## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* Investigation of: \* \* COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL CHRISTOPHER'S JOY CAPSIZING AND \* SINKING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO \* Docket No.: DCA-14-LM-020 NEAR SOUTHWEST PASS, LOUISIANA \* ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2014 \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

Telephonic Interview of: LARRY DARDAR

Thursday, October 9, 2014

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: LARRY D. BOWLING Senior Marine Accident Investigator

## APPEARANCES:

LARRY D. BOWLING, Senior Marine Accident Investigator National Transportation Safety Board

CWO Investigator Marine Safety Unit (MSU) Morgan City, Louisiana U.S. Coast Guard

Investigator MSU Morgan City, Louisiana U.S. Coast Guard

LTJG Investigator MSU Morgan City, Louisiana U.S. Coast Guard

IC Maritime

ITEM

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1	INTERVIEW
2	(11:22 a.m. ET)
3	MR. BOWLING: All right, the digital recorder is going.
4	This is Larry Bowling with the Office of Marine Safety,
5	National Transportation Safety Board. We are going to be
6	interviewing Mr. Larry Dardar. And it is October the 9th at 11:22
7	Eastern Time, 10:22 Central Time. I am participating in the
8	interview telephonically from the state of Louisiana, and I
9	believe you all are in Galliano, correct?
10	CWO Yes, that is correct.
11	MR. BOWLING: Okay. And the members participating in
12	the interview on location in Galliano, starting with the Coast
13	Guard?
14	CWO Chief Warrant Officer with the Coast
15	Guard out of Morgan City Investigations. With us?
16	MR. Morgan City Investigations.
17	LTJG Lieutenant Junior Grade
18	Morgan City Investigations.
19	MR. III III Maritime.
20	MR. BOWLING: Okay. And, Mr.
21	you on you. I apologize. Would you say that again for the
22	record? I keep forgetting you're there.
23	MR. That's all right. with IC
24	Maritime on behalf of the underwriters for the Fishing Vessel
25	Christopher's Joy.

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1 MR. BOWLING: Okay, thank you. And the witness for the 2 record, please state your name and spell your last name for me 3 please.

4 MR. DARDAR: Larry Dardar, L-a-r-r-y, D-a-r-d-a-r,
5 Dardar.

6 MR. BOWLING: Okay. And since there's two Larry's in 7 the interview, we'll use some caution about which one, and I'll 8 try and identify myself as Larry Bowling or Mr. Bowling or 9 something to that effect, or NTSB. But with that said, Captain 10 Dardar, you are aware that we are going to be recording this 11 digitally for later transcription, and probably within 21 days or 12 so I can get you a copy of it for you to review, correct?

13 MR. DARDAR: Yes, sir.

MR. BOWLING: Thank you very much. And with that said, we'll turn the floor over to Chief Warrant Officer with the Coast Guard for the first round of direct questions.

17

INTERVIEW OF LARRY DARDAR

18 BY CWO

19 So, Larry, can you -- because we weren't out there, you Q. 20 know, you guys were out and around the scene, can you try to paint 21 us a picture on what your operations were that day and how you 22 came about the information that the vessel was capsizing? Just 23 run us through from start to finish on how that went down. 24 Α. We were out in the fields, and we was going to another 25 field 18 miles farther east. And about an hour when I left the

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field, got a phone call that we should turn around and go circle
 Charlie; that's one of our platforms in the field.

3 I didn't know what was going on. They didn't say nothing about a boat or nothing, you know. So we turned around 4 and then the closer we got to Charlie platform and started looking 5 6 at that thing, we couldn't figure out what it was. You know, it's 7 not (indiscernible). So when I got closer, I realized it was a boat that was upside down. That freaked me out. That -- and then 8 9 the closer we got, there was something, people on the bottom of 10 So we got as close as we could to the boat then, the boat. 11 without the current shoving us into the boat, and we picked them 12 up and put them on our boat. And then from then on there, we talked -- I talked to the Coast Guard. And I was like 13 14 (indiscernible). But, I mean, basically that's about it, you 15 know, (indiscernible).

Q. So when you saw these, when -- I just want to -- this is with the Coast Guard from Morgan City. Captain Dardar, were you operating the vessel, were you at the helm when your vessel went to see what that object in the water was that ended up being the Christopher's Joy?

A. I was at the wheel until we got close to the boat.Q. Okay.

A. By that time Captain Mel came up, you know, and he took over the wheel, and I went out there to try to help them guys on the boat with the hatch.

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1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Then after that I stayed mostly on the radio talking to 3 the Coast Guard and talking to the main platform.

Q. Can you describe the condition of the two individuals5 that you got on board your vessel?

A. Well, the captain had a few scratches, barnacles and all, you know, on his arms and his shins and down his legs. I asked him if he needed medical attention, they said no. And they stayed on our boat till the next day.

10 Q. Okay, and can you describe their behavior once they were 11 aboard the vessel?

A. Well, one of them, the mate, didn't talk much, and the captain was -- he was breaking out every now and then, you know. He say just -- he was going to be killed and stuff like that about what happened, you know. That's about it.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But besides that, they didn't say much more.

18 Q. So when he -- so he used -- he stated he was going to 19 get killed by what happened?

- 20 A. Yeah.
- 21 Q. Okay.

22 A. It wasn't his fault that the boat flipped over.

23 Q. Okay. And did he describe why it flipped over?

A. Yeah, he said his outrigger -- he said he told his boss that the outriggers was too high up. And he had a safety chain

1 right here. And he said when he was turning, that it broke and 2 the outrigger (indiscernible) the current then, and it flipped 3 over.

Q. Okay, all right. And when you arrived on scene, did you5 see debris in the water?

6 A. What?

7 Q. Did you see any kind of debris in the water, any kind 8 of --

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. -- flotation devices? Okay.

Q. Captain Dardar, this is with the Coast Guard again. How long were the two individuals on board your vessel? A. (indiscernible) know the exact time. I think we picked them up at 4.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. That afternoon, and then the next day when the crew 17 changed, that's when they brought them back.

18 Q. About what time was that?

A. I think it was around 7, 7:30 maybe, that the crewchanged.

21 Q. 7:30 a.m. or p.m.?

22 A. a.m.

23 Q. Okay, all right.

24 MR. BOWLING: Chief Warrant Officer **man** if you don't 25 mind, scoot the -- push the phone a little closer to the witness.

1 The volume is barely level on this -- or barely readable on this 2 end.

3 CWO Okay, okay. So, Captain Dardar when you --4 just speak into the phone and that way Larry can hear what's going 5 on that end, if you don't mind, sir. Thank you so much.

BY CWO

6

Q. Did you interact with the two survivors for theremaining period while they were on board your vessel?

9 A. Well, like I said, the Captain there, he kept thanking 10 me and giving me a hug --

11 Q. He gave you a hug?

A. -- that he got off of that, you know. Kept thanking me.
Q. Yeah.

14 A. But, I mean, as far as talking with him, I didn't 15 really --

Q. Did he describe the incident? Did he describe anything about the two individuals that were -- that did not get on your vessel?

A. Well, he said that the one that drifted away, that he was trying to swim back to the boat but the current was too strong, and they watched him float away until he went down, you know. And then the other one, they said that when the boat flipped over, the water sucked him into the engine room. That's what they told me, you know.

25 Q. Okay.

1 BY MR. Captain, this is with the Coast Guard. 2 Q. 3 Captain, what was the weather like that day? 4 Α. I guess we had about a -- maybe a 1 to 3 maybe. 5 All right. Q. 6 Α. It wasn't bad at all. 7 How about was it overcast, sunny? What was it? Ο. No, it was sunny. 8 Α. 9 Ο. Did you take any pictures that day, with your phone or any pictures with anything? 10 11 Α. No, sir. 12 MR. Okay. I don't have any further questions. 13 BY LTJG 14 Lieutenant Junior Grade with the Coast Q. 15 Guard, Morgan City. Did they leave you any names? 16 Α. They told me their names, but I forgot. 17 Q. All right. 18 Α. I can't remember names for nothing, man. 19 No problem. Would you mind giving us a brief Q. description of the two gentlemen that you picked up? 20 21 Α. Yeah, one of them was a little shorter than me, 5'11". The other one, I really (indiscernible) close enough to, you know. 22 23 He must be about the same height. 24 Ο. What were they wearing? 25 One of them had black pants on with no shirt. And the Α.

other one had a short pants, blue jean pants. 1 2 Any shirt? Q. 3 I think he had a T-shirt. Α. 4 Q. Okay. 5 Α. I'm not sure. 6 Q. Did they have any tattoos on their body? 7 Α. One of them did. 8 BY MR. 9 Q. This is with IC Maritime. Captain, if we 10 need to contact you in the future, can I get your home mailing 11 address? 12 Α. Yes, 13 Q. 14 Α. 15 Q. What's that zip code? 16 Α. 17 Q. And do you have a home telephone number? 18 Α. Yes, sir. I got to look it up in my phone. 19 Q. If it's easier, you can give your cell phone. 20 Α. 21 Q. 22 Α. 23 Q. 24 Α. 25 Q.

1 A.

2 , all right. Did you have any opportunity to observe Q. 3 this vessel before you got the call that there was a problem? 4 Α. The shrimp boat? Yeah. Had you seen this boat shrimping in the area? 5 Q. 6 Α. No, sir. They had (indiscernible). 7 And you say the captain reported that -- told you that Q. this was his fault because the outriggers were too high? 8 9 Α. He said that he told his boss that. 10 Okay, that's all I've got. Thank you. MR. 11 CWO Larry Bowling, I believe everybody here in 12 Galliano is ready for to take it forward. 13 MR. BOWLING: Roger that. 14 BY MR. BOWLING: 15 Q. Captain Dardar, good afternoon again, and I appreciate 16 the folks moving to the phone to you. I'm having a little 17 difficulty hearing you. If you don't understand my questions or 18 you have difficulty hearing me, Captain, let me know and I'll 19 repeat the question. 20 The first question I have is can you tell me a little 21 bit about your background and your position on the vessel in 22 relation to Captain Mel and the other crew members? 23 Well, I guess you could consider me a second captain. Α. 24 Okay. And how long have you been serving in the Q. 25 maritime industry, and what's your background?

A. I started -- I'm on my sixth issue of my license. And I
 worked 20-some-odd years on shrimp boats. Worked the oil fields,
 roughneck, and you name it, I've done it.

Q. Okay. Now, the two other crew members besides yourself and Captain Mel, I understand one of the deckhands that we'll be interviewing is named Rob. What's Rob last name, and is he the senior deckhand or the junior deckhand?

8 A. I don't know what to consider him. I don't know what 9 title to give him, you know, but he's a good deckhand.

10 Q. Okay. And what's the other deckhand, the second 11 deckhand beside Rob?

12 A. Joe.

13 Q. Joe. So Rob and Joe.

Now you had -- we have your cell phone record, or cell phone number on record. It'll be redacted. It won't be put out to the public. But knowing that you have a cell phone, did you allow either survivors, the master or the deckhand from the *Christopher's Joy*, to use your cell phone and contact anybody?

19 A. No, sir, he didn't.

Q. Okay. I think it was a direct with the Coast Guard, you had said that the master had expressed some concern about being in trouble, I think you used the word killed over the incident. Can you think back, and I want to hear more details on what you recall from that conversation as to what prompted him to say those words, and what words he used, and your location when you two were

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1 talking about this?

A. Well, he was half crying and he was kind of out of it, you know, whenever he said that, you know, so -- but that's about all what he had said, you know.

Q. And again, if you don't mind, just cover it -- some of it was breaking up on my end. I'd like to hear what he conveyed to you and roughly how long was this into his presence or his rescue on board? Was it 5 minutes after he came on board or the following day before you put him off the vessel? Can you fill me in on that?

A. Oh, it must have been about maybe 30, 40 minutes after hewas on the boat, I guess; somewhere around there.

Q. Okay. And again, what led to that conversation? What do you recall being -- going back before, obviously you have shrimping background, were you two talking about how the vessel was rigged, or how did the conversation come up?

A. Well, he was just talking about how the boat flipped, and that's what he told me. He said his outrigger was a little too high, that when like -- when he was turning, the safety chain broke and that outrigger come up, and the current, then that's what made them flip.

Q. Okay. Do you recall either the master or the surviving deckhand telling you who was serving as the ice-hold man or the iceman on the trip, and how they were the storing the shrimp that they'd already picked and sorted?

1

A. No, sir. He never talked about that.

2 Okay. What about -- do you recall either the master or Ο. 3 the deckhand ever talking about any issues with the vessel prior to sinking, such as, you know, flooding from the shaft seal or 4 anything like that, any other issues on the vessel you heard 5 6 about? They may have talked about? 7 No. No, sir, they didn't. Α. All right. Now --8 Q. 9 Α. To me they didn't. 10 Go ahead, Captain. Q. I'm sorry. 11 I said they didn't talk about that, not to me, I said. Α. Okay, okay. Now related, I want to hear your -- what 12 Q. 13 you observed as a relationship between the master and the deckhand 14 during the period they were on the boat. How were they getting 15 along, were they talking to each other; can you just tell me what 16 you observed? 17 Α. They seemed like they was getting along good. The 18 captain would break down every now and then, you know. 19 Q. Okay. But as far as -- I couldn't see no problems between them 20 Α. 21 if they did. 22 Okay, and was the deckhand around at all when the master Ο. 23 was breaking down?

A. Yes, they was all -- they was all on the top deck.
Q. Okay. Do you recall what behaviorisms or mannerisms the

1 deckhand may have been exhibiting while the master was breaking 2 down? Do you recall taking a look at him or listening to any 3 input from him?

A. I'm sorry, I didn't understand the question.
Q. Yeah, when the master would have or experience these
breakdowns, do you recall what behaviors or actions you may have
observed from the deckhand if he was present?

A. The deckhand was on the side of the cab when the captain 9 was telling me that. I couldn't see his reaction to that, you 10 know.

Q. Okay. And, Captain, I should have told you this earlier, if you don't know an answer, it's okay not to know answers. We're just trying to make sure we get everything that you can contribute to the incident to help us understand what went on. So it's okay not to have an answer.

16 With regard to the medical treatment of the two 17 individuals. Tell me what you know about -- I understood Captain 18 Mel offered up medical assistance or to get the two individuals to 19 medical assistance. What do you recall in that realm?

A. Well, they just told us that they didn't want no -- they wasn't hurt or nothing, except the captain had a few scratches on his chest, belly, and arm. And the other one didn't seem like he had any.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. We gave them some water or whatever they wanted to

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1 drink.

2 Q. What about the life raft? Did you ever hear of the 3 master or the deckhand talk about the vessel's life raft or 4 anything regarding that area?

5 A. No, sir.

6 MR. BOWLING: Okay, bear with me. I'm looking at some 7 notes hear. And actually, Coast Guard, I think, from my 8 standpoint that is all I have for Captain Dardar.

9 CWO Okay, thanks Larry. I think we do have a few 10 follow-up items.

11

BY MR.

Q. Hey, Captain, this is with the Coast Guard again. You said something about the captain said he told his boss that the -- what was too high? The outriggers were --

15 A. (Indiscernible).

16 Q. What did he say -- did he say he told him that before 17 they went out or after it sank?

18 A. I guess it was out there at the dock that he told him19 that. It was at the dock.

20 Q. He told him that before they went out that the 21 outriggers were too high? That (indiscernible).

22 You also mentioned that you had 20 years in the shrimp 23 business, was that trawling or what kind of shrimping?

A. Trawling.

25 Q. Same type boat, same size boat?

(Indiscernible). 1 Α. 2 Now, tell me on these outriggers, should they be up like Ο. that or should they be down? 3 Well, that all depend on (indiscernible), all depends on 4 Α. 5 the individuals on the boat, around the boat, you know. 6 Ο. Okay. 7 I never had any problem with it. Α. Now can I ask you for an opinion based on your 20 years 8 Q. 9 of shrimping experience? The story about the chain breaking, a 10 safety chain breaking, and the outrigger going all the way across and flipping the boat, does that make sense to you --11 12 Α. Yes. -- based on your experience? 13 Ο. 14 I don't have any more questions, thank you. MR. 15 BY LTJG 16 with the U.S. Coast Guard Ο. This is 17 (indiscernible). I have questions (indiscernible). 18 So based on -- what would you typically run when you 19 used to run shrimp vessels, your outrigger set? They were steel hull. 20 Α. 21 Ο. In terms of degree, what were the outriggers? 22 I don't know. They should know, you know, if they was Α. 23 set right, so --24 Q. Okay. 25 I mean, as far as the degree, you know, for his --Α.

1 Q. How would you describe it, left, right, or 2 (indiscernible)?

Well, to me, all the shrimp boats that I've seen out 3 Α. there they look normal, you know. Like I'm used to shrimping. 4 5 Like I said, I never seen that boat there. 6 Ο. Right. 7 I don't know how it was rigged at that time. Α. I'm just meaning from your personal experience when you 8 Q. 9 used to run on board vessels, what would you typically set them at? Like what was considered, you know, too high or too low? 10 11 What's the benefit of having them high or low? 12 Α. Well, you hold the bait down where the shrimp is at. 13 Yeah, I think it's better, you know. 14 Okay, why is that? Q. 15 Α. Well, you got most of the stabilizing like that, you 16 know? You got your outriggers going front like this, your 17 (indiscernible). 18 Okay. And now having it too high, is there any benefit Ο. 19 to that? Not that I know of. 20 Α. 21 Ο. Okay. Well, once you're underway are they easy to 22 change the height of the outriggers? 23 Α. No. 24 Ο. No? You got to (indiscernible) at the dock? 25 Α. Yes.

1 LTJG Okay. 2 MR. again. Larry, just for the 3 record, he was showing us how they was used to having the outriggers set. And he put his arms out what would have been 90 4 degrees from his body, or would have been level with ocean, both 5 6 arms. 7 MR. BOWLING: Okay, thank you. Yeah, we'll have to work And, you know, when we're having the witnesses do 8 -- thanks, 9 that, we need to get at least a -- if they're not drawing, you 10 know, a diagram for us to enter as an exhibit, we probably should 11 at least do exactly what you did, bring us an audible description 12 of the witness's gestures and motions. So thank you. 13 BY LTJG 14 for the U.S. Guard. Captain have Q. This is 15 you fished most of your life in the Gulf or have you done, you 16 know, away site? 17 Α. In the Gulf. 18 Ο. Okay. Have you ever done any flag sites? 19 No. Α. Is there any difference between, to your knowledge, the 20 Ο. 21 height of the outriggers in the Gulf compared to somewhere else? 22 Look like I (indiscernible) everything out there. Α. 23 Right. Ο. 24 Α. So I don't know how they set the outriggers. 25 Okay, I don't have any further LTJG 

1 questions.

2 MR. Okay, this is with the Coast Guard. 3 I have two follow-up questions and then Mr. I think he 4 may have one or two, and then I think we'll be good to go on this 5 end.

6

BY CWO

Q. Captain, in your experience, your 20 years' experience on a shrimp vessel similar to this one, on the outriggers, the stabilizing chain that they're talking about that could have broken, what exactly is that, and in your past is that a practice that is used throughout the shrimping fleet?

12 A. Every boat uses it.

Q. Every boat uses it? Okay. And then you mentioned earlier that, you know, once you picked the survivors up your job was primarily communicating with the Coast Guard back and forth. Did anybody from the Coast Guard or anybody from the company, basically did anybody contact your vessel and ask you for the survivors to be alcohol-tested?

19 A. (No audible response.)

20

CWO Okay, okay.

BY MR.

21

Q. This is with IC Maritime. Captain Dardar, do you know if either of the survivors that you guys picked up contacted the owner of their vessel while they were -- after the rescue?

A. I don't know whether they did or not. I was just
 talking to the captain on the (indiscernible).

3 MR. All right. That's all I have. Thank you. 4 CWO Okay, that's all the follow-ups from this 5 end.

MR. BOWLING: Okay, thank you.

7 Captain Dardar bear with us please, I have a few follow-8 up questions and then we'll turn the floor over to you.

9 BY MR. BOWLING:

6

Q. For the record you'd responded to the Coast Guard question regarding the alcohol and drug testing, and I didn't get the response on this end. Did you say you were aware of input in that realm, or you had no awareness of that?

14 A. No, sir, I don't.

15 Ο. Okay. Now a question related to the accident, and from 16 the deckhand's perspective or the master's perspective, what do 17 you recall the individuals telling you or other crew members about 18 their efforts to assist, you know, the deckhand that perished in 19 the water and the deckhand that we believe perished in the engine 20 Tell me what you recall those guys telling you about trying room. 21 to assist either of those individuals.

A. There was really nothing they could do, I guess, you know. With the current we had, and then the guy trapped in the engine room.

25 Q. Okay, did either of them express any remorse or regret

1 that they didn't or couldn't do more?

2 Yeah, the captain, the captain did. Α. 3 Ο. What do you recall the captain saying? 4 Α. He start crying, and then said that he was sorry and all, you know, that he was upset, you know, about it. 5 6 Ο. Okay. Now when they were referring to the two 7 individuals on their vessel that deceased, were they describing the individuals by name, by position, or nickname, or how were 8 9 they referring to the individuals? 10 No, they just told me that -- they never mentioned to me Α. 11 their name or nothing like that. 12 Q. Okay, did they ever describe either victim to you? Well, I heard him say it, but he wasn't talking to me, 13 Α. 14 he was talking to one of the deckhands or (indiscernible), I don't 15 remember. 16 Ο. Yeah. 17 Α. He said it one time. That's how -- that he said. 18 Ο. What do you recall him saying to one of your deckhands? 19 Say that again? Α. What do you recall hearing? 20 Q. 21 Α. Oh, that was he was a little bit chubby, that's it, a 22 bit heavy. 23 Okay. Did he describe heights, gender? Ο. 24 Α. He didn't mention nothing about height, or nothing. 25 MR. BOWLING: Okay. All right, Captain, I think that's

1 it for the lines of questions from the Coast Guard and the party 2 in interest. If I'm incorrect, gentlemen, let me know. But other 3 than that, if not, we'll turn the floor over to Captain Dardar.

And, Captain, before we close up the interview we like to offer the witness an opportunity to put on the record anything we may have failed to ask you that, you know, you feel that you need to get on the record that may help us find a cause or causal events in this accident. Did we fail to ask you any questions or anything you'd like to add?

10 MR. DARDAR: No, sir. I think you about covered it. 11 MR. BOWLING: Okay. Well, Captain, I know we all 12 appreciate your assistance with this regard. And bear with me 13 everyone, so I can secure the interview here.

14 (Whereupon, 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: COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL CHRISTOPHER'S JOY CAPSIZING AND SINKING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO NEAR SOUTHWEST PASS, LOUISIANA ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2014 Interview of Larry Dardar

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-14-LM-020

PLACE:

DATE: October 9, 2014

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

Keith J. Maurer Transcriber