

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: EVAN WILLIS

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

Friday  
July 9, 2010

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice,  
at 8:56 a.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

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Evan Willis: By Mr. LaRue	4

I N T E R V I E W

(8:59 a.m.)

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3 MR. LARUE: Okay, all right, good morning. This is Liam  
4 LaRue from NTSB. It is 8:59 on Friday, July 9th. We're at the  
5 station here in Philadelphia. We're going to talk to Mr. Aaron  
6 [sic] Willis, BM2 from the Coast Guard. With me today?

7 MR. LAWRENCE: Captain John Lawrence from K-Sea  
8 Transportation.

9 LCDR FINE: Lieutenant Commander Matt Fine for the Coast  
10 Guard.

11 MR. LARUE: Great.

## INTERVIEW OF EVAN WILLIS

12  
13 BY MR. LARUE:

14 Q. And Mr. -- Petty Officer Willis, if you don't mind, give  
15 us a quick background of your time in the Coast Guard and how long  
16 you've been here at the station.

17 A. I've been at the station for three and a half years,  
18 going on four years. I've been in the Coast Guard for, let's see,  
19 five, just over five years. That's pretty much it. I've been a  
20 coxswain for probably two and a half years.

21 Q. What's your position here at the station?

22 A. Tactical coxswain, marine officer, OED.

23 Q. Great. So, I understand you took part in the response  
24 for the DUKW boat accident the other day?

25 A. I did.

1           Q.    If you could just kind of walk us through what happened  
2 from the time where you were when you heard the call and if you  
3 could put in times, if you remember them, that would be great and  
4 just kind of walk us through the whole thing.

5           A.    To start off, we got -- well, I heard a -- I heard the  
6 SAR alarm went off. I got a phone call almost immediately after  
7 that. It was around 2:40. I was at the work station back here.  
8 So, I came back, told the chief to get underway. I got a call  
9 from Monica from Penn's Landing. She notified me also that there  
10 was an accident down there with the DUKW boat and there were  
11 people in the water. I got underway. Got on the scene probably  
12 10 minutes after that.

13                   I saw a lot of people in the water, saw a lot of debris.  
14 The Marine Police were already out there and proceeded to pick up  
15 some people that were over towards the ferry boat launch and did  
16 that. We got two people, one was a detective, the other one was a  
17 little girl that was on the piling there just off of a, like I  
18 said, the ferry ramp. We picked up them. We had the Navy guys  
19 came up alongside of us, picked up the rest of the people that  
20 were hanging on the piling. We dropped them off at the ferry boat  
21 launch and proceeded to search the area, immediate area to see if  
22 we could find anybody else. Everybody else had been picked up by  
23 the other guys that were on scene.

24                   I guess the next thing that happened with me was we went  
25 back, moored up, got our guns, got the Alco Sensor, because we

1 thought we were going to do a boarding on the barge out there and  
2 ended up going and breathalyzing the captain and his assistant  
3 that was on board the DUKW boat. And that's pretty much the major  
4 events. We were out there -- my boat was out there until I think  
5 it was 5:30 just searching the area, helping out.

6 Q. Okay, I'm just going to walk you back through there and  
7 ask you a couple more specific questions. What time did you get  
8 the -- what time did you hear the SAR alarm and did you get the  
9 call from Monica?

10 A. It was all around 2:40, the SAR alarm, the phone call  
11 from our command center, and Monica was -- I think it was two  
12 minutes after that.

13 Q. And what was the boat that you went out on?

14 A. 25740, it's a 25-foot boat, RBS.

15 Q. And you were the coxswain that day?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Could you go walk us a little bit, walk us back through  
18 once you got on scene, just with a little bit more detail? You  
19 said you picked up one or two people right away, and then you --

20 A. Yeah, when I got on the scene, the Philly Marine Police  
21 were there. They had two boats out there. They were picking up  
22 people. They had most of the people that were out in the open  
23 water, so I approached that piling off the ramp, like I said. And  
24 there was a detective there helping out. I think there was like  
25 five people and like three kids and two adults, I think, along

1 with the detective. So, we were helping him out trying to get as  
2 many people out of there as we could. And then right when that  
3 happened, the Navy, that little red Navy boat came up and picked  
4 up the rest of the people.

5 Q. So, they were on a piling like right on shore there  
6 basically?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And so, the detective was on shore?

9 A. No, the piling is probably 20, 30 foot off of the  
10 shoreline right there.

11 Q. So, where was this detective from? Was he somebody that  
12 was on the boat?

13 A. No, he was actually -- the story he told me was that he  
14 jumped in the water when he seen it happen and helped them out,  
15 and he swam over to, I guess, give what little help he could.

16 LCDR FINE: That's Philly P.D.?

17 BM2 WILLIS: I think it was Philly P.D. He was the guy  
18 that was in there when we were breathalyzing the two guys, a real  
19 tall guy.

20 BY MR. LARUE:

21 Q. Okay. So, how many people did you actually get on board  
22 your boat?

23 A. We got a little girl along with the detective.

24 Q. And what did you do once you got them on board?

25 A. We just looked around to see -- I was looking to see if

1 we could find anybody else that was out there. It looked like  
2 from what we could see, everybody else was picked up.

3 Q. Now, you said there were a few other people that were on  
4 that piling with the detective and the little girl?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And who got them?

7 A. The little red boat for the Navy boats that are over  
8 there at Penn's Landing, an inflatable boat.

9 Q. So, you picked up two people total?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And one of them was the detective?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. All right. And then where did you take them?

14 A. Just right there up forward a little bit, I guess north  
15 of where that piling is.

16 Q. And then you said you did a kind of search pattern for a  
17 while after that?

18 A. Yeah, along the shorelines.

19 Q. All right. So, you didn't pick up anybody else after  
20 that point?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Went back, got your -- the drug test, the drug testing  
23 -- or alcohol testing equipment?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And so I guess you got dropped off on shore?



1           A.    No, I moored the boat up right up to that ferry boat  
2 ramp right there. I let two of my guys on, and then we went up  
3 there to help whatever way we could.

4           Q.    And do you know what time you did the alcohol test?

5           A.    I'd be guessing. I'm guessing it was maybe 45 minutes  
6 after the fact.

7           Q.    And what were the results?

8           A.    Just zeros.

9           Q.    Do we have -- who has the results? Or how does that  
10 come out; is it a printout or --

11          A.    I know they wrote it down over there. I could probably  
12 recall it on our Alco Sensor if you need to see it, but we didn't  
13 print anything out from it.

14          Q.    All right. Is it possible to get a printout from it?

15          A.    Yeah, I can see if I can get it for you.

16                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's probably in this location,  
17 too. It's sector.

18                MR. LARUE: Okay.

19                UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If you just call back  
20 (indiscernible).

21                MR. LARUE: That would be good.

22                BY MR. LARUE:

23          Q.    Do you have to have any kind of training to do the  
24 alcohol or the alcohol testing?

25          A.    Yeah.

1 Q. What's involved with that?

2 A. I got a -- through BO school, it's a seven week course,  
3 and we got a lot of training on it in there. It's the Alco Sensor  
4 IV.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You have a call letter  
6 (indiscernible), I think.

7 BM2 WILLIS: Yeah, I think it goes along with the BO  
8 call.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

10 BM2 WILLIS: Boarding officer call.

11 BY MR. LARUE:

12 Q. All right. And just so -- I've heard the name Monica  
13 before, but who is she and what's her position?

14 A. From what I understand, she's the lady that's in charge  
15 of Penn's Landing right there, and we have dealt with her a lot  
16 with the fireworks and stuff that go off there.

17 Q. All right. I think that's pretty much that's it.

18 MR. LARUE: Anything from you?

19 MR. LAWRENCE: Nothing.

20 BY MR. LARUE:

21 Q. Anything else you can think of that you know that might  
22 be useful in the investigation that we didn't ask about?

23 A. No, nothing I can think of.

24 Q. All right, can you just acknowledge that this is being  
25 recorded? You understand it's --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. All right. And we will sign off. It's about 10 after  
3 9:00.

4 (Whereupon, at 9:10 a.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 Evan Willis

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