

# CUI

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# CUI

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Interview with (b) (6)

Date of Interview: 17 Sep 6

Time of Interview: 1422

Interviewers: [Redacted]

Respondent: [Redacted]

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interviewer: Good afternoon. I'm [Redacted]. I am the senior investigating officer for the US Coast Guard Activities Far East. Under the authorities of Title 46 US code 6301 and Title 46 CFR Part 4 an investigation is being conducted into the circumstances of the collision between the USS John S McCain and the ALNIC MC which occurred on August 21, 2017. This investigation is intended to determine the cause of casualty to the extent possible and to obtain information for the purpose of preventing similar casualties in the future. To assist with the accuracy of our investigation we will be recording today's interview, which is taking place on September 6, 2017 at 1422. The individuals assisting me on this investigation will now introduce themselves.

interviewer: I'm [Redacted], Deck Watch Officer SME from Coast Guard headquarters.

interviewer: I am [Redacted], Commanding Officer of Activities Far East, Coast Guard Activities Far East.

interviewer: I'm [Redacted], I'm an attorney at the 14th Coast Guard District.

interviewer: My name is [Redacted]. I'm the senior member of the Safety Investigation Board. For the purposes of this discussion I will remain quiet. I'm, uh, I'm observing but not a participant in this event.

respondent: Okay.

interviewer: So if we could begin by having you state your name as well as spelling, and then with your day to day position on board the ship and your watch standing billets.

respondent: Uh, watch station billets? Like?

interviewer: Like OOD? Or any other

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**respondent:** Yes sir. Um, [REDACTED]. First name [REDACTED]. Last name [REDACTED]. Um, I was the Officer of the Deck.

**interviewer:** And your day to day position on board the ship?

**respondent:** Um, I'm the FSO, Food Service Officer.

**interviewer:** And when did you join the Navy?

**respondent:** I commissioned October 16, 2015, but I was a new POC option so I joined a little bit early. I was technically enlisted for a little bit, but I was, I commissioned December 2014 is when I sworn.

**interviewer:** Okay. Did you have any additional time on, on any Navy ships before that?

**respondent:** No, sir.

**interviewer:** Is the McCain your first vessel?

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** And when did you join the McCain?

**respondent:** March 31, 2016, something like that March 30th, 2016.

**interviewer:** Alright.

**respondent:** I can't really remember that date.

**interviewer:** That's okay. So, you've been on board the ship for a while now. Seen what the underway operations are like. Leading up to the 21st, would you say there is any increase, decrease in operations? Long days? Short days? Routine? How would you describe?

**respondent:** It was routine.

**interviewer:** And so when you say routine, what would be your normal routine during the day?

**respondent:** Uh, so we were in 4-section duty, 5-hour watches. Um, I had the, then 7-12 that morning and then had the 2-7 that evening, 2-7 in the morning. Um, but we were just transiting to Singapore. It was actually, that week, I don't remember what we did that week but it was routine.

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**interviewer:** So, nothing outrageous, out of the ordinary, 20-hour day. What is your sleep schedule typically?

**respondent:** Um, typically I would sleep, I would take naps throughout the day, and if I had the REV watches, the 2-7 watches I would sleep a little bit earlier.  
(incomprehensible)

**interviewer:** Okay. Do you have a rough average on how much sleep you usually get?

**respondent:** Um, I would probably get like four to five straight but then I would also take naps throughout the day, one hour naps during lunch and dinner. Something like that. (Low speaking)

**interviewer:** Uh, when did you qualify as OOD?

**respondent:** Um, like a couple weeks prior. I think my order says July 30th, 29th? It was end of, end of July.

**interviewer:** And I think I've gotten this answer before from others, but regarding the other bridge watch station duties, uh, JOOD, JOOW, CON are there any specific PQS or boards or qualifications for those positions?

**respondent:** Only (incomprehensible).

**interviewer:** Okay. So when you get assigned as JOOD, JOOW, that's just the watch standers and like the CO, XO saying we want to move you up to that spot?

**respondent:** Yes sir. Usually it's the new Ensign on board, serve as CON and then JOOW, JOOD.

**interviewer:** And then again you said you were on a 1 in 4 watch standing duty right now so since you had, uh, qualified as OOD you've been doing that position daily?

**respondent:** As OOD?

**interviewer:** As OOD.

**respondent:** Since I qualified, yes, I was the OOD. Well, so I was still in my old watch team and they changed, the SWO changed up the bridge teams. But I had the majority of the same people on my bridge team. I think the only difference was the OOD was he went down to COMBAT. I took OOD and one other person was added or something like that. I don't think it was immediately after.

**interviewer:** Uh-um.

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**respondent:** But honestly, I can't remember exactly. But I know the teams were switched around, and I was placed as OOD.

**interviewer:** Okay. So your prior position to?

**respondent:** I was the JOOD.

**interviewer:** JOOD. Okay. So, again, on the 20th, that Sunday you had the 7-12 watch. You said you got a little bit of sleep beforehand.

**respondent:** Yes sir. So, that day I had the 7-12 and then, um, the wardroom was hosting a steel beach so I was, I wanted to go to sleep a little bit earlier but I think I went to sleep around 9 which is not outrageous or anything because we were, me, me and actually the SICLO we were doing like the deep dish, not deep dish, um, deep sink washing everything. We were just cleaning, and then I think I went to sleep around 9 o'clock. We had, it was a really relaxed day.

**interviewer:** Uh-um. Okay. Like a holiday routine?

**respondent:** It was a holiday routine. Yes sir.

**interviewer:** 2100 and before the 02 watch.

**respondent:** I took a nap I think (incomprehensible) It's not anything abnormal.

**interviewer:** Okay. So leading up to again your watch, about what time did you wake up on the 21st?

**respondent:** 1 o'clock.

**interviewer:** 1 o'clock?

**respondent:** Uh-um.

**interviewer:** And at what time were you on the bridge?

**respondent:** So, I was on the bridge at 0130. So, um, the routine is you wake up, well, I woke up and then you do your walk throughs, so you go through central, you ask them what's the engineering status, is there anything tagged out? Am I expecting anything to be like, any maintenance now that's going to hinder me from like make it to full power or whatever. It was normal. They were like no, nothing, no maintenance. Maybe, maybe they were transferring fuel, I can't remember exactly. But they were like yeah, we're trail shaft, they were in trail shaft. I remember that. And then I go to COMBAT. I sat down with Surface and I asked him how's the contact picture looking. He showed me AIS. So we were, we were anticipating to be really heavy. We were, so, actually I went down to COMBAT a little bit earlier than usual, it was like around 0120. I sat down with Surface. I

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forget who it was. I think it, I can't remember who it was. But I knew the oncoming Surface was [REDACTED] who is like one of the best Surfaces that we have, so we sat down and we went over AIS. We saw a bunch of anchored vessels, and we see like all the vessels coming into the TSS. So we were, we were approaching that. Then I sat down with TAO, and I was like hey like what's to expect? And I think the new, the oncoming TAO still hadn't turned over yet so it was with the TAO, same with Surface. It wasn't the oncoming Surface yet. I spoke with TAO, like yeah, there's a bunch of vessels. Showed me radar, whatever. We were, we were expecting it to be heavy. So went up to the bridge around 0130. I think I was the first one out of my bridge team to be up there, but I was, I wanted a long turnover because there were a lot of contacts. I was talking to the OOD and we were looking at all these vessels. A lot of them were anchored out so I was trying to get a good situational awareness of what was going on. I waited for the entire bridge team to get relieved so the CON, the JOOW, the JOOD. Around 2 was when I actually turned over. So I was up there for 30 minutes before I took the watch, and the Captain was already up there when I came up.

**interviewer:** Is the Captain usually up on the bridge?

**respondent:** Um, in the middle of the night or just in general?

**interviewer:** (incomprehensible)

**respondent:** Um, so if it's just a regular transiting no, but like it's a special evolution. Sometimes he comes up there just to come up there and see what's going on. He always came up if we asked him to come up, if we felt like there was a conflict between us and COMBAT or if I was like hey sir this is the situation. Or if we gave him a contact report and he didn't feel like he really had good situational awareness of what was going on he always came up. But the Captain really liked the bridge. He was up pretty frequently. I wouldn't say he was there every night like from 22 to 07 or anything but he came up pretty frequently.

**interviewer:** Anyone else on the bridge who is not normally up there?

**respondent:** Um, it was just the Captain who was up there.

**interviewer:** XO hadn't arrived?

**respondent:** No, the XO was not there.

**interviewer:** Alright. So again you took the watch at 02. Uh, yeah, I think I took around 30 minutes to turn over with the off-going OOD.

**interviewer:** Uh-um. I will hand things over to my subject matter expert.

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**interviewer:** Uh, so your stood watch is 0200. Between 0200 and reveille at 0500 do you remember any significant equipment casualties, any sort, any unexpected lack of responsiveness from the plant or anything like that?

**respondent:** No, sir. So, like I said I came up there, and we were in trail shaft. We were approaching all these anchored out merchants and whatever. The CON and the Captain were on the port bridge wing. I come out to see, I was like telling him well this guy they're all anchored out. We're gonna go down this course. What I do remember is we had about 15 degrees and like 1 knot (incomprehensible) drift so like we were, we were driving a certain course, like I said, I don't remember exactly what it was but if it was like 000 we were making 015. But that was just, that was just

**interviewer:** I'm sorry.

**respondent:** If we were, like sent 15 degrees to starboard.

**interviewer:** So you were steering 000?

**respondent:** I, I don't remember exactly the course but like if it was 000 it would be like 015, like that's how we were crabbing.

**interviewer:** That was your crab angle. Okay. Significant.

**respondent:** Yeah, it was pretty significant. But I think it was expected. Like so we were approaching all these anchored vessels, and the Captain goes to me hey, uh, come to split plant and let's switch to backup manual. So we were in computer auto which is the steering setting, and then we went to backup manual before we entered all these.

**interviewer:** Steering with...

**respondent:** So we were already at a higher higher readiness.

**interviewer:** ...computer, okay.

**respondent:** When we, on my watch, so we came split plant so we had better maneuverability when we came to backup manual.

**interviewer:** Okay. Do you remember approximately what time that was?

**respondent:** I don't remember what time it was, but I remember it was right before, maybe like 30-45, I can't remember what time it was. But it was right before like we entered the area of (incomprehensible) because we were going to get some pretty close CPAs (incomprehensible) so the Captain was like yeah, I just want...

**interviewer:** So probably right before entering....

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**respondent:** No, it was.

**interviewer:** ...traffic separation scheme.

**respondent:** Yeah, before TSS for sure.

**interviewer:** So that would have been before modified NAV?

**respondent:** It was before modified NAV.

**interviewer:** Modified NAV, what time was that roughly?

**respondent:** 0420.

**interviewer:** 0420, okay.

**respondent:** Yes, because we were driving to a waypoint, did I get this waypoint, MOD NAV at 0420, and we were like we have to be there at 0420, so that's what we were driving towards the entire time.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** So we came up to splint plant, backup manual and I remember, remember we came to backup manual because I accidentally told the CON hey come to computer manual, he was like you mean backup manual? I was oh yes backup manual. He was on the port bridge wing so he said it over the sound powered headphones, come to backup manual. I never looked to see that it was actually backup manual but it was extremely, extremely dark. There was like zero illumination that night. All you see is just a bunch of lights and a bunch of these anchored out vessels. So, we're making our approach towards TSS. I'm passing down our course changes and our. I don't think we made speed changes. I believe we were going about 10 knots. Surface was like oh down this course you're gonna have a very close CPA with this guy. I informed Surface hey we have 15 degrees drift (incomprehensible) I was like what we're driving, we're actually driving this, so, cause it, down there he can't see what we're. I don't believe, I'm not Surface qualified but I don't think he sees what course we're actually driving. He just sees like oh she's steering 000, that's directed towards this guy but we were actually at 015.

**interviewer:** Okay. So he has ordered course but he doesn't have course over ground?

**respondent:** We gave him, yeah, we gave him our ordered course. I would, but then he was like oh I don't think that's a good course. I'm like we're actually making this course over ground. So he was like okay, Surface aye. He kept, like he had a pretty questioning attitude, he always asked us why are we driving that course? Why are we driving that course? And I would tell him oh we have this CPA and he was like okay. So, he, we were pretty engaged with Surface the entire evening. So, we were going through

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these anchored-out guys, and then the track had us going to this point, and then once it was loaded, which was I think, it wasn't like, I forget when the track was loaded, but

**interviewer:** Would the chart help you, behind there?

**respondent:** Oh. Okay. So, alright, so this is the TSS right here. Yeah, so we came up here. So we were coming from over here, right. So everyone's coming through here. We had to be at this point at like 0420. I forget exactly where. Um, and then we're like up here, and then the track had us going kinda like this, but since all these guys were coming in like that we, we wanted to come in at like a 90-degree angle to cross and then come in. So we went a little bit off track. Also, there was a bunch of like anchored people here so it wasn't like, we weren't going exactly on track because we just couldn't. It was impossible. So we were like, we're um going through these vessels. CPAs were, it was like close to normal but like there were just so many of them. It wasn't like, we couldn't avoid, we couldn't get any further away. We were literally cutting between, going between anchored merchants. So then we had, um, we started seeing all the ships that were underway because, you know, all you see is their two mast headlights and their running lights. So, it's like, Captain is like oh what's that guy doing? What's that guy doing? So then we were getting closer to TSS and, um, we were like looking at guys like over here but then I went on radar and I was like oh no, sir, we should be looking at these guys and these guys over here because, you know, if we continue on this we're gonna get really close to them. So, I remember there were two merchants over here, and like I said, the track was like to here and then kinda like at a smaller angle coming to the TSS. What we did was we ended up coming up kinda like 90 degrees to here, shooting these guys to stern, like I crossed their bow and then we just entered. That's, that's the way it was. So we, I never felt like it was unsafe. I think everything was always, always under control. Like we were going at a good speed. We had really good situational awareness. I was telling the Captain hey, sir this is the guy on the CPA. After the guy crossed here there was absolutely nobody else, well, there were some guys but they were far away, they were not, nothing to worry about. It was mostly these guys going southwest. So, we shot through stern and we started heading down, and then um, the NAV was like calculating. So, NAV said that his track was set for 16 knots. We were going I think 10 or something. We might have increased like 1 or 2 knots, but I think all of the vessels were going like, everyone else was going around like 10, 11, 12, 13 knots. So, we came up to 16, and we were just overtaking some guys. It was normal. Everyone was going in the same direction, we were just overtaking them slowly. That's all it was.

**interviewer:** Okay. So 0420 you man the modified NAV detail.

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** Um, ANAV came up, which is [REDACTED], and he was, so he was actually giving us like course recommendations, hey I think you should come to this course. But

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his course recommendations were to get back on track where what we were doing is we were just trying to enter the TSS. So we entered the TSS a little bit earlier than what the track said, but it was because of traffic. Like we, we couldn't just follow it. You know, it didn't make any sense.

**interviewer:** Sure.

**respondent:** So, he was like I think you should come here. I was like explain to him, no QMC, and I explained to him, hey we're gonna come up north a little bit so that we can enter the TSS and eventually we will get back on track. He was like okay.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** He was, he was engaged, and then yeah.

**interviewer:** Okay. So 0500 reveille as scheduled?

**respondent:** Uh-um. Reveille as scheduled. I remember they made like morning announcement. It was normal. The, the entire watch was very calm. Like we had everything together. We were, yeah.

**interviewer:** Okay. Do you remember what frequencies you were monitoring on the bridge?

**respondent:** Um, what channels?

**interviewer:** Uh-um.

**respondent:** 16, 10 I think. I don't remember the third one. 16 for sure. The other two I don't remember.

**interviewer:** Okay. Okay. In as much detail as you can, understanding that we are here to identify potential safety issues so that they can be addressed and hopefully avoided in the future, can you explain to me, um, in as much detail as possible the approximate time of the loss of steering, and your actions to trouble shoot?

**respondent:** So, at around, I want to say like 0510 or something, the Helmsman turned over. So, Helmsman comes over to the CON, does the proper turnover, you know steady on course. And I remember we were on course

**interviewer:** I'm sorry, Helm took over or Lee Helm?

**respondent:** Helm.

**interviewer:** Helm.

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**respondent:** We don't have Lee Helm for regular sea and anchor. We have Lee Helm for, sorry. We don't have Helm for a regular underway

**interviewer:** for modified NAV, right.

**respondent:** We don't have for MOD NAV, but we do have for sea and anchor.

**interviewer:** Okay. Helm turnover at

**respondent:** I, um, but it was like after reveille I'm pretty sure. He turned over with the Helmsman, and it was fine we were going course 2-2-7, think a speed of we were trying to make 16, or 15 over ground to make it on time. Well, I don't exactly, I don't think we were like rushing to get anywhere. We were just going 15-16 knots. It felt safe the entire time. We were never like speeding through, but then NAV recalculated and he thought we were gonna be late again so we came up another 2 knots, and once again we were just overtaking vessels. I didn't feel like, you know, on the freeway going like 90 miles an hour, (incomprehensible) it was just slowly going around.

**interviewer:** Okay. So, NAV recalculated, needed SOA and increased speed to 18 knots I guess is what it sounds like?

**respondent:** We started off making 15-16 and then we came up a little bit more, and I told the Captain cause NAV told me, I told the Captain, Captain told to increase speed.

**interviewer:** Okay. So increased speed.

**respondent:** Uh-um. What else. So, Helmsman turns over, he did a proper turnover I remember cause he came up to the Conning Officer, you know, request permission to relieve the Helm, stated course blah, blah, blah, checking, yeah. I forgot which HPUs were online. Turns over, I remember standing there, and I can't think of anything else that happened before that. We were driving course 227 overtaking other vessels. The Captain was asking me for recommendations of where we should turn. I was mostly using 73, AIS, and then I went outside to look to see if like anything was not coming up on radar or but all these merchant ships they were like pretty easy to get. And they were all on AIS as well.

**interviewer:** COMMS with Singapore Pilot?

**respondent:** So, we tried. We tried to get COMMS with Singapore Pilot. Cause apparently, we have to get COMMS three hours before. Um, the JOOW he tried to go on bridge-to-bridge. I think it was actually now that I think about it, I think it was channel 12. It was something. We weren't, it wasn't 16. It was a different channel. We were going on a different channel to talk to Singapore Pilots and they never answered. We tried multiple times, and never answered. So we were like okay we'll try again later. Maybe it was like, you know, can't remember, I don't know LAN was, I don't know, but they weren't communicating.

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**interviewer:** They weren't communicating back, not reaching them.

**respondent:** But yeah, we tried, before, before anything happened. I think it was around 5 o'clock.

**interviewer:** So loss of steering at approximately what time did you get that report?

**respondent:** I think it was after 0515. I'm not sure, 0515. Helmsman says it really quietly the first time. Then we were like what? He says it again, and I was like oh to CON, like. So we were already in backup.

**interviewer:** Manual

**respondent:** Yeah, backup manual.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** So, initially, what you, what you need to do if your computer you would depress the emergency override button but that wouldn't do anything cause we were in backup manual. So I told him switch alternate HPUs. He goes switch HPUs.

**interviewer:** You gave that the order?

**respondent:** I told, I told the CON and then CON said it. And then I go to the Boatswain Mate of the Watch, like boats loss of steering, man aft steering. And he went over the 1MC immediately, and he said loss of steering pilot house, loss of steering pilot house, man aft steering. Um, and I look up and the rudder was midships, right? And the Captain comes to me, comes up to me and he's like slow down. He didn't say what speed. So I said 10 knots. 10 knots felt like a safe speed like everyone was going around kinda that speed you know, and I wanted to keep the (incomprehensible) separation to a minimum cause we were in a pretty good spot. We had just overtaken somebody. I think we had just taken over the guy that we collided with. We saw some guys in front of us, maybe two guys behind us, something like that. But we were in a pretty good spot so I was like rudder is midships, we were staying at 227, just slow down a little bit. And switch to alternate HPUs. Then I run to the bridge wings to look around to see what's next to us, and then, so for, I, for some reason like some things are out of place in my head. I've thought about it so much that I don't know, like exactly what the sequence is but I know that we put on red over red. We, um, oh, so the Boatswain Mate of the Watch that was there for sea and anchor had already come up. He was doing an early turnover but they hadn't turned over yet. So we said loss of, loss of steering. So the two Boatswain Mate of the Watches, or sorry Boatswain Mate of the Watch and the oncoming sea and anchor Boatswain Mate of the Watch come to the SCC to see what's going on, to help the Helmsman out. One of them goes onto the phone, dials into aft steering, and gets COMMS with aft steering. Uh, we didn't have the headsets set up yet because it wasn't sea and anchor. So there's a phone right above

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the SCC so he dials in, he calls, he's waiting for COMMS. So, at that point we're just, I'm waiting for him to say like switch alternate HPUs. Next thing I know, I look up

**interviewer:** Sorry, I'm sorry, you're waiting for who to say switch

**respondent:** No, so at that point I was, I had run to the bridge wing, come back and then he might have said it, I'm not sure because I wasn't there but

**interviewer:** The Conning Officer?

**respondent:** No, the Helmsman saying switch, I have switched to alternate HPUs, or I don't know like, he acknowledged yes, switch to alternate HPUs, and then I guess the next thing was testing positive rudder control. I was, yeah, but I don't know if he actually said it cause I was on the bridge wing.

**interviewer:** Okay. So you told the Conning Officer to tell the Helmsman

**respondent:** Switch to alternate HPUs.

**interviewer:** It sounds like you heard the Conning Officer give that order?

**respondent:** Yeah, he did. The Conning Officer did give that order.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** So then I went to the bridge wing and then I came back to see if we regained control, which at that point I look out and I see the bow of the ship just turning to port really, really fast.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** And I remember looking up at the rudder on the screen, and I'm pretty sure it was midships, it was midships. And for a fact when he said loss of steering it was midships. And then I ran out to see what was going on, on the bridge wings, and I come back and I'm pretty sure it was still midships. I run out to the bridge wing again to see what the contact picture was, and I remember saying hey, Captain, sir, there's a contact on our port side.

**interviewer:** Did you have visual on that contact?

**respondent:** Yeah, I went and looked. I was sir, there's a contact on port side. But we were turning to port, that's why I ran to the port bridge wing. But it wasn't like gradual. It was freakingly fast, like I, I have no idea. Because the way the speed of the ship was turning wasn't just like a 5-degree rudder. It was like. We were, I don't know what speed we were at, at that point. Oh, I forgot. So we came down to 10 knots and the Captain came in and he asked the CON to slow down to 5.

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**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** And then, I don't remember at what point the ship started to turn, if it was before. I can't remember, but the ship started to turn to port really, really fast. Um, I don't remember when we gave aft steering control. I, I don't remember. But somehow, somehow, I think we regained control on the bridge because the CON ordered come right, and I see the Helm, I see the rudder going left really fast. But then he went back and he came right again, but then at that point it was way too late. So CON orders right standard or right full, I don't remember but it was definitely right, and then we see the rudder swing left.

**interviewer:** You came back in from the bridge wing and you saw the rudder still left. When you went back out there to report the contact to the CO...

**respondent:** No, so...

**interviewer:** ...the ship was moving to port.

**respondent:** So, I, after I saw the rudder at midships, I ran to the port bridge wing. We were still going 227. I just wanted to see what was going on, who we were around to see like okay, what do we have to worry about right now? Like, what's our main focus. Cause we had somebody in front of us, we had somebody next to us, and we had someone behind us. So, I was okay what's the priority here? So, come back in, we are still, I think we started turning to port a little bit, and all of a sudden, the ship starts turning to port really, really fast. And then I run back out to the port bridge wing, and I come back in, and the CON orders right standard or right something, and I see the, the rudder swing left. But this is after we transferred control to aft steering so I don't know. I don't remember exactly when we transferred to aft steering but aft steering had it momentarily, and then somehow, I think we regained it on the bridge, and then we were right and the Helm came left. But then he corrected himself but at that point it was too late. Like I said, it's hard for me to really exactly...

**interviewer:** You're not precisely sure who had control when the rudder came left or when it (incomprehensible).

**respondent:** Correct. Correct. So it might have been, I don't know. It was the moment like 5 minutes, it just happened so fast.

**interviewer:** Okay. So rudder starts responding to come back right, approximately, and you said moments later is when the...

**respondent:** I'm pretty sure that's when it happened yeah.

**interviewer:** ...collision, okay. Any, any whistle signals, any signals on the ship's whistle, alarms before the collision, anything like that?

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**respondent:** We collided, we sounded the collision alarm, we went to general quarters, but we didn't.

**interviewer:** Okay, in that order?

**respondent:** Yes.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** We didn't sound any, we went on bridge-to-bridge and made (incomprehensible) that was the only thing. We didn't make any...

**interviewer:** Before or after the collision?

**respondent:** Before.

**interviewer:** Before.

**respondent:** I'm sorry, after, after, after.

**interviewer:** Okay. So pan-pan, collision alarm.

**respondent:** So it was collision, collision alarm, general quarters, pan-pan.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** And at some point, I think it was right at reveille or sometime between when the XO came up. So the XO was already on the bridge when it happened.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** So, and NAV had come up as well. So, initially we set mod nav and then eventually NAV came up and the XO came up.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** Um, but like throughout the transit, um, us and COMBAT had pretty, really good COMMS. We made the transit into TSS, which for me that was the most, most nerve racking part, like I was most nervous about entering the TSS. We entered the TSS. We were just going with traffic, and it was fine. Everything was great. We were just overtaking some vessels. We weren't, I wouldn't say we were zooming, we weren't going like 30 knots passed everyone else. We were just overtaking some guys. And the next thing you know, Helmsman was like loss of steering, I have indications of loss of steering.

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**interviewer:** Uh-um.

**respondent:** And then, I don't even know how fast, how long it took, 5 minutes, I have no idea.

**interviewer:** Okay, between loss of steering and collision.

**respondent:** Right.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** Correct. And then we were supposed to set sea and anchor at 0530 so it was about 10 minutes before setting sea and anchor. Sea and anchor was gonna be set in 10 minutes. And sea and anchor has a lot more watch stations (incomprehensible).

**interviewer:** Sure. Do you have the impression that at least yourself, the CO, the Conning Officer had situational awareness of the closest contacts to you? Like you were pretty clear between visual and radar about your relative position with these contacts and what they were doing?

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** Okay. So when you went out on the port bridge wing you said you had visual contact and you were discussing that with the Captain.

**respondent:** It was more of like he, I went out and then I came back in, said we have a contact report off our port side.

**interviewer:** What do you estimate was your, your distance, um, to that contact?

**respondent:** I don't remember. I remember CPAing people around like 500 yards, maybe, like overtaking them.

**interviewer:** Overtaking them. So approximately 500 yards of beam.

**respondent:** Maybe, something like that

**interviewer:** Right around there.

**respondent:** I can't, I don't want to, I have no idea. It's closer than what you would usually have like out in the open ocean, but this is obviously, the TSS is different.

**interviewer:** Traffic separation scheme.

**respondent:** And it wasn't like that was the only contact that was there, you know. We had contact behind us, we had contacts in front of us.

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**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** The rudder was midships and we were like okay. Let's like slow down to buy us some time and then somehow, I have no idea how, the ship started moving to the left and fast. It wasn't 5-degree rudder. It must have been, cause we were going about 18, so like I guess a 15-degree rudder at 18 knots would have been pretty...

**interviewer:** Oh, that's flying

**respondent:** Pretty quick, yeah so. Yeah. It's, you definitely felt the ship (incomprehensible).

**interviewer:** Yeah, uh. Okay. Correct me if I'm wrong, or if I misunderstood you. I believe you said that once you felt the ship turning you went back out to the bridge wing again?

**respondent:** I think that's what I did. I'm pretty sure that's what I did.

**interviewer:** Okay. This may not be a relevant question, if you're not sure if you did, but um if you did you'd remember gauging a closing CPA with the, with the ALNIC?

**respondent:** I don't know. I don't remember.

**interviewer:** Okay. Was there a moment where it became clear to you before the collision that

**respondent:** No, I

**interviewer:** a collision was becoming imminent?

**respondent:** I think they were still pretty far away, I don't remember. I don't remember looking at it and being like, but I remember there being something there, if that makes any sense.

**interviewer:** You, I'm sorry?

**respondent:** Like I remember looking out and seeing something but I wasn't like shit, they're about to hit us. I remember there being something there.

**interviewer:** Okay. During, during this entire interaction do you remember getting a report from lookout?

**respondent:** No.

**interviewer:** Okay.

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**respondent:** No, nothing was reported to me as the OOD.

**interviewer:** Alright. Uh, immediately following the collision, sounded the collision alarm, set general quarters, began pan-pan. What other actions, what other actions did you take?

**respondent:** Um, so I kept the deck. Everyone turned over so the CON went to his general quarters station. The JOOD stayed up there, and he started writing down everything DC was saying. Um, and then we opened up the DC plates and started plotting. Um, made pan-pans. Um, IVCS went down so our next best thing was the black phones. That's what we were mainly using, black phones. Um, but everyone stayed really calm. Everyone just maintained. Like no one was like freaking out. Like, I might have been internally but I kept calm. The entire watch was extremely calm. Even for loss of steering. We all stayed calm. I pretty calmly told the Conning Officer to switch to alternate HPUs. Boatswain Mate of the Watch, like man aft steering. But I never felt like anyone was yelling. We, we were just trying to maintain like the second one person starts freaking out then everyone like starts going crazy.

**interviewer:** Was it immediately clear to you that it was a collision?

**respondent:** Yeah, I felt the ship, uh, ship rock.

**interviewer:** But it wasn't

**respondent:** And then I went to port bridge wing

**interviewer:** And then you saw it from the port bridge wing?

**respondent:** Yes sir. But yeah, I kept the deck. NAV stayed up there with me. Conning Officer turned over. The JOOD turned, or the JOOW turned over. Um, and then after that

**interviewer:** So what, what direction did you get from the CO once the collision took place? What was the priority?

**respondent:** Um.

**interviewer:** As far as maneuvering the ship?

**respondent:** I don't remember. Somehow, we detached from the ship. I don't remember how.

**interviewer:** Okay.

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**respondent:** But, um, HPUs started to fail. I think aft steering took control again, and then once the GQ Helmsman came up to the bridge a little bit after I think he took steering control.

**interviewer:** How much longer were you up there?

**respondent:** Until like 10, 10 am.

**interviewer:** Okay. So you retained the deck...

**respondent:** I kept the deck up until [REDACTED] (incomprehensible) relieved me, which was like 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** He was, I think, the OOD that took the ship into the pier (incomprehensible).

**interviewer:** Okay. Do you have any questions?

**interviewer:** Okay. So just, just a couple things that came across in my notes here. Again, I think originally you said when you were starboard watch it was trail shaft but then you came up to split shaft.

**respondent:** Yes sir. Split plant.

**interviewer:** Split plant.

**interviewer:** What does that mean, split plant?

**respondent:** One engine on each shaft.

**interviewer:** One engine on each shaft.

**respondent:** Full power would be two on but not...

**interviewer:** (incomprehensible)

**interviewer:** Cause essentially you have four turbines, two on each shaft, and for various speeds and powers you can work between those.

**respondent:** Yes sir. So split would be max 28 knots. (Low speaking)

**interviewer:** Okay. And if you needed to, you can put those at different throttles?

**respondent:** Yeah, we can do twists.

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**interviewer:** Were you in twist at the time or like separate? Is that called having them ganged?

**respondent:** Yeah, they were ganged.

**interviewer:** Uh, regarding the calls to the pilots. Roughly 05. Um, is there a separate call you need to make to VTS, like there's a TSS here so you have to call in?

**respondent:** I, I, uh, I don't remember. I don't recall. It might have been VTS. I don't recall. It might have been VTS. We were, we were trying to contact somebody but they never responded.

**interviewer:** Do you recall again what channel that may have been?

**respondent:** It wasn't 16. It was something different, maybe 10 or 12. It was on the NAV brief.

**interviewer:** Alright. And again you said that, I believe you said the beginning of the watch it was computer manual for the steering?

**respondent:** Computer auto.

**interviewer:** Computer

**respondent:** Yeah, or the one that's the electronic signals whereas the other one has actual physical copper wire.

**interviewer:** Okay. And when did you switch up to backup manual?

**respondent:** A little bit after I took the watch. I don't remember exactly when.

**interviewer:** But it was during the approach to the TSS?

**respondent:** It was before the approach. It was before the approach to all the anchored merchants cause we were gonna start getting close CPAs with them is why I wanted better maneuverability.

**interviewer:** Okay. And was there at any time that you came out of that backup manual?

**respondent:** No. Never ordered to come back off backup manual.

**interviewer:** Alright. When the loss of steering occurred who was that that announced that?

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**respondent:** Boatswain Mate of the Watch. Oh, who announced

**interviewer:** To you

**respondent:** I'm sorry, the Helmsman.

**interviewer:** which was [REDACTED]?

**respondent:** [REDACTED].

**interviewer:** [REDACTED]. Do you recall looking at the console, at the screens where?

**respondent:** Yeah, rudder was midships and we were steering 227.

**interviewer:** Do you recall seeing the throttles, what they were set to?

**respondent:** No.

**interviewer:** Was there anything on the, cause there's multiple stations there, correct?

**respondent:** Uh-um.

**interviewer:** There's the Helm station, there's one next to it, at Lee Helm?

**respondent:** So Helm, Lee Helm, CON, the CON CO, I believe is port side, CON1, um NAV1, NAV2, NAV3 is in COMBAT. But for steering you could, if you wanted to, have it to Helm Forward station but at the time Helm Forward station was actually BCCS, backup control station or something like that cause they had an issue with that station for some reason. It was a couple weeks prior. So it wasn't (incomprehensible) BCCS.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** But in our EOCC actions like it never asks us to transfer it there or anything like that. That one is just touch screen.

**interviewer:** So when you're, you were describing setting up of the Lee Helm with the, uh, off-going BMOW?

**respondent:** No, Lee Helm was not manned up.

**interviewer:** There was no (incomprehensible) to...

**respondent:** (incomprehensible)

**interviewer:** ...man up Lee Helm

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**respondent:** So, actually during the watch I had asked Boatswain Mate of the Watch to help, cause it was a couple hours prior actually. I was like can you like look at the Helmsman to see. Traffic is getting kind of heavy...

**interviewer:** Okay. But, but going back to approximately the time of the loss of steering, there wasn't, that was, that did not coincide with a setting up of the Lee Helm?

**respondent:** I don't recall sir. I don't think so. We didn't man up Lee Helm. I don't, I don't remember.

**interviewer:** Okay. And so Lee Helm was not manned. Uh, do you recall anyone standing next to the Helmsman or who would that have been?

**respondent:** [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED].

**interviewer:** And those are the Boatswain Mate of the Watch and the oncoming Boatswain Mates?

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** Any additional, uh, Helmsman or lookouts or anyone else standing around that station?

**respondent:** They might have, but it was extremely dark. I don't. Those are the two that I saw. There might have been some more people, like I just don't remember. It was not my first instinct (incomprehensible). It was definitely [REDACTED] as the Helmsman and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

**interviewer:** So, again, you've stood all the different watch standings of CON, JOOD, JOOW, on your way up to OOW, or OOD. Uh, so, I, I assume you have a pretty good understanding of that console and how it works.

**respondent:** Yes.

**interviewer:** So, walk me through on the console what would you press, what would you be doing if you were at the Helm when the loss of steering came up.

**respondent:** So, I can talk to as being Helm Safety. I'm not Helm (incomprehensible)

**interviewer:** Sure. Let's do it that way.

**respondent:** So if I were Helm Safety, if we were in computer auto, I would tell the Helmsman, or the Helmsman should know to press the big red button, override to manual.

**interviewer:** And what does that big red button do?

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**respondent:** It brings steering to, backup manual, that's what it does.

**interviewer:** And keeps it in...

**respondent:** Backup manual. So if you were.

**interviewer:** Backup manual, send control.

**respondent:** Correct. So, um, if it was at Helm Forward station, we had a steering casualty at Helm Forward station we would press the big red button and it would come to the SCC. So that big red button means that it would come to the SCC no matter where it is. Even if it's in aft steering you press the big red button it would come back up to SCC.

**interviewer:** SCC meaning primary Helm?

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** So, you would press, you'd well, press that. Actually before that, you'd press the big red button, come to backup manual and then you'd test for positive rudder control at the, pretty sure the Con, still no positive rudder control, you switch HPUs, test positive rudder control. Um, and before that obviously you, um, you get on the 1MC loss of steering, man aft steering. So you wait for aft steering to get manned. Um, well, I'm sorry, so if there is a Helm Safety standing watch, if there's Helm Safety there that means that aft steering is already manned up. So, I already have COMMS with aft steering, press the big red button, come to backup manual, switch HPUs. If still nothing is regained, press the, uh, there's a button on top of SCC loss of steering alarm that aft steering would get. So, press the alarm so there'd be an alarm in aft steering. And then what aft steering would do, aft steering presses the big red button, that they essentially steal the control. They do the same thing, test for positive rudder control. They get commands from the bridge from the Helm Safety, of what course to drive, test for positive rudder control. If still nothing switch HPUs. Still nothing you switch LCUs to local. You drive via the local control unit. Still nothing. You go to the fill and drain pump. Still nothing. You do the, not the ratchets, the hand crank, not the hand crank, but the ratchets. Those are mostly for the watch, like the extra watch standers are down there with the MMs, the ETs, EMs. There would also be an Officer in aft steering, COMMS with the bridge.

**interviewer:** So when aft steering hits the big red button they take control in computer assisted manual?

**respondent:** Backup manual

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**interviewer:** In backup manual, okay.

**interviewer:** So definitely a lot of different options to try and regain control from station to station, local at the machinery, to doing it by hand if need be.

**respondent:** Right. For hand, if you're at the point that's just to get like the rudder back to midships. It's not for you to maneuver by any means.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** (incomprehensible)

**interviewer:** What happens if the bridge presses, uh, if aft steering hits the red button, takes control in backup manual, at that point while they're testing for rudder control? What happens if the bridge hits the red button again?

**respondent:** It goes back to bridge.

**interviewer:** Shifts back to the bridge in, still in backup manual?

**respondent:** Yes, sir.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**interviewer:** So unfortunately, I haven't been able to see these actual screens in use. Uh, I got a quick tour of the bridge and the different spaces, but I've been shown screen shots and folks have explained how the different controls work of, you know, I guess the standard method if say you want to transfer, um, Helm control from that Helmsman to like the Lee Helm station or a throttle or something. Is that, you basically have to request it? And then whoever has it will

**respondent:** That's normal circumstances. That would be like, uh, normal underway steaming, then you, so whoever has control would go on the touch screen, switch it to Forward Helm station, Forward Helm station has to be manned up if they accept it. But in the case of an emergency SCC, big red button, you don't have to accept anything, you just take control. So aft steering they press it, they take control right away. There's like nothing saying like yes you take it.

**interviewer:** Okay. So that's a little different than what I heard before. So, like if I'm at the Helm station and I wanted to give something to Lee Helm station, is the Helm station selects give and the Lee Helm station hits, essentially take or accept?

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** Okay. Does it work the opposite where if I'm at Lee Helm I request, hey can you give that to me and then the Helm station gives it?

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**respondent:** Uh, I think you can touch the screen and then press it, but essentially the person who has control always has to press accept so they could, they could press it but nothing is going to happen until they...

**interviewer:** ...until someone else.

**respondent:** ...someone hits accept on the console that has control.

**interviewer:** So, it's a handshake process. Somebody has to say one way or another give, accept.

**respondent:** Unless you press the big...

**interviewer:** Big red button. And does that work for, I know, I'm not sure what else you can control with this, the stations, like, I get the Helm. Throttles? Does that work the same way or is it just here's the throttle?

**respondent:** Um, steering, throttle. I think throttle goes to wherever you press the big red button.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** So, so you can have throttle in three different places. You can have throttle at the Helm station, the Lee Helm station, Forward Helm station or aft steering.

**interviewer:** How about in the engine control room, CCS?

**respondent:** CCS? Yes, they can have. In case, yeah, you transfer throttle control to central.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** (incomprehensible) Yeah, central for sure. Now I'm thinking about aft steering.

**interviewer:** Okay. So, that, that red button also steals throttle? Or it just steals?

**respondent:** I think it might. I think actually, yeah, I think it's just steering. I'm confusing myself.

**interviewer:** It's alright. We have plenty of time. We just want to make sure we get it right.

**respondent:** Yeah, it's just steering, steering control. Because in case of an engineering casualty depending on if we're in like sea and anchor, RMD, whatever, give

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it to, either we keep it at SCC or bring it down to central and central takes their actions, whether or not they want to man up the actual like local engine.

**interviewer:** So, did you say you could control throttles from aft steering?

**respondent:** No, no you can't. I just confused myself. It's just backup manual would be for steering.

**interviewer:** Aft steering can also operate in computer assisted manual?

**respondent:** Yes. Yeah, yeah, aft steering would be backup manual or auto, computer auto.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**interviewer:** So, again with that Lee Helm station, that's, you were going to have that at sea and anchor detail?

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** But it was not manned yet.

**respondent:** No, sir. Thrust was at the helm station. I didn't hear anybody transferring anything, I don't know, but it was at the Lee Helm, it was at the Helm station from my knowledge. When we said GQ it was transferred over to Lee Helm.

**interviewer:** Would that be announced if it were transferred?

**respondent:** Yes, you have to ask permission from the Conning Officer.

**interviewer:** Would that be under your direction that would be transferred?

**respondent:** Uh, well a GQ is automatic, so.

**interviewer:** So, let's say for, um, loss of steering. If it would be considered to be transferred, is that an order from the OOD?

**respondent:** It would be an order from the CON. The CON is the person who gives orders to the Helmsman and the Lee Helmsman.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** So, I would, like I would say hey tell the Helmsman to transfer, but there was, we didn't have a qualified person to be Lee Helmsman. I mean, I guess.  
(incomprehensible)

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**interviewer:** So, CON gives the order. What would be the occasion that, uh, it would be transferred without a direction? Would there be any occasion where control would be transferred without the direction from the CON or the OOD?

**respondent:** (incomprehensible)

**interviewer:** So, how about when you set up a Lee Helm station, is that done under orders and under communication that it's being done, like set up Lee Helm.

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** And then what happens when Lee Helm gets set up? What are the steps in that?

**respondent:** So, if Lee Helm comes up there, the Helmsman goes Conning Officer request permission to transfer thrust control to Lee Helm station. CON responds transfer control to Lee Helm station. Transferring to Lee Helm station. Aye.

**interviewer:** So there's a sequence of?

**respondent:** Yes sir. You're supposed to ask permission from the Conning Officer to do anything. And it was transferred for GQ.

**interviewer:** Do you recall when that happened?

**respondent:** Um, whenever the Lee Helmsman showed up on station. I'm not really sure when he came up exactly, but after 0525, in my best assumption.

**interviewer:** Again, you said the CO was on the bridge but you still had the deck? Like, CO is not giving, CO is not giving orders to CON, is that correct?

**respondent:** The CO can give orders to the CON. So CO gave orders to the CON to slow down. CO gives CON orders to do course changes and stuff, so, I as the OOD, I would give recommendations to the Captain, sir, we have this guy here, we have this guy here. Like I recommend coming to this course. Cause when he's on the bridge he ultimately, like I run everything through him. I'm not gonna do just anything (coughing in the room) especially in that kind of situation where there's a lot of contacts around. So I would be like hey, there's this guy over here, this guy over here. My attention is to like come in between them at this course, this speed. He's like okay. So, but I would run everything through him.

**interviewer:** So, it's been a while since I've on the bridge, I want to understand the order of things. So the CON again is directing the Helmsman and Lee Helmsman if there's someone there, rudder and thrust commands. You, as the OOD, is in charge of the bridge?

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**respondent:** Yes, the JOOW, the JOOD, and the Conning Officer.

**interviewer:** So when you come on watch you say I have

**respondent:** Attention Pilot house, I have the deck.

**interviewer:** Okay. So when the CO was up there when you came on to watch and you're coming on as Officer of the Deck was it stated to you or explained during the turnover whether you have the deck or if the CO has the deck?

**respondent:** So, ah, what we do is we go to the Captain say sir, request permission to relieve the Officer of the Deck and Captain gives permission to relieve the Officer of the Deck. And then I go into the pilot house, in the pilot house, (very low) (mumbling) (almost incomprehensible) this is [REDACTED], or the off going be, she would say it, or she did say it, attention in the pilot house, this is [REDACTED] (incomprehensible), [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has the deck. (0)

**interviewer:** Okay. So you had the deck. And it's announced you have the deck.

**interviewer:** To the best of your recollection did the CO ever assume the CON?

**respondent:** No.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**interviewer:** Do you know if any MoBoards were being done that night?

**respondent:** Yes, they were being done by the Junior Officer of the Watch, especially when we were going through all the anchored vessels.

**interviewer:** Were anything, were any of them done during the time in the TSS?

**respondent:** I don't believe so. We had Shipping, and so, Shipping was up there.

**interviewer:** Was, did anyone ever say stop doing MoBoards, the CO or?

**respondent:** No.

**interviewer:** Is that normal?

**respondent:** To stop doing MoBoards?

**interviewer:** Yeah.

**respondent:** There were just a lot of contacts.

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**interviewer:** What's the normal standard for MoBoards?

**respondent:** Uh, according to the Captain's standing orders. It's when a vessel's in 20,000 yards with CPA of less than 10,000 you're required to do a MoBoard.

**interviewer:** Vessels within 20,000 with a CPA of less than 10,000?

**respondent:** Yeah. And it's reportable to the Captain. Unless, usually when he's not on the bridge we would call him, if it's less than 5,000 yards before it gets to 10,000.

**interviewer:** That's a 5,000 yard CPA but before you get to that 10,000 yards.

**respondent:** That's correct, sir.

**interviewer:** I assume you had a number of vessels in the TSS that would meet that criteria?

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** Are those contacts constantly being fed to the CO or is it

**respondent:** Yeah, every vessel that we overtook, I told the Captain and COMBAT was also, COMBAT also does MoBoards and stuff. So COMBAT was also giving us CPAs and stuff. Um, I don't recall there being MoBoards, but I don't know. It was, like I said it was really dark. (incomprehensible)

**interviewer:** You mentioned after loss of steering you went off to the port bridge wing, looked out, saw the contact.

**respondent:** Yeah.

**interviewer:** Okay. What kind of lights did you see?

**respondent:** I don't remember. I think, I just saw like the forward most, uh, I don't remember what I saw. I just saw contacts. I wasn't paying attention to the lights.

**interviewer:** Okay. So how did you, like what are you seeing when you see the contacts?

**respondent:** Um, I guess I saw the bow of the ship, the pilot house, uh, the bridge, or the yeah, the superstructure.

**interviewer:** It's again 0520ish at this time? Sunrise would have been?

**respondent:** It was still pitch black. Sunrise I think was at 7 or something.

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**interviewer:** So when you're seeing the superstructure is it because it's lit up, is it because there's a Christmas tree on top, what are you seeing on that bridge?

**respondent:** I honestly don't remember.

**interviewer:** Okay. But you saw it.

**respondent:** I saw it.

**interviewer:** So you reported back and then CO and was it the CON, like did they go out with you? Did they go out separately?

**respondent:** The Captain and the CON I'm pretty sure went out together.

**interviewer:** They came back, and they told you anything?

**respondent:** I don't recollect.

**interviewer:** So when you came back in from there is when you started to realizing that the lights were shifting and that you were coming left.

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** Which was shortly after you had just put eyes on the contact.

**respondent:** Yes sir. And then I told the Captain, sir, there's a contact port side.

**interviewer:** But it wasn't clear to you that you were essentially steering in front of the, you were starting to cross the contact's bow?

**respondent:** Right. I guess I didn't realize how fast it was all happening.

**interviewer:** Okay. Did anybody remain out on the bridge wing?

**respondent:** I don't remember.

**interviewer:** During?

**respondent:** I don't remember.

**interviewer:** Do you know where the lookout was at that time?

**respondent:** Um, I don't remember what side of the bridge wing he was.

**interviewer:** Was he on port bridge wing when you went out there?

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**respondent:** I don't remember.

**interviewer:** So again the CO and the CON come in from the bridge wing. Do they have any reaction? Was there anything they said or?

**respondent:** I don't remember.

**interviewer:** How about throughout the evolution, from the time of the announcement of loss of steering, what was the CO's reaction?

**respondent:** Uh, he said slow down, looked up, I remember seeing rudder at midships. He, uh, I think he went to both the bridge wings. And he was asking like what status of getting aft steering manned up and ready, ready for call (incomprehensible) to transferred steering I think to aft steering, and then came back up to the bridge somehow, I think.

**interviewer:** Did he make any orders to you as the OOD? Did he take the deck?

**respondent:** I had the deck. He didn't take it. He didn't say anything, he never said...

**interviewer:** That's right, you had it. Right.

**interviewer:** Do you know if anyone on that bridge was aware that the collision was imminent?

**respondent:** I don't know.

**interviewer:** Is there a specific material condition for the ship during modified NAV?

**respondent:** Uh, we just have more watch standers.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** And then

**interviewer:** No set structural Zebra, (incomprehensible) Zebra.

**respondent:** No, sir. The charts go from intercostal, more detailed charts on the VMS.

**interviewer:** Okay. But nothing else throughout the ship as far as damage control posture or anything like that.

**respondent:** No, sir. We usually don't even go to backup manual. But we were, we decided to go to backup manual just because of the volume of the traffic.

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**interviewer:** Regarding your training, um, because I know you said there's no PQS for like CON, JOOD, or anything. It's just all part of the OOD package, that you're learning things, you're getting things signed off. Is there any specific sit-down training or manuals that you go through? Is it primarily under instruction? Like what kind of training do you do as working on the OOD qualification?

**respondent:** So prior to coming on board I went through BDOC, Basic Division Officer Course. We do a lot of code just like Conning Officer virtual, something. (incomprehensible) do exercises like come in next to a pier, anchoring, man overboard. That's the conning experience I got before coming to the ship.

**interviewer:** So those are simulators?

**respondent:** Simulators. Um, so, when I came up to, I didn't start off as CON. Right away I started as CICWO UI which is COMBAT, CIC Watch Officer. There you learn how to, well, in BDOC you also learn how to do MoBoards and stuff like that. In OCS, you learn how to do MoBoards. So CICWO practicing MoBoards and stuff. And then once you get comfortable as the Conning Officer with the commands and do a bunch of evolutions like anchoring, pulling alongside, RAS, you come up to JOOW where you're doing basically COMMS, MoBoards, radar, hooking tracks on radar. And graduate to JOOD. JOOD essentially like OOD UI. They, also help on MoBoards, kind of give recommendations to OOD. It's kinda like practice as the OOD. When you graduate you have a board, you have several boards before you go see the Captain for OOD.

**respondent:** Do you mind if I use the bathroom real quick?

**interviewer:** Yes, we can definitely pause it.

**interviewer:** We have restarted recording. It's now 1542.

**interviewer:** So, I just had a quick question regarding AIS, how that's used on board the ship, how it integrates into the other equipment. Cause I think you said that was one of the tools you had keeping track of other things. If you could, please explain how AIS is set up on the bridge.

**respondent:** Uh, it's right in the middle of the pilot house and right by the centerline (incomprehensible) and we use it and so does Surface. Surface uses it to compare what he sees on his radar. And we use it to compare what we see on the 73. Um, normal underway steaming it's really helpful with big merchant ships that are transmitting. You can see pretty far away what they're approximate CPA is gonna be because it's a return, but it's just what they're saying what they're doing so it's not 100% accurate but it's a good estimation. But, looking at AIS like you saw exactly where the TSS was and where everyone was entering and where everyone was anchored. So we use it on our approach.

[REDACTED] So what we ended up doing is we would hook the tracks that were at our main point of interest, so like we wouldn't hook all the anchored-

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out vessels cause they obviously weren't gonna be an issue. (incomprehensible) all the TSS and the guys that were going through to help us determine CPAs and stuff. (S)

**interviewer:** And what about integration with the VMS? Are you able to pull up AIS data on VMS?

**respondent:**

**interviewer:** Okay. So when you say you're using AIS, you're using a laptop? Is that kept open all the time or is, do you turn it on and off?

**respondent:** I usually keep it open, make it really dim because you don't want to lose your night vision up there. But I would keep it open, and I would, um, you have a function that you could see like, um, their course speed, CPA, range to CPA, um, time to CPA on it. Um, but there were like probably hundreds of tracks at a time. (incomprehensible) And we were hooking the ones that are of interest (incomprehensible) SWS. I'm pretty sure we had the guy we collided with on AIS as well.

**interviewer:** (coughing in the room) How do you have range, how far out or how close you can get with that?

**respondent:** AIS?

**interviewer:** Uh-um.

**respondent:** I think it's 20, 20 nautical miles is the range, distance. I'm not 100% sure.

**interviewer:** Okay.

**respondent:** Sometimes it picks it up earlier.

**interviewer:** And you can alter those ranges, like 6, 20, 2, go in and out, or is it set as only 20?

**respondent:** Oh, so it starts picking up tracks, I believe around 20, but you can zoom in. You can zoom in to as far as, as close or as far away as you want. So you can zoom in to just see 5 nautical miles around you.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

interviewer: Uh-um.

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interviewer: Okay. Would the, the tanker, do you think it was within that?

respondent: I don't know.

interviewer: Could you see it on the radar?

respondent: Um, I believe so. I don't (incomprehensible)

interviewer: Um, shifting gears a little bit here. We've been told by various people we've interviewed about a, that there have been a few UNREPS during this deployment prior to, uh, specifically one towards the end of July with JSDF Japanese Self Defense Force and then two in the month of August with the [REDACTED] I was wondering if you could tell me what your role was for those different UNREPS, if you were on the watch bill, if you were on the bridge.

respondent: I was the JOOD for the one with the Japanese ship, one of them. I forgot what the name of it was. We did two with the Japanese ship. I was the JOOD for the first one. And I don't think. I was Helm Safety for one of them, I forget which one it was. I was Helm Safety for one of them.

interviewer: With the JSDF?

respondent: No, I think it, I, uh, oh I think it was, I don't remember which one it was. I don't think it was with the JSDF.

interviewer: Helm Safety with the [REDACTED]

respondent: Maybe? I can't recall.

interviewer: Okay.

respondent: We do a lot of RES.

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**interviewer:** Do you generally have a watch position on the bridge for UNREPS?

**respondent:** It depends. It depends.

**interviewer:** Not necessarily.

**respondent:** Not necessarily. Um, the way we've been doing it recently is whoever is supposed to have watch at that time takes the deck along with the extra watch stander.

**interviewer:** Augmented watch standers. Okay. Um, following the UNREP, the second UNREP with the JSDF, and the two UNREPs with the [REDACTED], were you ever made aware or did you observe any crossing of the bow of the UNREP ship or unconventional break away with?

**respondent:** No, not while I was on watch.

**interviewer:** Not when you were on watch.

**respondent:** No, sir.

**interviewer:** Did you participate in any of the debriefs that may have taken place after something like that?

**respondent:** (no audible response)

**interviewer:** Okay.

**interviewer:** Have you heard of any close calls during these UNREPS, maybe something that came up during a talk in the wardroom or some training or something of anything that was out of the ordinary?

**respondent:** Um, trying to think. I don't think so.

**interviewer:** Okay. Do you ever do lessons learned like close calls and stuff and say hey while we were on watch last night we had this come up, keep an eye on it?

**respondent:** We have an OOD pass down log that we write stuff down. Usually we write any faults that we have. So we have had some minor major communications faults with the HPUs like pretty frequently actually, but never a loss of steering. One time I relieved the OOD and they were in autopilot and they had steering at the BCCS, which is where the Helm Forward station. They had called away loss of steering because I think the screen froze. That was the, but I don't know if it was actually because there was loss of steering or the screen froze or whatever, but they called man aft steering. They regained right away. What they did was they pressed the big red button on the SCC and they regained control.

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**interviewer:** On the morning of the 21st autopilot was not used?

**respondent:** No, sir.

**interviewer:** Is that attached to any specific station or can any station be in place and hit autopilot?

**respondent:** The station that has control can choose autopilot.

**interviewer:** Okay. So it's an option on the menu?

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** I'm gonna check my notes one more time.

**interviewer:** Well, we definitely appreciate your time here today and all the information you've provided to us. It's definitely going to help us out in trying to piece everything together. We want to open the floor to you in case you had any questions for us or if there's any information that didn't come up during our interview today that you want to make sure that you're aware of.

**respondent:** Um. (incomprehensible)

**interviewer:** It's totally fine. If you do come up with any questions or something comes into your mind later that you want to talk to us about, do feel free to reach out. We'd be glad to sit with you again and discuss that information.

**interviewer:** (b) (5), can I ask one question?

**interviewer:** Yes.

**interviewer:** What do you think happened?

**respondent:** What do I think happened? Honestly, (laughing) (sigh) I don't know. Because if you're to follow the EOCC actions steering should have always remained in aft steering. It should not have been brought back up. From what I think happened, somehow it came back up to the bridge. I, I don't know how. I never told the CON to order. I'm pretty sure the CON never said bring steering back. If you follow the EOCC it says bring it to aft steering. Never ever once does it say bring it back up to the bridge.

**interviewer:** Uh-um.

**respondent:** So, I don't know.

**interviewer:** You've actually triggered a good question, that I had completely forgot. When you are in manual, backup manual...

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**respondent:** Backup manual?

**interviewer:** ...what signal shows up on the other screens? Like is there an option to, uh, take control at any other station? Does it blink? Is there anything special that comes up if one station is in manual, backup manual?

**respondent:** So if you switch to backup manual all stations will show that they're in backup manual. So, if we switch to backup manual the SCC, Helm Forward station shows backup manual.

**interviewer:** Okay. So they just show what's going on, on the main screen. Is there any way to take control or is it that same process we talked before where it's, you know, request and give?

**respondent:** The handshake

**interviewer:** The handshake.

**respondent:** Like I said, unless you press the big red button. That overrides everything.

**interviewer:** Right.

**interviewer:** So, the final thing I want to say here is we ask that you not discuss this interview with other crew members, simply because we want to make sure everyone's stories and details stay separate. We don't want to start mixing things together.

**respondent:** Yes sir.

**interviewer:** Thank you so much for your time.