



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD



## INVESTIGATOR INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

On Dec. 8, 2015

**Witness:** FN [REDACTED]

Role: Boat Crewman

Contact: [REDACTED]

Location: Station Gloucester

NTSB (lead) & MAB present

*Personal/Professional background:*

At Station Gloucester past 13 months

Quals as Boat Crew, Radio watchstander, Engineering

*Day of the incident:*

Underway doing area familiarity "run" underway since 1330. Returned to station to swap engineers out. En route to incident scene about 1530. GAR score as Amber for weather and evolution complexity. Weather was gale, NOAA buoy showing 4 footers but on scene was 10 footers. SAR notification came when 47 arrived at dock to swap out engineer. Station OOD notified us. Scene was 24 miles offshore. Estimated 1 hour transit to scene. FOXY LADY had ORIN C in tow upon arrival to scene. Knew it was damaged. 10ft+ waves on scene. Passed pump and drogue to ORIN C. Assisted to get pump running (gave instructions on radio). Put ORIN C in tow. Used 700 foot rope because of waves. Heard vessel (ORIN C) was going down, so we needed to get them (passengers) off the boat (ORIN C). 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> guys off the ORIN C about the same time. Recovered the first guy. 3<sup>rd</sup> guy drifted and swam a ways. He was unconscious and head went below water. He was 15 yards off our boat. I jumped in to retrieve him. Took 5 or so of us to get him on the aft deck. Checked "CABs" and began CPR. About 30 minutes later the helo arrived on scene. Attempted to take the swimmer on board with EEBD. Rough seas prevented this.

*Leading up to arrival at incident scene:*

We prepped for the (towing) evolution en route (to the scene). ORIN C was still under tow (by FOXY LADY II) when we arrived on scene and during pump transfer). Set deck up. Kevlar bridle, hook up tow line. Got (P6) pump ready, packed for throwing over (to the ORIN C). Used heaving bag and 75 foot safety line, tied to P6 and threw it over. Once on scene I went on aft deck (of 47) with the MK and stood by with the heaving line. I was on port quarter about 30 feet distance (from ORIN C) and threw it over – successful after a couple times. Dropped bag sin water to get it heavier to throw farther. Asked them (ORIN C crew) to pull on the line and they pulled over the pump. Sea state separated the boats. About 10 minute attempt to dewater (on the ORIN C). We talked over the radio to assist in the function (of the pump). MK3 was on the radio. I saw water spray out from the discharge a couple sprays. Could see the (ORIN C) stern in the (ORIN C's) aft deck light. No (ORIN C) crew was visible on deck. Dewatering continued, one crew was directed to set up the tow, catch the heaving line from us. [FOXY LADY II was detached from towing at this point] I passed heaving line over about 20 yards. They set it on the tow bit on the (ORIN C) bow. We paid out about 7-800 foot of line and made it to our (47) bit. Could tell the length of the line by markings on it at 50 foot increments. The Cox'n determines the length of the tow. Stood tow watch (as part of being qual'd). About 10-20 minutes towing. Cox'n got news (ORIN C) was taking on too much water, vessel was going down. Watched for snapback on the line/strained. Strain on line is described in terms of light (dips in water) to medium (constant tension) to high (taut and gets thin and water squirts out). Line in this tow (47/ORIN C) was medium strain the whole time. Was hard to get visual of ORIN C during the tow. ORIN C went in and out of visibility because of wave period. Unknown what the period was. Other vessel's (ORIN C) yawing and veering and then capsized.

[REDACTED] Investigations Division

USCG Sector Boston, MA

MISLE IIA #5775162



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*Passenger recovery:*

Got one PIW onboard (47), then second, and then the third jumped. One swam to us, one (the last ORIN C crew to abandon ship) swam away (from the 47). He was 15-20 yards off our starboard. He was on his back, head under water when waves passed. I got a line on me and jumped in, swam him back to the (47). It took about 6 of us to get him onboard. Sea state was moving. The (47) recess was being pitched 5 foot or so out of the water. U climbed up finally and helped pull him up (onboard 47). I assisted with CPR. Recovered passenger had one eye open, one shut, foam from nose and mouth whole time when I hauled him.

*Background questions:*

Had countless hours experience with this Cox'n during past 13 months. The 47 qual'd crew was in sync. Checks are done daily on the towing line by unraveling the whole line, MPC maintenance cards are checked by the deck department (pump). No equipment issues on the 47 that I know of. Work schedule was 2 days on 2 days off. Worked Weds-Thurs, 0640-1600, and slept 2200-0530.

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On Dec. 8, 2015

**Witness:** [REDACTED]

Role:

Contact:

Location: Station Gloucester

NTSB (lead) & MAB present

*Personal/Professional background:*

Port starboard duty, 2 days on 2 days off. Sliding weekends. Wake at 0700, shave, brush. Eat at 0730. Admin work (email, boat hours, training) about 4 hours daily. 1200 lunch. Work out. 1600 dinner. Lives on station (Gloucester) while on duty. Roommates on station. On duty days he tracks weather with a NOAA phone app that includes NOAA buoy data. Asks OOD about the operational picture. Checks PPE, pyro, proper gear for weather conditions. Get boat specs, weight (for towing parameters). POB, POSN, problem, circumstances. ID CG crew for issues, brief GAR score risk assessment with crew. Which crew attends missions depends on the mission. Tends to take more people out to get experience. Been on Gloucester for 2 years. Loves his job. Predominant mission calls are for towing assist. Had 5 fires this year. Firefighting capabilities limited by CG policy and situation and experience. Objective in calls/missions is to preserve life first, then property. Was 47259 Cox'n with duty to safety of crew and conduct of crew and passengers. Operates and cons the boat from various sports. Can float around. Typically drive from above starboard on the open bridge – its primary station – the helm – where there's the best feel of the controls and faster response of controls. Weather limits of the 47: 30 foot seas, 20 foot surf, 50 knots wind. Other limits. Cox'n training at MLB school for two weeks. GAR process: review mission, weather, operational picture and follow the GAR checklist and rate each GAR category on 1-10. If in Amber, Sector is notified and efforts made to mitigate risk factors. All-verbal brief conducted on pier or onboard.

*Day of the incident:*

Woke at 0700, followed usual routine. Got ready to purchase Christmas party items. Admin work, email. Lunch. Prepared for area familiarization of Gloucester for new crew. Planned to re-moor midway to swap crew. Returned to Station Gloucester dock. Went to comms center to get brief on possible case. Got brief, POSN, and nature of distress. Had experience with the ORIN C. Case about a year ago when it got stuck on the bottom in the vicinity of Thatcher's Island. On this case, the ORIN C had been in 108 foot tow and shattered windshield in rogue wave with water in the engine room.

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Received a phone call from Sector (Boston) to respond to the ORIN C. Checked weather - 3-4 foot seas. Not a concern for the MLB (47). Got MK3 as the engineer, and went to MLB at the dock. Did GAR and decided to have the trainees along to observe – not part of mission – as break-ins. GAR was Amber (26 or 25). Got underway. En route, 20+ miles off Thatcher's Island. Passed lee off Cape Ann. Seas increased to 6 footers. Checked personnel status. Don't be a hero – if you're sick, don't hold it in. Arrived on scene with FOXY LADY II and ORIN C. FOXY LADY II said the ORIN C was favoring the starboard bow with the seas. Saw knots on the tow line. ORIN C wasn't riding bad but short tow was no help. You have force of waves multiplied by getting pounded by waves. ORIN C was taking on water so headed in to take control. Gave PO [REDACTED] the Cox'n under my supervision. Passed (P6) pump to ORIN C. Gave instructions on the pump. Briefed 47 crew for tow setup, length of line to get on deck. ORIN C got (P6) pump running. Could see spray from discharge hose. FOXY LADY II reported the water level was at air cleaner part of engine room. Radioed FOXY LADY II to disconnect from tow line. Called ORIN C to have crew go forward. They weren't comfortable sending crew forward with the seas. MLB radioed to ORIN C that we couldn't take over tow until FOXY LADY II tow was released. Thought of options. ORIN C sent crew forward. Told them to don PFD. ORIN C complied. Ordered FOXY LADY II to release tow. Took us 3 attempts to pass the towing line to ORIN C. They put it on the Samson post in the bow. We put out line, started with 600 feet. Our boat wasn't "in step" with ORIN C given waves so we added 200 foot of line for total of 800 foot of line. Told ORIN C if they weren't riding well or felt unsafe to tell us. Once tow was set, ORIN C turned lights out – said because he was trying to save battery. Asked them to turn lights on - lights came back on. Asked ORIN C their water level. ORIN C responded it's at the drip pan. Assumed dewatering, lessening water level. ORIN C reported the (P6) pump not working. Discussed with MK3 (engineer) and found that rags may be stuck. ORIN C reported (P6) pump ran less than 30 seconds. We asked for report of when dewatering again. ORIN C- we're not taking a prime. We asked for water level ORIN C – we're at the dipstick (ORIN C radio voice was not panicked, it was calm). It sounded like the calm voice indicated the water level was not affecting the ORIN C captain. Continued troubleshooting the (P6) pump. Asked ORIN C for water level – 1 foot in galley. Told ORIN C, if water level is high or you feel unsafe then call... ORIN C responded "if it goes down, it goes down." Ordered ORIN C to don immersion suits. Seas at 10 foot now. No safe way to do a passenger transfer alongside with the 47 being steel and the ORIN C being wood – seas and steel to wood contact not good. ORIN C said they need to get off. Ordered to don immersion suits and we broke tow. Maneuvered to within 50 feet of ORIN C bow, backed down, dropped tow, and got into position for passenger pickup. It took the ORIN C about 10-15 minutes to don immersion suits. Maneuvered to stern of ORIN C toward aft deck, briefed on plan to have passengers enter the water one at a time. ORIN C started riding differently. Slower. Indicated water onboard. Deck was awash. Crew was on deck. Strobes were activated on their immersion suits. Entered water one at a time. Swam to us. One passenger onboard 47 now and was fine, said "my while life was on that boat." Saw ORIN C stern submersing. Rolled to starboard, port side swung up to us, starboard side down, bow up, stern rolled down, stern went down, bow up, debris circled above it – boxes, coolers. She was gonna sink. Told both crew to get away from the boat. 2 crew had entered the water immediately when this began – the third was hanging onto staying on the port quarter, then in water and back stroked away from us, no sound, no hand signals, recovered other 2 crew on our starboard side. I appointed a lookout on crew #3, called out bearings and ranges. 2<sup>nd</sup> crew on deck. ORIN C underwater. You could see its lights. MLB drove around wreckage and toward #3, got 10-15 feet away. He was face-up and his face dipped underwater, limp head bob. Assigned FN [REDACTED] to deploy into water to retrieve #3. FN [REDACTED] jumped in and got ahold of #3; was pulled by line back to MLB on starboard side. Difficult to get the large man onboard. Six people got him onboard the starboard side and on deck. Pale. Unresponsive. Unzipped and removed immersion suit – cell phone and pack of cigarettes fell out. Checked CAB, no pulse, no breathing. Massive foam out of mouth. Cleared foam. Used pocket mask for breathing, then started chest compressions. Other petty officers started breaths and got relieved to continue CPR. Went to bridge. Called station. Reported victim's status. Sector (Boston) conference in flight surgeon. We reported no pulse, pale, no breathing, had done CPR for 10 minutes. Doctor advised 10 more minutes CPR. We got weak pulse after 10 minutes so continued CPR. Helo arrived. Attempted to retrieve swimmer on deck with AED. Sea state was too dangerous. Helo departed. We continued inbound. No pulse now – past 10 minutes. Radioed station (Gloucester) and they said to discontinue CPR – we continued because we had a pulse earlier but stopped later. Continued to shore. Nearest land was Rockport and had headed there for EMS transfer but now headed to Gloucester after losing the victim. Moored at Station Gloucester.



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*Background questions:*

ORIN C's riding moment wasn't low in the water. Her ride didn't indicate she was unsafe to tow.

ORIN C's radio calls never stated who they were. Not known whether it was the same person throughout. We addressed all radio calls to them as "captain". Voice was constant throughout whole time – calm – until the last call when he decided to get off the boat. But then he was calm again when they responded about donning their immersion suits. We relied on their captain to assess and communicate. His calmness indicated to me his level of concern – you can always hear their level of concern in past cases.

Recalled previous case with ORIN C when the vessel was driven into Ten Pound Island (Gloucester Harbor) reportedly because the autopilot failed at night, clear. Vessel was on the rocks. Same captain at the time, "Heavy D".

PPE = dry suits for the crew

Heavy weather Cox'n certified

GAR was reassessed informally

Checked the local buoy 7 miles offshore for weather updates.

6 POB on 47 became seasick.

ORIN C captain said his onboard pumps (not P6) were not keeping up with the flooding (later in the tow, just before getting off the vessel). Captain reported the P6 was restarted but wouldn't take a prime. Asked him to try any means to dewater.

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On Dec. 8, 2015

**Witness: MK3 [REDACTED] (second interview)**

Role:

Contact:

Location: Station Gloucester

NTSB (lead) & MAB present

*Personal/Professional background:*

13 years CG service. All underway billets.

Works 2 on 2 off, sliding weekends.

Does general maintenance, PMS (preventive maintenance), facility checks, boat checks, anything mechanical.

*Day of the incident:*

Woke 0700. Well rested. Doesn't recall particulars of the morning. Started painting. About 1400, the 47 returned to dock (Station Gloucester). I boarded for support (engineering). Heard FOXY LADY II was towing the ORIN C. about 1500 underway with 4 new guys onboard (47). Good training opportunity with seas and tow evolution. Exiting Gloucester Harbor seas were 1-3 feet. Larger seas farther out: 2-4s, then 4-6s, then 10-12 foot seas on scene with the ORIN C. En route to ORIN C, got communications with FOXY LADY II about 5 miles out. Had visual also. On radio, heard they needed a pump, they were taking on water. Heard pilothouse was blown out. Unclear what the source of water ingress was. Passed (P6) pump to ORIN C, took 3 attempts. FN Tosh got it to them. Lowered it into the water, attached a sea drogue as well. ORIN C crew started setting up pump. It was dark outside at this point. Told the ORIN C crew instructions on pump operation. Could see water flowing on deck (ORIN C) but could not tell if (P6) discharge hose was connected (to the pump). About 15 minutes passed. The 47 asked if the ORIN C was comfortable, was the water going down. One ORIN C crewmember went to bow and donned PFD. FOXY LADY broke tow. We (47) prepped our tow. ORIN C didn't want to break tow (with FOXY LADY II) but we (47) couldn't connect until they broke tow. Eventually we (47) paid out 800 feet of line for tow. (P6) pump was not working. Lost prime. Pump was running/working but not sucking. Told ORIN C crew to use



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the hand-priming pump. Tried that. No suction. Told them: gotta feel a lot of resistance. Takes a long time to prime (it could be like 150 pumps). Told them to check the strainer. (ORIN C) crew said rags clogged the pump. They took them out. Told them to get the strainer under water (in ORIN C engine room). Still no prime. Told them to check the O-ring, open the camlock and check fittings. Asked if anything was inside the pump. Nothing in the hose. I used these pumps for 6-7 years and knew them (operation). Did monthly tests and tried to help the (ORIN C) crew to trouble-shoot. I asked MK1 and we couldn't think of anything else (troubleshooting). MK1 was talking on radio with ORIN C whole time. He was calm the whole time. Couldn't estimate how much water was coming into the ORIN C. ORIN C crewmembers said he was going into the galley and saw there was water in the engine room. We asked if the pump had suction. Asked if they (ORIN C crew) could bail water with a bucket. Responded they were doing that. ORIN C said crew was cold – no roof on pilothouse. ORIN C asked for another pump. We told them to try more effort to prime the pump. BM1 got on the radio and asked if they (ORIN C crew) felt in danger. ORIN C responded "yeah, don't feel safe anymore". We then prepared to break tow. Pulled line on deck until we were 50 foot from the ORIN C – it looked setting pretty low in the water but couldn't feel if it was unstable. We turned about. Prepped for abandon ship. Got one person onboard (47). ORIN C starboard side was swamped. 30 seconds later the 2<sup>nd</sup> ORIN C crew jumped. 3<sup>rd</sup> ORIN C crew jumped and paddled backward three times. We recovered the 2<sup>nd</sup> crew. 47 came around within 30 feet of 3<sup>rd</sup> crew. We kept getting blow off. Saw water crashing on his face. 3<sup>rd</sup> crew was in the water about a minute. FN [REDACTED] then went in and grabbed him onboard. Talked to 3<sup>rd</sup> crew. No response. Kept talking to him. CPR began – by BM1 I think. Then BM2 [REDACTED] and FN [REDACTED] took over CPR. Heard on the radio that a helo was coming. Went to the open bridge. I was there with BM1 to help navigate. Saw off port quarter the helo. Coordinated on the radio with helo. Grabbed helmets for deck crew and talked with surviving ORIN C crew on medical status. No medical concerns. Lowered HF antenna and colors. Checked for loose gear on deck, secured all. Threw pocket mask and gloves overboard so no interference with helo ops. Rescue swimmer with trail line lowered. FN [REDACTED] assisted with trail line. Grabbed trail line and passed weight bag. Tried to pull swimmer aboard. Pulled max effort. Swimmer got on his feet on the aft deck, then a wave hit and he got thrown off the stern. Wave receded, then the swimmer was slammed again. Helo ops were aborted. Went to CPR and breaths with FN [REDACTED]. BM1 on phone with flight surgeon. Got pulse so continued CPR. Surgeon said continue for 10 minutes. 10 minutes passed and still had no pulse. Continued CPR for 1 hour, plus. Was told to secure CPR. Stopped CPR. Rested on deck. BM1 asked to cover the ORIN C crewmember with rain jacket. I covered him and centered him on the deck and asked to turn the aft deck lights off. Seas calmed as we got closer to shore. Kept watch on the victim. Arrived at Station (Gloucester). Crew went ashore and secured vessel (47).

### *En route to Gloucester, post-incident:*

No comments heard from ORIN C survivors about the vessel condition. Smelled slight odor of alcohol when the ORIN C crew was onboard. Wasn't sure of the source. Got their names. ORIN C crew seemed unemotional.

### *Helo operations:*

Swimmer didn't put his leg up on the rail like I had seen others do before. Either we took a roll or the (helo) pilot shifted; swimmer got picked up and slammed on deck on the stern two times. Helo reeled him in. I threw off the trail line. Helo remained on scene awhile. Heard no discussion about an AED. Someone on radio asked if we had qualified EMTs onboard. I don't know if there was a response.