saturday,
April 15, 2006

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to
notice.

BEFORE: ROB JONES

APPEARANCES:

ROB JONES
National Transportation Safety Board

LT. CHARLES COBB
United States Coast Guard

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1 I N T E R V I E W

2 MR. JONES: Okay. This is Rob Jones with the
3 National Transportation Safety Board and we're here
4 interviewing Captain Steve Naples with the Sandy Hook Pilots
5 Association. With me is Lieutenant Cobb representing the U.S.
6 Coast Guard.

7 INTERVIEW OF CAPTAIN STEVE NAPLES

8 BY MR. JONES:

9 Q. And, Captain, if I could just get a little background
10 information on you first. If -- where'd you receive your
11 training or how did you get to the --

12 A. I received my --

13 Q. -- rank of Captain?

14 A. I received my training here. I started as an
15 apprentice in November of 1979. Spent seven and a half years
16 as an apprentice acquiring, you know, spending -- working on
17 the boats starting as a Deckhand and working my way up to
18 Captain of the Pilot Boat, all the time riding ships for our
19 Pilot training. Over the seven and half years getting enough
20 sea time to get the various licenses. I have a Master
21 Pilots -- Federal Master Pilot Vessel any gross ton for First
22 Class Pilotage covering the majority of the areas as far as the
23 North -- up to the North River, Yonkers, out the East River to
24 Execution Rocks and all the waters around Staten Island and the
25 Upper and Lower Bays.

1 I have a New York State Pilot's License which I --
2 first issue was May of 1987, and, you know, I've been a Full
3 Branch Pilot and that was seven years to a Full Branch Pilot in
4 the State of New York as part of the Association.

5 Q. Okay. Any cursory training, radar, bridge resource
6 management?

7 A. Yes. We've had -- the usual ongoing training is
8 bridge resource management for Pilots, a class that was
9 designed for done in Mitex (ph.) in Baltimore for us at the
10 union school. We also did one week harbor training. I just
11 renewed my radar certificate two weeks ago. I've also had
12 emergency simulator -- emergency shipboard operations on
13 simulators. We recently did -- two years ago now I did
14 training with aussiepods (ph.) and tractor tugs in simulators.

15 THE WITNESS: Excuse me?

16 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Tractor tugs you say?

17 THE WITNESS: Tractor tugs, yeah.

18 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Port Rebelle (ph.).

19 THE WITNESS: Oh, yeah, that's right. Also I did,
20 not Port Rebelle but the Man Mile School (ph.) in South
21 Hampton, England.

22 BY MR. JONES:

23 Q. Okay. And on the day that you boarded the New Delhi,
24 can you just give back from the time of boarding back to like a
25 72 hour profile, three days or so, your sleep, your rest sleep

1 cycles. Just general. It doesn't have to be hour by hour.

2 A. Yeah, I'm just -- okay. I got to figure out. Let's
3 see. Well, I sailed the evening before at 1900 on the Maersk
4 Valencia. I was out there probably about 2030, 2100 roughly;
5 rested on a pilot boat until 2:00, or, you know, 2:10 when I
6 boarded the New Delhi Express and that was what, Friday. I
7 even lost track of days here. In the two days previous to that
8 I was -- one second. Just give me one second.

9 Q. Sure.

10 A. I'll take a look at the days. Obviously, the 14th,
11 15th I know, and I hadn't -- the 13th I was off at home and off
12 most of the 14th. So, most of the time was spent, you know, at
13 home.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I --

16 Q. So, were you considered well rested prior to getting
17 aboard the New Delhi?

18 A. Oh, yes. Yeah.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. All right. If -- let's take it then from getting
22 aboard or the pilot boat run out to the vessel, how you got on
23 board and then just take me through -- I won't interrupt, take
24 me through your trip aboard that vessel up to the incident.

25 A. Okay. Well, I'm just going to go basically off of

1 the report that I wrote.

2 Q. Okay. But feel free to elaborate --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- if you want.

5 A. If you'd like. As I said I boarded at 2:10 on the
6 morning of the 15th, April 15th. The visibility was two to
7 three miles and he said -- but the Mate on the pilot boat
8 didn't -- I asked the Mate on the pilot boat what was the
9 visibility up above, I mean, I up in here and there were spots
10 of fog in Ambrose Channel that was reported by -- that were
11 reported by outbound pilots, and -- but the dispatcher up here
12 said he could see shore to shore. They just look out the
13 window. If you can see Brooklyn, we get the shore to shore
14 report.

15 I did hit some fog at the 14 Buoy in Ambrose Channel
16 and once that was, you know, the second turn and it was, you
17 know, a little foggy up until about maybe a mile south of the
18 bridge, the Verrazano Bridge, it cleared up a little bit there.
19 Then when I got north of the bridge it socked back in again a
20 little bit until just north of the 22 Buoy, then it was all --
21 then I had clear. I could see all the way up the upper bay to
22 Manhattan and all the way across shore to shore.

23 There were two ships following me in, the Maersk
24 Georgia and the Queen Mary II were inbound and the reason why
25 I, you know, I consider because the one ship was following --

1 was going to be following me in the kills and the Queen was
2 going to Brooklyn. This was her first trip up into the -- into
3 that -- the new terminal in Brooklyn. So, we were trying to
4 get -- we were talking to the Queen and trying to keep out of
5 their way so that they can get by us because we were slowing
6 down because of, you know, visibility or whatever.

7 The Captain basically came up shortly north -- just
8 north of the 24 Buoy, I guess, came on board and I forget -- I
9 don't know exactly what time it was, from I believe the Merriam
10 Moran was the boarding boat. We turned into the Connuck Range
11 (ph.). We had visibility all the way through the kills. From
12 the position where we were we could see. Basically on a range
13 you can see, you know, all the way in almost as far as I guess
14 IMTT looking over top of the buildings and tanks and stuff.
15 The visibility was fine. We went in. I had, you know,
16 obviously, spoken to VTS and got a traffic report. It was -- I
17 believe it was the Frederick Bushard (ph.) with a tug in tow
18 that had just left one of the berths at IMTT. I think it was
19 Berth C. I don't remember exactly which pier it was and the
20 MSC Olson was rounding -- well, it was probably at the Bayonne
21 City Dock, no, I'm sorry, was at the old Texas Dock approaching
22 Bergen Point as we were inbound on the Connuck Range.

23 We, you know, we did a pilot to pilot exchange with
24 Captain Bates and myself, report on the draft, which was 39
25 feet. I discussed the air draft which off the top of my head I

1 can look it up, I don't remember -- recall exactly what the
2 number was and the oncoming traffic; told him about the other
3 tow; told him about the MSC ship, plus we discussed the MSC
4 ship because of the zone requirements, we knew that -- we
5 figured that he would be east of the zone long before we got to
6 the zone so he was not going to be a concern to us. I also
7 told him that, you know, the ship was 39 feet. She wasn't
8 sluggish. She wasn't handling poorly, but she did need a
9 little extra rudder to get her going and to get her turned, but
10 that was, you know, that's normal for that weight.

11 At that point, you know, the visibility was very good
12 up until we got to about the Bayonne City Dock or just west of
13 IMTT and then it just basically, that was it, you know, the
14 bridge disappeared. Bergen Point disappeared. After that,
15 well, we, you know, we made the approach to the bridge. As we
16 were coming under the bridge, Captain Bates couldn't see the 14
17 Buoy. He asked the Merriam, whom I'm pretty sure, almost
18 exactly sure the Merriam was the boat on the starboard bow, the
19 Merriam, if he could spot the buoy, the Merriam replied he
20 couldn't and that's when John asked me to go out on the wing
21 and see if I could find the buoy. I went out on the wing. I
22 downed -- I -- as I got on the wing, I happened to look up at
23 the bridge and I could see that there's red channel markers,
24 red lights on the bridge that marked the northern edge of the
25 channel. That was off the starboard wing, you know, above us.

1 I spotted the 14 Buoy as the bow approached it as we were
2 passing under the bridge and I saw the Merriam kind of maneuver
3 around alongside of us to avoid the 14 Buoy and the 14 Buoy was
4 on the starboard side and I'm estimate -- I estimated about 50
5 feet off. I mean, it was -- the Merriam is about 35 feet wide.
6 It looked to be about 15, 20 feet off the Merriam. So, I'm
7 estimating 50 feet. I saw the structure for the new beacon
8 that was being constructed on the Point and that's what I --
9 that's all I saw. That's everything I saw on the starboard
10 side. I never actually saw the 2 Buoy. I had to go -- I was
11 too far away to see the 2 Buoy, which was the next red buoy up
12 the line.

13 I had just reported to -- tried to yell across to
14 Captain Bates that I had seen -- I had spotted the 14 Buoy when
15 it was off the bow. He couldn't hear me. There was, you know,
16 between radios and everything else. I was in the far side of
17 the wheelhouse. He was on actually the -- I was on the far
18 starboard wing. He was on the port side of the wheelhouse by
19 the radar there. I had switched over to his radio frequency.
20 He working on -- he works on 67 with the boats but there was
21 too much conversation going on between him and the boats, I
22 didn't want to interfere with that. As the buoy went by, the
23 Merriam had came down our starboard side. I then went all the
24 way across the wing to yell in the door and said I had the buoy
25 at beam and went back to where I originally was standing,

1 watched the buoy go astern past the quarter, went back into the
2 wheelhouse to tell him we were clear of the buoy, which I did
3 yell to him as I was coming in, we were clear of the buoy and
4 that's when I started walking uphill. So, that's when I
5 assumed we had -- at that point, we had already pretty much
6 touched the Point.

7 Q. Um-hum. What happened after that? Just if you could
8 keep going.

9 A. Well, we -- at that point I wasn't exactly sure what
10 had happened. All's I know is what I had seen. I think John
11 had mentioned to me he thought we had gone aground. I said if
12 that was the case we have to get this thing moving or else we
13 got -- she's going to lay up against the rocks. We have to get
14 her out of here. We tried to push her out a little bit. He
15 used the boats to push her out a little bit and she came to a
16 rest pretty much in the center of Bergen Point Reach, Bergen
17 Point West Reach. The -- and with a, almost a 10 degree list.
18 She had about a 9.9 I think was the final figure that I heard
19 of list on her to starboard.

20 We, at that point, you know, I turned to one of the,
21 either the Mate or the Captain, I'm not exactly sure who I
22 spoke to originally, I said, you know, we better start sounding
23 tanks, figure out what's going on here. I spoke to -- John was
24 still maneuvering the boats and trying to get, you know, the
25 anchors down and everything. He was dealing what the Captain,

1 you know, get an anchor down and everything else, as far as I
2 remember, and I got on the phone and called VTS to tell them we
3 had a situation, that we were aground. The operator at VTS
4 that I spoke to, and I don't recall the name, the officer I
5 spoke to was apologizing to me. He said it was clear when you
6 went in the kills. I said, I know, you know, it was clear, you
7 know. I just told him that we, you know, at the present time
8 I'm not exactly sure what the circumstances are but it seems --
9 we seem to be aground in, you know, in the middle of the Bergen
10 Point. I also had mentioned something, you know, you had the
11 Maersk Georgia astern. At least somebody better talk to them
12 and tell them what's going on and then again we went back to,
13 you know, discussing what was going to go on and what we was
14 going to do.

15 We had the boat run around -- one of the tug boats
16 run around and do sounding around us trying to figure out where
17 we were. We had -- asked them to -- John had asked them to
18 spot the draft marks to see where we were with the draft marks
19 and we were over, I guess, the starboard side was over the load
20 line to 13 plus meters the way she was lying. Then all of a
21 sudden the alarms were going off. Fire alarms were going off
22 all over the place. It's not funny, but at one point I guess
23 almost every officer must have had their wife or significant
24 other with them because at one point I turned around and there
25 was a bunch of Indian women standing in the back of the

1 wheelhouse with lifejackets on. Now, I'm starting -- because
2 nobody is telling us whether there's a fire or not, now I'm
3 starting to get a little more concerned, you know, if they got
4 the family members getting together I'm starting to get
5 worried, but, no, I guess it was just a function of the list
6 that was setting off all the fire alarms --

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. -- and possibly, you know, the hole in, I don't know,
9 whatever it could have been, but we weren't -- we didn't have a
10 fire problem at that point that I knew of.

11 Then it was a matter of trying to convince the
12 Captain to try to start pumping ballast over to the port side.
13 I think the Captain was under the misconception that we were
14 aground on the port side, that the reason why the ship was
15 listing to starboard is because she was resting against the
16 bank on the port side and it was a little difficult to try to
17 explain to him that no, we had been holed and we were -- had
18 taken on water and she had rolled to the bottom on the
19 starboard side and after a couple of times we finally got him
20 convinced and they started pumping ballast over to the port
21 side. That and the combination of the finally the rise in tide
22 was basically I think what floated her. At that point I had
23 left the ship. I came back here and did the mandatory drug
24 test and breathalyzer test and that was all I had.

25 Q. Okay. This is Rob Jones. Let's just start right

1 with the, where the vessel kind of came to aground --

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. -- after the touch. Are you pretty sure and -- there
4 was an anchor down now? From what I gather now, a port anchor
5 went down and I'm just trying to establish supposition that you
6 sat at for a couple of hours --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- prior to --

9 A. I had my DGPS laptop on and the position that it
10 showed on the laptop showed us on the center line of Bergen
11 Point West Reach. At one point I did -- I had walked out on
12 the starboard wing for one reason or another and I looked aft
13 and I could see the green 15 Buoy that they had moved out into
14 the center of the channel and I could actually start to see --
15 I could see a loom from the drill boat, the Proctor, astern of
16 us, almost directly astern of us, maybe a little bit off to the
17 starboard side which -- where the buoys would have been in the
18 middle of the channel, but the position icon that appears on my
19 Differential GPS is technically the position of the antenna,
20 you know, I put in an offset of roughly 50 feet to the center
21 line. So, the -- in -- the unit itself is accurate to within a
22 meter. So, it gives us a pretty good estimation of where we
23 came to rest, at least where the wheelhouse came to rest.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. But the visibility was such I couldn't tell you, you

1 know.

2 Q. So, it's just that electronic position on the chart.

3 A. That's correct.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. But was she swinging at all?

7 A. No.

8 Q. So, it was just --

9 A. No, we hadn't, no.

10 Q. So, aground.

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. And probably by -- down by the starboard side?

13 A. Absolutely.

14 Q. Yeah. All right. On your way in before you --

15 before Captain Bates assumed the con.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. How was the crew reaction to your orders, your helm

18 orders?

19 A. Oh, they were fine. Yeah. They were fine. Yeah.

20 Q. No problems with the vessel --

21 A. No.

22 Q. -- no problems with the equipment?

23 A. No, none at all.

24 Q. The radars, gyros?

25 A. The radars -- the -- there's two -- there were two

1 radars, one on either side of the center consul in the
2 wheelhouse, port and starboard. When I brought in -- when I
3 went up there I set up my GDPS directly in front of the port
4 radar, right on the windowsill directly in front of the port
5 radar, which is my standard procedure when the visibility is
6 variable. The reason I used the port side is because the ship
7 was due to go starboard side, too. There's a long wire that
8 connects this -- the antenna to the computer and the -- I
9 always choose the lesser of two evils. If I put it on the
10 opposite side, I don't have to worry about somebody tripping
11 over it going out there on the wings of the bridge. So, that
12 was set up directly in front of the port radar. I mean, I come
13 to find out later on -- the port radar was all right. There
14 was some clutter on the radar. It wasn't the best picture I've
15 ever seen, you know, on a ship. It turned out the starboard
16 side was actually tuned better, but I actually never even
17 looked at the starboard radar because of the position of my
18 tools and where I had them, but, I mean, it wasn't by no -- it
19 was usable but it -- there was some clutter involved. It
20 was -- it wasn't the best picture I've ever seen.

21 Q. Um-hum. Now, you mentioned you bring your laptop
22 aboard and that you're referring off of the Differential.

23 A. It is, yeah, but it is all my unit.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. Yes. It uses Differential corrections.

1 Q. Can that track be archived at all?

2 A. It can when you turn it on. Unfortunately, because
3 it is -- I met one or two ships, you know, coming outbound and
4 everything else, I never got around to logging it. There's a
5 key. You hit write and it writes a log based on, you know,
6 your track. At that point it -- if I think about it when I'm
7 out at sea, you know, by the time you get on board you do your
8 Mas-Pilot exchange, you call VTS, you do all your things, you
9 know, sometimes you just forget. I just forgot. I never
10 turned it on. I mean, the laptop was on. I never turned on
11 the logging function. I did turn it on after we were aground
12 to keep track of our position once we were aground but
13 before -- previous to that point, no, I did not have it on.

14 Q. Okay. With the memory on that, there might be data
15 on there that we could possibly use.

16 A. I spoke to Captain Andy McGovern who was instrumental
17 in setting up these units to begin with. I spoke to him. He
18 was on --

19 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Another pilot.

20 MR. JONES: Um-hum.

21 CAPTAIN NAPLES: Yeah. He was on the Queen Mary,
22 too. I asked him if he knew if there was a way for us to
23 rescue that data and he wasn't sure but he, you know, he told
24 me, why don't you contact Chuck Parker who was the
25 representative from Reagan Industries who makes these units for

1 us, try to get a hold of him, which I tried to. He's -- but
2 Andy did suggest, he said, listen, don't turn it off. Leave it
3 on and leave it going. If there's any way of rescuing it,
4 perhaps as long as the thing is going, you know, the computer
5 is still on and operating then we should -- we may not have a
6 problem if we can. As it turns out, no, there is no way to
7 rescue the position data from the software unless it's been
8 turned -- unless the logging function has been engaged.

9 BY MR. JONES:

10 Q. Because we probably have people that can probably
11 extrapolate that data from there. It's just a matter of either
12 using another laptop or giving us the hard drive, so -- well,
13 we can talk about that after the interview, but it's an option
14 we might have. Okay. During the course of your transit when
15 you're in command --

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. -- when you have the con, even if visibility had been
18 okay at the time or patchy, at any time can you stop the
19 vessel's movement or go to anchorage if the visibility was to
20 decrease or you get word or notification --

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. -- that the entire Reach is down now or the Bergen --

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. -- Bergen -- yeah?

25 A. Yeah, that crossed my mind, it crossed my mind down

1 at the Narrows.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. Because I had checked in the radar. I was looking at
4 positions for -- actually, it crossed my mind before the
5 Narrows because I was looking at the anchorage and the
6 anchorage, the Staten Island anchorage was full. I think there
7 was five ships in stay in Staten Island. There were, I believe
8 two ships in the lower end of Baybridge Flats (ph.), which
9 pretty much eliminated any positions we could go to north of
10 the bridge and I was, you know, looking at Gravesend Bay, and
11 there was nobody in Gravesend Bay so in the event something
12 happened in the course, you know, when we got into the Upper
13 Bay, at the very least I could take her up to the North River,
14 turn her around and bring her back down and put her in
15 Gravesend Bay. I had an out.

16 Q. So it is an option.

17 A. Oh, there's always -- you always have to have an out.

18 Q. So, along, you know, along those lines, once the --
19 and I don't want to speak -- you to speak for the Docking
20 Master, but once the vessel is in the Artic Kill, or the Kill
21 Van Kull, is it pretty much committed at that point if
22 visibility closes down?

23 A. Well, if -- you heard the story about the Maersk
24 George and how she wound up laying along side at IMTT. You're
25 pretty much committed. Once you're in the kills, there's no

1 turning around in there in most cases and you're not going to
2 turn around in zero visibility anyway if you're shut down in
3 the kills.

4 Q. So, the Maersk -- the vessel that was following you,
5 though --

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. -- that basically had to hold station --

8 A. Yeah, they had --

9 Q. -- somewhere in there until --

10 A. Yeah, they held for --

11 Q. -- it was clear out of your way.

12 A. -- a good few hours, yeah.

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. All right. That's all I have right now, Captain.

16 MR. JONES: Lieutenant.

17 LT. COBB: This is Lieutenant Charles Cobb with the
18 Sector in New York.

19 BY LT. COBB:

20 Q. I only have a couple of real quick questions to just
21 follow on on some of the stuff that Mr. Jones talked about.
22 The laptop, what is the normal procedure for the logging
23 function? Is there a policy for the Sandy Hook Pilots --

24 A. No.

25 Q. -- or the New York State Pilot Commission?

1 A. No, there is no policy.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Not with these units.

4 Q. When you initially got on the vessel at approximately
5 2:10, I think --

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. -- did you go up -- when you went up and set up your
8 equipment, do you normally check out the other equipment on the
9 bridge and become more comfortable with it as you were coming
10 in?

11 A. Yeah, absolutely, I mean, well, the standard
12 procedure, of course you go up and do the Master Pilot exchange
13 and, of course, you ask the Captain if everything is operating,
14 which he said it will -- it was. I had, you know, taken a look
15 at the radars because of the visibility situation so I knew
16 about, you know, about that. I -- I'm sorry, I looked at the
17 port radar. The port radar was operating. I didn't get a
18 chance to look over and look at the starboard radar and then
19 set up my equipment. Once I do that, there's not much else, I
20 mean, everything was operating according to what I was told.

21 Q. You mentioned earlier that it needed a little bit
22 more, a little extra rudder.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. Was that fairly noticeable?

25 A. No, it was just something that, you know, that I

1 noticed coming inbound that, you know, you would pass on to the
2 Docking Pilots especially since he's going to operate a little
3 bit slower speed than I was --

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. -- I was operating it with because then when, you
6 know, a ship is 39 feet, especially, you know, this ship, she
7 was heavy at 39 feet, that it wasn't that it wasn't going to
8 turn, it wasn't like it was a dog, it was just that you had to
9 give it a little extra consideration and make it turn.

10 Q. Okay. As you passed under the Bayonne Bridge, you
11 state -- stated that you went out and you said the light --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- the red light. Thinking back, do you remember the
14 orientation of the bow at that point?

15 A. I have -- wouldn't -- I didn't see the bow.

16 Q. All right.

17 A. I have no idea. I saw -- I could see -- it was one
18 of those -- it was those strange type of fog. I couldn't
19 see -- the ship was fully loaded. There was a lot of boxes on
20 the ship. I couldn't see the boxes forward of the beam,
21 almost, but I could look down and I could see the Merriam --

22 Q. Uh-huh.

23 A. -- on the water. So, I mean, I could see a little
24 bit of the flare but I couldn't --

25 Q. So, I got a picture of the ship right here.

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. In relationship to the bow, where would the Merriam
3 have been?

4 A. You'd have to -- that's a better question for the
5 Captain Bates but I'm guessing I probably saw him here just
6 where this, I guess, I don't know if that's a shadow or if
7 that's part of the flare.

8 Q. It's hard to tell.

9 A. Yeah. If that's part of the flare, the Merriam would
10 not be underneath this flare.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. That's just a shadow wherever the flare begins. The
13 Merriam would be just where the end of the -- the flare ended.

14 Q. Okay. Well, you stated you could only see up to the
15 beam on the boxes but you couldn't --

16 A. From up here. Once you look down on the water you
17 could see a little bit further.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It was a high -- it was -- I don't know if it was
20 descending at the time or what it was doing, okay, I could --
21 never saw the jacks there, couldn't see, you know, half of the
22 boxes but I could look down in the water and I could see the
23 Merriam. I could see a little bit of the turn of the bow, you
24 know, wherever that turn is.

25 Q. I was reading through your statement. You talked

1 about a recommendation to come to the starboard that he'd asked
2 your opinion on the positioning -- the position of the ship.

3 A. We were approaching the bridge, just before I walked
4 out on the -- in the wheelhouse. He -- we -- looking in the
5 radar. We're looking -- we're standing in front of the port
6 radar on the port side and the drill boat is off our port bow
7 with a pair of buoys. At the time -- he said -- turned to me
8 and said, what do you think? I said, well the heading marker
9 was now going inside the security zone, was heading inside the
10 security zone between the buoy and the drill boat so obviously
11 we can't come to port any longer. We come anymore left. I
12 said think possibly we're going to have to go -- come to
13 starboard.

14 Q. Uh-huh.

15 A. At that's when he -- that -- at that point is when he
16 asked the Merriam about the buoy and that's when I walked out
17 on the wheelhouse.

18 Q. Okay. So, you don't know if he took a -- made a
19 course change?

20 A. He -- all's I know is he agreed. He said -- he
21 agreed. He thought that was appropriate and then asked me
22 about trying to find the buoy.

23 Q. Okay.

24 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: While you were still with him,
25 did he order a course change or a rudder change?

1 CAPTAIN NAPLES: Not that I recall.

2 BY LT. COBB:

3 Q. That's all the questions I actually have right now.
4 Thank you.

5 MR. JONES: This is Rob Jones again.

6 BY MR. JONES:

7 Q. Captain, when you're -- when the Docking Master
8 assumes the con --

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. -- what do you consider your role up there on the
11 bridge as?

12 A. Depending on the situation, depending on the traffic
13 and the visibility, usually basically it's just a matter of
14 maybe monitoring, you know, radio calls for him, trying to help
15 him out with the radio calls because of the increased traffic
16 within the kills. In this case, because of the visibility,
17 it's a matter of trying to help without getting in the way, you
18 know, we work on the assumption that four eyes are better than
19 two and that any assistance I can give or the Docking Pilot
20 will ask for, I will provide. You know, if the Docking Pilot
21 goes out on the wing then I stand by the radios in case
22 somebody is calling looking for the ship or whatever, or if
23 something goes wrong, I also try to pay attention to some of
24 the orders and make sure that, you know, the Helmsman doesn't
25 go the wrong way, the Quarter Master doesn't turn the wheel the

1 wrong way or the engine orders are done properly, I mean, it's
2 an assist mode. That's all you can do.

3 Q. No obligation for you to be there, is there?

4 A. Well, I -- legally I'm responsible for the ship from
5 sea to the dock and dock to sea.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. You know, my --

8 Q. So, you had -- I'm sorry. But as a normal course of
9 action, even though the Docking Master has taken the con, you
10 wouldn't go below though.

11 A. No, no. No.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. No. Not at all.

14 Q. All right.

15 MR. JONES: That pretty much does it for me.

16 Lieutenant?

17 LT. COBB: I have no more.

18 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Did you ask where the con was
19 transferred? I know where it was but I wasn't sure if you
20 asked.

21 MR. JONES: I thought he said at the Connuck Ridge.

22 CAPTAIN NAPLES: Yeah.

23 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He did. All right.

24 CAPTAIN NAPLES: On the Connuck Ridge, yeah.

25 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And then the other question that

1 I didn't think was asked, what was the visibility on the Range
2 coming into Kill Van Kull?

3 MR. JONES: He said he could see -- it was clear on
4 the Connuck Ridge. He could see all the way to the --

5 CAPTAIN NAPLES: IMTT. It was just -- IMTT.

6 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: All right. That's on the Range.
7 How about in Kill Van Kull?

8 CAPTAIN NAPLES: Well, I -- we still had visibility
9 when we rounded the 8 Buoy at Hes Bayonne (ph.) and we could
10 still see probably at least to the City Dock. As far as -- I
11 honestly don't recall when it started to shut down or where we
12 were when it started to shut down. I don't know exactly when
13 it actually happened. All's I know is that when we got to the
14 Bayonne City Dock or when we got west of IMTT, the bridge was
15 gone.

16 BY MR. JONES:

17 Q. Where's IMTT in relation to a buoy? It might not be
18 on the chart as far as IMTT was.

19 A. Give me. You said -- it actually isn't on the chart
20 but this is --

21 Q. This is the Connuck Range --

22 A. That's the Connuck Range. I'm looking at this upside
23 down. I never look at it upside down. Yeah, right. Okay.
24 There's the 9 Buoy. IMTT is over here. Okay, well, no, it was
25 actually right there.

1 Q. Right there.

2 A. Yeah. And this would be the Bayonne City Dock is
3 about right here. No, I'm sorry, the Bayonne City Dock is over
4 here. Yeah. Yeah. It's over here. Just, well, just east of
5 the 10 Buoy. This is the IMTT. When we refer to IMTT, we're
6 usually talking about this was the original IMTT in this area
7 right here.

8 Q. Okay. And you could still see the bridge at that
9 point?

10 A. I -- no, well, what I said was when we were inbound
11 on the range I could see -- we could see to this point --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- you know, this vicinity. I honestly don't recall,
14 other than when we approached the bridge when we lost the
15 visibility to the bridge.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. To be perfectly honest with you, I don't remember.

18 Q. Okay.

19 MR. JONES: Anything further? Captain? Lieutenant?

20 LT. COBB: I just got one quick thing.

21 BY LT. COBB:

22 Q. The buoy, the 14 Buoy, how far do you think that you
23 may have been off of it when you --

24 A. Again, I'm estimating off of the Merriam, the Merriam
25 having a beam of 35 feet, excuse me, of at least 15 to 20 feet

1 off of that. I'm estimating 50.

2 Q. Okay.

3 LT. COBB: That's all I have.

4 CAPTAIN NAPLES: I mean, you know, the visibility
5 is -- was crappy, you know, there's -- there was no light. You
6 couldn't see all the way across the water to be able to ask me
7 how far it was, anyway.

8 BY MR. JONES:

9 Q. The software in your laptop --

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. -- what software does that use?

12 A. It's a proprietary system. It's a -- what it does is
13 show us a position on a vector based chart. On the -- the
14 vector based chart is drawn to the engineered, I'm sorry, the
15 surveyed positions of the channel, edges and buoys so that, you
16 know, you don't have any of the paper error that are involved
17 with raster charts and what it does, it give us to within one
18 meter our position off the center line of the channel.

19 Q. Okay. Are the aides plotted onto that, also?

20 A. The aides are plotted onto that but they are not
21 updated according to the Notice to Mariners. It is the, you
22 know, the original surveys.

23 Q. Okay. Do you know when the original survey was done?

24 A. I have no idea.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It's like an early predecessor to the current --
2 Noah's (ph.) current ENC chart.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. It's basically just a database of points.

5 Q. Okay. Thank you.

6 MR. JONES: Okay again?

7 LT. COBB: Yeah.

8 MR. JONES: All right. That'll conclude the
9 interview.

10 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled
11 matter was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: Investigation of New Delhi Express
Interview of Captain Steve Naples

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-06-MF-013

PLACE: Bayonne, New Jersey

DATE: April 14, 2006

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Mary Anne Jones
Transcriber