

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: LAURA KENNEDY

Sector Delaware Bay
United States Coast Guard
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Friday
July 9, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,
at 4:35 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

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Health, Safety, Quality and Environment
K-Sea Transportation

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Ride the Ducks Philadelphia

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United States Coast Guard

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Laura Kennedy:	
By Mr. LaRue	4
By Mr. Laws	9
By Mr. LaRue	9

I N T E R V I E W

(4:35 p.m.)

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3 MR. LARUE: Okay. It is 4:35 in the afternoon. This is
4 -- it's Friday, July 9th. This is Liam LaRue from the NTSB. And
5 we're going to talk to Laura Kennedy, one of the passengers on the
6 DUKW.

INTERVIEW OF LAURA KENNEDY

BY MR. LARUE:

9 Q. Laura, how old are you?

10 A. Seventeen.

11 Q. Okay. And if you don't mind, please just walk us
12 through the events of the accident.

13 A. Okay. So, I guess when the DUKW broke down, we smelled
14 it first, and then all the smoke came. I saw the white-gray. I
15 never saw it turn black, but I wasn't really paying attention, I
16 guess. After that, I guess the tour guide captain kind of kicked
17 Kyle, who was driving, out of the seat saying, "Get out, get out,"
18 and was yelling at him. And he shut off the engine. And Kyle got
19 on the front of the boat to try to fix it. I guess he anchored
20 it, too.

21 I think when we broke down, I thought we did turn
22 around. And so, like, that's how we got into the position where
23 our back was facing where the barge came in. After that, he was
24 sending distress calls, I guess, just to get us towed away. He
25 didn't really tell us anything. I felt like -- I felt like I had

1 to hear it from other people that we were going to get towed away.
2 He didn't really make an announcement or anything.

3 Then, I guess, people knew about the barge, but maybe I
4 wasn't paying attention, because I didn't really see it until it
5 became prominent that it was probably going to hit us. I don't
6 really think the captain made it clear that we were in the path of
7 the barge.

8 So, then he starts giving distress calls to the barge.
9 I didn't hear anything come back on the radio. And I guess I just
10 remember him saying, "This is bad," and that's pretty much it. He
11 didn't give us any direction to do anything. No directions to put
12 life jackets on, none of that kind of stuff, no safety
13 precautions.

14 Barb Anderson finally stood up and was like we have to
15 get off the boat. This is on the -- it's coming to hit us. And I
16 guess that's when we started freaking out, and I think we all
17 realized that it was so close that if we jumped off, the barge
18 would just hit us straight on as like a body instead of just on
19 the boat. So, we all went down as a boat, except for Kyle. But
20 Kyle was on the boat, like kind of like waving his arms in the
21 air, trying to get the attention of the barge, and then he jumped
22 off. And apparently, he said "jump", but it was loud on the boat.

23 So, I looked back and it hit us, and it kind of like
24 crunched us down. And I guess it was just kind of like it sucked
25 you under because it was sinking. I guess I was just trying to

1 swim up and get air. And like, when I first came up, I was still,
2 like, under the DUKW, so it was still partially sinking. So, I
3 came up and like got a little bit of air, but not really. And
4 then it just kind of sunk me down with it. And somehow, I just
5 kicked up. Emily was trying to pull me up, but she said I was
6 probably the last one up, being down there for like a minute or
7 so.

8 So, I got up, and I guess Emily threw me a life jacket,
9 and I guess I didn't really understand how to put it on, like, in
10 the water, because I didn't understand how we were supposed to do
11 that. So, I just kind of used it as a floating device. And I
12 guess I just started swimming with one of the Hungarian girls,
13 Virag, and we swam like kind of sideways to the dock. And a man
14 on the side threw us a hose that was connected to the dock to pull
15 us in and get us up the ladder. And when I got up, I was just
16 kind of running up and down the road trying to make sure my mom
17 and Emily got on a boat. And then a police officer escorted me
18 in.

19 Q. Great, thank you. Let's get the seating chart here.
20 Where were you sitting?

21 A. Eight, with Emily.

22 Q. Okay, so you were in 8, and you were in the -- she was
23 in the window seat or the aisle?

24 A. No, I was in the window seat.

25 Q. Oh, yeah, yeah, you're right. Okay, so you were 8

1 window. Did I do that right?

2 You said you heard the radio calls, you heard the
3 initial calls he made just asking for help?

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. And then what radio calls do you remember that he was
6 making to the tug and barge?

7 A. I remember, I think it was one call, but I remember him
8 saying two things to the barge, like two initial messages that
9 were just like a DUKW boat number, whatever, is here, blah, blah,
10 blah; you need to move because we can't, kind of thing, and I
11 think he did that twice. I'm almost positive.

12 Q. Okay. Did any -- did you hear anything come back? I
13 think you already said that, but --

14 A. No.

15 Q. All right. Sound signals, anything like that?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Okay. Did you try to grab a life jacket before you got
18 hit?

19 A. I tried to. I was kind of -- since I was in the window
20 seat, they were on the opposite side of me, because all of the
21 adult ones are over on one side and all the kid's ones are over on
22 one side. So, I was trying to grab them down, but I guess
23 everyone was just over there grabbing them. I just couldn't get
24 one. And they didn't -- I couldn't get one out. Like they
25 wouldn't come out very easily I felt like, but -- I was trying to

1 pull them, but it didn't seem to matter.

2 Q. Okay. And stepping back again, do you remember did you
3 know how to put one on if you had had time to -- can you tell us a
4 little bit about the brief he gave, the captain?

5 A. I felt like the brief was kind of a little bit like a
6 joke, so I kind of -- I didn't really listen to it, to be honest.
7 Because just kind of what he said, he was like, well, the Coast
8 Guard makes us do it; this never happens; we never use them kind
9 of thing. So, I just kind of blew it off because I figured if you
10 don't need it, you don't need it. So, I didn't listen to it
11 personally.

12 Q. Okay. Did you have any injuries?

13 A. Not anything significant, just like back pains. I think
14 something hit me. There was like red marks on my back.

15 Q. Bumps and bruises? Did you end up going to the doctor
16 or the hospital?

17 A. No, I didn't go to the hospital that day. I got like
18 checked out to make sure it wasn't anything bad.

19 Q. Can you swim?

20 A. Yeah. I was on swim team for like 10 years. I tried to
21 go up current (indiscernible). It was intense.

22 Q. Did you happen to see anybody on the tug or on the
23 barge?

24 A. No one on the barge for sure. I didn't even see the
25 tugboat. I just saw the barge coming for us. But I didn't really

1 notice it until it was -- we were kind of in panic time, I guess.

2 Q. Okay. Do you remember if the captain made any
3 broadcasts on his -- you know, on the loudspeakers about what was
4 going on?

5 A. No, he didn't really say anything.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Just, this is bad.

8 Q. This is bad?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. Well, I thank you. Any questions?

11 BY MR. LAWS:

12 Q. Just one. Early on when the -- I'm sorry, Shane Laws
13 with the Coast Guard. Early on when the boat first broke down and
14 he was calling someone to let them know the boat was broke down,
15 did you hear anything back to that radio communication? Did
16 anyone respond to it?

17 A. I don't remember.

18 Q. No?

19 A. I don't want to give you any false information. I don't
20 remember. I don't know if any of you guys did.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I didn't hear anything.

22 MS. KENNEDY: I was too far away.

23 CWO LAWS: All right. Thank you.

24 BY MR. LARUE:

25 Q. All right. And then the last question, is there

1 anything else that we didn't ask you that you can think of that
2 might be important?

3 A. No, not that I can think of.

4 Q. All right. Well, thank you very much. And you're okay
5 that we recorded this?

6 A. That's completely fine.

7 Q. All right. Thank you.

8 (Whereupon, at 4:44 p.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 Laura Kennedy

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