

SS AMERICAN FISHER, Attempted Sabotage of
CONFIDENTIAL 6ND B-2 #5443

Ref: (a) 7ND Card, Walter JOSEPH, 1-8-43.
(b) 6ND Card, Fred G. HOWELL, 2-27-43.

Investigation revealed that on 11-28-42 SUBJECT vessel weighed anchor in Charleston Harbor, and after being under way for about one hour running the degaussing range, and when almost completing a U-turn North of the Cooper River Bridge, some unknown party shut off a steam valve to the steering engine, shutting down the steering engine and almost causing vessel to collide with the West pier and dolphin of the bridge; that after steam valve had been opened ship's steering gear worked perfectly. Officers of SUBJECT vessel .

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stated same attempt to sabotage vessel occurred on Nov. 8, 1942 while passing through a narrow channel at Goose Bay, Labrador, which almost caused the ship to go aground; that Chief Engineer Fred R. NEINDORFF was accused of the act and removed at NYC. It was reported by ship's officers that on the morning of Nov. 28, 1942 the steam valves of the steering engine were opened, the steam steering engine put in gear, tested and found operating perfectly; that the valve had to be open during the time the vessel had been under way as otherwise the steering engine would not have worked. Investigation revealed that the steering engine room was inclosed by heavy, small-mesh wire fencing, and the only way anyone could have gotten through into

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the room was by way of the unlocked door; that there were several valves on different pipes, very close together, and anyone not knowing the steering engine room would have had a difficult time finding the right valve to shut off to stop the steering engine; that in order to cut a valve on or off, both hands must be used and many turns made to open or close the valve completely. It is reported that a guard has now been posted at entrance to steering room. SubRef(a) was suspected by Officers of vessel as having committed the act since he was the only one whose whereabouts was not known at time of the incident. However, according to information obtained by 8ND boarding officer at New Orleans, La., it was later reported

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by fellow crew members that SubRef(b) had been seen coming out of steering engine room on both occasions after the exhaust valve had been cut off, and he also is suspected of having committed the act. No opportunity was given 6ND investigating Officers to interview SubRef(a), by reasons of ship's order to sail at once.

ONI-1-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15NDs; SRNC-PRNC-NOB(Ber); MIS(4SC); FBI(Savh); Zones(1,2,3,4,5,6,7)-NYIU-NASIU(A,J,StSi)-BeauBrO-BrunsBrO-PIO(USMB).
March 1, 1943. rls B-7-S CONFIDENTIAL wpt

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