

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

DUKW 34 AND M/V CARIBBEAN SEA *

Docket No.: DCA-10-MM-025

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Interview of: AMANDA JOHNSTON

Sector Delaware Bay
United States Coast Guard
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Friday
July 9, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,
at 4:10 p.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

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I N T E R V I E W

(4:10 p.m.)

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2
3 MR. LARUE: Okay, it's 4:10, Friday, July 9th. This is
4 Liam LaRue from NTSB. And we're going to be talking with Amanda
5 Johnston.

INTERVIEW OF AMANDA JOHNSTON

BY MR. LARUE:

7
8 Q. And, Amanda, how old are you?

9 A. I'm sixteen.

10 Q. Sixteen, great. So, if you don't mind, if you could
11 just kind of walk through the event and just try to tell us
12 everything you remember that might be useful.

13 A. Well, I guess I'll start from when the engine stopped.
14 We were heading back to the land and the smoke started coming from
15 the front of the boat. And we really didn't know what was causing
16 it. It was, you know, it was a white -- it wasn't really dark.
17 And the captain was yelling at the guy who was driving get out,
18 get out. And then they stopped the boat, and it turned around
19 once. And then the driver, who was the person who was driving it,
20 Kyle, got on the front of the boat. He had a life vest on, and he
21 put the anchor down. And then we were sitting there. We were
22 kind of joking around, and Kyle was on the -- he was still on the
23 front of the boat. We turned around, and there was a barge there,
24 but we didn't really think anything of it because it was farther
25 back. So, we went back to talking.

1 And then we turned around and the boat was closer, and
2 we were all kind of like, you know, it's going to stop. It's
3 going to go around us or, you know, something is going to happen.
4 This isn't actually going to happen. And the captain and the guy
5 on the front of the boat weren't really saying anything much. I
6 mean, they were just kind of sitting there. And then one of the
7 ladies, Barb, from our church got up, and she yelled, "We've got
8 to move." And she started pulling down the life vests, and people
9 started screaming, and other people were getting up and pulling
10 life vests down, and that's right before the barge hit it. And
11 you could hear the back of the boat like crunch. And then a few
12 seconds after, I guess -- I don't really know how long it was --
13 the boat went under water before anyone could really get a chance
14 to jump out of the boat.

15 And then I was under the water, and I opened my eyes,
16 and I couldn't see anything under there and I felt around for the
17 window. And I finally found like, you know, yellow, and that's
18 how I knew that's where I wanted to go. And I guess it was like a
19 foot from the surface, and I swam up out of the window.

20 And right away, I just kind of saw Jackie and Emily and
21 Rachel. And Timea grabbed onto me pretty much right after I got
22 up, and she held onto me until we could find her a life vest. And
23 then I found a kid's life vest, and that's when me and Emily
24 started swimming towards the docks. And there was a mom and her
25 daughter, and the mom was on her back with, I think it was, two

1 vests, and she was floating, keeping her daughter afloat because
2 her daughter couldn't swim.

3 And we started swimming over to the docks, and there was
4 no way we were going to make it because of the current. And the
5 firemen on the dock told us to swim up to the piling, and that's
6 what we did. And we gave -- me and Emily gave our life jackets to
7 the mom and her daughter and pulled the little girl over to the
8 piling with us, and her mom came over.

9 And then the police officer jumped into the water and he
10 had one of the rings. I'm not sure what they're called. And we
11 held on I don't know how long. I'm guessing like, you know, 5 to
12 10 minutes, somewhere between that time. And a life -- or a Coast
13 Guard boat came, and the police officer swam the little girl, who
14 she's sitting on top of the piling at that point, he swam her over
15 to the Coast Guard boat. And he was going to take the mom over,
16 and that's when the Navy Seal boat came, and he told us to get on
17 that boat instead of the Coast Guard boat.

18 And Emily got on and then I did and then the mom did,
19 and they took us over to the docks. And we got on the docks and
20 we waited there until the daughter -- the mom was with her
21 daughter, and then the police escorted us to the museum.

22 Q. Okay, great. I've got a diagram here of the layout of
23 the boat. That's the front of the boat. Do you remember where
24 you were sitting?

25 A. I was right here, 15.

1 Q. 15, so and were you on the aisle seat or the window
2 seat?

3 A. Window seat.

4 Q. Okay. All right. Okay, so from where you were, could
5 you -- you know, how much could you hear about, you know, what the
6 captain and what he was doing up front, you know, as far as on the
7 radio and stuff?

8 A. I could see him talking on the radio, but I couldn't
9 really hear much of what he was saying.

10 Q. Okay, and you said that Barb -- what's Barb's last name?

11 A. Anderson.

12 Q. Anderson. Okay, so she's the one that kind of jumped up
13 and said you need to move?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Where was she sitting?

16 A. I think she was sitting like 7 or 9. She was closer to
17 the middle of the boat.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Uninterpreted speech.)

19 MS. JOHNSTON: She was probably this -- like 11. So she
20 thinks 11, I guess. That's just my guess.

21 BY MR. LARUE:

22 Q. Okay. Somewhere in front of you, though?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. And she -- okay. So, you didn't hear any of the radio
25 calls. Was he on the radio a lot that you saw?

1 A. I don't know, because I only looked up towards him once
2 or twice, and right before people started getting up and --

3 Q. Okay. Did you hear any horn? Did anybody blow a horn
4 or anything like that before --

5 A. No, just screaming.

6 Q. Okay. Let's see, so, you heard Barb. That was kind of
7 the initiating event for everybody starting to grab life jackets.
8 Now, did you say you were able to grab a life jacket?

9 A. No. I didn't get a life jacket until after I was in the
10 water, and then it was a kid's life jacket, so I just kind of held
11 onto it.

12 Q. Okay. Did you try to grab one?

13 A. I did, but like there weren't really -- we didn't get
14 any pulled down close where I was, and soon after we were in the
15 water.

16 Q. Just not enough time?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. As far as the life jackets go, when you got on
19 the boat, could you tell me about the safety brief that the
20 captain gave you?

21 A. He told us how to get the life jackets down and, you
22 know, in case of an emergency, but he was kind of joking around
23 about it like, you know, we never have to use them; they just tell
24 us to do this stuff, and we have to do what the Coast Guard tells
25 us.

1 Q. Okay. So, I guess they were held up there with some
2 sort of a strap, right?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Did he talk about getting the strap off?

5 A. He said that you had to pull the other tab to get it
6 down, and then there's a strap on it, but I think it wasn't really
7 -- it was part of the life jacket --

8 Q. Right.

9 A. -- and it wasn't --

10 Q. What was the yellow thing, the yellow strap?

11 A. I'm not sure. It just -- it hung down next to the aisle
12 seat, and there was a yellow tab on the bottom and you pulled it,
13 and that's when they would come down.

14 Q. Okay. All right. Did you have any injuries? Did you
15 get hurt at all?

16 A. I had a few scratches; that was it.

17 Q. Okay. Did you end up going to a hospital or anything?

18 A. No.

19 Q. And can you swim? Are you a good swimmer?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. How long do you think after the boat stopped and you
22 were anchored before you actually -- before the collision
23 occurred?

24 A. I'm thinking about 10 minutes.

25 Q. Okay. All right. I mean, that's the general questions

1 that I've been going through with everybody.

2 MR. LARUE: Do you have any questions there, Greg?

3 MR. BLUMENTHAL: No, everything's been answered.

4 BY MR. LAWRENCE:

5 Q. I've got one. Amanda, you said that Kyle -- I guess
6 that's the name of the younger captain. I think you referred to
7 him as Kyle. You said when he was putting the anchor out after
8 you stopped, that's when he put on a life vest?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. Was that a blue one?

11 A. Yeah, he was wearing a blue one.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And he jumped off the boat before the barge hit, so he
14 was out of the way.

15 Q. Okay. Thank you.

16 BY MR. LARUE:

17 Q. Did he say anything to you guys before he jumped off the
18 boat?

19 A. Not that I heard. Apparently, he said "jump", but we
20 were all screaming.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I didn't hear him.

23 Q. Okay. Is there anything else you can think of that we
24 didn't ask you about that might be good to know?

25 BY MR. LAWRENCE:

1 Q. I'm sorry, John Lawrence, again. I have one more
2 question for you. On that same note there, when he supposedly
3 said jump or when he jumped off, was that after -- was he still on
4 the bow on the front putting --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. So after -- so, he was up there still tending the
7 anchor, I guess, when everything happened, and that's when he
8 jumps. So, he just jumped from standing up there, is that how --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. He wasn't back inside with the other passengers, with
11 the other captain? No, okay.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, your vision would have been
13 sort of his legs then, I guess?

14 MS. JOHNSTON: Yeah.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. From looking through the
16 front window? Yeah.

17 MR. LAWRENCE: Okay, good. Thank you.

18 BY MR. LARUE:

19 Q. All right, great. Thank you very much. I appreciate
20 it. And it's okay that we recorded?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. All right.

23 (Whereupon, at 4:20 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

24

25

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 Amanda Johnston

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