

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CAPSIZING AND SINKING OF MSRC 8-1

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DURING OIL SPILL RESPONSE EXERCISES

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* Accident No.: DCA19PM014

ON THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER

*

JANUARY 16, 2019

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Interview of: JASON ROGERS

Master, *Louisiana Responder*Aboard the *Louisiana Responder*

APPEARANCES:

ADAM TUCKER, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Lead Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

JAMES BRITTENHAM, Regional Response Manager
Marine Spill Response Corporation (MSRC)

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:21 p.m.)

MR. TUCKER: All right, so time is 1321. We're onboard the Louisiana Responder for the investigation into the capsized and sinking of MSRC 8-1, which was assigned to the, to the -- Munson boat that was assigned to the Louisiana Responder. My name is Adam Tucker. I'm the investigator-in-charge for the National Transportation Safety Board. And here with us we have --

LTJG [REDACTED] Lieutenant Junior Grade [REDACTED] [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard.

MR. BRITTENHAM: James Brittenham, MSRC.

MR. TUCKER: And Captain?

MR. ROGERS: Captain Jason Rogers, MSRC.

MR. TUCKER: Okay.

INTERVIEW OF JASON ROGERS

BY MR. TUCKER:

Q. And first question is, how long have you been with MSRC, and what's your, what's your -- kind of your background? Just an overview.

A. MSRC will be actually 10 years in April that I'll be here with them. Prior to that, I worked lightering vessels, putting out the fenders and such, working with the STBLs and served the ships offshore. Did that for 16, 17 years. So most of my experience prior to MSRC was on those vessels. First 3, 4 -- first 4 years, roughly, deck member. And then after that officer,

1 whether it be mate or master. So about the last -- about 20 years
2 as either a mate or master on these vessels.

3 Q. And how long have you been master with MSRC?

4 A. The entire -- my entire time. The full -- well all but one
5 hitch. I worked one rotation as a mate, and then -- so pretty
6 much, pretty much the entire time except for a three-week work
7 rotation.

8 Q. Okay. If you need to grab a call --

9 A. No.

10 Q. I know you're the captain of the ship, so --

11 A. No, this guy, he --

12 Q. Yeah. Yeah, because I know you guys still got to run the
13 operation, so --

14 A. He's just wanting to know what's going on, probably.

15 Q. Okay. And Captain, just with this ship, it's a twin-screw?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Twin-rudder.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Bow thrusters as well?

20 A. Yes, sir. One forward bow thruster.

21 Q. Any problems with propulsion or any technical problems on the
22 day of the accident?

23 A. No, sir.

24 Q. Okay. Nothing related to either deck equipment, deck
25 machinery?

1 A. No, no.

2 Q. Okay. And in saying that, how does this vessel -- it's an
3 open-ended question, but how does this vessel maneuver? Does she
4 have adequate power for handling in the river?

5 A. She maneuvers, she maneuvers pretty well. When the current
6 is running, sometimes it is difficult, especially right here at
7 this dock. You have a cushion that pushes you off this dock. So
8 a lot of times when you come in, she -- we play a little hell
9 getting her in here sometimes. But as far as when you get out
10 into the river and maneuver and whichever, it's usually pretty
11 well -- responds pretty decent. Gets a decent response.

12 Q. And she's a twin-screw. Are they inward rotating or --

13 A. Yes. Inboard.

14 Q. Okay. And only one thruster forward. How many --

15 A. Only one thruster on the bow.

16 Q. How many horses forward?

17 A. That is a 3512. That's RPMs -- I guess usually around 21,
18 2200 RPMs. The horsepower is -- I'm going to lie to you.

19 Q. That's okay. We have the specs.

20 A. It's a 3512, yeah.

21 Q. Yeah. And more of a curiosity question, but when you get
22 underway in the river, do you have any requirement to take a pilot
23 or anything like that or --

24 A. No, sir. No, sir.

25 Q. Okay. All right. So only one thruster forward.

1 A. Only one forward.

2 Q. For the propulsion system in general, is it, is it an
3 electronics system or is it --

4 A. Air.

5 Q. Air, okay.

6 A. Pneumatic, yeah.

7 Q. Pneumatic. Okay. And your license -- your credential?

8 A. 1600-ton master near-coastal.

9 Q. 1600. Okay. Okay. And so just on the day-to-day, what's --
10 I know in general what the master does on a vessel, but what's
11 the, what's the day-to-day job and tasking of a master on an MSRC
12 boat?

13 A. You know, just depends. Of course, you know, with MSRC, we
14 do all the invoicing and all that stuff. But we start out the day
15 with a morning safety meeting down below. We'll do a safety
16 meeting, just a brief overview of what we plan on doing for the
17 day. You know, which -- who's going to do what, this or that. Or
18 discuss anything we may or may not have coming in, you know,
19 because we do all our own purchasing and all that stuff that gets
20 delivered here. Talk about anything -- any safety concerns for
21 that day or what have you.

22 So we do that, and then once that's done, everybody goes to
23 their assigned duties. I may go to my office and grab my -- you
24 know, do my, do -- finish out my log from the previous day, check
25 out any PMs or CMs we may have coming up, just to -- you know, it

1 may be something we have to get quotes for. We keep track of the
2 paperwork, make sure all our paperwork's up to date, whether --
3 you know, if we got Coast Guard coming up, you know, and our
4 annual inspections. We keep track of all that, make sure the
5 vessel's ready for that. We decide when we're going to do our
6 drills and training throughout the -- throughout our -- we work a
7 three on/three work off rotation.

8 So it's your basic captain duties. You know, paperwork,
9 working with the mate to keep the crew going, keep them going,
10 keep the ship in the response ready mode, meaning whenever we get
11 a call we're ready to go with it, you know, at that -- at any
12 time. If not, it's something else. And we keep contact with our
13 marine ops manager and let him know of any situation that may curb
14 us from having to get underway within our allotted time.

15 But yeah, mostly a lot of paperwork. Logs, invoicing, making
16 sure all the ship's paperwork, keeping up with the crew outside,
17 make sure everybody's, you know, doing there what they're supposed
18 to be doing. Just general duties such as that. And overall in
19 charge of the vessel, you know.

20 Q. And strictly curiosity question, but when you say "response
21 ready" -- so the minute you get a call and something happened, is
22 there like a turnaround? You got to be underway within 2 hours or
23 an hour?

24 A. We have 2 hours. From the time that -- my understanding,
25 from the time MSRC receives the call from the customer and the

1 customer calls, says yes, we want to activate the boat, then we
2 have 2 hours from that time to get underway.

3 Q. And that's not a long time, really, to get a boat underway,
4 especially if you got someone sitting next to you and --

5 A. Right. Right, and just -- I mean, usually we make it. We
6 have minutes to spare because our -- we have a couple sites like
7 this, but there's a couple of sites that are unique where our
8 warehouse is over an hour from the vessel. So a lot of times we
9 have to wait on those responders to drive down, which gives us
10 time to try to button up the back deck or what have you. Or if we
11 get a chance to go to the grocery store to, you know, load a few
12 extra groceries until we can get some other supplies. But 2 hours
13 is usually -- 3 hours would be nice, but 2 hours is what you get,
14 so --

15 Q. Yeah. And you mentioned, for clarification, PMs, planned
16 maintenance. But you said CMs. What are CMs?

17 A. Corrective maintenance.

18 Q. Corrective maintenance. Okay.

19 A. If you do a PM and you find something that is -- needs work,
20 whether, you know, something that's going to take, say, over 2
21 days to fix or over a certain dollar amount or -- you know, it may
22 be over a certain dollar amount, you go ahead and what's called a
23 CM in the system. You put it in the system what's wrong. And
24 that way it basically sends out an email that lets them know, hey,
25 we're running -- you know, we're ready to go, but we do have this

1 one issue here that we're waiting on parts or what have you that
2 may take more than a day to fix.

3 Q. Understood. And so one thing that I've learned through this
4 is that it's kind of a unique operation, because you have the ship
5 and the ship crew and the operational readiness of the ship. But
6 then you have the responder crew that comes onboard, and they run
7 the back deck and all the equipment. And as I learned, this is a
8 -- basically all the equipment that can be removed from the ship
9 that is not essential for the operation of the ship, that's what
10 they're responsible for.

11 A. Right.

12 Q. How does the responsibility of the master work with respect
13 to people from shoreside or the operations crew coming onboard?
14 Do you still have overall authority and --

15 A. Well we kind of work together. You know, if -- depending,
16 you know, if they come down, they have their PMs to do on their
17 equipment. We're not responsible for the, for the upkeep of that,
18 their spill response equipment. But we do talk. You know, if
19 they, if they're doing something on the back deck that is going to
20 involve maybe a JSA or involve needing just a hand, they'll come
21 talk to us. We'll talk together.

22 Usually when they do come onboard, they'll let us know, hey,
23 this is what our plan is for the day. You know, we're going to do
24 this, this and this. And they'll ask us, hey, do you, do you want
25 us to fill out a JSA, or do you want us to, you know -- if I, if I

1 got any guidance or anything that I would -- since they're doing
2 something on my vessel, do I want them to take any extra
3 precautions here or that. But we usually try to work together.

4 And if they need help, if -- sometimes if they need the help,
5 you know, they may be shorthanded or they're spread out doing
6 multiple things, and if we got the extra hand, sometimes we'll
7 give them a hand. But if I see something, if I happen to just be
8 walking on deck and see, you know, an oil leak or something, or
9 you know, a loose (indiscernible), you know, we'll let them know,
10 and that way that when they're down they can, they can fix that or
11 -- yeah.

12 Q. Okay. And when you're running an evolution or a drill or --
13 with the responders onboard, is there -- can they ever say, no,
14 Captain, we're doing this? Or do you still always have the
15 authority to say, no, this is extra -- as you mentioned, extra
16 precautions or --

17 A. When you say "drill," you mean like a fire drill, or like
18 doing a boom exercise drill?

19 Q. A boom exercise. Sorry, my --

20 A. Anybody has stop-work authority. Anybody can stop the
21 operation. So if I see something that I don't see right, I can
22 stop it. They see something -- one of my deckhands. You know, as
23 -- if you're down as a guest. You know, unfortunately that day we
24 had a young lady from BSEE down. She could have stopped the
25 operation. If she saw something that she didn't like or she

1 thought looked kind of funny, all she had to do was put an all-
2 stop. And as long as we can all stop it without injuring
3 somebody, you know, if there's -- if we can stop it and nobody --
4 you know, there's no safety concern as far as -- well give us a
5 second, because if we don't get this out, then there's a chance
6 something can happen. You know, other than that, anybody has a
7 stop-work authority to stop the job.

8 And at that point, myself, the -- whether it's -- whoever is
9 the lead responder on the back deck, whether it's a response
10 manager or whoever, and the person who stopped it, we'll get
11 together. We'll talk about it. We'll see what they saw, and we
12 all come to agreement. And no -- and until we're all in agreement
13 to how we're going to proceed, the job stays stopped until we --
14 everybody's in agreement as to get back going.

15 Q. Okay. Related to the actual day of the accident now,
16 wondered if you can kind of walk me through what your day was and
17 tell me how things, how things went through that day. And I
18 understand it was a very busy day for you, very busy day for a lot
19 of people.

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. And witness to a very unfortunate event.

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. But just walk me through your day. I'm going to ask if you
24 started out from the minute you woke up, and kind of hit all the
25 high points from when you left the dock, when you got underway.

1 And then when -- the moment when things went wrong or you felt
2 things were going wrong, that's where I want you to, if you can,
3 slow things down for me. And just talk right -- talk through
4 that, keeping in mind that you may know a few things that are not
5 important or you think that are not important, but can be really
6 important to us. So in other words, any -- all the small details
7 as well, if you have them. And then pretty much right up until
8 the time you took your shoes off at the end of the day and --
9 yeah.

10 A. So you know, I get up every morning, you know. Get up. Turn
11 on the shower. First thing I do normally is turn the shower on,
12 because it takes a few minutes to get the water warm. I go in and
13 just kind of, kind of wake up, walk around, do whatever. Put out
14 my clothes to wear for the day. Take a shower. Go down below. I
15 mean, take a shower, get dressed, go down below. Make a pot of
16 coffee. Wait for the crew, wait for the crew to -- all everybody
17 to wake up and get down in the galley to start our morning
18 meeting.

19 Once everybody's there, usually around 7 o'clock, we do our
20 morning meetings. Again, like I said earlier, we'll talk about
21 our plan of the day, what's going to happen, stuff like that.
22 Drink coffee. A little bit of -- sometimes turns into a little
23 bit of BSS, once you get all that stuff out, just like anybody
24 else.

25 Q. Well, we're mariners.

1 A. Yes, sir. So once we do all that, everybody just kind of --
2 once our plan of the day is established, what we're going to do,
3 what everybody -- their responsibilities are going to be for that
4 day. That day we talked about, you know, hey, we're -- the plan
5 is be getting underway. Once the responders and everybody's
6 onboard, including the young lady from BSEE, they'll get there.
7 We'll stop. We'll get everybody accounted for. Within that time
8 while we're waiting, the guys will just go on the back deck. Star
9 squaring -- you know, making sure the back deck's squared away,
10 just any loose ends that may or may not have.

11 The mate will come up up top. He'll start getting the
12 electronics ready. Well once the chief goes down, cranks up the
13 generator, lets it warm up, cranks it up, lets it warm up.
14 Switches shore power to generator and cranks the main engines,
15 lets those start warming up while we're waiting. The mate'll
16 usually go up top, start turning on the navigation equipment and
17 doing his checks, radio checks, equipment checks up on the bridge,
18 stuff like that. Engine checks. Once the engines have warmed up
19 for 20, 30 minutes, been energized pretty good, he'll make a --
20 we'll make a call over -- sometimes I'm up there; sometimes I'm
21 not. But he'll make his call over the loud hailer and on our
22 little handhelds. Test the engine. You know, let everybody know
23 stay away from the lines and such as that. We'll be testing
24 engines, be testing steering. Just beware of the lines, and then
25 that such.

1 So we did do all that, and then once everybody -- once we
2 have everybody here that's going to be getting underway for the
3 day, we'll sit down in the galley. We'll start a little safety
4 briefing. We'll do a small little safety briefing, and then
5 everybody will do a vessel safety briefing. Everybody will
6 introduce themselves, and everybody starting from myself down to
7 the ABs, all the responders and all the -- and the young lady from
8 BSEE. They'll introduce who they are, what their position is in
9 the company, whether they're master, lead responder, master
10 responder, and their -- what their task for the -- that day --
11 what their task for this operation is, whether it's running the
12 back deck, you know, Munson driver, to -- you know, whatever their
13 task is for that day, that's what they'll do. ABs, you know, I'm
14 AB on watch; I'll be -- either be up on the bridge or patrolling
15 the deck, you know, as directed by either the master or the mate.

16 So everybody gets here. They sign in. We do all that. We
17 go through the safety meeting. We've got a -- MSRC has a training
18 roster. I don't know if you've had a chance to see one of those.
19 It has about 30-something items listed. You could check those off
20 as you go, all the way from what kind of PPE may be required, what
21 the weather will be, slips, trips and falls. Just all that
22 different stuff. There's about 30 -- I don't know exactly how
23 many, but there's 30-something on that training roster. Items you
24 talk about, if it pertains to what you're doing that day.

25 So we did all that. Again let everybody know about the stop-

1 work authority. Let everybody know what the weather was, the
2 stop-work authority, the plan, everybody's responsibilities, what
3 we were going to do, how much boom we were -- had planned to
4 launch. You know, put the Transrec skimmer in, the Munson in, all
5 that, all that stuff. We went through all that, and once
6 everybody was comfortable -- you know, has anybody got any
7 questions, concerns, you know, anything at all? Nobody had any
8 questions; everybody was satisfied with the meeting. I don't
9 remember any questions, anyways. Once all that was done, we told
10 them, all right, give us -- you know, it'll be a couple minutes.
11 We'll make sure, make sure we're ready to go. So we -- and we
12 asked everybody to stay off the portside, to stay away from the
13 lines until we get untied and all that, all that such. And they
14 did. They stayed -- everybody stayed away.

15 We get the -- check the river, make sure there's no traffic
16 coming. Once it's clear for a good, a good, you know, 10-, 15-
17 minute clearance before we get any traffic here, we go ahead,
18 untie the vessel. With the current, way that it was running, it's
19 -- like I said earlier, it's hard to keep the vessel -- it's not
20 always the easiest to keep the vessel alongside the dock to get --
21 because you always have one guy on the dock throwing lines. We
22 put him on the dock, take the gangway off and then start throwing
23 lines. We start, we start aft, work our way all the way forward,
24 and then midship will be last because of the way the -- and it's
25 just, it's -- we do that 12 months out of the year. It's the same

1 way we untie. I've never untied any different at this dock.

2 So stern lines, forward bow lines, spring line, breast line
3 last. If the current is -- if it allows, we'll stay alongside to
4 backload that one person on from the dock. If not, we'll back up,
5 get alongside the barge. That guy untying the vessel will get on
6 the barge. Once we get alongside and we know it's going to stay,
7 he'll cross over on -- he or she will cross over onto the boat.
8 We'll get underway. And that's what we did that day.

9 We had -- once we got everything unloosed, got alongside the
10 barge, got our man back onboard. Everybody was onboard accounted
11 for. Again checked for the traffic, make sure there was just
12 nothing that didn't sneak up on us. You know, sometimes you got a
13 tug or something that doesn't come up on radar or doesn't come up
14 on AIS, and you don't see, and then next thing you know here he
15 comes around the bend.

16 Got underway. Turned the vessel around. Here on the river
17 since I've been here, we've always trained in the Bootheville
18 anchorage, the upper end of Bootheville anchorage. Because as you
19 know, there's -- this is a heavy traffic area. Lot of, lot of
20 container ships, just -- you know, a lot -- just about every type
21 of ship you've got comes up and down this river. So it's -- for
22 safety reasons, we don't do an underway training here in the
23 river. We've always done it at anchor.

24 No different that day. We arrived at the anchor spot,
25 dropped the hook. Put out two to three shots. Usually we wait

1 about, you know, a good -- anywhere, 15, 20 minutes, make sure the
2 anchor's holding. We'll let her stop, stop her swinging
3 everything, make sure she's holding good. We only anchor in about
4 25 to 35 foot of water, so it's not very deep.

5 I'm usually on the bridge for everything up there. That day
6 I was. I was on the bridge. Usually once we get the anchor, the
7 responders will call up and say, is it okay if we start making
8 preparations on the back deck? Meaning, you know, taking binders
9 off, running hoses for hydraulics, stuff like that. Usually you
10 have to go ahead, go ahead and start doing what you need to do
11 back there.

12 Once the boat is set, I'm happy, I feel we're not going to
13 drag or anything in that nature, we'll give the go-ahead, let them
14 -- I'll let the responders on the deck know. Hey, you know, we're
15 good, whenever you all are, you know, ready to proceed, proceed.
16 So once they do that, they finish getting their deck ready. Last
17 thing they do for -- before they launch the Munson is they take
18 down -- on the stern on the ramp, we have some cables to block it
19 off. So they'll take those cables down, get them out of the way.
20 They'll ask permission to do that.

21 Once that's done, they did that, I release my -- I was
22 upstairs. I think I released the deckhands, let them go down and
23 start cooking -- you know, just kind of double-checking stuff at
24 that time. Both myself and the mate will -- I think Ben was up
25 there at the beginning. It's been a while now.

1 But we're up there. Both the chief and the assistant are
2 down on deck because they run hydraulics. Once hydraulics are
3 running, there's always a chief -- one of the -- there's always
4 somebody active for emergency shutdown in case of a line pop or
5 something like that.

6 We got -- let's see. So I'm up there. The hands went down
7 below. The chiefs are there. The responders are prepping the
8 deck, getting it ready to go. Once they're ready to go, they ask
9 for permission to take down the gates. Well they call it the
10 gates or cables. Give them permission. They'll take it down.
11 Once they're down, they'll ask for permission to slide the Munson
12 boat back. They'll slide it back probably almost to the stern,
13 because it has the collapsible antenna on the mast that they take
14 down, because where we slide it underneath the helipad, it'll
15 basically take it out. So they slide it back, put it back. I
16 guess they'll turn their -- you know, I don't know their exact
17 prep before they -- you know, inside that Munson once they do all
18 that. I've never been down there for that portion of what they do
19 on the Munson, but they do do their checks and all that stuff.

20 Once they're confident, they're ready to go, everybody will
21 get in position. Whoever's running the tugger will get on the
22 tugger. She'll have usually a couple people running the quick
23 connect lines to disconnect the Munson. You'll have two people on
24 the Munson usually at the very -- well at the very least, you have
25 two people on the Munson. Sometimes I've seen three, but not

1 often. Mostly just two people. One is a Munson driver; the other
2 one is a line handler or a deckhand.

3 Once they're ready to go, they'll call up permission and ask
4 for permission to launch the Munson, which they did. Traffic was
5 clear. We had no tugs or anything coming up. Called to let them
6 know that it was okay. So they proceeded. They launched the
7 Munson vessel. They'll hold the Munson vessel there for a minute
8 before they disconnect it. You know, make sure the engines are up
9 and running, there's no issues. They'll do a couple of other
10 checks or whatever they have before they let the quick connect go,
11 or quick release. I guess once the Munson driver's happy, he'll
12 get them -- let them know to release it. They'll release it.
13 They'll pull that cable onboard. At this time, the Munson pulled
14 away. Just kind of -- a couple of hundred yards off the stern.
15 And I guess just did more little checks and stuff. They're
16 playing with that.

17 While they're doing that, doing their checks and such,
18 responders will clear the deck, start clearing the -- getting the
19 deck -- prepping the deck for the next stage. Once they -- you
20 know, they got tracks they have to remove, tugger line they have
21 to put up, stuff like that. Then they'll put all that stuff up,
22 get it up out of the way. They got to run some hoses for air to
23 blow up the bladders on the Sea Sentry Boom. They did that. They
24 will start unwinding the towline from the, from the reel. Get the
25 towline out. Get about the first two or three -- just the first

1 couple of sections of boom out on deck, air it up, stop right
2 there. Make sure everything is good, ready to go.

3 They'll call up to the bridge, let me know, hey, Captain,
4 we're ready to start deploying boom; are we good to go? We'll do
5 a check. Usually at that time, I'll do a -- I'll just do another
6 quick check around the area and make sure we don't have any tugs
7 or anything coming, or any ships coming at that, you know, at that
8 time, because to do that -- we'll do that. I'll give them -- I
9 gave them permission. Yes, it's good to go; area's clear. They
10 then -- they call for the Munson boat. Munson boat come up to the
11 back deck, to the stern ramp, pull it up to the stern ramp, held
12 it in position. Once they were there, they'll call up one more
13 time, say, hey, we're ready. Okay, go ahead.

14 They'll pass the towline to the Munson boat. Munson boat
15 will take all the towline in that -- you know, they'll judge how
16 much to take in onto the boat, then leave X amount between the
17 towline and tying it off to the bit. Once the Munson boat has it
18 secured -- has the towline secured on the bits, they'll let them
19 know they're ready. Everybody will be in agreeance. They'll call
20 up one more time. Hey, we're going to start deploying the boom.
21 Roger that. Go ahead; start deploying the boom.

22 So they did that. Started deploying the boom, going out
23 easy. The Munson boat, you know, drifts back, kind of starts
24 pulling it out easy. As they unspool, they pull back a little
25 bit, get all the boom out. As it slides on the deck, they'll be

1 airing it up, capping it off. They were doing that. As each
2 section, which -- a section is 110 feet. As each 110 section went
3 off the back deck, they'll announce 110, then 220, then 330 in the
4 water, 440 in the water. All the way till they get to 660 in the
5 water. We did that. Got all the boom in the water.

6 Once they had that, they secured it to the back deck in one
7 of the D rings. Secured it on our side. Once they're secured on
8 their side and everything is ready to go, they'll tell the Munson
9 boat that they have it secured. Munson boat say okay. They'll
10 call up to the bridge again at that point and ask if it's okay to
11 go ahead and get into the J configuration. J configuration is
12 what -- is basically the -- when the boom is in position
13 collecting the oil, if you look at it, it looks like a big J. And
14 so once -- they'll ask up there, and they'll call the bridge, ask
15 permission to start forming the J. You know, go ahead. Or you
16 know, if you're -- traffic looks good, you know. Proceed, you
17 know, whenever you want to. We're good to go.

18 So the lead guy on the deck will call, will call the Munson,
19 say, okay, Munson, it's -- you know, whenever you're ready, go
20 ahead and form the J; go ahead and get into the J position. Or
21 whenever you're ready, whenever you're comfortable, you know, go
22 ahead and get in the J position. So Munson says okay, we'll get
23 into the J. I see -- both Ben and I are up on the bridge. See
24 the Munson come forward, see the deckhand -- once there's slack in
25 the water, the line handler -- once there's slack, they will --

1 she went up there. She untied it from the bit and started walking
2 it back. I seen her go back.

3 And I'm looking out, I'm looking out the starboard side aft.
4 The mate's looking out the portside aft. And we both kind of at
5 the same time said, why is he doing this? As they're doing this,
6 you see the Munson boat -- I see the Munson boat. He sees the
7 boat come a few degrees to port. Don't know why. We both -- both
8 of us kind of in unison said, why is he going to port? Why are
9 they going to port? And then next thing you know, you see her
10 drop the line -- or well, I'm sorry. They come to port, and I
11 think he realizes what they're doing and they make the -- he goes
12 to make -- the boat starts coming to starboard. When it did, it
13 came fast.

14 And at that time, about that time, you see the line being
15 dropped, see her go -- run into the bridge. I mean, not -- well
16 into the cabin. And once it got crosscurrent, it -- the boat
17 immediately of course pulled back. And once it got pulled back,
18 everything came taut. You could see the boom come taut, the line
19 come taut on the Munson boat. And then next -- Ben and I were
20 like, whoa, whoa, whoa. You know, hey.

21 And then next thing you know, you see -- I guess it seemed to
22 me that he tried to power out of it. Because you can see it's
23 caught up. He gives a little bit of a shake -- a little bit of a
24 roll. I'm sorry. Not a shake, but a little bit of a roll. And
25 then once it starts rolling, it looked like they started coming --

1 tried to come ahead and to the port some, because you can see the
2 Munson kind of get up a little bit. But when they did that, you
3 see it start rolling more, and then that's when myself and the
4 mate, again in unison, probably got about six or seven whoa, whoa,
5 whoa, whoa, whoa, whoas out.

6 And you know, got the -- and then I grabbed the radio, which
7 is the handheld one of these. Handheld radio, and I start
8 hollering -- because I see, I see it. It looks like it's -- every
9 time it rolls, it rolls with more of a, more of a list. You know,
10 comes back less and rolls more to the port. And so I grabbed the
11 radio and I start hollering, cut the line, cut the line, cut the
12 line. When I, when I say "cut the line," I'm talking -- Munson
13 boat, cut the line. If that -- if they would have -- somebody
14 hopefully had time to go back there and cut that line, basically
15 the boat -- in my mind, it would have popped back over. Because
16 with each, with each roll that it did, the less it came back to
17 starboard, the more it kept going to port.

18 So we're both hollering, whoa, whoa, whoa. And like I say, I
19 start -- I grab the radio, start hollering, cut the line, cut the
20 line, cut the line. Munson boat, cut the line. I never see
21 anybody come back out. I never see anybody come out of the bridge
22 to attempt that.

23 At that time, I probably said it four or five times. And
24 about that last time, it finally flips all -- well it flips over,
25 and it's kind of going on its side for a second maybe and then

1 rolls over all the way. And at that time, we're like, whoa, whoa,
2 whoa. You know, I holler on the back deck -- no, I apologize. I
3 don't holler on the radio. I go over there and I throw the, I
4 throw the general alarm for man overboard.

5 Ben runs down to -- Ben runs directly down to the RIB. I
6 holler over the radio, man overboard. Munson's capsized, Munson's
7 capsized. It capsized. They run to the, to the RIB. Ben runs to
8 the RIB. ABs run to -- meet at the RIB once they hear it, because
9 I hollered on the radio, this is not a drill, this is not a drill;
10 the Munson boat has capsized. I did it both on the radio and on
11 the loud hailer.

12 They get in the RIB. You know, to me it seemed like less
13 than a minute, but it was probably more like a minute, maybe two.
14 But I mean, they were there that fast. I mean, they got in there
15 that fast. Munson boat, the -- my two ABs, they get in the RIB.
16 At this time, you know, they go over there. I get on the VHF,
17 call Coast Guard Venice, let them know, you know, of our
18 situation. I go, you know -- Coast Guard Venice, let them know
19 what was going on with the -- where we were. Who I was, where we
20 were, what was going on. We have a capsized vessel with two
21 people in the water. No visual on the two people at this time.
22 Then I kind of went back to the, went back to the back and tried
23 to see what's going on with everybody.

24 Ben comes back up. We start talking about what are we going
25 to do, you know. Hey, you know, the RIB's on scene. The RIB

1 boat's on scene telling us what they see, what they hear. You
2 know, we hear -- now this may not all be in order, but the RIB
3 boat, you know, they can hear Ruben. They say they can hear
4 Katelyn. You know, they can't get out; they're disoriented or
5 what have you. He can't find his way. While I'm on the -- Ben
6 and I are talking about -- you know, we're talking about, well,
7 let's get the crane going, let's get some straps, let's get back
8 on the crane. I think what we need to do, we need to start
9 pulling that -- try and pull that RIB boat in -- I mean, not the
10 RIB boat. The Munson boat in. I holler at the crew, at the
11 responders on the, on the deck. Let's get -- let's set up to, you
12 know, pull it in, try to get it closer to the boat, to where
13 -- because you know, we're trying to figure out a way how are we
14 going to get it -- how are we going to get that Munson back to us,
15 and either get it overturned, or what are we going to do. Best
16 way, let's get it -- start pulling it back in.

17 So responders start pulling the RIB boat -- the Munson boat
18 back in with the boom. Just told them, you know, take it easy,
19 don't pull too hard. Just, you know, let's start pulling the boom
20 back in. And they do that.

21 I grab my phone. As far as I know, everybody's in our
22 Houston offices doing -- because it's eval week, managers'
23 meetings, the whole nine yards. So a lot of times, they convene
24 in one site and do all that. Basically on speed dial, I have my
25 MOPS manager. I pressed him. He answered. I told him what was

1 going on. I hit speaker and I just set the phone down and just
2 kind of, you know, let them -- you know, they can hear what's
3 going on, but I set it down and just leave it running, and I'm
4 talking and working with the mate and them guys on the back deck,
5 telling, you know, what's going -- you know, can you all still
6 hear them?

7 So I don't think we got all the boom -- no, we didn't get all
8 the boom in yet. Then the pilot boat, Branch Pilot, showed up on
9 scene. I believe he was the first boat on the scene. Then yeah,
10 he called and asked what could he do. And at that time, there was
11 really nothing he could do. So it was just, you know, if you
12 could just stand by and just look out for anything in the water,
13 anybody in the water; we've got two personnel that were on that
14 boat that are unaccounted for. So he -- they just kind of stand
15 by the area. They're, you know, doing what they're doing. RIB
16 boat's alongside the whole time, alongside the Munson at this
17 time, trying to communicate and let the -- you know, just trying
18 -- I don't want to say comfort them, but just letting them know
19 what we're doing. We're doing what we can to get you out of
20 there, such as that.

21 Coast Guard helo shows up. They lower the swimmer onto the
22 back deck of the Branch Pilot. Once he was on the back deck, the
23 RIB boat went over there. He transferred from the Branch Pilot
24 over to my -- to our RIB vessel. Once he was on there, he
25 immediately -- they immediately went back to the -- which would

1 have been the starboard side of the RIB. Because now the boat is
2 -- this is us. This is our stern. So now you've got -- you know,
3 you still got the boom out, towline. When the Munson boat went
4 over, it went over like -- you know, kind of like this. And when
5 it finally went over, it was kind of hung up like that, if I
6 remember correctly.

7 And they -- everything they did was on this side. You know,
8 the RIB boat was on this side. And they could hear Ruben. Ruben
9 was up forward. They said they thought they heard Katelyn a
10 little bit about aft of the -- you know, where the cabin -- you
11 know, aft portion of the cabin. But they only heard, only heard
12 her a couple times, and then they quit hearing her. They asked
13 Ruben if they knew where -- if he knew where Katelyn was. He said
14 no, he couldn't find her.

15 So they get the swimmer, come back around starboard side.
16 Come back alongside. They're trying to explain to the swimmer the
17 kind of -- you know, where everything is. You know, you've got a
18 door here, a window here, the cabin's right here. The door is
19 going to slide this way or that way. You'll have 4 foot of
20 freeboard or, you know, 4 foot of haul. Then you'll have maybe a
21 handrail that's -- from the, from the bulwark to the handrail is
22 probably a foot, 18 inches or you know, whatever. You'll have
23 about 6 foot you're going to have to go down and go under that
24 handrail to get to the door, roughly. 5 to 6 foot. And they
25 tried to, they tried to explain to him where everything was to

1 give him an idea of what he was getting into.

2 He attempted -- my understanding is he attempted to go under.
3 Went under, but wasn't under long. Came back up. He attempted
4 that a couple times, was unsuccessful. About this time, the Coast
5 Guard boat arrived on scene. And I don't remember if the swimmer
6 got on that boat. I honestly don't. I don't remember if the
7 swimmer got on that boat, had any kind of discussion with them or
8 not, and then went back to the RIB boat.

9 But they had talked about -- something came up. Did we get
10 him? Before he hooked up, if I remember correctly, we got all 660
11 foot of boom to the vessel. Once we got to the last section, the
12 -- where they got in connectors, the in connector got stuck. Got
13 caught on the portside of the ring, and they couldn't pull anymore
14 without fear of tearing it, without fear of ripping it. And then
15 if they would have done that, that would have ripped it. You
16 know, basically the vessel would have drifted away, drifted away
17 from us, because it would have parted it.

18 They said something -- somebody said something over the
19 radio. Captain, Captain, can you, can you bring your, bring your
20 stern to port? And I told them no, because -- this is where
21 honestly I don't -- when he came -- I don't remember if that
22 question was posed to me after the Coast Guard boat tried to take
23 them in tow. Because at some point, the Coast Guard boat, my guy,
24 they passed a line to one of my deckhands. One of my deckhands
25 secured the line to the, to the Munson boat. And the Coast Guard

1 started pulling. Well when they started -- they started making a
2 little bit of headway, trying to get the boat up to the stern,
3 because we couldn't go nowhere with it. We were trying to get it
4 to the stern to get it secured somehow, whether we tied it to the
5 starboard side, the -- I'm sorry. Portside of our vessel or
6 hooked it up to the crane just to -- not try to pick it up, but at
7 least get something to where it wouldn't go, wouldn't -- it would
8 stay afloat, hopefully.

9 Can't remember -- and what I'm trying to remember is did the
10 Coast Guard boat pull on the vessel and then they had to -- I
11 mean, they pulled on the vessel and they had to stop, because they
12 had to pull -- put so much RPMs on there, the wash from their
13 vessel was filling up the cabin. Ruben had hollered, the water's
14 coming in; stop. Stop what you're doing; the water's coming in.
15 You know, I don't know if he made -- those are his exact words,
16 but that was what it amounted to. Water was coming in the cabin;
17 you need to stop. So they stopped.

18 But at some point, I had asked the Branch Pilot to push on my
19 stern. Because somewhere in that, somewhere in that timeframe,
20 they had asked if I could swing my stern to port to maybe free up
21 that -- the boom. Because during -- when we launch boom, a lot of
22 times, hey, Cap -- the boom, you know, the boom may start trailing
23 one way or the other. Cap, can you swing to starboard? Yeah, no
24 problem. So you know, you swing to starboard. Because
25 everything's well above your engines.

1 And I think it was afterwards, because when they asked me
2 that, I knew immediately I couldn't because now I'm worried about
3 my wheel wash going into his cabin, into the cabin of the Munson.
4 So that's when I asked the Branch Pilot -- I saw him. I said,
5 hey, can you, can you get up and push on my, you know, push on my
6 stern to push my -- on the starboard side, push it to port, see if
7 it'll break that line loose? He tried. It didn't, it didn't
8 work. He did -- agreed he would. He come alongside. He tried to
9 push on it. It moved the vessel, but as it did, the Munson just
10 kept drifting with it. You know, so the connector stayed caught.
11 It stayed basically, I guess you could say, tube locked (ph.).

12 So he stopped, because it wasn't doing no good. We told him
13 to stop. It wasn't doing any good. The Coast Guard boat tried
14 again with less, you know, thrust, but they weren't making -- they
15 were, they were holding position, but they weren't making any
16 headway. And they said, hey, we're not making any headway. So
17 they finally -- it was agreed to -- somewhere between -- I don't
18 know if it was agreed between the swimmer and the Coast Guard
19 boat. They unhooked. My guy -- I think, I think one of my guys
20 unhooked it from the, from the -- he backed up. They gave him his
21 line back. He got his line back.

22 And then for some unknown reason, the Coast Guard boat -- you
23 know, so I'm trying to remember if he was like that or like that.
24 Either way, Coast Guard boat's right here. We're right here at
25 anchor. He gets let loose from the Munson boat, gets his towline

1 back. So for some reason, instead of peeling off this way, he
2 goes this way. He comes to starboard and goes right over the
3 towline. And as soon as that happened, he got -- he went over the
4 towline, and I'd say within 5, 10 seconds maybe, the towline came
5 off. Once that towline came off, that boat basically just went
6 like this, raised up, stern -- bow straight in the air. Within 5,
7 10 seconds, it was completely under. That's, you know -- I mean
8 it happened -- when that towline, when that towline finally came
9 off, that boat just went -- and straight down. Took 5, 10
10 seconds, if that long, once that towline came off.

11 Everybody, you know -- really there's nothing you can do at
12 that point. It's just -- you know, everybody's freaking --
13 everybody's like, whoa, whoa. You know, this just ended. Because
14 there's nothing we can do. But when it goes down, looking across
15 the water, looking for anything popping up, whether it's one of
16 the, one of the crewmembers. Just anything coming out. Hopefully
17 something -- you know, one of them, they're able to get out at
18 that point. And we all know they weren't, but --

19 What did I do? Kind of -- I don't know. I don't want to say
20 I froze, but I just kind of, like, whoa. I marked -- well we
21 already had our position down, estimated how much position they
22 were from us. At some point, a Port Authority boat showed up. I
23 don't remember when he showed up. Went down. I said out loud,
24 Munson boat just went under. Munson boat just went under.

25 The RIB boat hung around for a few more -- you know,

1 everybody hung around, of course, because I mean, there's really
2 nothing nobody could do. At some point, the RIB, the RIB boat
3 dropped off the swimmer to the Coast Guard boat. RIB boat come
4 back alongside our boat. I don't know how much time went by,
5 because again, there -- well what do you do? There's nothing we
6 can do. We're, you know -- we just lost two crewmembers, or two
7 members of our team.

8 And after that, of course the radio went off a few times,
9 Coast Guard wanting to know what's going on. I don't -- I'm
10 guessing they weren't -- I don't know what the -- communications
11 they had with their, with their boat.

12 Boat went under. Few minutes later, the RIB boat -- well
13 they dropped the -- again, like I said, they dropped the Coast
14 Guard guy, the swimmer, back onto the boat. Then they come back
15 alongside. We got them back onboard. Course they were shaken up.
16 Well we're all a little shook up, of course. If I remember, I
17 grabbed my phone, let them know that Munson boat went under, no
18 sign of anybody.

19 Trying to jot a couple of things -- excuse me -- jot a couple
20 of things down on the pad, because I mean -- did that. Port
21 Authority boat ended up coming alongside. One of their guys got
22 off, asked me how many people were on there, what their names
23 were. I remember asking, can I really say the -- I remember
24 asking somebody -- I remember getting on the phone and saying,
25 hey, can I -- such-and-so with the Port Authority wants some

1 information; can I release that to them? You know, because I
2 don't know what I can and can't release. I don't know what -- you
3 know, because it's not the Coast Guard. To me -- well, Coast
4 Guard should be asking these questions, not the Port Authority. I
5 don't really -- I know they have a lot -- I know, I know they had
6 the authority, but I -- when he first came on, at first I thought
7 he was Coast Guard, but then I realized he wasn't. They said,
8 yeah, you know, give him names. And they asked for names and
9 approximate ages and such. And then he left.

10 And then we just, we stayed at anchor for a couple more
11 hours. I think it was a couple of hours. Well our RIB boat had
12 came -- our RIB boat off of the boat next door. Off the Benz.
13 The Benz was downriver a little ways. They were just doing an
14 underway day training, just marine ops only. The RIB boat came
15 up. I asked the RIB boat to come a little closer. I said, get on
16 the -- I said, keep coming until I tell you to stop. They came.
17 They got to where I asked them to stop, and I asked them -- I
18 said, give me your location, right? Give me, you know -- they
19 have a GPS onboard. I said, I want that location right there
20 where you're at, which is approximate location, exactly where it
21 went down. And they did. They give me the location. I wrote it
22 down upstairs. I wrote it down.

23 We stayed on, we stayed on location. Keeping a constant
24 watch for anything to pop up. Also during that time, one other
25 boat, a CGA boat, had arrived on scene. They called, wanting to

1 know what they could do to help. And you know, just look around.
2 Just kind of look. You know, look, search if you see anybody,
3 anything, you know.

4 We stayed on location. Finally I got a phone call. I don't
5 remember if somebody asked me, you know, what'd Coast Guard tell
6 you to do. I said, I haven't heard from Coast Guard; I'm just
7 staying put until somebody tells me what to do. I don't -- of
8 course I've never had this situation. They said, okay, well,
9 we'll call you back. Somebody from my office called me back,
10 said, Coast Guard said go ahead and go back to the dock. And I
11 said, are you sure? You know, yeah, yeah, proceed to the dock.

12 Also during that time, I received a call from Coast Guard, a
13 phone call. Can't remember the gentleman's name. I may have it
14 written down, but kind of asked me what happened, you know, over
15 the phone real quick. I can't -- during that 2-hour, 2- or 3-hour
16 period that we -- after the Munson boat had went down, this guy,
17 an investigator with the Coast Guard, had called me.

18 Once I got the, once I got the word to go ahead, heave
19 anchor, proceed back to the dock, we did, we did just that. We
20 picked up anchor and went back to the dock. Got secured. Was
21 told that nobody's to leave; everybody's to remain onboard. So we
22 got tied up, and that's when that's -- well after we got tied up,
23 that's the first time I left the bridge. I left the bridge and
24 just kind of walked the back deck, just to check on everybody: my
25 crew, the responders, the young lady from BSEE.

1 And did the Coast Guard show up? I don't remember if you
2 guys showed up first or the young lady from -- the young lady to
3 do the drug and alcohol test showed up. Everybody did a drug and
4 alcohol test. Of course, MSRC have their representatives show up.
5 Yourself and -- it's not [REDACTED] Oh, you're [REDACTED] The other
6 one that came with --

7 Q. [REDACTED]

8 A. [REDACTED] I knew you both started with an A. The other one
9 showed up. I mean, you guys showed up together and started
10 interviewing everybody one by -- well not everybody. I think you
11 all only interviewed three or four of us at that evening: myself,
12 the lead responder, the young lady from BSEE, and maybe one other.
13 Three or -- four or five people, I think you guys interviewed.
14 They interviewed -- you guys interviewed whoever. Of course, our,
15 you know, MSRC representative showed up. He was present for all
16 that.

17 You guys left. Once you all were done, I think the
18 responders got the okay to leave if they wanted to. The young
19 lady from BSEE got the okay to leave. We secured, you know -- the
20 deck crew, we just -- I think I went to my room and started --
21 bless you. I went to my room, started writing -- just trying to
22 write things down as I remember them, because as far as actual
23 times, really -- I mean, up into -- I mean, I have times written
24 down from when we started the operation to, you know, certain
25 things. Munson in the water. Boom in the, boom in the water.

1 Stuff like that. I had jotted down 10:38. I don't remember if
2 that's when I called Coast Guard. Ten-thirty, I think, is when I
3 called the Coast Guard. But I jotted that time down. And I --
4 honestly, from that time until the time I picked up anchor, I
5 never looked at a clock. I was doing other things. You know,
6 looking, what's going on here, what's going on there. I had this
7 in one hand, that in one hand, VHF in the other hand. You know, I
8 had radios going off. Got back here and wrote things down. I
9 couldn't tell you what time I went to bed that night. Couldn't
10 tell you when I finally ate that night.

11 Finally everybody -- told everybody to go to sleep, whatever.
12 Don't worry -- you know, when you wake up, you wake up. Because I
13 knew, I knew nobody was going to get no sleep after this. And
14 just told them to expect a busy, busy, busy day tomorrow.
15 Probably have to give interviews. You know, just be non-stop
16 questions and, you know, stuff like that, which I don't, I don't
17 think you all come to us. I think that next day, the Coast Guard
18 went to the site, and then you all come to us the following day, I
19 believe. So they kind of went a full -- a day to -- I don't know.
20 I guess they decompress or whatever, but to collect their thoughts
21 and relax. And we didn't do nothing as far as deck work or
22 anything like that.

23 Talked to the Coast Guard the -- let's see. Happened on the
24 16th. Talked to you guys on the 18th. Yeah. After that, we just
25 kind of hung out here and didn't do a whole lot for a few days.

1 You know, just kind of -- everybody decompressed and collect their
2 thoughts. Try and get some rest, you know. MSRC brought on a
3 chaplain and -- you know, so that guys could talk to somebody and,
4 you know, stuff like that. Yeah. And I know I went past the day,
5 but --

6 Q. It's all relevant. And thank you for that.

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Couple follow-ups for you. And do you remember what your
9 draft was that day? Or does --

10 A. Our draft pretty much stays the same. 11'6" forward, 13 aft.
11 And if -- I got it written down upstairs. We got a pre-checklist
12 we fill out before we get underway, and writing the draft down is
13 one of them.

14 Q. Okay. And then the weather for that day?

15 A. Wind was calm. Clear sky. The only, the only one was
16 current. But the wind was calm. Of course there was no seas
17 here. There wasn't no -- any seas. The visibility was good. We
18 had, we had mentioned the current was running 3½-plus knots, at
19 least. You know, we had made mention of that during the JSA. Or
20 not the JSA, but the safety meeting we did. Told them, you know,
21 it's about the same current you guys had the previous week.
22 Because they had done the same operation the previous week on the
23 boat next door. Same area. Went and did the back deck training.
24 But you know, as far as -- other than that, all the rest of the
25 weather was nice. I mean, I don't remember the temperature or

1 what exactly the wind was in my head, but it was calm.

2 Q. Okay. And I understand you didn't, you didn't look at your
3 watch very much or at all because you were just so busy and --
4 very understandable. But where were you mostly positioned? Were
5 you on the starboard side bridge wing?

6 A. Most of the time I'm on the starboard side bridge wing. Yes,
7 sir.

8 Q. Okay. You mentioned engines, and specifically not turning
9 any propellers because of a -- you didn't want to send any wash
10 into the Munson.

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Did you use engines or propulsion at any time? For during
13 the --

14 A. No. During the deployment?

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. No. No. They were, they were running. They were -- the
17 engines were running. But no, we never put them -- I never did --
18 they never asked me to put them in gear that day.

19 Q. Okay. So they were just in the standby state for being used,
20 correct?

21 A. They were -- a lot of times, yeah.

22 Q. Okay. So I know you gave me an example with your phones.
23 Just to clarify, so when you said the RIB was on the starboard
24 side of the Munson, that was the starboard side as it was upside-
25 down, correct?

1 A. No. I was wrong. Portside.

2 Q. Portside.

3 A. Because it's turned down. So yeah. Okay, the Munson boat
4 was like this. I mean, okay, they're like this. They're pulling
5 to stern. He went to port, shot to starboard. Come around --
6 shot to starboard. So you got your port, starboard. Flip, flip,
7 flip, flip like this. So portside.

8 Q. Portside.

9 A. My fault, my fault. The RIB boat was on the portside.

10 Q. Okay. So the, so the lead of the towline was from the
11 starboard side --

12 A. Right.

13 Q. -- around the starboard quarter?

14 A. Quarter. You had 660 foot of boom, and whatever -- you know,
15 100 foot of -- 100, 120 foot of towline. Of course -- so he had
16 -- they had gotten, like I say, they had gotten the complete 660
17 on deck up until the last connector got caught on the stern here.
18 So you're looking at, you know, 125 feet, maybe. Whatever.
19 That's the closest we got them to us.

20 Q. So with the RIB over here, that means he was on the, on the
21 bankside. Between the boat and the bank.

22 A. Yes, sir. Between the bank and the boat, boat and the bank.
23 Yes, sir.

24 Q. Okay. And the Coast Guard boat, he was --

25 A. Originally came up this way. So he was here. You know, he

1 was right here. He had a towline. Was making headway. Ruben
2 hollered, water's coming in; stop, stop. Water's coming in. He
3 stopped. And then they said, try, you know, again, but less, you
4 know. The most he got to where it was very minimal wheel wash, he
5 could -- just basically all he did was hold position. Never
6 advanced it anymore.

7 At that time, I don't know who made the decision. He cut
8 loose, you know, from the -- he was untied from the Munson. He'd
9 given his line back. For whatever reason, instead of coming
10 around this way or coming around and going back around, he went in
11 between me and the, and the Munson boat. Don't know why. At that
12 time, I was like -- because I said, you know, what's he doing?
13 He's going to cut that line. At this time, I didn't know it was a
14 jetboat, that he had jet. I thought it was, you know, just a
15 regular prop wheel, so I'm like, he's going to cut that line.
16 What is he doing? What is he doing? And about that time is when,
17 you know, he got over. He was over here. Line came off. I was,
18 he cut that line. He cut that damn line. And that's when this
19 thing went just like that. He kind of came up like this and went
20 straight down.

21 It just, it just baffled me why he went across. I don't know
22 if he got caught in current. I don't know. I don't know, I don't
23 know why he went that way, why he went starboard instead -- to his
24 starboard instead of coming around port and either going around me
25 or going back around the Munson boat. Yeah. I don't know. I

1 didn't find out later till after we were back here and we were
2 secure here, and I told -- you know, I said -- I went down and I
3 wanted to talk or see each person that was on the back deck for --
4 you know. You know, hey, what are -- you know, ask him, how're
5 you doing? But at least face to face and -- you know.

6 I asked him about the towline. I said something about the
7 part -- the cut towline. I don't know why, how it came up. I
8 said, you know -- but they told me the towline is not cut. I'm
9 like, what do you mean the towline's not cut? I said, the
10 towline's not cut; the entire towline's onboard. I said, you're
11 lying. He said, no. And that's when they showed me. They went
12 and showed me here. Here's the eye right here. Here's the whole
13 thing, and it was never cut. And that's when I found out it was a
14 jetboat, not a prop.

15 Q. What anchor did you have down?

16 A. I think my starboard anchor. We switch them out just to give
17 them both exercise. I don't -- I honestly -- when I put one in, I
18 don't -- we don't write down which one we put out. Just, the guys
19 will go up there and, oh, we put that one out last time. I say,
20 well put out the other one.

21 Q. All right.

22 MR. TUCKER: I'm going to catch up on my notes here.

23 CAPT. ROGERS: No, fine, fine. Go ahead.

24 MR. TUCKER: I've got a couple questions. So I'll let
25 someone else do the talking.

1 LTJG [REDACTED] I got a few additional questions.

2 BY LTJG [REDACTED]

3 Q. Right before the Coast Guard took their line off and they
4 drifted in front, was there ever an all-stop called or anything
5 like that over the radio?

6 A. From me?

7 Q. From you or any in the crew.

8 A. I didn't call an all-stop. You know, once the -- before they
9 drifted, you know, I don't know who made the call or who -- I
10 don't, I don't know how that agreement came to when they stopped
11 and unhooked that they, that they weren't doing -- you know, it
12 wasn't -- they weren't accomplishing anything by doing what they
13 were doing. I don't know if they called -- the diver or the diver
14 -- not the diver. The swimmer. I don't know who made that call.

15 Q. Okay. And then when you guys do training for the deployment
16 or the exercises, you always do it in the Bootheville anchorage?

17 A. Most of the time. Usually once or twice a year, we try to go
18 out all the way offshore. But yeah, most of the time, the
19 deployments are right here in the river. Have been since I've
20 been here.

21 Q. All right. From what I understand -- we kind of talked about
22 this yesterday too. When you actually deploy, like when you get
23 called on, like, a response, you're mostly in the Gulf --

24 A. Mostly in the Gulf.

25 Q. -- for an operation, right?

1 A. Yes, sir. It just depends, but yeah, most -- my experience
2 on deployments, the actual activations that I have been on have
3 all been out in the Gulf.

4 Q. Okay. Now is -- do you guys just -- do you exercise in the
5 river just because it's closer?

6 A. Yeah. Yeah, a lot of it is because it's closer. It's a 3-
7 hour, 3- to 3 1/2-hour run out. You know, when you get out there,
8 you know, the -- just what it's always been. You know, three --
9 so you're looking at 6 to 7 hour just runtime there and back. And
10 then depending on, you know, whether or not they get, they get
11 overtime or not, such as that. For us it's no big -- you know,
12 for the, for the -- everybody.

13 Q. For the responder crew?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Yeah. Okay.

16 LTJG [REDACTED] That's all I got.

17 MR. TUCKER: Anything?

18 MR. BRITTENHAM: I don't have anything. Just kind of
19 clarified on that is, yeah, for the equipment they were deploying
20 that day, it is -- like we discussed yesterday, it can be used in
21 the different operating environments. But yeah, I would say that
22 out of convenience is why they typically train in the river.

23 MR. TUCKER: Okay.

24 MR. ROGERS: I don't think we're -- I'm sorry, go ahead.

25 MR. TUCKER: No, go ahead.

1 MR. ROGERS: I said I don't think we're the only one who
2 trains that close to our area because of the distance from where
3 we are to the, to the Gulf.

4 MR. BRITTENHAM: Boat on Lake Charles.

5 MR. ROGERS: I think the boat on Lake Charles does. I think
6 you had told me once, I think, the boat in Oregon -- or Astoria
7 does, or something. Depending on --

8 MR. BRITTENHAM: In winter they do -- train in the river, and
9 then in the summer they go offshore. So we have other vessels
10 that do train in a river-type environment.

11 LTJG [REDACTED] It's just because of, like, where you're
12 stationed at, basically?

13 MR. BRITTENHAM: Yes, and we have customers everywhere. So
14 we cover refineries and everything as well. So in Lake Charles, a
15 lot of the refineries, they're right there on Lake Charles. So it
16 would be in Calcasieu Lake or -- you know, it's all, you know,
17 inland sort of rivers, canals, however you want to call it. I
18 would say even in Delaware there up the -- now off the Delaware
19 River. But as far as vessels that are, like, in the river, it's
20 this vessel and the Oregon Responder. And that's Columbia River
21 and Mississippi River, which are probably two of the biggest river
22 systems in the United States, right? So they do train in the
23 river and train offshore, just depending on -- you know, the
24 weather more so in Oregon, because in the wintertime, you can't go
25 offshore and train.

1 MR. TUCKER: Right. Okay.

2 BY MR. TUCKER:

3 Q. Captain, did you -- I know you mentioned you were on the
4 starboard side bridge wing looking aft. Did you use binoculars at
5 all?

6 A. I may -- I think I looked through them once or twice, just to
7 kind of scan the area for any sign of whether a lifejacket or a --
8 you know, person. Yeah.

9 Q. Did you see anything?

10 A. No, sir. Most of my time was spent on the starboard side. I
11 mean, I did kind of go back and forth a few times from the
12 starboard to the port. Just, you have a better vantage view from
13 the, from the starboard side.

14 Q. Okay. And when -- during the time when the Coast Guard
15 vessel went to starboard over the towline, were you on the
16 starboard bridge wing then looking aft, or were you on the port
17 side?

18 A. I think I was actually on the port side when that happened.
19 Eventually, you know, like I said, we're here, and they kind of
20 got off to the side just a little bit here. You know, just off to
21 the side. So you know, I was, I was in both locations. So I --
22 from where I was, I could see the boat from both sides. But I
23 think when that particular moment happened, I had actually got on
24 my -- not got on my phone, but either answered a radio or I had a
25 radio call or something, so I was on that side of the vessel doing

1 something. And I don't remember, but I think when that happened,
2 I was on the port side when that particular time happened.

3 Q. And you had mentioned you were on the bridge, and the last
4 time you really took note of the time was around 10:38. You kept
5 a couple of notes afterwards, but were you -- most of your time,
6 were you up there by yourself?

7 A. Yes. Well once that, once that boat overturned, for the
8 majority of the time, the engineers were down on the main deck.
9 All the responders were on the main deck. The two ABs were in the
10 RIB boat, and then the mate was down on the deck and also in the
11 crane. That way if they got -- you know, we had the crane ready,
12 running to go, which he was -- you know, he had gotten straps,
13 some 20-foot straps that -- you know, we don't know how he's going
14 to get them tied on there, but you know, find some way to secure
15 and at least try to hold it up. You know, try something. So
16 yeah, most of the time I was up there by myself.

17 Q. Okay. And is that normal during emergency? Like, are you
18 supposed to have anybody else up there? I know you've got a small
19 crew --

20 A. Well we got a small crew and we just, you know, we just --
21 you know, everybody on position and, you know, ready to go. You
22 know, everybody just get in position. We don't train for capsize.
23 We don't train for a capsized vessel. That's why I threw the man
24 overboard. When we did the -- when I sounded the alarm, that's
25 why I sounded the man overboard, because I knew -- fire and

1 emergency's going to get the guys to the fire locker. Abandon
2 ship's going to get them to wherever. And the -- but the man, but
3 the man overboard will get them straight to the RIB boat. So
4 that's why I did that, because we don't have a signal for a
5 capsized vessel. I mean, we don't, we don't train for a capsized vessel.

6 Q. Because I noticed on the station bill, it says, second mate.
7 That's the reason why I was asking if you were alone.

8 A. Well we didn't have a second mate onboard. We don't -- no.
9 When we are in steady state -- which is what we are now basically.
10 We're here. We're just doing preventative maintenance and stuff
11 like that, training and drills. We only carry a crew of six
12 people: captain, chief mate, chief engineer, either assistant
13 engineer or an oiler, and two ABs. So we only carry a crew of
14 six.

15 Now in our COI, we have a provision. Anything over 16 hours,
16 we have to bring on a second mate and a third, and a third AB. So
17 that's when we're -- go over that 16-hour time period. That's
18 what their job would be.

19 Q. Understood.

20 A. That's why he -- they weren't onboard for that day.

21 Q. So in that 2-hour turnaround, you've got to have a second
22 mate pretty much --

23 A. No, we have -- once we leave this dock, we have -- the boat,
24 they have 16 hours to get somebody --

25 Q. To get somebody.

1 A. Yes. So on the 2-hour turnaround, no. We can get underway
2 with just a crew of six. But we have -- they have a 16-hour time
3 period from when the boat leaves the dock to get that additional
4 personnel onboard.

5 Q. Okay. Understood.

6 A. So that that -- yeah, that doesn't happen. We just go do a
7 normal training day or such as that.

8 LTJG [REDACTED] I'm good.

9 MR. BRITTENHAM: I'm good. I mean, I just have a follow-up
10 comment, I guess.

11 MR. TUCKER: Yeah.

12 MR. BRITTENHAM: I just want to make sure that everyone
13 understands that the -- because we've talked about river, oceans
14 and everything. The overall tactic of collecting and recovering
15 oil with this platform does not change in a river environment, in
16 an ocean environment. The actual way you deploy the gear, the way
17 that you string it in a J configuration -- you see what I'm
18 saying? The high-arching -- now granted, sometimes offshore seas
19 are different. In the river, the current's different. But the
20 overall tactic from this deployment platform is the same
21 throughout all environments it would operate in.

22 MR. TUCKER: Understood. You guys got any -- no?

23 LTJG [REDACTED] No.

24 BY MR. TUCKER:

25 Q. I guess, Captain, then, the only other question that I have

1 for you is, is there anything we have failed to ask you that you
2 may feel is relevant, important for us, kind of, to put all of
3 this together?

4 A. Honestly I can't think of anything right off the top of my
5 head. I mean, I can't think of any -- I guess my only question is
6 what do we do here from this point forward, you know, as far as
7 training, you know? But that would be our side, our training.
8 You know, how our training is going to change, and what are we
9 going to do to hopefully prevent this from happening again? But
10 as far as the incident, I mean, I don't know. I can't think of
11 anything right this -- no, sir.

12 Q. Okay. And those are things that we'll be asking MSRC as well
13 down the road. Weeks, months, whatever. What changes have been
14 implemented, if any? You know, again, it's unique that a boat
15 capsizes and -- it's just so very rare.

16 A. I have never -- I been -- you know, for the 10 -- the almost
17 10 years I've been with MSRC, 7 1/2 of it have been on this boat.
18 I left for 2 1/2 years. I went to be captain on that boat when it
19 was in Fourchon. And then I came back over here. The entire
20 time, I -- we've always -- other than, you know, once or twice --
21 other than the once or twice a year we go offshore, right here in
22 the river. We've done it daylight hours. We've done it nighttime
23 hours. This current. You know, this is what we've always done
24 since I've been here in the river.

25 So for us, you know, we were -- we're aware of the current.

1 We're aware of the winds. You know, we're aware of all that.
2 It's their decision. You know, hey, if you're not comfortable
3 doing it, then we won't do it. Don't do it. You know, everybody
4 has that authority to, if you're not comfortable doing it -- we
5 don't -- this is just a training. This is a training exercise.
6 If you're not comfortable, don't do it. We can always find
7 something else to train on, you know.

8 And there is -- has been plenty of times where they launched
9 660, you know, however much boom, and -- no, we're not going to --
10 you know, hey, I'm not -- you know, whatever. And they stop.
11 They unhook it, throw everything in the water, they come tie
12 alongside. We do other training. They train on the skimmer head
13 -- not skimmer head. The Transrec skimmer. They, you know, just
14 do some type of other training. For whatever reason, that day he
15 felt he -- I assume, you know -- I'm assuming he was comfortable
16 with what he -- what they were doing. So I don't know. It was
17 just a normal day for us.

18 Q. Yeah. And to that note, had anybody at any time expressed
19 that they were uncomfortable?

20 A. Not to me. No, sir.

21 Q. Okay. And did you at any time feel uncomfortable?

22 A. No. Again, it's -- we've trained in that current before.
23 You know, we -- again, we've done it -- my 7 1/2 years on this
24 vessel, we've done it in the river. My very first, my very first
25 training as captain on here, the current was probably running

1 harder than it was this time. I mean, it was -- I've, you know,
2 seen the buoy. You know, they've got the buoy there, the 18 buoy
3 or whatever. I've seen that buoy, you know, laid over pretty good
4 before, and they still -- they put it out and did the training.
5 So I mean, it's nothing that they hadn't done before. I mean,
6 granted, it wasn't those two people in the boat that time -- that
7 time, they, you know, weren't even working with the company at
8 that time. But I've seen Ruben in the Munson, you know, many
9 times.

10 So nobody expressed any concern of not being able to do it at
11 that time. I didn't express any -- we talked about it just like
12 we do every time we do a training. You know, what's the weather,
13 what's the current. You know, what's going on. You don't do what
14 you don't feel comfortable doing. Again we always stress it's
15 just a training. It is a training. It's just a training
16 exercise, so --

17 Q. Understood.

18 MR. TUCKER: And then that's it. So we'll wrap this up.
19 Time is 1446.

20 (Whereupon, at 2:46 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: CAPSIZING AND SINKING OF MSRC 8-1
 DURING OIL SPILL RESPONSE EXERCISES
 ON THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER
 JANUARY 16, 2019
 Interview of Jason Rogers

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA19PM014

PLACE:

DATE:

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber