

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: JUDIT SZUTS

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

Friday
July 9, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,
at 12:10 p.m.

BEFORE: LIAM LARUE
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

LIAM LARUE, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Marine Safety
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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

AGNES JONAS, Interpreter
American Red Cross

BARBARA TORREY
American Red Cross

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I N T E R V I E W

(12:10 p.m.)

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2
3 MR. LARUE: Okay, good afternoon. It is 10 after 12:00
4 on Friday, July 9th. This is Liam LaRue from the NTSB. We have
5 the same group from earlier, minus Lieutenant Commander Fine. And
6 we have two new additions, so let's have you say your name.

7 MS. JONAS: I'm Agnes Jonas (ph.).

8 MR. LARUE: And who do you represent?

9 MS. JONAS: I'm the American Red Cross, and I also can
10 interpret.

11 MR. LARUE: Okay, great.

12 MS. TORREY: I'm Barbara Torrey (ph.) from the Red
13 Cross.

INTERVIEW OF JUDIT SZUTS

14
15 (Whereupon, Ms. Szuts answered assisted by an
16 interpreter.)

17 BY MR. LARUE:

18 Q. Okay, great. And we're going to be interviewing Judit.
19 And how do you pronounce your last name?

20 A. Szuts.

21 Q. Szuts?

22 A. Szuts.

23 Q. Szuts, okay, thank you very much. Start off with just
24 how old are you?

25 A. Sixteen.

1 Q. Great. So, what I'd like you to do is to just kind of
2 walk us through what happened on Wednesday. You can just start
3 from when you got on the boat and just tell us what you remember.
4 And then we'll follow up with some questions.

5 A. Okay. The smoke came out, and I remember we just
6 thought that it was just part of the show. And we were laughing
7 at it. And we after 10 minutes, we saw the barge, and we thought
8 nothing really happen. And then everybody started to scream. And
9 I took off a life jacket, and it was in my hand, I think. I --

10 INTERPRETER: She let go of her bag.

11 MS. SZUTS: Then the barge stand like this, and I felt
12 water. And the other thing I remember, I was in the water, the
13 light coming, and I was --

14 INTERPETER: She opened her eyes. She was above the
15 water.

16 BY MR. LARUE:

17 Q. What happened next?

18 A. I saw my teacher, Victor, and I swim to my bag, and I
19 carry it and I swam out. And someone in my -- classmate Peter,
20 helped me to came out the water.

21 Q. Peter helped you get out of the water?

22 A. And were some other people that were there.

23 Q. Did you swim to the shore?

24 A. Yeah. I swim to the --

25 INTERPRETER: She swam to shore.

1 BY MR. LARUE:

2 Q. Okay. So, it wasn't a boat? You didn't get on a boat?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay, I've got a seating diagram here. So, this is the
5 front of the boat; this is the back. Do you remember where you
6 were sitting?

7 A. There.

8 Q. So, definitely -- okay.

9 INTERPRETER: Yeah. 13.

10 BY MR. LARUE:

11 Q. Definitely 13? Okay. So --

12 A. That's the right number.

13 Q. All right. Which -- were you sitting on the out -- the
14 aisle seat or outside?

15 A. The aisle.

16 Q. Sitting on the aisle, okay. And who was sitting next to
17 you?

18 A. Katalin.

19 MR. LARUE: Okay, what's your name?

20 MS. TAKACS: Kata.

21 MR. LARUE: Kata. All right. Well, we'll be talking to
22 you next too.

23 BY MR. LARUE:

24 Q. Great. Do you remember who was sitting near you?

25 A. The big guy was sitting there.

1 Q. Who's the -- do you remember his name?

2 A. No. I don't know him.

3 INTERPRETER: He was not part of the group.

4 BY MR. LARUE:

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Rachel and Amanda were sitting there.

7 Q. So, Rachel and Amanda were sitting in 15?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. All right. How about in front of you?

10 A. Maybe Jackie was sitting there, I think.

11 Q. Maybe Jackie?

12 A. Jackie, Jackie Kennedy.

13 Q. In front of you in 11? Was she sitting next to anyone,
14 or --

15 A. Yeah, a woman that I don't know.

16 Q. Okay. Someone not from the group?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. Do you remember hearing the captain talking on
19 the radio, or --

20 A. No. No, I don't -- didn't hear that.

21 Q. Okay. You were too far back?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Do you know if the DUKW boat that you were on, if they
24 had a horn? Did they use a horn?

25 A. No, no, I don't remember hearing horn. No, I

1 (indiscernible).

2 Q. Okay. Do you remember if the tug and the barge made any
3 noises?

4 A. No, no, I think.

5 Q. You said that you were able to grab a life jacket?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Did someone tell you to grab a life jacket, or did you
8 do that on your own?

9 A. I --

10 INTERPRETER: She saw that others were. Nobody told
11 her, but she saw that others were taking. She couldn't pull it
12 over her head.

13 BY MR. LARUE:

14 Q. Okay. So, that was my next question. So, you didn't
15 actually get it on, but you were holding it?

16 A. No, I can't put it.

17 Q. Okay. And you managed to hold it the entire time?

18 INTERPRETER: She's not sure if it was with her the
19 whole time or just on top of the water when she grabbed it.

20 BY MR. LARUE:

21 Q. Okay. Was it easy or hard to get the life jacket? Were
22 there any troubles getting the life jacket?

23 A. Yeah. Yeah, I think it --

24 Q. Okay. So, you swam to shore. Did you have any
25 injuries? Were you hurt at all?

1 A. (Through interpreter) A little black and blue.

2 Q. Did you go to a hospital or anything?

3 A. No, no.

4 Q. Can you swim?

5 A. Yes, I can.

6 Q. When you looked back and you saw the barge, did you see
7 the tug that was pushing the barge? Did you see anyone on board?

8 A. No.

9 Q. No? So, you said you saw -- I'm going to back up
10 further. When you were in the water, you saw smoke?

11 A. No.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, on the boat. When you were
13 on --

14 BY MR. LARUE:

15 Q. When you were on the boat.

16 A. Yeah, that I saw.

17 Q. So, yeah, what did the smoke look like? Color.

18 A. Gray.

19 Q. Okay. How long from the time the boat stopped until the
20 barge came and hit the boat?

21 A. Ten minutes.

22 Q. Ten minutes. And were you in your seat the entire time,
23 or did you move around the boat, or did you stay in your seat?

24 A. I stay there, but then the others jump and I jump too,
25 jumped there (indiscernible).

1 Q. Okay. So, you stood up?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. Did the captain give you any instructions at any
4 time before the barge came?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. All right. That's it for me. Thank you. I'm
7 going to let everyone if they have any questions, they'll follow
8 up. We'll start with Greg.

9 BY MR. BLUMENTHAL:

10 Q. This is Greg from Ride the Ducks. Did -- could you see
11 the captain from your location on the boat, what he was doing?

12 A. Yes.

13 INTERPRETER: He just talked on the --

14 BY MR. BLUMENTHAL:

15 Q. On the emergency radio or a cell phone? A microphone?

16 A. (Through interpreter) It was part of the boat. The
17 younger one was up on the front. Just on the radio, not on a cell
18 phone.

19 Q. And do you recall if he had made more than one time or
20 multiple attempts to use the radio? Over the course of ten
21 minutes, right?

22 A. (In English) I don't know.

23 Q. Okay. Could you see the deckhand? And that's the
24 person that went out and dropped the anchor.

25 A. No.

1 Q. Were you able to see what he did during the whole time?

2 Were you able to hear anything that he said?

3 A. I didn't hear anything.

4 Q. When did you first notice the barge, after anchor or
5 before?

6 INTERPRETER: She didn't see when the anchor went down,
7 but when people started screaming, a few seconds before that, she
8 saw the barge.

9 BY MR. BLUMENTHAL:

10 Q. Okay, okay. How much time did you -- passed, do you
11 think, before -- after the DUKW boat stopped until the collision?

12 A. Ten minutes.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 MR. LAWRENCE: No questions.

15 BY CWO LAWS:

16 Q. Did -- I'm sorry. Shane Laws with the Coast Guard. Did
17 you see the captain or the deckhand try to open the engine
18 compartment to look into it at all?

19 INTERPRETER: The younger one stood on something up
20 front, but that's all she -- and looked at something, but that's
21 all she --

22 CWO LAWS: Did he open --

23 INTERPRETER: She doesn't know.

24 BY CWO LAWS:

25 Q. Did either of them use a fire extinguisher or bring one

1 up front?

2 A. No.

3 Q. No. After they turned the boat off, how quickly did the
4 smoke go away?

5 A. (Through interpreter) About a minute for the smoke.

6 Q. Where was the smoke coming from?

7 A. Somewhere in the front, on the side.

8 MR. LARUE: Do you remember which side? The side that
9 you were sitting on? From the starboard side?

10 MS. SZUTS: (In English) Yeah.

11 MR. LARUE: Okay.

12 BY CWO LAWS:

13 Q. You didn't see any other smoke from any other part of
14 the boat?

15 A. No, just this.

16 Q. I don't recall if this was asked. Do you remember when
17 you first got on the boat, maybe even before it went in the water,
18 was there ever a time where the captain explained where the life
19 jackets were and how you put them on?

20 A. Yes, he showed us, but on his own life jacket, not the
21 orange.

22 (Through interpreter) Not the orange, but the blue.

23 INTERPRETER: And she said if she would have to, she
24 wouldn't know how to put it on.

25 BY CWO LAWS:

1 Q. What -- he demonstrated with a blue life jacket?

2 A. (In English) Yeah, something.

3 Q. What did the blue life jacket look like?

4 INTERPRETER: Similar to the -- to theirs.

5 BY CWO LAWS:

6 Q. Square block, like a rectangle, or more like a jacket
7 you would put your arms through?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Did it look like this?

9 MS. SZUTS: (In English) Yes.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And it comes apart, your head
11 goes in?

12 CWO LAWS: Just the blue vest. Okay. That was all I
13 had. Thank you.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just one quick question. When
15 the boat was hit, do you remember if it rolled over, went up in
16 the air?

17 MS. SZUTS: (Through interpreter) The back was down
18 further.

19 BY MR. LARUE:

20 Q. Just one more question from me. This is Liam from NTSB.
21 Do you remember where your two friends that are missing, do you
22 remember where they were sitting?

23 A. (In English) Maybe there or there.

24 MR. LARUE: She's pointing at seats 5 and 3.

25 BY MR. LARUE:

1 Q. Okay, great. Is there anything else that you can think
2 of that we didn't ask you about that might be useful for us to
3 know?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Okay. Is it okay that we used the recorder to tape
6 this?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay, thank you very much. We'll be finished now.
9 Thank you.

10 A. Okay.

11 (Whereupon, at 12:29 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 Judit Szuts

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