

F/V EMMY ROSE STATEMENT

I was the qualified underway Officer of the Deck at the time of these events. Prior to the following events VIGOROUS was diverted for SAR by Coast Guard District One at 0154, tasked to actively search for the fishing vessel EMMY ROSE. At approximately 0200, my bridge team and I noted a white light flashing at regular intervals of two seconds. The light was approximately eight nautical miles ahead of us off our port bow. After reviewing the RADAR, AIS, and other bridge equipment, I determined no vessels, aids to navigation, or fishing gear should be located in the area. After shortening the distance to five miles, I noticed a dome shape below the light, as well as noticed a faint smell of fuel that was unlike the fumes of our own ship. VIGOROUS shifted TACON to District One at 0301. At 0305 an MH-60 Coast Guard helicopter arrived on scene. The same fuel-like odor reappeared later at 0310, and it was determined that it was diesel. Still no radar information was available at this time. Approximately two miles away from the light, I noticed several pieces of wood drifting in the water, and the dome shape under the light had an orange hue. I could not determine the color of the wood, as it was floating slightly below the surface of the water. Before closing within 500 yards of the light, another small blinking light became visible to me at the waters surface approximately 400 yards to the west of the first light. This turned out to be the vessel's EPIRB. The helicopter illuminated the first light I saw. At this point I realized it was a life raft that was emitting the light. At this time, I was unsure if there were survivors on board or not. The life raft appeared to be in good condition, there were no tears or signs of damage. However, the door flap for the raft was open. I could see inside the raft. Several additional pieces of debris were spotted to the west, including two fish crates approximately 500 yards away. Soon after, at approximately 0316, the Rescue and Assistance bill was set, as I was unable to navigate through the debris and handle the situation on my own. Additionally, the fishing vessel GUARDIAN was the only other vessel in the area, located 10 miles east of the life raft. This statement is true to the best of my knowledge.


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