

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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DUKW 34 AND M/V CARIBBEAN SEA

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Docket No.: DCA-10-MM-025

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Telephonic Interview of: KEVIN GRACE

Conference Room
Sector Delaware Bay
United States Coast Guard
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Monday
July 12, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to Notice,
at 4:00 p.m.

BEFORE: LIAM LARUE
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

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Ride the Ducks

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United States Coast Guard
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I N T E R V I E W

(4:00 p.m.)

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3 MR. LARUE: All right, good afternoon. It is 4:00 in
4 the afternoon on Monday, July 12th. This is Liam LaRue from NTSB,
5 and we're here today at Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay to talk to
6 Mr. Kevin Grace. We've got him on the phone. Could you just
7 spell your name for the record, please?

8 MR. GRACE: K-E-V-I-N, G-R-A-C-E.

9 MR. LARUE: And I understand you've got somebody there
10 with you?

11 MR. GOSSOW: Yeah, this Doug Gossow. I'm Kevin's
12 attorney. I'm a lawyer with Goldstein and Price in St. Louis.

13 MR. LARUE: Great. And I'll get everybody here to
14 introduce themselves for the record now too.

15 MR. LAWRENCE: I'm sorry, what was his last name?

16 MR. LARUE: Can you say your last name again, Doug?

17 MR. GOSSOW: Yeah, it's Gossow, G-O-S-S-O-W.

18 MR. LAWRENCE: G-O-S-S-O-W. Thank you.

19 MR. LARUE: Great. Thank you.

20 MR. LAWRENCE: And this is Captain John Lawrence from K-
21 Sea Transportation.

22 CWO GLADISH: Chief Warrant Officer Rick Gladish, United
23 States Coast Guard Casualty Investigations, Sector Delaware Bay
24 here in Philadelphia.

25 MR. FITZGIBBONS: John Fitzgibbons, Ride the Ducks.

1 MR. LARUE: All right --

2 MR. GOSSOW: I didn't catch it. Who was the last
3 person?

4 MR. FITZGIBBONS: John Fitzgibbons with Ride the Ducks.

5 MR. LARUE: All right, so we've got everybody introduced
6 now.

7 INTERVIEW OF KEVIN GRACE

8 BY MR. LARUE:

9 Q. Kevin, if -- how old are you, sir?

10 A. Fifty.

11 Q. Fifty. All right, and we'll just start off with, do you
12 remember where you were sitting on the boat?

13 A. Left side, second seat, aisle seat.

14 Q. All right. So seat four. And did you have -- were you
15 alone or did you have anybody with you on the boat?

16 A. My daughter, nine-year-old daughter, Ruby Grace, was
17 sitting next to me at the window seat.

18 Q. Okay. All right, what I'd like you to do, please, is to
19 just walk us through the events of that afternoon. You know, tell
20 us about the DUKW ride. Possibly start with the safety brief, and
21 just tell us everything you remember.

22 A. Well, we boarded the DUKW by the Visitors' Center near
23 the Constitution Square. Proceeded on the DUKW tour through old
24 Philadelphia on South Street. Made our way to the point where you
25 enter the river. It was a real hot day. The captain of the DUKW

1 boat was engaging the tourists, making it fun, pointing out all
2 the highlights, doing what everybody expected to be done. He
3 asked us if we wanted a big splash when we went into water, and
4 you know asked us to blow our little DUKW whistles and everything,
5 and everybody enjoyed that, I'd say. It was a real hot day, so I
6 think everybody welcomed a splash in the river.

7 As soon as we got underway in the river I kind of
8 noticed that there was -- I thought, you know, coming from St.
9 Louis and being in a big city, I'm used to unusual smells in the
10 air. And I noticed a peculiar smell, but I kind of likened it to
11 something that might be similar to what we would experience here
12 (indiscernible) with the smell of hops. And, but I didn't really
13 think much of it. Being in a big city, there's lots of different
14 kinds of smells.

15 So we pulled out into the river, and he was pointing out
16 different highlights, the Penn Landing and, you know, the
17 battleships and whatnot. And we proceeded downstream.

18 At one point he -- I couldn't tell if he was admonishing
19 his first mate or -- well, actually, what he did first was he
20 invited his assistant, first mate, whatever he was, to take the
21 wheel so he could sit and turn facing the crowd and interact with
22 the crowd, while pointing out landmarks and whatnot. So -- and I
23 want to get all the chronology right in my head here. So once he
24 did that, we were proceeding downstream, and he made a comments
25 about, you know, pull out further away from the bank; these people

1 don't want to see all this junk over here. Which I didn't know if
2 that was, you know, he was just kind of being fun or what the deal
3 was there.

4 But, so we pulled out a little bit further and we
5 continued. I didn't really notice anything out of the ordinary.
6 I did notice that smell starting to get a little bit more
7 pronounced. Once again, I didn't think anything of it. And then
8 we turned around and started heading upstream. The captain
9 instructed the assistant to do that. The assistant, you know,
10 started doing what he had to do, turned upstream and started, you
11 know, driving the boat up the stream. And then the captain said,
12 hey, you know, slow down, you're going too fast. And there was a
13 definitely a tone of agitation in his voice. I don't know if the
14 agitation -- why exactly. And I don't also once again know if he
15 was just kidding around or what, you know.

16 I neglected to mention that before we started on the
17 ramp into the water, he did mention the fact that the Coast Guard
18 required that he explain the safety procedures. He pointed out a
19 few life vests. He indicated how one was to unstrap them and pull
20 them down, put them on, put the strap around you, and clip the D-
21 ring. He did do that before we went down, but he kind of made,
22 once again made a joke when he said essentially, you know, you all
23 aren't going to really need to do this but, you know, the Coast
24 Guard requires it and that's why we do it, kind of thing. We were
25 heading down into the river -- or heading back up the river.

1 It became known that there was a problem when smoke
2 started coming up from the bow area. The people in front of us --
3 a colleague of mine from work and her son were seated next to this
4 little panel through which smoke was coming. They got up and kind
5 of moved back and, you know, I kind of stood up so her son could
6 sit next to my daughter. And the captain opened that little panel
7 up, and a lot of smoke came out of that. And it didn't seem like
8 it was -- it seemed kind of like a radiator kind of smoke more
9 than just a fire kind of smoke. And it was just, you know, the
10 strong smell that I had noticed earlier, only a lot stronger now.

11 So the captain -- and before he opened that panel, he
12 shut everything down and, you know -- a cry had kind of gone up of
13 hey, there's a lot of smoke here. And the captain immediately
14 turned attention to that, which his back was to it, and tried to
15 get, you know, everything shut down, so whatever was going on
16 would stop damaging the boat or causing that problem, you know.

17 At which point -- let's see. Then he had his first mate
18 get on the bow, and he was barking orders at him, and he had him
19 put the anchor out. And tried also to kind of to control a
20 sentiment that everybody would have something going wrong and, you
21 know, trying to keep it light. And then he took that panel, after
22 it cooled off a little bit a few minutes later, and closed it up
23 and put some duct tape on it. And I kind of joined in and was
24 making it light by commenting, you know, you put some "Duck" tape
25 on it and it shut down the smoke coming out of it.

1 So we're -- he's making calls trying to get somebody to
2 come and tow us out of there. We're facing upstream. We're
3 sitting in the front of the boat, so we, you know, we could see
4 what was pretty much upstream and not too much what was downstream
5 unless we kind of turned to look. My daughter and I were kind of
6 standing there because, you know, the smoke came pretty close to
7 us. And he was -- as I said, trying to get people to respond and
8 also turning around to everybody and saying, you know, this
9 doesn't happen, we're going to get -- you know, explained what's
10 going to happen next. Somebody's going to come and tow us out of
11 here.

12 And I was actually sitting down texting a friend of
13 mine, who we'd been traveling with, about what was going on. And
14 then somebody said, hey, is that barge going to hit us? And I
15 just looked downstream to see that there was indeed a barge kind
16 of coming upstream, though it wasn't evident to me that -- and I
17 could see the towboat too, and it seemed reasonable to me that
18 they could see us. I mean that's the rules of the river, I
19 suppose, that you don't run over boats and you look for other
20 boats. And, you know, at first I wasn't all that alarmed, and
21 then, you know, the captain was immediately I think kind of
22 alarmed about it. And he got on the radio and started calling
23 for, you know, watch out us for us, essentially whoa, whoa, whoa.
24 And then I remember him saying this isn't good. And at which
25 point, you know, I'm grabbing a life jacket and cramming it over

1 my daughter's head.

2 And the thing came up on us, like so fast. And I
3 noticed -- you know, there was a good curl of water under the bow,
4 and it seems pretty clear to me -- I'm not a tugboat captain, but,
5 I mean if you're going upstream in a barge and you see a vessel
6 floating, and you want to do something just to avert your course,
7 that the least you would be doing is putting, you know, your
8 engine in reverse and that curl should have diminished. It seemed
9 to me that there wasn't ever any hesitation on the part of this
10 boat. It seemed like it just never stopped or even saw us.

11 And as it got close, it was obvious that this was going
12 to happen, and I'm putting this lifejacket on my daughter and
13 pushing her towards the best place to get her off the boat. There
14 really wasn't any good option. Jumping in the river in front of a
15 barge or staying on a boat, who knows what the best option is. So
16 she didn't want to go off the boat. Of course she wouldn't. And
17 I'm trying to get this thing on her. And when I'm getting it on
18 her, everybody else was moving to the front of the boat and
19 panicking. And the back of boat kind of goes down and then kind
20 of bobs and kind of turns and pulls, you know, and just basically
21 dumps us off the front right side of the boat where we were trying
22 to get out of anyway. As I was putting the lifejacket on her, I'm
23 trying to hold onto her, get her off the boat, and I grab a
24 handful of hair as I go in.

25 And the next thing it's just chaos, everyone's in the

1 water, people rolling out of the -- I was absolutely sure that
2 barge was coming right over the top of us. I was sure of that.
3 And we were rolling under the water. And I don't know how -- it
4 was like the hand of God just moved that thing over so it didn't
5 roll over us. I don't know how it happened.

6 But we were rolling around under water. I had a hand on
7 my daughter's hair. I was trying to kind of get my act together
8 and get oriented. We didn't even have enough time to take a
9 breath. And then we popped up out of the water, and I could
10 see -- I think it was at that point where I looked around or -- I
11 don't know how much I looked around, but we got pulled back down
12 again. And it was as if the sinking boat had kind of sucked us
13 down with it. Or I don't know if it was that, or the wake of the
14 towboat or what it was, but we got, we were -- all of the sudden
15 all of us were back under water again three or four feet. And
16 then, you know, we fought our way to the surface again. And my
17 daughter's right there and I'm assessing the situation. I see my
18 colleague and I see my daughter, but I don't see my colleague's
19 son. So I'm looking for him, and he pops up, and he has a
20 lifejacket on. She managed to get one on him.

21 And so then we started making our way away from and, you
22 know kind of looking around and, you know, there was a lot of
23 stuff floating around. A lot of people. I grabbed a cooler.
24 People were trying to, you know, figure out what to do. There's
25 just one little bitty, you know, small cooler -- it's like not

1 Styrofoam but a plastic cooler. So I grabbed a hold of that,
2 thinking that, you know if there was an undercurrent that that
3 would be some safeguard. Neither my daughter nor I had a
4 lifejacket on. We kind of started trying to make our way toward
5 the bank.

6 I noticed there was another boat coming upstream. I
7 didn't know if it was saw us, so I was a little bit alarmed that,
8 you know, we weren't making quick enough progress. So I could see
9 that my colleague and her son were, you know, had made better
10 progress than us. And they didn't -- she didn't have a life
11 preserver but he did. She was ahead of him. And I was downstream
12 of everybody. So I was -- hey, my daughter's a strong swimmer,
13 you know, just go ahead and swim. And my intention was to keep up
14 with her, but I couldn't do that holding onto the cooler. So I
15 allowed her to continue swimming, and I basically just became more
16 uncomfortable thinking that she would get too far away from me
17 than I was with the possibility of her getting in an undertow
18 situation. She was making good progress. She's a good swimmer.
19 So I let go of the cooler, and I just swam along to the side of
20 her as best I could.

21 I directed her to get upstream to this little ladder
22 that would allow the people to climb up the wall from the river to
23 this bank of the river. And she was able to do that. And I
24 landed downstream about 25 yards from her.

25 Somebody threw down a towel and held on the other end,

1 trying to like tow me up to the ladder. But I appreciated the
2 effort and everything, and I did hold onto just for a second, but
3 then I just went ahead and swam over to -- around this pylon and
4 got up the ladder myself. And then once I was out and reunited
5 with my daughter and saw that my friends were safe -- you know,
6 that the main crisis was over.

7 And shortly after that we went to the Seaport Museum,
8 and everybody else was coming in there, and they were doing crisis
9 control. And you know my daughter went into shock. Her eyes
10 glazed over, she wouldn't talk, she wouldn't drink water, she was
11 barely, hardly responsive at all. I got a fresh shirt on her and
12 tried to get her away from the chaos in a different area, but they
13 were trying to count us and everything.

14 There was somebody -- I don't know if she was a Red
15 Cross worker or what, but she facilitated our being able to kind
16 of get out of the chaos. As soon as we got out of there,
17 everybody kind of just was -- everybody else kind of came where we
18 were too. And then we all ended up in the auditorium, and as my
19 daughter proceeded to not snap out of it, and we were wrapping
20 blankets around her and doing everything we could to get her kind
21 of grounded, and you know the fact that everything was okay, I
22 decided that she needed to go to a hospital.

23 So the fireworkers and policemen and all the people in
24 Philadelphia were just incredible helping make this crisis go away
25 as much as they could. You know, people were bleeding, people

1 were hysterical, people were missing other people. It was just
2 heartfelt chaos going on in there. So I called my wife on the way
3 to the hospital and let her know what was going on. And once we
4 went to the hospital we had -- my daughter was taken to one of the
5 ER rooms. And we got her out of her wet clothes and wrapped her
6 up in some warm clothes.

7 Also in the ambulance were my friend from work -- my
8 colleague from work and her son. And he had a bump on the head,
9 and they were going to that checked out too. And my daughter had
10 a bump on the head from who knows what. It was chaos just trying
11 to swim her off that boat as best I could. Once we were in the
12 hospital she kind of, you know, they looked her and looked at the
13 bump on her head. We got her warmed up. We turned on the TV and
14 saw what was going on, which kind of helped bring things for her.
15 And she was able to kind of snap out of it once she got that warm
16 blanket on her.

17 So then the police officers took us back to the Seaport
18 Museum so that we could kind of do whatever they needed us to do
19 there. And the detective came and had took statements from us.
20 And then we got our car. I had a little trouble with my car. I
21 did have a key in my pocket, but it had gotten wet. So it didn't
22 work and I had to figure out how to get into the car without the
23 working key. So we got through that and then we went on with, you
24 know, all of us were back together again and we went on with our
25 trip.

1 Q. Okay, what I'm going to do now is just kind of step back
2 through it with you and ask a few questions.

3 A. All right.

4 Q. You mentioned that hops smell that you smelled initially
5 and that it got stronger later on in the trip. Were you in the
6 water or was it just before the water when you first started
7 smelling it?

8 A. I would say it was before we got in the water.

9 Q. Okay. And then do you remember exactly where you were
10 when you started smelling it again?

11 A. Well, you know, it kind of just -- intermittently I
12 would smell it. It wasn't like -- you know, I mean this just, it
13 was lots of sensations going on here. Every once in a while I
14 smelled that. It wasn't like it was just somebody was eating a,
15 you know, a can of Limburger cheese sat right next to me. It
16 wasn't that strong. But, you know, just intermittently I would
17 smell that.

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. You know, I don't know if you've ever had your car
20 overheat or something like that or, you know, it's similar to an
21 experience I've had driving a car where there might have been a
22 problem that wasn't working or something.

23 Q. Right. And you said that the smoke was coming from the
24 bow area. Was it coming from one side or the other?

25 A. It seemed like it was coming more from the right side.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. You know my right. Because I was facing the front of
3 the boat. But that panel that I mentioned was on the lower left
4 side.

5 Q. Right. I see. So you were right behind the captain and
6 you heard his radio calls?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Can you try to remember, you know, exactly the wording
9 he used when he was calling out?

10 A. I really don't remember exactly what the wording was. I
11 couldn't understand what was coming through on the receiver end of
12 it. You know, something to the effect of, you know, we're
13 disabled, out in the river, you know, we need assistance. I don't
14 remember the specific language. I don't know if it was, you know,
15 maritime jargon or if it was just you know, hey, this thing isn't
16 working out in the river right now and we need you to get our
17 butts out of here as soon as possible kind of thing.

18 Q. Um-hum. Do you remember how many times he called out to
19 the tug and barge?

20 A. It was pretty much an ongoing thing. I mean he would
21 call and say something, then he'd turn and talk to us, and then
22 he'd call again. It seemed like that cycle repeated itself
23 several times. But he did -- he was making an effort to call
24 people.

25 And one thing that did not happen was, in my opinion,

1 you know, we should have been told soon as that thing copped out
2 to get those lifejackets on. And that did not happen. That did
3 not happen. In fact, I admonished myself for not taking charge
4 and telling everybody to do it myself. And, you know, I know he
5 had a lot on his mind, but that should have been number one, to
6 me.

7 And my heart goes out to the captain of that boat, but
8 that was an egregious error that should not have happened. And,
9 you know, when you're in a position of being under the authority
10 of a captain of a boat and you're a tourist, you know, this isn't
11 something that jumps in mind to -- jumps into somebody's mind to,
12 you know, contradict the captain. And it really didn't even occur
13 to me. You know, I was trying to keep it light, like I said. I
14 made a joke about the duct tape. And it seemed perfectly
15 reasonable to me that any knucklehead driving a tugboat on a river
16 and pushing a barge would be able to see that there is another
17 vehicle dead in the water right in front of them. I don't get
18 that. There's so many levels of errors in this thing.

19 Q. Well, that's what we're --

20 A. I understand that people, you know, it's a tense
21 situation and so on. But people's lives were at stake here.

22 Q. You're absolutely right. Did you hear any response to
23 the radio calls?

24 A. Like I said before, it was kind of garbled. I couldn't
25 really understand anything that was coming out of there.

1 Q. Right. Okay. You talked about you put a lifejacket on
2 your daughter.

3 A. I tried to. It popped off her. I couldn't get the
4 strap around her in time.

5 Q. Okay, so that was my next question. You said later on
6 that neither of you had a lifejacket on. So when did she lose the
7 lifejacket?

8 A. As soon as we got in that water with all that chaos and
9 everything, it just popped off her. I didn't have -- I couldn't
10 get the strap on her.

11 Q. And did you have time to get one on yourself?

12 A. No, I didn't even have to time to grab one out for
13 myself. I never had one.

14 Q. And could you try to walk me back through what happened
15 when you were in the water, you know, where --

16 A. Once the tugboat hit us, the back of the boat initially
17 went down. And you know, and we were like facing the right side
18 front getting ready to -- I was getting ready to push her off
19 because that seemed like the best place to go for whatever reason.
20 And so as soon as I was like ready to push her off -- like as soon
21 as I felt that boat move, I knew it was time to -- we had to do
22 something. We weren't going to be missed. I couldn't really see
23 exactly, you know, until it was like right on us, how close that
24 boat was, because we were on the boat and with all those people in
25 the way and so on.

1 Q. Right. So --

2 A. So I pushed her. As I was pushing her towards the edge,
3 the boat hit and it kind of turned the whole boat and dumped us
4 out it from the right side. Dumped us out of the right side, the
5 front right side of the boat. So we didn't really have to jump,
6 you understand? We were kind of dumped out. And it seemed like
7 the boat rolled over on top of us, and we're flailing around under
8 water. All these people, and all the junk on the boat and all
9 that stuff. And it was just, you know, this mass chaos under
10 water. And I don't know how deep we were. I never -- I just
11 can't remember feeling any pressure in my ears. But then we, you
12 know, eventually -- I don't know how long. I mean we didn't have
13 time to even take a breath. And, you know, I'm thinking through
14 my head, you know, how long can I hold my breath or am I going to
15 come up underneath this barge. It's kind of like a pre-language
16 thought that I had and fear. And then I popped up for a moment.
17 Saw -- I don't know, a wave problem and we got sucked down again.
18 And I was able to keep hold of my daughter and my friends, even
19 though, some were -- I eventually saw them too.

20 Q. I'm just trying to get the picture straight in my head.
21 Because you guys were sitting on the left side of the boat. So --

22 A. That's right.

23 Q. Now you said you were trying to push your daughter off
24 the right side. So did you --

25 A. That's right.

1 Q. You moved over to the other side?

2 A. Well, we had been standing because that smoke was coming
3 out of that panel. And we were all kind of standing and sitting
4 down, but when you were sitting down, it was stronger. I mean if
5 you stand up, you're further away from that. So, you know, we
6 were kind of in a position up there in the front center of the
7 boat mainly. We weren't sitting in our seats any longer. We kind
8 of -- I don't know. We alternated sitting in our seats and
9 standing up. Because, and when the barge thing started to happen,
10 I was actually sitting down texting a friend of mine on my
11 telephone that we were on this DUKW boat in the Delaware River.
12 And when I heard the commotion about, is that barge going to hit
13 us, I instantly dropped the phone and jumped -- and kind of jumped
14 into action.

15 Q. Okay, so you were trying push your daughter out the
16 right side, and the barge hit, and you didn't really, you didn't
17 get a chance to do that?

18 A. I did not get a chance to get the life preserver all the
19 way on my daughter --

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. -- before we both were tumbled out of the boat.

22 Q. Okay. And then do you remember consciously swimming
23 towards, you know -- did you see light when you were under water?

24 A. Yeah, I did see light and bubbles and shadows. Not in
25 very much detail.

1 Q. And then do you remember how you got to the surface?

2 A. Just kicking towards the light.

3 Q. Right.

4 A. And kicking hard. I only had one hand. I'm pretty sure
5 I had my other hand wrapped in my daughter's hair, and just trying
6 to make it to the top with my other hand. Kicking as hard as I
7 could. I had tennis shoes on. My daughter, who's a good swimmer,
8 didn't have -- she had flip-flops on so, she knew -- I mean she's
9 been in -- she's a swimmer. She knows what to do in the water.

10 Q. All right, what would you say your swimming ability is?

11 A. I'm a strong swimmer.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. I exercise, if I thought about it, you know, like
14 anybody else I get in my stack at work, where I exercise regularly
15 and then I don't. But one of my routines is to swim a half a
16 mile. And I've been swimming half a mile at about -- I think my
17 fastest time is like 21 minutes or something like that.

18 Q. Okay. You mentioned that you looked back and not only
19 could you see the barge but you could see the tugboat as well?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. How much of the tugboat could you see? Could you kind
22 of, you know, describe what you saw?

23 A. I could see enough of it to appreciate that he should
24 have been able to see us.

25 Q. Right. Were you able to --

1 A. Enough to feel like he's not going to hit us. How can
2 that happen?

3 Q. Were you able to see anyone on the tug or the barge?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. And how far away do you think the tug and barge
6 were at that point?

7 A. When I first saw them?

8 Q. Yeah, when you were able to see them.

9 A. Probably about a half to a quarter-mile away.

10 Q. Okay. And then, let's see, just one last question
11 before I pass it off. What was the name of the hospital that you
12 took your daughter to?

13 A. We were taken to Hahnemann Hospital.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. The next day, I took her to the emergency room at
16 A.I. duPont in Wilmington because she seemed to be having symptoms
17 of, you know, both head injury with nausea and unresponsiveness
18 and a little disorientation. So I took her there the next day.
19 And they -- I noticed there was a mild concussion.

20 Q. Is she doing okay now?

21 A. We took her to the doctor again today. You know, they
22 said that just to kind of keep an eye on her. She seems to be
23 doing okay.

24 Q. And did you have any injuries?

25 A. Just scraped and bruised and anxiety.

1 Q. All right, that's all the questions I've got.

2 MR. LARUE: I'm going to pass it off to the next in line
3 here.

4 MR. GRACE: Okay.

5 BY CWO GLADISH:

6 Q. How are you doing, sir? It's Chief Warrant Officer Rick
7 Gladish with the Coast Guard. I appreciate you being on the line
8 with us today so we can ask you these questions. I did leave a
9 message on your phone yesterday evening. We were able to get your
10 residential number.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. For you to get back to us. Sir, you mentioned the duct
13 tape on that panel on the left side. Was that duct tape
14 preexisting or was that placed on there by the captain?

15 A. It was put on there by the captain.

16 Q. All right. And that was because it was aspirating some
17 steam or the smoke out?

18 A. I got the sense that it was some kind of standardized
19 procedure, but it very well could have been just to keep the
20 passengers comfortable, to keep the smoke from coming out of
21 there. I don't know.

22 Q. Um-hum. Also, I was listening to you as you were doing
23 rundown of the events as they occurred. Do you recall another
24 boat coming along side and exchanging language between the
25 captains?

1 A. Another boat?

2 Q. Another DUKW boat, sir?

3 A. Yeah, I don't -- there was a point at which another DUKW
4 boat came by. It was before all this happened obviously. Yeah,
5 there was another DUKW boat. I don't know what they -- if they
6 just kind of said howdy do or what they said to each other. But
7 yeah.

8 Q. So you can't recount any of the vocabulary or what they
9 were saying -- the dialog between each other?

10 A. Not at this -- no, I can't remember.

11 Q. Okay, sir, that's all right. That's fine. Some of the
12 other passengers we interviewed, they said they ingested quite a
13 bit of water. Was that the case with you and your daughter Ruby?

14 A. Yeah, I swallowed some water. I don't know -- not a
15 whole lot. I did not have -- you know, and I'm sure she probably
16 did too. I mean we were flailing for a long time.

17 Q. You said that the captain was barking orders. Was it a
18 command-full type voice or was it basically you were unable to
19 ascertain, you know, what his demeanor was when he was speaking
20 with the deckhand? Was it panicky or --

21 A. No, it was -- my intuition about it was that -- you
22 know, a lot of truth is spoken in jest, and it seemed to me that
23 he was agitated with this assistant. I don't know. I do -- one
24 thing I didn't mention was that, you know, when that barge started
25 coming -- when it became clear that we were going to hit by the

1 barge, one of the things that just made me sure we needed to get
2 the hell off that boat was the fact that whoever that assistant
3 was -- I mean he had already -- he had dived into the river and
4 was about 20 yards away. He was booking the hell out of there,
5 which that sure prompted everybody else to want to get the heck
6 off the boat, you know.

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. I don't remember anybody saying get off the boat or put
9 on a life -- I know nobody said put lifejackets on.

10 Q. Um-hum.

11 A. It was just mass chaos. It was almost like the tarp on
12 that thing kept us from being able to see what was coming, you
13 know. The captain seemed like he even had to kind of crane to
14 look around to see what was going on downstream. So to answer
15 your question, yes, he was barking orders. I couldn't tell
16 specifically if he was just trying to, you know, be fun, you know.
17 You know since I was like right there, it didn't seem like -- he
18 wasn't doing it into the microphone. I can tell you that.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. He was saying okay, slow down. Or he was saying hey,
21 you know, don't look at that -- they don't want to see that junk
22 over there.

23 Q. Right. Have you ever been in a vehicle that overheated,
24 sir?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. Was this kind of similar or was it --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. I'm sorry, can you say it again?

4 A. Yes, it was similar.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And that's what I thought had happened.

7 Q. Okay, all right.

8 A. It had, you know, I had -- the odor was very similar to
9 a radiator anti-freeze kind of smell.

10 Q. Very well.

11 A. Sweet, kind of sweet smell.

12 Q. How's your daughter Ruby doing? Is she talking about
13 this?

14 A. Yeah, she's talking about it. We've been interviewed by
15 local television.

16 Q. Last night?

17 A. Saturday and Friday.

18 Q. Right. But she seems to be okay and she's able to sleep
19 and all that for now, I mean?

20 A. Well, she woke up in the middle of the night with a
21 headache last night. Two nights ago she woke up twice screaming
22 for me. Yeah, there's some anxiety there for sure.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And there is with myself as well, but you know I'm just
25 trying to, you know, just trying to keep everything going here

1 with my life and getting back to normal.

2 Q. And this was the first time you ever rode on Ride the
3 Ducks? Is that a correct statement?

4 A. Yes, it is.

5 Q. Okay. That's all I have, sir. Thank you.

6 MR. GLADDISH: I'm going to pass along the table.

7 BY MR. LAWRENCE:

8 Q. Yes, Mr. Grace, this is John Lawrence, and I'm very
9 happy that you and your daughter are where you are today.

10 A. Thank you.

11 Q. And on behalf of the tug operators, I'm just very sorry
12 this happened. And like we've been saying here, this is why we're
13 having this conversation in the hope we can find out what happened
14 and prevent something like this tragedy happening again. One
15 question I have for you is -- and it's a difficult question, I'm
16 sure, is but the two deceased passengers who were sitting directly
17 across from you, I understand. Do you --

18 A. That's what I've been told. When I saw their pictures
19 in the paper, I recounted seeing them. You know, I was retired a
20 few years ago, and my focus was on my daughter's experience, my
21 experience of all the stuff that I didn't have -- you know, trying
22 to take pictures. I was interacting with my daughter. And, you
23 know, the captain was doing a good job of trying to, you know,
24 entertain people with jokes and, you know, different things like
25 that. And so I did notice other people talking, but I was sitting

1 in the second row and my back was to most everybody. So I didn't
2 really -- I recognized the faces. Somebody said they were sitting
3 near us. I guess. I don't know.

4 Q. So you don't remember any specific actions of them
5 during the actual time of the incident?

6 A. I remember there was a young man next to me, who the
7 captain was talking to, and he couldn't quite -- I think it was
8 him. He couldn't quite -- he was interacting with him, and he
9 couldn't quite get the accent and was having a hard time
10 communicating with him. So I don't know if that was Szeb or not.

11 Q. Okay. Thank you. That's all I had.

12 A. Okay.

13 BY MR. FITZGIBBONS:

14 Q. This is John with Ride the Ducks, and exactly like
15 everybody else has said, we're glad we're here and we're talking
16 to you today and not some other situations. But you said
17 something about back in the radio traffic, you don't remember what
18 he said, but you said it was garbled. Was that the transmission
19 back to the boat or was that something he was saying? Do you
20 remember?

21 A. No, the transmission back to the boat is what I was
22 referring to.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. It was difficult to understand.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It was a lot of beeps and buzzes and whatnot.

2 Q. Okay. That's really all I had. Everybody else covered
3 mine.

4 MR. LARUE: All right, it's back to Liam from NTSB here.
5 If nobody else has questions? All right.

6 BY MR. LARUE:

7 Q. The last thing I'll ask is, is there anything else you
8 can think of that we haven't asked you that might be important?

9 A. Well, you know, it occurred to me that the anchor being
10 put out -- I mean I understand why that's procedure and why they
11 had to do that, but that -- how that could have contributed to the
12 boat sinking so quickly. I think I've said everything with regard
13 to, you know, my unhappiness about not being told to put jackets
14 on right away. And my incredulousness about not being able to --
15 I mean the tugboat captain not being able to see. Because I could
16 see that tug, and I still think it's important for me to
17 reiterate.

18 You know, the only other thing is that, you know, the
19 positive part of this is that, you know, the people in
20 Philadelphia were incredibly nice to us. And, you know, I
21 appreciate all they tried to do for everybody. Once I had climbed
22 out of that -- out of the river, a man came up to me and said he
23 had witnessed the whole thing from his apartment and was
24 practically in tears. I don't know what else there would be for
25 me to mention as far as to what I think is important. I mean I

1 think the Ride the Duck people tried to provide a good product.
2 You know, I've said -- talked to a couple people that believe that
3 the Ride the Duck vehicles really shouldn't be out in that kind of
4 boat traffic and had to retrospective sort of agree with that.
5 And it's just a sad thing. My heart goes out to the families of
6 Szeb and Dora. And I don't know what else I have to say, except I
7 hope whatever manifests from this improves safety and keeps things
8 reasonable.

9 Q. Yes, sir. That's why we're here and that's why we're
10 doing this. So I do appreciate you taking the time to talk to us
11 today.

12 MR. LARUE: If nobody else has any questions, I'm going
13 to go ahead and turn off the recording. Can I just -- I just want
14 to make sure that it was okay with you and you were aware that we
15 were recording this?

16 MR. GRACE: I was aware you were recording, yes.

17 MR. LARUE: Okay, thank you. I'm shutting it off.

18 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: DUKW 34 AND M/V CARIBBEAN SEA
 Interview of Kevin Grace

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-10-MM-025

PLACE: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DATE: July 12, 2010

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

Kimberly Hawkins
Transcriber