

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: KRISZTIAN MIKE

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

Friday
July 9, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,
at 1:30 p.m.

BEFORE: LIAM LARUE
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

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GABOR MIHALCSIK

DAVID STROBL

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:30 p.m.)

1
2
3 MR. LARUE: Okay, good afternoon. It is about 1:30 on
4 Friday, July 9th. This is Liam LaRue, and we're here today
5 talking with Krisztian Mike. Did I pronounce it correctly?

6 MR. MIKE: Yes.

7 MR. LARUE: Okay, and same crew as before, so we won't
8 go around.

INTERVIEW OF KRISZTIAN MIKE

9
10 (Whereupon, Mr. Mike answered assisted by an
11 interpreter.)

12 BY MR. LARUE:

13 Q. And how old are you?

14 A. Sixteen.

15 Q. Sixteen. And if you could, please, just walk us through
16 the boat ride and tell us what you remember, and then we'll follow
17 up with some questions.

18 A. Okay. Okay, the engine stopped, engine stopped, I
19 smelled something strange, and then we saw the smoke. And the
20 captain who was driving on the land and not on the river, but
21 because there was two captains, he stopped the boat and sat down,
22 and they, I don't know, made something on the nose of the boat.
23 And then we were waiting. He used the radio to spoke.

24 Q. Was it a radio or a cell phone?

25 A. A radio, like a walkie-talkie.

1 Q. Okay, walkie-talkie.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay, so continue.

4 A. I think first someone answered, but then we saw the
5 barge coming, and he put nervous begin to --

6 (Through interpreter) Okay, he spoke very excitedly,
7 yes. The captain spoke excitedly.

8 (In English) But when the barge was near, and no one
9 answered. And there was chaos.

10 (Through interpreter) There was chaos. There was chaos.

11 (In English) And younger captain jumped into the water.
12 I wanted to catch a life jacket. When I tried first, they
13 didn't --

14 (Through interpreter) Yeah, it wasn't successful when he
15 first tried.

16 (In English) My second time, I got one, and then the
17 barge hit us, and I turned back, and I saw that we are --

18 (Through interpreter) -- sinking.

19 (In English) Yeah, and the water was -- and I lost my
20 life jacket. I think that roof follow me, because my head hurts
21 on the boat, and, I don't know, somehow I fall in the water.

22 (Through interpreter) You got in the middle of a lot of
23 different boats.

24 (In English) Yeah, I wasn't able to get out of there.
25 And I just saw light, and the water. And there I found the life

1 jacket. I put it on my arm, and I began to swim to the dock.

2 Q. How did you get to land? Did you climb out?

3 A. Someone gave his arm and told me --

4 Q. Someone on shore?

5 A. Yeah.

6 (Through interpreter) Oh, a pier, a pier.

7 (In English) From a pier.

8 Q. From a pier. Okay, great. When you got on the boat,
9 did the captain teach you how to use the life jackets and try to
10 get off the boat?

11 A. He just put on his head. And when the barge hit us, I
12 wasn't able to put on my head.

13 Q. Okay, do you know how to put it on and secure it?

14 A. He showed how to --

15 (Through interpreter) -- how to open --

16 (In English) But we had no time. He didn't say we
17 should put on this jacket.

18 (Through interpreter) He didn't demonstrate how to
19 actually put it on.

20 Q. Right. So, you saw smoke, and then the captain stopped
21 the engine?

22 A. (In English) Yes.

23 Q. Did the smoke continue?

24 A. No, it stopped by the time.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And then we --

2 (Through interpreter) -- he sounded the horn -- oh,
3 heavy, something was heavy.

4 (In English) That heavy --

5 Q. Anchor?

6 INTERPRETER: Oh, oh, yeah, yes.

7 BY MR. LARUE:

8 Q. Okay, so he dropped the anchor?

9 A. Yeah.

10 INTERPRETER: Sorry, I --

11 MR. LARUE: No, no problem.

12 BY MR. LARUE:

13 Q. Okay, right here in front of you, we've got a picture of
14 the boat. So, this is the front of --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- the front.

17 A. Yes, I was here. I was here by the window.

18 Q. You were seat 8, okay, on the window. And I think we'll
19 just get all of you to contribute to this, so we don't have to do
20 it three times. Let's see, seat 8 window, okay, who was sitting
21 next to you?

22 A. Gabor.

23 MR. LARUE: How do you spell your name?

24 MR. MIHALCSIK: Gabor, G-A-B-O-R.

25 MR. LARUE: So, you were sitting seat 8 on the aisle?

1 MR. MIHALCSIK: On the 8, there is a -- yeah.

2 MR. LARUE: Okay, all right. Where were you sitting?

3 MR. STROBL: In front of them.

4 MR. LARUE: In front of them?

5 MR. STROBL: Yeah.

6 MR. LARUE: And what was your name? What's your name?

7 MR. STROBL: David.

8 MR. LARUE: David?

9 MR. STROBL: Yeah.

10 MR. LARUE: David, so you were in front of them?

11 MR. STROBL: Yeah.

12 MR. LARUE: So, you were in seat 6?

13 MR. STROBL: Yeah.

14 MR. LARUE: On the window?

15 MR. STROBL: No, on the aisle.

16 MR. LARUE: Okay. Who was sitting next to you?

17 MR. STROBL: Barbara.

18 MR. LARUE: Barbara, 6 window.

19 Okay, do you remember who else was nearby? So, you

20 were --

21 MR. STROBL: Then was Jackie's daughter, Laura.

22 MR. LARUE: So, Laura was 10, window?

23 MR. STROBL: Yeah.

24 MR. LARUE: Okay, who was next to her?

25 MR. MIHALCSIK: I think Amanda, but not sure -- a girl.

1 INTERPRETER: Amanda, but he's not sure.

2 BY MR. LARUE:

3 Q. All right, so Amanda 10 aisle, maybe. Okay, what about
4 on the other side? Do you remember? No?

5 A. Reka and Adrienn sat here.

6 Q. Okay, so who was on the aisle?

7 A. Adrienn was at the window.

8 Q. Five window, okay, Audrienn.

9 A. And there was Szaboles and Dora.

10 Q. The two missing?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay, all right.

13 MR. MIHALCSIK: Dora was at the window.

14 BY MR. LARUE:

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I think that these three seats there were Americans. We
17 don't know who they are.

18 Q. Okay. Americans in 1, 2, and 4?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay, great. Thank you for that. So, you said the
21 first time, you couldn't get the life jacket. Why couldn't you
22 get the life jacket?

23 A. I tried to pull the --

24 (Through interpreter) Yeah, he tried to pull it with the
25 belt.

1 MR. MIKE: Yeah.

2 INTERPRETER: Yes.

3 MR. MIKE: It was shut. Can I draw it?

4 BY MR. LARUE:

5 Q. Yeah. Here, draw it on this.

6 A. There were two life jackets on there, and that was a
7 belt.

8 Q. Okay, with a snap, like a --

9 A. Yeah, and I tried to --

10 Q. Oh, you pulled on that?

11 A. Pulled here down, but it didn't open, and then I tried
12 to do that.

13 Q. And then you pulled the snap the second time?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And that came open? Thanks. Okay, so the first time,
16 you pulled on the strap itself. The second time, you pulled on
17 the snap

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And it came down? Okay, okay, what made you grab a life
20 jacket? Did someone tell you to, or --

21 A. No, no one did.

22 Q. No one told you to?

23 A. No.

24 Q. So, what was the reason?

25 A. That I saw that the barge was coming.

1 Q. Okay, was that the first time you saw the barge?

2 A. No, I saw it before, like when it was far.

3 Q. You saw it when it was farther away?

4 A. Yeah, but I thought that it was stopped.

5 Q. Yeah. And then you looked back and saw it again when it
6 close and grabbed the life jacket?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay, did you have any injuries? Were you hurt?

9 A. Just on my head.

10 Q. Did you go to a hospital?

11 A. No, I realized that yesterday.

12 Q. Okay, can you swim?

13 A. Just a bit. If I swim too much, I become tired.

14 Q. Me too. So, you -- so the life jacket you had came away
15 from you as you were -- as the boat hit you, but you found it on
16 the surface again?

17 A. I think it was another one.

18 Q. A different one?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. How long from the time the boat stopped until the boat,
21 the barge, hit you?

22 A. Ten minutes.

23 Q. Ten minutes. Did you stay in your seat the entire time?
24 Did you stay --

25 A. I mean, while we were stopping or when the barge came?

1 I was sitting, but when I saw the barge too close, I stood up
2 and --

3 Q. Okay. And your friends that are missing, do you know if
4 they were able to swim, if they could swim well?

5 A. I think Szabolcs was able to, because he was sport.

6 Q. Um-hum. Athletic?

7 A. Um-hum, yeah.

8 Q. Okay, and don't know about Dora?

9 A. No, I think she's a good swimmer. I think, but she
10 never said.

11 Q. Okay, that's the questions I have. We'll start with
12 Greg and see if he has any.

13 MR. BLUMENTHAL: Not any additional questions.

14 MR. LARUE: Okay.

15 MS. MIKE: Can I ask?

16 MR. LARUE: You can ask.

17 MS. MIKE: What about the specialist who will see the
18 tape in my camera?

19 MR. LARUE: I haven't had a chance to call him yet. I'm
20 going to -- if we take a break, I want to get through everyone
21 quickly, so you guys can be finished, and then I'll make a call
22 after that, okay?

23 MS. MIKE: Okay.

24 BY CWO LAWS:

25 Q. After your boat went into the water, you know, you drive

1 it on the land, and then you -- then he drove it into the water,
2 who was driving the boat when it was in the water?

3 A. The younger captain.

4 Q. The whole time?

5 A. Yes. Just when we stopped, he climbed on the nose of
6 the boat.

7 Q. Okay. And what was the other -- before anything
8 happened, so what was the other captain doing?

9 A. He was --

10 (Through interpreter) He got up to --

11 (In English) He got up on the boat just when we were at
12 the (indiscernible).

13 (Through interpreter) Okay, okay. The other captain
14 came on the boat just as they were leaving.

15 BY CWO LAWS:

16 Q. But he didn't drive, the older captain didn't drive?

17 A. When we went in --

18 Q. Went into the water?

19 A. Yeah, he was, and then the younger.

20 Q. Oh, so he drove it into the water?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And then the other, the younger one, then he drove the
23 rest of the time?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Until the engine stopped, and then they switched again?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And the older captain (indiscernible) him because he
4 wasn't really talented.

5 Q. Okay. By the way, Shane Laws for the Coast Guard,
6 sorry.

7 MR. LARUE: Oh, I thought you said that.

8 BY CWO LAWS:

9 Q. You said earlier that you had seen the barge far away
10 earlier. If you could picture where you were when you saw it,
11 were you looking backward when you saw it earlier far away?

12 A. It wasn't so far. I don't know. The others saw that.
13 Can you give me this one?

14 Q. Oh, sure.

15 A. This is the bridge.

16 (Uninterpreted discussion between Mr. Mike and the
17 interpreter.)

18 MR. MIKE: The others saw the barge, and I turned to
19 see.

20 INTERPRETER: He turned back to see. I guess the others
21 were saying a barge, and he turned back to see.

22 MR. MIKE: Yes.

23 BY CWO LAWS:

24 Q. I'm trying to be clear that -- I know you saw the barge
25 right before the barge hit. But you indicated that he had seen it

1 before that time later -- or earlier. How much earlier?

2 A. The engine was stopped when I saw that first.

3 Q. Oh, okay. So, five minutes?

4 A. Yeah, five -- no, less, less. Three or two. It came
5 very fast.

6 Q. Okay. But -- and so, we're talking -- when was the
7 first time you saw the barge?

8 A. I think two minutes before.

9 INTERPRETER: Less.

10 BY CWO LAWS:

11 Q. Two minutes before it hit?

12 A. Or less.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's what he was saying, yes.

14 CWO LAWS: I'm just trying to get a feel for where it
15 was when he saw it that first time. Was it off to one side of the
16 boat or another and what it looked like.

17 BY MR. LARUE:

18 Q. Was it straight behind? Was it over here? Was it over
19 here?

20 A. Here.

21 Q. Here. Okay. Pretty straight behind?

22 A. Straight behind, yeah.

23 MR. LARUE: Is that what you were looking for?

24 CWO LAWS: Okay. Yeah, this is the first indication
25 that somebody saw it right -- other than right before it happened,

1 so I -- okay. Did you ask about any sound signals?

2 MR. LARUE: I don't know if I did.

3 BY CWO LAWS:

4 Q. Before the collision, did you hear your boat, the boat
5 you were on, did you hear it make a horn sound or bells or
6 whistle?

7 A. No, nothing.

8 Q. Nothing.

9 A. I -- it was my not correct to make, but it was very
10 quiet.

11 Q. The towboat and barge, did you hear them sound their
12 horns, make any horn sounds or bells or whistles?

13 A. No, no, nothing.

14 Q. No, nothing, okay. You indicated, you said before you
15 went in the water that there was water in the DUKW, in your boat.
16 Had the boat -- was it tipping one way or another? Which way was
17 it tipping?

18 (Through interpreter) There was no water in the boat
19 before we jumped.

20 Q. Okay, so I misunderstood. I'm sorry. Thank you.
21 That's all I have.

22 BY MR. LARUE:

23 Q. Did you say you -- this is Liam LaRue from NTSB -- did
24 you say you actually jumped, or you -- it just --

25 A. I don't remember really. I think I fall with the boat

1 in the water.

2 Q. Okay, okay.

3 MR. LARUE: Matt, did you have any questions?

4 LCDR FINE: No.

5 BY MR. LARUE:

6 Q. So, do you have anything else that you can think of that
7 we didn't ask you about that might be important for us to know?
8 You already mentioned you got videos, and hopefully we can get
9 that.

10 A. Yeah, I had a video.

11 Q. Okay, is it okay that I recorded this? Is it okay with
12 you?

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. Great.

15 (Whereupon, at 1:50 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 Krisztian Mike

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