

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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Interview of: MIRTILL MILASIN

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

Friday  
July 9, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,  
at 2:30 p.m.

BEFORE: LIAM LARUE  
Accident Investigator

## APPEARANCES:

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United States Coast Guard

PETER FARKAS

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:30 p.m.)

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2  
3 MR. LARUE: Okay, it is about 2:30 in the afternoon on  
4 Friday, July 9th. This is Liam LaRue from NTSB. We've got the  
5 same interviewing group. We're going to talk to Mirtill Milasin.

6 MS. MILASIN: Good enough.

## INTERVIEW OF MIRTILL MILASIN

7  
8 BY MR. LARUE:

9 Q. Good enough. How do you actually say it?

10 A. Milasin.

11 Q. Milasin?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay, all right. How old are you?

14 A. I'm 19.

15 Q. Nineteen. And if you could please just walk us back  
16 through the event and tell us what you remember.

17 A. Okay, I first, I guess, on board the guy was like joking  
18 around, like the captain and didn't tell us anything. Like okay,  
19 he was just telling us that life jackets were on the top, and we  
20 should grab them if there is emergency. And he also said that the  
21 exits were on the windows. And actually, I smelled this funny  
22 smell. Like later, we found out it was the smoke when we were  
23 driving around the town. And after we got into the water, like we  
24 just stopped. And then this gray, gray whitish smoke started to  
25 come out. And then this was like really hot. And we were --

1 yeah, we stopped, but the water was so strong, and we were just  
2 circling around.

3           And then we didn't think anything. I didn't think of  
4 anything like that could happen to us. And I didn't see the big  
5 boat either. And just someone -- yeah, that guy was -- I think he  
6 was asking for help on his radio, but I couldn't hear too much.  
7 Like he was just -- I could remember he said like "wow" or  
8 something like that.

9           And okay, when the big boat was coming, and I just  
10 remember like everyone started to jump up and tried to grab a  
11 safety jacket. And I wanted to get one. Like I wanted to -- I  
12 tried one from the top, but I wasn't able to, because there was a  
13 bag on it, and it was so tight. I didn't know how to open it;  
14 however, I did try it. And then Jackie, the leader, a lady --

15           MR. FARKAS: The host of us.

16           MS. MILASIN: Yeah, I saw her that she had some, and she  
17 just handed it out to people, and that's how I got one.  
18 Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to get any. And then I remember  
19 that the big boat was like our boat and the big one just met, and  
20 it was a big sound. It was a really bad sound, and I saw that big  
21 amount of water was coming to us, and people were running into the  
22 front. And the next thing I had no idea how I could get out of  
23 the boat. I just know I was under the water and saw a dark light,  
24 I guess, above my head. And I saw people around me kicking and  
25 trying to escape, I guess. And then I hold his hands, and somehow

1 we were on surface. And I only saw that the boat turned upside  
2 down, yeah, sideways, and we climbed on it. Like I have no -- I  
3 can't remember what we touched. It was -- I remember it was a bad  
4 thing.

5 MR. FARKAS: Only it was massive, and you could touch  
6 it. And we found that it was sinking.

7 MS. MILASIN: Yeah, so we just touched it, and then I  
8 don't know. I don't know what was after that, but I remember that  
9 the waves were coming, and it was a big splash into my face. But  
10 the jackets or the jacket, this time it wasn't on me. Like I just  
11 put on at the end, like yeah, and tie could go to the -- or I  
12 could come out of the water. And yeah, Peter went to the top.  
13 And also, I know I'm pretty sure that the guy didn't tell us,  
14 neither the captain or the younger guy, told us anything to jump  
15 out.

16 MR. FARKAS: Or it's an emergency.

17 MS. MILASIN: Yeah, or anything, like nothing. And  
18 neither I couldn't hear a sound, nothing. Yeah, I only heard  
19 people were yelling.

20 MR. FARKAS: And they said we're going to die.

21 MS. MILASIN: Yeah.

22 BY MR. LARUE:

23 Q. How did you get out of the water? Did you get to shore,  
24 or did you go on a boat?

25 A. No, no, I swam, like I swam to shore. And there was a

1 ladder and a bunch of people who tried to help us. And on the way  
2 to the --

3 MR. FARKAS: Shore.

4 MS. MILASIN: Yeah, to the shore, there was a lady with  
5 a little kid. And she was crying, and she told me to take her  
6 child, but I wasn't able to. Yeah, so --

7 BY MR. LARUE:

8 Q. And so, you climbed out a ladder?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay, so you said you saw the captain on the radio. Did  
11 you hear anything that he said?

12 A. Not -- I heard something like we're in trouble or  
13 something like that.

14 Q. Did he say that right away, or was that right before the  
15 barge hit you?

16 A. Right before, yeah.

17 Q. All right, do you remember anything else that he said?

18 A. Not really. I'm trying really hard, but I --

19 Q. No, I understand. It's okay.

20 A. Yeah, but I've been thinking since what he said, but I  
21 just can't remember anything. And okay, and the young guy climbed  
22 out to the nose --

23 MR. FARKAS: To the nose of the boat.

24 MS. MILASIN: -- of the boat, and I couldn't see what he  
25 was doing, but I saw maybe a rope, and I thought that he was

1 throwing it to the other boat to --

2 MR. FARKAS: Because there was another DUKW boat near  
3 by.

4 MS. MILASIN: Yeah, they were watching us. I thought  
5 they were helping us or something.

6 BY MR. LARUE:

7 Q. What happened with the other DUKW boat?

8 A. I have no idea.

9 MR. FARKAS: I think the captain told them to get help,  
10 and they said we will when we get out of the water.

11 MR. LARUE: Okay.

12 BY MR. LARUE:

13 Q. Let's see here. You gave me a seating chart. I think  
14 we got most of it, but where were you sitting based on this?

15 (Uninterpreted discussion between Mr. Farkas and Ms.  
16 Milasin)

17 MS. MILASIN: Number 9.

18 MR. FARKAS: Number 9.

19 BY MR. LARUE:

20 Q. Number 9?

21 MR. FARKAS: Yeah, and in number 11 was Jackie and the  
22 lady from North Carolina.

23 MS. MILASIN: Was Jackie and the lady from North  
24 Carolina.

25 BY MR. LARUE:

1 Q. So, you were in 9. Were you on the window or the  
2 inside?

3 A. I was in the window.

4 MR. FARKAS: And I was inside.

5 BY MR. LARUE:

6 Q. Okay, and here. So, Peter --

7 MR. FARKAS: And I have the first seat, I have a --

8 MS. MILASIN: Exit.

9 MR. FARKAS: Yeah, and exit.

10 MR. LARUE: Okay, like that?

11 MR. FARKAS: Yeah.

12 MR. LARUE: All right. Okay, so who was in 11?

13 MS. MILASIN: Jackie.

14 MR. FARKAS: Jackie, our host. Jackie Kennedy.

15 MR. LARUE: Okay.

16 MS. MILASIN: And a lady.

17 MR. FARKAS: And she sat inside, and by the window there  
18 was a lady from North Carolina.

19 MS. MILASIN: And the people in front of us were from  
20 Arizona.

21 BY MR. LARUE:

22 Q. So, the people in front of you, so 7?

23 A. They were from Arizona, yeah. I remember because at the  
24 beginning, the guy asked --

25 MR. FARKAS: Not Louisiana? I think it was.

1 MS. MILASIN: No, it was Arizona.

2 MR. FARKAS: But we're not sure.

3 BY MR. LARUE:

4 Q. Was it two people from --

5 A. Yeah, a lady --

6 MR. FARKAS: A lady and her grandson.

7 MS. MILASIN: And he was redheaded with freckles.

8 MR. FARKAS: Yes, the guy, the guy.

9 MS. MILASIN: He was kind of annoying.

10 MR. LARUE: So, they were either from Arizona or  
11 Louisiana?

12 MR. FARKAS: We don't remember, because --

13 MS. MILASIN: They were talking about different places.

14 MR. FARKAS: Yeah, so they -- the captain asked who is  
15 from Philadelphia and that stuff.

16 MS. MILASIN: And where we're from.

17 MR. FARKAS: Yeah, and the little guy shouted Arizona or  
18 Louisiana.

19 MS. MILASIN: I think it's Arizona.

20 MR. LARUE: Okay, we'll be able to figure it out from  
21 that. That's good.

22 MR. FARKAS: I don't know.

23 BY MR. LARUE:

24 Q. And I think we've got most of the seats now.

25 MR. FARKAS: And we know that -- he said Gabor

1 Mihalcsik.

2 MR. LARUE: You think it was Gabor?

3 MR. FARKAS: Gabor, yes.

4 MS. MILASIN: And Barbara, American Barbara.

5 MR. FARKAS: No, Krisztian, Krisztian Mike.

6 MS. MILASIN: Krisztian.

7 MR. LARUE: Yeah, we just talked to them.

8 MR. FARKAS: Yeah, they sat in number 9. And before  
9 them, Barbara Anderson in number 6. Barbara Anderson sat inside,  
10 and David sat by the window.

11 MR. LARUE: Okay, okay.

12 MR. FARKAS: And next to us there were two American  
13 girls.

14 MR. LARUE: Which row was -- which seat was that, 10?

15 MR. FARKAS: Yes, 10. I think it's -- yeah.

16 MR. LARUE: Two American girls?

17 MR. FARKAS: Emily, Emily sat inside, and Laura the  
18 daughter of Jackie --

19 MR. LARUE: Was on the window?

20 MS. MILASIN: Yeah, because they were taking turns.

21 MR. FARKAS: And behind them in number 12, --

22 MS. MILASIN: Virag and Renata.

23 MR. FARKAS: Yeah, Virag and Renata.

24 MR. LARUE: And Virag was window or aisle?

25 MS. MILASIN: Renata was inside by the window.

1 MR. FARKAS: Yeah, Renata was inside.

2 MR. LARUE: So, Virag was window?

3 MS. MILASIN: No, no, no, Renata was.

4 MR. FARKAS: Renata, Renata was at the window.

5 BY MR. LARUE:

6 Q. Okay, all right. All right, you guys did a good job  
7 remembering all of that.

8 A. Thanks.

9 Q. Let's see here. So, you already said you didn't hear  
10 any sound signals. You talked about the life jackets and the  
11 safety brief. Did you get hurt at all? Do you have any injuries?

12 A. No, nothing.

13 Q. Nothing? You didn't go to the hospital?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay, can you swim?

16 A. No, not really.

17 Q. Not really. How long from the time that the boat  
18 stopped until you were hit by the barge?

19 MR. FARKAS: Ten minutes, I guess, 10 or 15.

20 MS. MILASIN: Between five and ten minutes I would say.

21 MR. FARKAS: Yeah, five or ten minutes.

22 BY MR. LARUE:

23 Q. Okay, let's see here. And did everyone stay in their  
24 seats until just before the barge hit?

25 A. No, yeah, yeah, before when the smoke was coming, the

1 people who sat in --

2 MR. FARKAS: So, the people who sat in the seat number  
3 1, they moved backwards.

4 MS. MILASIN: To the back.

5 BY MR. LARUE:

6 Q. When was that?

7 A. When they saw the smoke was coming out.

8 MR. FARKAS: Right after the smoke was coming out.

9 MS. MILASIN: And it smelled like pretzels.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It smelled like what?

11 MS. MILASIN: Pretzels.

12 BY MR. LARUE:

13 Q. Pretzels. The smoke did? The smoke --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay, okay, did you -- did you -- when was the first  
16 time you saw the barge? Was it right before it hit, or did you  
17 see it when it was far away?

18 A. Like 20 seconds before we got hit.

19 Q. Okay, and then you heard someone shout?

20 A. Yeah, and I just got scared. I just freaked out,  
21 because people started to grab the jackets and yelling or  
22 screaming.

23 Q. Okay, I think that's all the basic questions that I've  
24 got.

25 A. All right.

1 Q. I'll let the other gentlemen here ask some questions.

2 BY CWO LAWS:

3 Q. Shane Laws with the Coast Guard. After the engine  
4 stopped working and was shut down, you sat there, and you floated  
5 for a little while?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. During that time, did the captain explain at all what  
8 was going on?

9 A. Nothing, he didn't say --

10 MR. FARKAS: No, no, nothing.

11 MS. MILASIN: He didn't say anything to us. He was just  
12 on the radio, and with the younger guy, they were arguing, but I  
13 don't know what about. I couldn't hear anything.

14 BY CWO LAWS:

15 Q. Okay, was he on the radio so much that he didn't have  
16 time to explain?

17 A. No, no, I think he could, he could have.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. He would have time.

20 Q. So, he didn't tell you that he was waiting for another  
21 boat or that --

22 A. Nothing, no. He wasn't so serious to us actually.

23 Q. Okay, well, did he talk to you at all, at all during  
24 that time?

25 A. I don't think so.

1 Q. No, okay. That's all I had. Thank you.

2 MR. LARUE: Okay, everybody good?

3 BY MR. LARUE:

4 Q. The only thing I'll ask you is there anything else you  
5 can think of that might be important for us to know?

6 A. Well, actually, I just -- I don't know. I have to think  
7 about it actually. I don't think so.

8 Q. Okay, well, thank you very much. You've been very  
9 helpful.

10 A. I hope so.

11 Q. It's okay that we recorded this?

12 A. Sure, yeah.

13 Q. Okay, great. And then we'll turn it off now.

14 (Whereupon, at 2:47 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 Mirtill Milasin

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.

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Debbie Mizell  
Transcriber