

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

 In the Matter of: *
 *
 "FIRE ON BOARD M/V COLUMBIA" *
 DOCKET NO. DCA-00-MM030 *

INTERVIEW OF:

DEBRA LORTON
 Third Mate
 M/V Columbia

INTERVIEWED BY:

MIKE JONES
 NTSB Human Factors Group Chairman

Captain J. Lynn Craddock-Melin
 Port Captain Vessel Operations
 Alaska Marine Highway System

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 USCG Marine Safety Office
 Juneau, Alaska

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. MIKE JONES: It is Friday, June 9th, about
3 3:30, 3:38 and we are about to interview the chief
4 mate? The third mate, I am sorry, third mate.

5 Would you state your name?

6 MS. LORTON: My name is Debra Lorton.

7 MR. MIKE JONES: And would you spell your last
8 name?

9 MS. LORTON: L-O-R-T-O-N.

10 MR. MIKE JONES: And your position is?

11 MS. LORTON: I am the third mate working the
12 pilot, training.

13 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. And you were the
14 third mate on watch at the time of the fire?

15 MS. LORTON: Yes, I had just come on watch
16 right before that, quarter to 12. And we, it was just
17 raining a little, and we saw on the radar another,
18 something moving north and we were southbound, and so
19 we called on the radio and to arrange passenging and it
20 was the TAKU and when I, we called on 16, channel 16
21 and when I put the radio down, the telegraph alarm went
22 off and some of the power went off and the captain and
23 chief mate came in right away and the pilot called the
24 Taku back to tell them that we had a situation. I
25 wasn't paying real close attention to what he was

1 saying. We were all just trying to simulate what was
2 happening, what had happened. And then the alarm went
3 off, the fire alarm went off and there was announcement
4 that this was not a drill, that we had a situation and
5 we were to assemble for that. And I went to get my
6 gear and I got the VHF radio, which is what I was
7 suppose to do and assist Chief Mate and so, I went with
8 the Chief Mate to the car deck at that point and there
9 were, I think the fire screen doors were all closed on
10 the way down. It seems the ventilation was off, it
11 seemed very still. I can't say for sure, but it just
12 seemed everything, everything seemed very still. We
13 still had steering on the bridge. And we had VHF
14 radios. I don't know how he was, I am not sure, since I
15 am new here, I am not sure how everything relates to
16 the electricity on the ship. I know there, our
17 emergency generators must have been on. But, at that
18 point I didn't know exactly what was.

19 So, we went to the car deck and the fire
20 squad was down there assembling with their gear and
21 bottles. I kind of stood back a little because the
22 Chief Mate took charge and I was there to assist him.
23 And he sent me back up to the bridge to, I have
24 paperwork here, if I can -- I kept notes because I knew
25 there would be some question about what the, what we

1 did. And so, this is, I have some times, but they
2 aren't necessarily the times that these things
3 happened, they were the times that the information was
4 made available to me.

5 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

6 MS. LORTON: And I just kept the original of
7 pretty much what happened.

8 We were around Tenakee Springs, when the
9 alarm went off, and we, oh, okay, I remember when the
10 alarm went off, I reached over and wrote down 12:07, so
11 that was the time that the alarm went off. And then we
12 went out to the, we went, let's see, went to the car
13 deck, and they were assembling and the Chief Mate sent
14 me back up for flashlights and a line, another air
15 pack, two more bottles, and spotlights, flashlights,
16 various things that he would need down there, from the
17 E-gear locker on the bridge.

18 And then at some point I heard, and then I
19 didn't write anything down, but I know that we are
20 fighting the fire, I was just trying to just kind of
21 stay out of the way and facilitate whatever the people
22 needed with their gear or whatever and just kind of
23 stand by to assist, you know, if I was needed. So, I
24 was back down on the car deck and I had been to the
25 bridge and got down, and then I heard, I think it was

1 around 12:30, I heard on the VHF, the hand held radio
2 that the fire was out. And let's see, we were
3 extinguishers, we routinely deliver extinguish at 12:32
4 to the engine room. And then I believe there was some
5 venting done. It was very smoky on the car deck
6 forward. And then I think, at 12:27 I wrote down that
7 the first engineer, the chief engineer and the day
8 third were reported out, back out of the engine room.
9 And I think the, one of the aft tie-up stations was
10 opened at 12:35, I wrote down here. See these are all
11 the times that they came available to me.

12 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

13 MS. LORTON: Let's see. I gave some copies of
14 the some checklists to the Chief Mate at 12:45 and he
15 started asking questions of what, if things had been
16 done, he kept asking if I had any input would take any
17 suggestions anyone had. And he was doing the job. I
18 thought he was doing a great job. The engineers were
19 going down into the engine room. Hazelman, the
20 watchman, reported that the water tight doors were
21 being closed, except for number three, I think, to
22 generator room. And that was for the Chief Engineer to
23 pass through. I don't know what, you know, I don't
24 really know what everything that was going on, but this
25 is just what I was hearing.

1 I don't think we had any water to the mains
2 except for, later I found out, I think we had water in
3 the shop -- one of the mains was functioning.

4 I don't remember, something about the pumps,
5 I was still kind of new I don't really know what just
6 yet . The pursuer came by and he was collecting fire
7 extinguishers. He was dry-chem for the engineers that
8 we were collecting more fire extinguishers.

9 At this point I got sent up to the bridge, to
10 get radios for the boat crews, the lifeboat crews. So,
11 I took the VHF and came up, all the passengers were in
12 their life jackets. They were all assembled. There
13 were assembled mostly forward and aft here, I believe.

14 I didn't spend a lot of time wandering around to see
15 who was where and what was going on, because I was, I
16 was assigned to do something else. But, I know they
17 all had on jackets and somebody came up to me when I
18 was just wandering through, dressed in the jacket, they
19 were making sure the crew had jackets, the stewards,
20 the pursuers were all--.

21 Okay, I took some radios from the bridge, I
22 was given them by I think the captain or someone, and I
23 took them out to make sure that boat crews were ready.

24 So, they were standing by after I gave a radio to --
25 one of the stewards. I gave him a radio, and he was on

1 Boat 1. And on Boat 2 I gave it to Number 49. I said,
2 who are you, what boat are you with? He said I am
3 number 49. I said, good enough. Do you know how to row
4 this boat? He said, yes. And I had, I looked around
5 and got some other stewards who were nearby and I said,
6 you are assigned to this boat and they said, yes, and I
7 said, you stay with them and be ready to look, lower
8 boats if necessary. So, I assigned the other stewards
9 to that area. They were instructed to stand by. And
10 those were the boats that they were suppose to be on.
11 I heard instructions to evacuate passengers to the
12 Taku, I heard this on the VHF.

13 I am back to the car deck now. Okay. And
14 this is 14:29 and we were, we were at the, I think the
15 length -- the fire area. And I think we were moving
16 now to evacuate the Columbia and so, we went up to the
17 car deck doors forward and started assembling the two
18 ropes and plywood, materials to assist, safe transfer
19 passengers to the car deck doors, to the Taku and then
20 I heard on the radio, one of the oilers had smoke
21 inhalation intake into that aft tie up station, which
22 maybe why the door was open. He had been given, he was
23 being given oxygen by a pursuer. He was being assisted
24 by a pursuer.

25 Then at 14:32, we tested the talk-back system

1 on the car deck, and it worked. We had the talk-back
2 system was functioning by the side doors and the Taku
3 fast rescue boat arrived on the port, I had starboard,
4 I think it came around to the starboard and then they
5 went around to the port cargo door, to stand by for the
6 passenger transfer. The Taku was close then. Tom
7 Moore, the Chief Mate, they were bringing out boats.
8 At 13:51 the Taku arrived at the cargo door on the port
9 side. At 14:05, we were trying to keep the steward
10 upstairs to keep the passengers from wandering down and
11 I was hearing something on the radio, so I sent two
12 stewards, I went upstairs to the cabin deck and two
13 stewards and -- to the to watch the doors so that we
14 wouldn't have to going down, the aft cargo, to the aft
15 cargo doors. The fire was between the aft doors and
16 the forward cargo. We didn't want to alarm them to the
17 car deck.

18 So, at some point I went up to the upper car
19 deck to look for fire extinguishers with someone --
20 with stewards in case, for some, I don't remember
21 exactly when that was. I didn't know exactly when that
22 was, the steward in the area by themselves. Okay.

23 We got the ropes. We had some ropes attached
24 to keep the passengers from the main part of the car
25 deck. So, when they came down that forward door, they

1 would go, we kind of led straight to the gangway of the
2 Taku. So, at 14:10, the gangway was ready for the
3 passengers to disembark the Columbia to the Taku.

4 At 14:10, the car deck mooring line was sent
5 over to the Taku at the cargo deck door, our port side
6 to their starboard side Taku so, he tied down -- Then
7 at 14:19, we started to transfer the passengers slowly
8 from the car deck. It was slow because we had to be --
9 We had 18, I put 18, I was trying to keep track of the
10 people who had gone, I was taking names, trying to keep
11 track of the people going back to get the pets from the
12 cars. So, I took the names and I write down names and
13 then check them off to make sure they, I kept the
14 count. I told them -- most of them checked back in
15 with me. A few people broke through at some point. I
16 think they just -- I had people to assist with people
17 who were -- I had some stewards and some deck hands go
18 with these people back to their cars and help them.

19 At 15:23, the Taku and the Columbia, at this
20 point we kept transferring passengers. It was just a
21 steady stream of passengers. Okay. At 15:23, I moved
22 down, the trooper on the Columbia counted 443
23 passengers that had crossed the Columbia to the Taku
24 perhaps -- I don't know what they were, came back and
25 went over, he was a trooper and he was stationed down

1 there.

2 At 15:23 we started another sweep. We sweep
3 the rooms, the passengers -- At 15:28 the trooper was
4 off the Columbia to the Taku, crossed the gangway to
5 the Taku. At 15:30 I heard, a pursuer came up to me and
6 I was still at the car deck, and he said - radio back
7 to the bridge. There is some -- I think I had two
8 radios. One on 1-5 and one on the -- 15:30. The one
9 was reported clear of passengers. The lower decks
10 were being checked. I heard on the radio -- I think I
11 heard that, perhaps the chief steward, someone asked
12 them to muster forward. At 15:39, the port cargo door
13 was secured -- and we had secured the port cargo door
14 and so -- (Pause.)

15 MS. LORTON: And then I heard there was an
16 accurate count of 434 passengers and six crew members
17 had gone with Taku. Then at 16:08 all medical
18 supplies, well, not all, but many of the medical
19 supplies had been sent to the Columbia. And we had
20 sent them via the Taku.

21 MR. MIKE JONES: Speak a little louder.

22 MS. LORTON: We sent them with the fast rescue
23 boat to the Taku to help with the passengers they had
24 over there. And then the aft tie-up station operation
25 was secured by the day man, Barbara Brown, the one on

1 the car deck, people had come aboard. And at 16:22 I
2 have U.S. Coast Guard Anacapa standing by, U.S. Coast
3 Guard personnel onboard. And then I heard that we had
4 one water main was reported working. And that is the
5 information that came available to me during that.

6 MR. MIKE JONES: Well, that is a pretty
7 detailed narrative. You have got the times down to the
8 minute. How did you reconstruct that?

9 MS. LORTON: I just stood there with a pen and
10 paper and wrote it down, because I knew someone would
11 want to know.

12 MR. MIKE JONES: At the time or this was
13 afterwards?

14 MS. LORTON: At the time. I did it at the
15 time. Does that help you?

16 MR. MIKE JONES: You should be commended for
17 that, because that is --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Wow.

19 MR. MIKE JONES: That is, and I am sure, you
20 know, everybody is going to have a lot of questions and
21 things to ask you.

22 I have a few questions here. And I want to
23 go back to some of the basic stuff here and talk about
24 your career and how you got started in the maritime
25 industry, stuff like that.

1 First, tell me what licenses you hold?

2 MS. LORTON: I have a Coastal 3rd Mate,
3 unlimited license.

4 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

5 MS. LORTON: In Crawford. It was Seattle that
6 I got that, probably six years ago since I am my second
7 issue and Captain -- hired me on April 6th.

8 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. How long have you
9 been in the industry?

10 MS. LORTON: Since, I think I hired, I hired
11 on ferries, it was August 1976. I was a steward for
12 two years, and then I went into the deck department and
13 worked as a sailor since then.

14 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. Has that been, that
15 has been, has that been with the Alaska Marine Highway
16 System?

17 MS. LORTON: Yes.

18 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. All right. Can you
19 tell me when your last medical or physical was?

20 MS. LORTON: I have it in my room. It was
21 like a week and a half ago, or two weeks ago. It was,
22 it was in May, because in June my physical had been up,
23 so I had one in May.

24 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

25 MS. LORTON: So, it would be current.

1 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. And was your
2 physical, did your physical come out all right?

3 MS. LORTON: Yes.

4 MR. MIKE JONES: Was there anything
5 noticeable? Okay.

6 MS. LORTON: No.

7 MR. MIKE JONES: Are you currently taking any
8 medications?

9 MS. LORTON: No.

10 MR. MIKE JONES: At the time of the, at the
11 time of the fire, at the time you were on watch of the
12 fire, had you been taking any cold medications or over
13 the counter stuff that you buy?

14 MS. LORTON: No, no.

15 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

16 MS. LORTON: I was, one of the sailors had
17 given me a tea, a herbal tea and one man gave us a drug
18 test, I went and got that and gave that to the man who
19 was doing the testing.

20 MR. MIKE JONES: Now, what is the name of this
21 herbal tea?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It was me. I am the
23 one she gave it to.

24 MR. MIKE JONES: Oh.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I checked it.

1 MR. MIKE JONES: It is not the other thing --

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. No. The reason I
3 had concern, she said she got it from another sailor.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

5 MR. MIKE JONES: Onboard.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And the case I am
8 working was an AMHS employee.

9 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, I was kind of
11 curious. It listed all the ingredients and --

12 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. That is fine.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right.

14 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

15 MS. LORTON: All right. I just trust people,
16 you know.

17 MR. MIKE JONES: Yeah, you have to be
18 comfortable about that especially in these kinds of
19 situation.

20 Before the alarm sounded, the fire alarm
21 sounded, did you have any other and you may have told
22 me this before, I just didn't pick up on it, but was
23 there any other indication of any kind of trouble,
24 whatsoever?

25 MS. LORTON: No. Not on the bridge.

1 MR. MIKE JONES: Not on the bridge.

2 MS. LORTON: No, I had just gotten there, if
3 there had been, it was on the watch previously, because
4 I had just gotten there, and the pilot, we both came up
5 about a quarter to 12.

6 MR. MIKE JONES: Quarter to 12.

7 MS. LORTON: Quarter to noon. And there was
8 nothing. Things were, just looked good and we were
9 just ready to navigate.

10 MR. MIKE JONES: Did you get a brief from the
11 person you relieved?

12 MS. LORTON: The pilot did, I believe.

13 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. All right. And they
14 didn't rely anything to you that there was any problems
15 or anything?

16 MS. LORTON: No.

17 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. And once the fire was
18 rolling, were you able to see any smoke from the
19 bridge?

20 MS. LORTON: No, not until I was on the car
21 deck and it was after we had been there for awhile, I
22 started noticing smoke. The smell, but it was quite
23 awhile before I saw and then I looked down in the car
24 deck and forward, because we were in the center of the
25 car deck with the engine room, and when they said they

1 were going to try and get some smoke out, I looked up
2 forward and there was, there was some smoke forward on
3 the car deck.

4 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

5 MS. LORTON: It wasn't bad where we were.

6 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. Is there, I don't
7 know if there is or not, but is there an emergency
8 checklist of things that you would have to do from the
9 bridge in cases of fire?

10 MS. LORTON: Yes, there is.

11 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

12 MS. LORTON: I had a small checklist with me
13 that I gave to the Chief Mate. He asked questions.

14 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

15 MS. LORTON: The crew down there had done
16 that. I just ran to my room and it is a -- and I just
17 ran to my room and gave it to the Chief Mate to ask
18 questions.

19 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. So, were you able to
20 execute the things that were on the list?

21 MS. LORTON: I think he, I think the Chief
22 Mate did whatever was -- I stood back again and let him
23 take care of that.

24 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. Okay. Did you
25 operate any, close any of the, now you tell me if this

1 is technically incorrect, because I am not, I am not
2 sure, I am not a mariner. But, were you able to
3 operate any of the fire screen doors or is that part of
4 this checklist?

5 MS. LORTON: They were closed.

6 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

7 MS. LORTON: They were closed. They go off
8 with the electricity, the electric magnet just --

9 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. That is automatic.

10 MS. LORTON: Yeah.

11 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. Okay.

12 MS. LORTON: They were closed. I don't
13 remember seeing any of them open.

14 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. All right. Prior to
15 coming on watch, at quarter till, what were you doing,
16 give me a general idea of your activities? Let me ask
17 you, before you answer that question, answer this one,
18 how much sleep did you get prior to coming on watch?

19 MS. LORTON: I had gotten quite a bit of sleep
20 because I knew we were going to have a fire drill that
21 day, and there was some things I wanted to do prior to,
22 that off watch, but I just went to bed because I wanted
23 to be awake for the fire drill. So, I --

24 MR. MIKE JONES: About how much was it?

25 MS. LORTON: Well, we were off six hours and

1 they wake us up 45 minutes before and I am sort of lazy
2 and I kind of sleep in a little. I would say I had
3 probably, five hours.

4 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. What is your normal
5 watch?

6 MS. LORTON: I work from noon, 12 o'clock to
7 1800 and then midnight to six in the morning.

8 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. So, it is a six hour
9 watch.

10 MS. LORTON: It is twice.

11 MR. MIKE JONES: Right, six hours on, six
12 hours off.

13 MS. LORTON: Six hours off.

14 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

15 MS. LORTON: Right.

16 MR. MIKE JONES: All right. How often, how
17 long do you sustain that kind of a watch? Is it six on
18 and six off for how long?

19 MS. LORTON: Well, for two weeks.

20 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. And then were you off
21 for a period?

22 MS. LORTON: We are off two weeks.

23 MR. MIKE JONES: And then you are off for two
24 weeks.

25 MS. LORTON: Normally we are off for two

1 weeks, right.

2 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. And so that rotation
3 continues, what, indefinitely or --

4 MS. LORTON: Well --

5 MR. MIKE JONES: You take vacation or what?

6 MS. LORTON: Well, if you have a regular job,
7 you are on there. I am a relief worker now, it is, it
8 was my first week on the run.

9 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

10 MS. LORTON: So, I had been on the beach. I
11 had been working in the yards.

12 MR. MIKE JONES PEAKER: Okay.

13 MS. LORTON: I hadn't been working those
14 hours. I had just been working eight hours, eight
15 hours of jobs in the yard and then 16 hours off. So, I
16 wasn't tired from anything.

17 MR. MIKE JONES: Give me an idea of your
18 activities, you say you had, did you say you had four
19 to five hours of rest before coming on that watch?

20 MS. LORTON: I would say I had five hours of
21 rest, yes.

22 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. What were your
23 activities then prior to that?

24 MS. LORTON: Navigation.

25 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

1 MS. LORTON: On the bridge, navigating.

2 MR. MIKE JONES: You were on the bridge,
3 navigating.

4 MS. LORTON: Yes.

5 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. So, this was another
6 watch.

7 MS. LORTON: Well, you know, where were we? I
8 don't remember if we in the port at that point. I
9 think I had, wait a minute, I would have to look at the
10 schedule. But, we had been either navigating or I had
11 been doing fire station checks.

12 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

13 MS. LORTON: If I was in port, I was doing
14 fire station checks.

15 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

16 MS. LORTON: To make sure all the equipment
17 was in order, lifeboats.

18 MR. MIKE JONES: Do you have time for meals?

19 MS. LORTON: You know, I eat a little bit
20 after I get off watch, you know, and since I am new, I
21 am learning a lot and so a lot of times I will just get
22 a sandwich and take it to my room. And I don't spend a
23 lot of time eating.

24 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. Well, is that
25 sufficient for you?

1 MS. LORTON: Well, it has been working.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

3 MS. LORTON: Yeah, I think if I, the more I
4 learn the less time, extra time I will have to spend
5 learning the job. There are a lot of things I still
6 need to know. But, I don't have time to socialize, I
7 just have to time eat, take a shower, and go to work.

8 MR. MIKE JONES: So, when do you get out, is
9 this like an apprenticeship thing or you are just under
10 instruction?

11 MS. LORTON: Under instruction, yeah.

12 MR. MIKE JONES: How much longer do you have
13 to go?

14 MS. LORTON: Well, I suppose that is up to the
15 company and when I have pilotage, I need to have some
16 pilotage.

17 MR. MIKE JONES: Oh, I see.

18 MS. LORTON: I know how to do the runs,
19 without a pilot, until I have --

20 MR. MIKE JONES: So, you need a certain number
21 of runs?

22 MS. LORTON: I need more exams.

23 MR. MIKE JONES: Exams.

24 MS. LORTON: I need to take more exams.

25 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

1 MS. LORTON: Coast Guard exams for pilotage.

2 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. Okay. Now, I am
3 still trying to get this activities prior, and I got an
4 idea of how much sleep you had before coming on watch.
5 Walk me back further. What about the day before the
6 fire, what was going on?

7 MS. LORTON: I think I had been up on my own
8 time, some during fire stations, because if you are
9 navigating on the bridge, you, I have other duties in
10 addition when we are in port to do fire inspections.

11 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

12 MS. LORTON: You know, I just, I don't exactly
13 remember. I know I did spend maybe an hour when I get
14 off watch, I will go spend an hour, 45 minutes walking
15 around the ship trying to do what I am suppose to do,
16 learning what I am suppose to do, looking at the fire
17 stations and looking at the lifeboats and just
18 inspecting equipment, finding where it is and what
19 there is, since this is my first week.

20 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. Okay. This is your
21 first week. Have you worked a six hour watch before in
22 other positions?

23 MS. LORTON: Always as an AB.

24 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. As an AB?

25 MS. LORTON: Yes, for years.

1 MR. MIKE JONES: And what kind, is four to
2 five hours of rest during your off duty time, is that
3 typical for you, would you say?

4 MS. LORTON: Sometimes, and sometimes not. It
5 depends on if you, it depends on your schedule, because
6 they need a lot of sailors to tie up the ship, so, they
7 wake us up to tie up the ship. And then we go back
8 down sometimes, almost always.

9 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. So, you are telling
10 me that there are times then when you are going to get
11 less than four or five hours?

12 MS. LORTON: Well, your sleep gets broken.

13 MR. MIKE JONES: All right.

14 MS. LORTON: Yeah, sometimes we have less
15 sleep. The navigational officers don't. Navigational
16 officers are off watch.

17 MR. MIKE JONES: How does that impact you when
18 your sleep is broken?

19 MS. LORTON: Well, you get sleepy sometimes,
20 you do, and then you just sleep whenever you, you know,
21 I think different people, it will affect different
22 ways, but we get tired, you know, when we come into
23 port and we tie up, and we go back to bed. But, we
24 will get tired.

25 MR. MIKE JONES: How long do you think you can

1 sustain a six hour watch?

2 MS. LORTON: Well, we do it for a week at a
3 time.

4 MR. MIKE JONES: A week at a time, okay. So,
5 you know you are going to at least make it through that
6 week.

7 MS. LORTON: Oh, sure. I was on the
8 Kennicott, we did it for three weeks. Well, it was
9 different though because we worked, it was sort of
10 staggered. It was a different kind of routine. When
11 we were first on the Kennicott, it was an new boat.
12 So, we were actually, we were actually given more
13 opportunity to sleep.

14 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. Okay.
15 Identify yourself and --

16 CAPTAIN MELIN: I am Captain Lynn Melin, port
17 captain, Alaska Marine Highway. I have a question
18 concerning the, you said you went back to your room and
19 picked up some questions, and then you handed them to
20 the pilot.

21 MS. LORTON: The Chief Mate on scene at the
22 fire.

23 CAPTAIN MELIN: The Chief Mate. Is that
24 normal for you to have that in your room?

25 MS. LORTON: Well, as a new third mate, I have

1 been trying to get as much information as I can that I
2 thought was relevant in case I needed it and that was
3 one of the things that I just happened to pick up and
4 put in there. I think as a third mate, well, usually,
5 I think it is on the bridge, I don't know. I am new.
6 I just knew that I might need it, so I put it in my
7 book.

8 CAPTAIN MELIN: Okay. Those questions that
9 you had, were they the type of questions that are asked
10 each week in a drill also?

11 (Tape ended.)

12 CAPTAIN MELIN: Or were they merely brought up
13 because it was an emergency?

14 MS. LORTON: These were questions, official
15 questions for us to, a checklist, official checklist in
16 an emergency to use, I believe.

17 CAPTAIN MELIN: Okay. That was all I had.

18 LIEUTENANT BOWER: This is Lieutenant Eric
19 Bower from Marine Safety Office, Juneau.

20 When you left the bridge, did the Master or
21 somebody relieve you of the Com?

22 MS. LORTON: Yes, the Master was up there and
23 the second mate had come up. Yes, they were all on the
24 bridge at that time.

25 LIEUTENANT BOWER: So, somebody officially

1 relieved you of your navigation duties?

2 MS. LORTON: The pilot was there.

3 LIEUTENANT BOWER: The pilot had the com.

4 MS. LORTON: The pilot had the com, yes.

5 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Okay. Okay. Is it
6 normal for you guys to carry a trooper?

7 MS. LORTON: When they travel, they check in
8 with us, and we log them in the logbook and they wear
9 their uniforms and it is not, it is normal to, if they
10 are aboard, I suppose, to let us know they are aboard.

11 I think they travel for free, I am not sure.

12 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Do you know who the trooper
13 was?

14 MS. LORTON: I don't know who the trooper,
15 was, but, I know his name was probably on the logbook.

16 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Okay.

17 MS. LORTON: I don't recall his name.

18 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Do you, Captain Melin?

19 CAPTAIN MCLEAN: I know who he was. He was
20 Robert Batey.

21 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Batey, okay.

22 MR. MIKE JONES: Are they armed, is that why
23 you --

24 CAPTAIN MCLEAN: Yes, they are armed.

25 LIEUTENANT BOWER: They are Alaska State

1 troopers.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

3 CAPTAIN MCLEAN: We have a program.

4 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Did you take a pre
5 employment drug test?

6 MS. LORTON: When I was employed, I didn't, we
7 didn't have drug test. The last time I think I took a
8 drug test, I had been on vacation, and I was a few
9 days, after three months of being off, we have to take
10 a drug test. And I took a drug test awhile back.

11 LIEUTENANT BOWER: So, when you came on this
12 vessel, as a new mate, you came from prior employment
13 with AMHS into this new position.

14 MS. LORTON: I came from a different
15 department, working on these same vessels.

16 LIEUTENANT BOWER: So, you had continuous
17 employment.

18 MS. LORTON: Yes.

19 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Okay. So, you weren't a
20 new hire or a new employee with AMHS?

21 MS. LORTON: No, no.

22 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Okay. That is all I have.

23 CAPTAIN MCLEAN: And I actually do have one
24 more and it concerns the basic safety training that we
25 had. We just did training here in Ketchikan, in

1 Juneau, did you participate in any of that?

2 MS. LORTON: No.

3 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Have you done any of the
4 kiosk work?

5 MS. LORTON: No, I did go, before I knew about
6 this, I took, I went to the college in Ketchikan and
7 took the first aid CPR for the mariner class on my own.

8 LIEUTENANT BOWER: Okay.

9 MS. LORTON: But, I was working and I didn't
10 really have the opportunity to do that when you did it.

11 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay.

12 LIEUTENANT BOWER: That is it.

13 MR. MIKE JONES: Okay. I am going to end the
14 interview with Debra Lorton. Thank you very much.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)