

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

* Docket No.: DCA-10-MM-025

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Interview of: REKA HORVATH

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

Friday
July 9, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,
at 11:30 a.m.

BEFORE: LIAM LARUE
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

LIAM LARUE, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Marine Safety
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MATT FINE, Lieutenant Commander
United States Coast Guard

JOHN LAWRENCE, Vice President
Health, Safety, Quality and Environment
K-Sea Transportation

GREG BLUMENTHAL, General Manager
Ride the Ducks Philadelphia

SHANE LAWS, Chief Warrant Officer
United States Coast Guard

SUSAN JANOWITZ, Interpreter

TOM K. HOLCHAP
American Red Cross

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:30 a.m.)

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2
3 MR. LARUE: Okay, good morning. It is about 11:30 on
4 Friday, July 9th. This is Liam LaRue from the NTSB, and we're
5 here today to interview one of the passengers from the DUKW. Her
6 name is -- could you say your name?

7 MS. HORVATH: Reka Horvath.

8 MR. LARUE: Okay, Reka Horvath. And then I'm just going
9 to have everybody go around the table and introduce themselves, so
10 we have it on the record, starting to my right.

11 MR. BLUMENTHAL: Greg Blumenthal from Ride the Ducks.

12 MR. LAWRENCE: Captain John Lawrence from K-Sea
13 Transportation.

14 CWO LAWS: Chief Warrant Officer Shane Laws with the
15 Coast Guard in Philadelphia.

16 LCDR FINE: Lieutenant Commander Matt Fine, Coast Guard.

17 MS. JANOWITZ: Susan Janowitz to help translate.

18 MS. KONYA: Adrienn Konya.

19 MR. HOLCHAP: Tom K. Holchap (ph.) for the Red Cross.

20 MR. LARUE: Okay, great.

INTERVIEW OF REKA HORVATH

21
22 (Whereupon, Ms. Horvath answered assisted by an
23 interpreter.)

24 BY MR. LARUE:

25 Q. First question is how old are you?

1 A. I'm sixteen.

2 Q. Sixteen years old, great. And so, we know that you were
3 on the boat on Wednesday. What I'd like you to do is just walk us
4 through what happened once you got on the boat and once the boat
5 entered the water and -- as best as you can remember, and then
6 I'll follow up with some questions after that.

7 A. So, when we were still on the land, we felt that there
8 was hot air coming out of the boat. That was strange. And when
9 we got into the water, first everything was okay, and then we
10 turned, and we saw the smoke, and we stopped. And the other
11 captain or I don't know who went to the nose of the boat, and he
12 brought him a life jacket, and I don't know why he did that.

13 The captain was talking on the radio, but I didn't hear
14 exactly what he said. And first we thought it just a joke. And
15 we were just sitting and waiting for another ship. And another
16 DUKW boat came next to us, and they said nothing, but I thought
17 they had to see the big barge.

18 Then the time passed, and I just remember the captain
19 said whoa, whoa, whoa, and I looked back, and I saw that the barge
20 is coming and then crashed. And I tried to take a life jacket,
21 but I couldn't, and then the water came, and I don't know. Yeah,
22 I took a deep breath, and I opened my eyes and I saw nothing. I
23 just tried to swim to the surface. And yeah, I don't remember
24 exactly what happened. And I got to the surface, and I got a life
25 jacket from a guy, and then I tried to swim as fast as I can

1 because I saw another ship, and I thought it's not far.

2 Q. How did you get to shore? How did you get onto land?

3 A. I swam to a DUKW and three men were there, and they
4 helped us.

5 Q. Okay, that's great. Thank you very much. I'm just
6 going to go back with a couple more specific questions. Did --
7 when you got on the boat, did the --

8 A. I'm sorry, sir. I forgot that the younger captain
9 jumped into the water, and I just realized that, hey, he is in the
10 water and -- yeah.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That was before the barge hit --

12 MS. HORVATH: Yeah.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- you saw him jump in?

14 MS. HORVATH: Yeah. And we just read that someone said
15 that she heard that this captain said we have to jump, but I
16 didn't hear anything.

17 BY MR. LARUE:

18 Q. I've got a seating chart, so that's the front of the
19 boat, the back of the boat. Do you remember where you were
20 sitting?

21 A. Here.

22 Q. This seat right here?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay. So, she indicated number 5, which is on the
25 starboard side. Who was sitting next to you?

1 A. She was.

2 MR. LARUE: And what was your name again?

3 MS. KONYA: Adrienn.

4 MR. LARUE: Adrienn, okay, and we'll be talking to you
5 next, so --

6 BY MR. LARUE:

7 Q. Were you on the outside seat or the inside seat?

8 A. Inside seat.

9 Q. You were on the inside. Okay, great. So, you were
10 pretty close to the front?

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. And I know it's difficult to remember, but do you
13 remember anything that the captain was saying when he was talking
14 on the radio?

15 A. Maybe he said we need help, but I don't know exactly
16 what he said.

17 Q. Okay, was he talking on the radio just before the barge
18 hit you?

19 A. He talked and then after 10 minutes, he just said whoa,
20 whoa.

21 Q. Do you remember if there were any like a horn or a sound
22 like from the boat?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. Did anyone tell you to grab a life jacket?

25 A. No.

1 Q. No, okay. And so, you didn't get a life jacket until
2 after you came up?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay. Did you have any injuries?

5 A. No.

6 Q. No. Okay, good. Can you swim?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. Do you remember did you get a chance to look at
9 the barge as it was coming at you?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. Do you remember the tug alongside, the tugboat?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Did you see -- did you happen to see anybody on the tug?

14 A. Uh-uh.

15 Q. Okay. And do you remember anything that the other DUKW
16 said when they came next to you?

17 A. Uh-uh.

18 Q. No, okay. That's the basic questions I had. We'll just
19 go around. We'll start next with you, Greg.

20 BY MR. BLUMENTHAL:

21 Q. How long do you think you were at anchor, how many
22 minutes after anchor?

23 A. Right after the water -- when it stopped?

24 Q. When they put the anchor down.

25 A. Ten or 15.

1 Q. Do they -- did it feel like they were in a stable
2 position? Did the anchor keep them anchored in one spot?

3 A. Yes, but because there was --

4 (Through interpreter) There was a current.

5 Q. Right, right. So, the boat got pulled into the flow of
6 the water but then stayed in that position? That's a question.

7 A. Around the point it did sway.

8 Q. Okay. And in that, do you remember if the captain used
9 the radio before or after anchoring, or both, the emergency radio?

10 A. Just after.

11 (In English) But I'm not sure.

12 Q. Do you recall maybe how many times she saw him try to
13 use that radio? Was it more than once?

14 A. I don't --

15 Q. Okay, okay. I don't have any other questions.

16 MR. LARUE: Just identify yourselves for the tape.

17 BY LCDR FINE:

18 Q. Matt Fine with the Coast Guard. You said at the
19 beginning you saw -- when the boat first stopped, you saw the
20 captain get a life jacket? So, he went and got one for himself?

21 A. All of the life jackets are orange, but his was blue.

22 Q. Okay. Now, he put it on?

23 A. No, he put it --

24 (Through interpreter) Put it on a mirror on the boat.

25 Q. Right next to him though? So, he put it next to him?

1 A. (In English) Yeah.

2 Q. And then did you see him use his cell phone or just the
3 radio?

4 MS. KONYA: Yes.

5 MS. HORVATH: She said yes, but I don't remember.

6 BY LCDR FINE:

7 Q. No, that's okay. There's no right answer. There's no
8 right answer.

9 A. Oh, sorry.

10 Q. This is the last question. Was -- when it hit the boat,
11 do you remember what it did to the boat? So, did the front of the
12 boat go up? Did the front of the boat go down? Do you remember?

13 A. I thought the boat turned like this, but everyone said
14 it's turned like to its left side.

15 Q. Okay. But it didn't feel like it went straight up in
16 the air?

17 A. No. No, no, no.

18 Q. Okay.

19 BY CWO LAWS:

20 Q. Shane Laws for the Coast Guard. When you first got on
21 the boat, do you remember a point, did the master ever explain
22 where the life jackets were, how you get them, how you put them
23 on?

24 A. He just pick one from the floor, and he was smiling, and
25 so it was not --

1 (Through interpreter) It wasn't an exact instruction on
2 how to use it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 BY LCDR FINE:

5 Q. Matt Fine from the Coast Guard. When you said you
6 couldn't reach it, was it because it was too high, was it stuck?

7 INTERPRETER: She was able to reach it, but there was a
8 snap that was too hard to open.

9 LCDR FINE: Thank you.

10 MR. LARUE: Did you have any more questions, Shane?

11 MR. LAWRENCE: John Lawrence, K-Sea. You've answered my
12 questions. That was very good.

13 BY MR. LARUE:

14 Q. Okay. Just two more little things I remembered. This
15 is Liam from NTSB. You said before you went in the water, you
16 felt hot air?

17 A. (In English) Yeah.

18 Q. Where was the hot air coming from, and could you just
19 describe --

20 A. From the motor -- from the nose.

21 Q. Okay. Did the captain say anything about it, or --

22 A. No.

23 Q. And then how long after you were in the water, how long
24 was it until you saw smoke?

25 A. I don't know.

1 Q. That's fine. That's fine. So, just a last question
2 from me, did you -- what made you reach for the life jacket?

3 A. Because I just thought it's safer if I got one.

4 Q. Sure. Well, was it because you turned around and saw
5 the barge, or did somebody yell grab a life jacket, or --

6 A. Both.

7 Q. Both? Okay. No, that's great.

8 MR. LARUE: Did you have --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

10 CWO LAWS: Actually, (indiscernible) about this smoke.

11 BY CWO LAWS:

12 Q. Shane Laws with the Coast Guard. When he turned the
13 boat off, when he stopped the boat, did the smoke go away right
14 away?

15 A. The smoke came from this end. We all smelled it. So,
16 it came through the boat.

17 MR. LARUE: So she's -- for the record, she's pointing
18 at the front of the boat, and it went back.

19 MS. HORVATH: Um-hum.

20 MR. LARUE: Okay.

21 BY CWO LAWS:

22 Q. Did you see smoke coming from anywhere other than the
23 front of the boat?

24 A. No.

25 Q. What color was the smoke? Do you remember that?

1 A. Gray or white.

2 Q. Gray or white. Not black?

3 A. No.

4 MR. LARUE: Great. Well --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can I ask one question?

6 MR. LARUE: Sure.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How tall are you?

8 MS. HORVATH: 163 or 5.

9 BY MR. LARUE:

10 Q. Do you have anything that you can think of that you
11 think that we didn't ask you about that might be useful for us to
12 know?

13 A. No.

14 Q. I do have one other question, actually. This is Liam
15 still. It might be a difficult question, but do you know where
16 your two friends were sitting that were missing?

17 A. Yeah. Yeah. Before us.

18 Q. They were sitting in front of you? But were they
19 sitting together?

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. And so they were in seat 3? Okay.

22 Did anybody have time to move or try to do anything when
23 the boat hit?

24 A. I don't know, because I just stood up, and everybody
25 was -- I think everybody stood up and --

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. What I last see, that was Dora, Dora's face. I saw it
3 and she just looked back and she was screaming, and that was the
4 last I remember.

5 Q. So, they were definitely both sitting right in front of
6 you? Okay.

7 All right, that's great. I don't have any other
8 questions. So, thank you very much for talking to us today. And
9 then just, could you just say for the record that you know that we
10 were -- you're okay with us recording?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay, thank you.

13 (Whereupon, at 11:47 a.m., 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 Reka Horvath

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-10-MM-025

PLACE: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DATE: July 9, 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.

Debbie Mizell
Transcriber