

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

* Docket No.: DCA-10-MM-025

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Interview of: KATALIN TAKACS

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

Friday
July 9, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,
at 12:32 p.m.

BEFORE: LIAM LARUE
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

LIAM LARUE, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Marine Safety
490 L'EnFant Plaza East, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20594
(202) 314-6000

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

(12:32 p.m.)

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3 MR. LARUE: Okay, good afternoon. It is 12:32. This is
4 Liam LaRue from NTSB, and we're going to talk to Katalin Takacs.

5 MS. TAKACS: Takacs.

6 MR. LARUE: Takacs, Takacs, okay, thank you. And we've
7 got the same crew in the room, so we won't go around the room and
8 do intros. We'll just jump right in.

INTERVIEW OF KATALIN TAKACS

9
10 (Whereupon, Ms. Takacs answered assisted by an
11 interpreter.)

12 BY MR. LARUE:

13 Q. How old are you?

14 A. Seventeen.

15 Q. Seventeen, all right, great. And just like we did with
16 your friend, we'll ask you to just go ahead and tell us what you
17 remember, and then we'll ask questions after that.

18 A. Okay.

19 (Through interpreter) The motor stopped. They saw that
20 smoke was coming, and they thought it was just part of the show
21 and that it was a joke. They saw the captain speaking on a radio
22 or a telephone. The younger one climbed up to the front of the
23 boat and was looking or doing something up there, but she doesn't
24 know what. And then everybody started screaming and stood up.
25 And somebody yelled out to put on the life vests. And she looked

1 back and saw the barge coming. There was somebody Hungarian who
2 yelled to put on the life vests. And she jumped in the water
3 before the collision. And she took down one vest, but somebody
4 took it away from her. She took down another one, but she wasn't
5 able to put it on. She just held onto it, the life vest and her
6 bag, and jumped into the water.

7 There were a lot of people, and she tried to swim, and
8 she finally came above the water. She saw that people were trying
9 to climb out at the port, and she tried swimming over there. And
10 she saw another boat or ship coming, and she wasn't sure whether
11 it was going to stop or not, so she just tried to swim as fast as
12 she could to get across.

13 Gabor, one of the boys, was climbing out already on the
14 fireman's ladder or something, and she went towards there and they
15 got her out. And they pulled her up and another girl, Krisztian.

16 INTERPRETER: It's a boy, not a girl.

17 MR. LARUE: It's a boy?

18 INTERPRETER: Krisztian is a boy.

19 MR. LARUE: Krisztiana?

20 INTERPRETER: Krisztian. It's a boy.

21 MR. LARUE: Krisztian. All right.

22 MS. TAKACS: Krisztian.

23 INTERPETER: Krisztian, I'm sorry. It's a boy, and they
24 pulled him up. Thanks.

25 BY MR. LARUE:

1 Q. So, you were pulled up on shore?

2 A. (In English) Yes.

3 Q. Okay, what did they do once you got on shore?

4 A. (Through interpreter) Yeah, they asked her if she was
5 okay and what she need. People came over. And the police came,
6 the police came, and they were all together.

7 Q. Okay. We'll start all the way back from the beginning.
8 Do you remember the captain telling you about the life jackets and
9 safety items?

10 A. (In English) He didn't say.

11 (Through interpreter) When they got on, he did explain
12 how to use it, but it was, you know, joking, and it wasn't
13 serious.

14 Q. You said you saw smoke. Could you tell us what color
15 the smoke was, what it looked like, was there a lot?

16 A. (Through interpreter) She thinks it's white. From the
17 front of the boat. She remembers two sides though.

18 Q. And when -- so, then the master, the captain stopped the
19 boat when the smoke came?

20 A. (Through interpreter) Afterwards, yes.

21 Q. Did the smoke stop when he stopped the boat?

22 A. For a little while, and then it stopped.

23 Q. How long? How long? How much time?

24 A. A minute maybe (indiscernible).

25 Q. Did the captain tell everyone on the boat what was going

1 on, why there was smoke?

2 A. (In English) No.

3 Q. No? Okay, did you hear any -- did you hear the captain
4 talking? You said you saw him on the radio. Did you hear what he
5 was saying?

6 A. No.

7 INTERPETER: She saw. She couldn't hear it.

8 BY MR. LARUE:

9 Q. Okay, let's see. Did you hear any -- a horn or bell or
10 any kind of sounds from the boat?

11 A. (In English) No.

12 Q. What about from the other boat, the barge and tug?

13 A. (Through interpreter) She didn't hear anything.

14 Q. Okay. And then, can you just with the seating diagram,
15 do you remember what seat you were in?

16 A. (In English) Right there.

17 Q. Thirteen, okay. And you were on the aisle or the
18 outside?

19 A. Outside.

20 Q. Outside. Now, we just went through the people that were
21 around with your friend. Do you remember anybody different or
22 anybody else that she didn't tell us of where they were sitting?

23 INTERPRETER: She sat next to her.

24 MR. LARUE: Right. Does she --

25 BY MR. LARUE:

1 Q. Do you remember anybody --

2 A. (Through interpreter) The teacher sat somewhere over on
3 the other side.

4 Q. Who was that?

5 A. The teachers.

6 Q. Teachers, that's the Hungarian teachers?

7 A. (In English) Yes.

8 Q. Okay. And that's, you said, seat 16 maybe? Seat 16?

9 A. Sixteen, yes.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. (Through interpreter) And Jackie's daughter, Laura, sat
12 either in 10 or 12.

13 Q. Either 10 or 12. And was she on the inside or -- the
14 aisle or the outside?

15 A. (In English) Outside.

16 Q. Outside. Okay. So, you said you -- somebody shouted to
17 grab a life jacket, a Hungarian?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Was it a boy or a girl that shouted?

20 A. I think a girl, but I'm not sure.

21 Q. Okay. What exactly did she say or he? What did you
22 hear?

23 A. I don't know.

24 Q. That's okay. And you said you grabbed one jacket down
25 and someone grabbed it from you?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And you grabbed a second one?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And did you -- you didn't -- did you put it on or no?

5 A. No.

6 Q. No?

7 A. I can't.

8 Q. And then you held onto it the whole time though?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And you jumped out the side of the boat?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. So, you jumped completely away from the boat?

13 A. (Through interpreter) Into the water, yes.

14 Q. Did you get hit by the boat or the barge as they came
15 over you?

16 A. (Through interpreter) She jumped before it hit, so she
17 didn't feel any impact.

18 Q. Did you have any -- were you hurt? Do you have any
19 injuries?

20 A. (Through interpreter) They took her to the hospital, but
21 it was more just fright and not physical trauma.

22 Q. Do you remember what hospital?

23 A. (Through interpreter) It was a emergency room.

24 INTERPRETER: No, she just remember the initials ED,
25 which is the emergency department, but she doesn't know which

1 hospital.

2 BY MR. LARUE:

3 Q. That's okay. Can you swim?

4 A. (In English) Yes.

5 Q. Did you -- when you looked back and looked at the barge
6 and the tug, did you see any people?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. Was that the first time you saw the barge, right
9 before it hit, or did you see it earlier?

10 A. (Through interpreter) When it was -- when it was coming
11 towards them and when it was very close, she jumped before the
12 impact.

13 Q. Okay. Did you see it when it was further away?

14 A. (Through interpreter) It was very close when she first
15 noticed.

16 Q. Okay. And did you stay in your seat the whole time
17 until the end?

18 A. (In English) Yes.

19 Q. Okay. All right, thank you. I'm going to pass it off.
20 Greg from the Ducks will ask questions next.

21 BY MR. BLUMENTHAL:

22 Q. Can you describe when or what was said when they
23 described the emergency process and how to put on the life jacket
24 or where the emergency exits were on the DUKW or any fire
25 equipment?

1 A. (Through interpreter) She just remembers that on the
2 vest, he showed something to pull down, some rope to pull down,
3 but she doesn't remember any exits or anything.

4 Q. All right. And in the time that they were stopped, was
5 the captain just mostly on the radio, or did he turn around and
6 face all of you and speak to you during that time?

7 A. (Through interpreter) Just on the radio.

8 Q. On the radio.

9 A. Didn't address them directly.

10 Q. For -- so, nothing coming out of the speakers?

11 A. (In English) No.

12 Q. Okay, thank you.

13 MR. LARUE: John, do you have any questions?

14 MR. LAWRENCE: I have one.

15 BY MR. LAWRENCE:

16 Q. John Lawrence, I have one question, a difficult
17 question, I'm sure. But your two friends that were missing, were
18 you close enough to them to know if they knew how to swim?

19 A. (Through interpreter) She's not sure, but the boy was a
20 very sportsmanlike person, so she would assume that he did.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 A. (Through interpreter) But she doesn't know for sure.

23 MR. LAWRENCE: That's all that I have.

24 BY CWO LAWS:

25 Q. Shane Laws for the Coast Guard. When you were getting

1 life jackets, did you have any trouble pulling them down?

2 A. (Through interpreter) It was hard to take it out, but
3 she was able to pull it down.

4 Q. Okay. And when you were trying to get off the boat, did
5 you have any trouble getting off the boat?

6 A. (Through interpreter) No, she was able to jump.

7 CWO LAWS: That's it. Thank you.

8 MR. LARUE: Nothing from you?

9 BY MR. LARUE:

10 Q. Is there anything else you can -- this is Liam LaRue
11 from NTSB. Is there anything else you can think of that we didn't
12 ask you that might be important?

13 A. (In English) No.

14 Q. Okay. Thank you very much for talking to us. Was it
15 okay that we recorded this?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Thank you very much.

18 (Whereupon, at 12:48 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 Katalin Takacs

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