

CUI

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Standard Form 901 (11-18)
Prescribed by GSA/ISOO | 32 CFR 2002

CUI

1 UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
 2
 3 PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
 4 BEHALF OF NTSB BY THE U.S. COAST GUARD
 5
 6 REAR ADMIRAL [REDACTED]: I'm [REDACTED]. I'm the
 7 Admiral in charge. Have a seat and we'll uh introduce
 8 everyone and get started. All right. So, again, my name
 9 is [REDACTED]. I am the uh um Flag Officer in charge of
 10 the investigation for the Navy. Um, supporting me today I
 11 have two lawyers. I have uh Commander [REDACTED] and Commander
 12 [REDACTED]. Both Judge Advocate General Navy lawyers. YN2
 13 [REDACTED] will be taking notes. And, uh Master Chief
 14 [REDACTED] serving as my de facto CMC Senior Enlisted, so.
 15 During the uh interview today we won't be asking you any
 16 questions. It'll all be the Coast Guard uh who'll I'll let
 17 Lieutenant [REDACTED] introduce his team, which does include
 18 Captain [REDACTED] serving as a Liaison Officer, so this side of
 19 the house will be doing all the questions today.
 20 [REDACTED] Okay.
 21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, good afternoon.
 22 [REDACTED] Good afternoon sir.
 23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] I am Lieutenant [REDACTED]
 24 the Senior Investigating Officer for the U.S. Coast Guard
 25 Activities Far East here in Japan. Under the Authority of

Audio transcription - [REDACTED]

2

1 Title 46, U.S. Code 6301 and Title 46 CFR Part 4 an
2 investigation is being conducted into the circumstances of
3 the collision between the USS Fitzgerald and the ACX
4 Crystal, which occurred on June 17, 2017. This
5 investigation is intended to determine the cause of the
6 casualty to the extent possible and to obtain information
7 for the purpose of preventing similar casualties in the
8 future. To assist with the accuracy of our investigation,
9 we will be recording today's interview, which is taking
10 place on June 24th at 13:20. Assisting me, I have Mr.
11 [REDACTED] from the Coast Guard's National Center of Expertise
12 for Investigations. I also have Lieutenant Commander
13 [REDACTED] who works with me in our office and is a previous
14 Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Cutter. And, I have
15 Captain [REDACTED] who is working as a Liaison Officer to help
16 balance communications between ourselves and the Navy and
17 make sure we understand Naval Operations. Uh before we
18 start, I want to ensure that you know that if at any time
19 you need something to drink, you need to take a breather,
20 get some fresh air, whatever you need, we can hit pause on
21 the recorder and come back to it. So, please let us know
22 if there's anything you need. Likewise, in our questioning
23 if there's something that I ask that you simply don't know
24 the answer to, there's no problem saying I don't know. Uh,
25 we don't want you to try making things up and speculate it

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1 could've been this, I don't -- if you don't know it's fine
2 to say I don't know.

3 [REDACTED] Okay.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Understood? Any questions?

5 [REDACTED] No sir.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right. And if we could begin
7 with your uh name, first and last.

8 [REDACTED] Uh [REDACTED]

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And, I will ask for spelling on
10 that.

11 [REDACTED] Uh, it's [REDACTED].

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Thank you. And your position
13 aboard the vessel?

14 [REDACTED] Um, OS2. Um, I am in OI Operations
15 Department and um underway I stand uh SWS (Surface Warfare
16 Supervisor).

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Thank you. How long have you been
18 in the Navy?

19 [REDACTED] Three and a half years. Joined
20 [REDACTED]

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Is the uh Fitzgerald your first
22 vessel?

23 [REDACTED] It's my first ship, yes.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And when did you get aboard?

25 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so been on for a couple of
2 years now, and or uh a l-little over a year.

3 [REDACTED] Yeah.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Seen, seen how normal operations
5 are getting underway.

6 [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Uh been out to sea for some time,
8 including a dry dock period, I believe, last year.

9 [REDACTED] Yeah, it was right when we got
10 here, or-or right when I got here we went into dry docks.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did they put you on any other
12 vessels as well during that dry dock period?

13 [REDACTED] Negative sir.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, dry dock period and earlier
15 this year was the um testing, ship testing, and then a full
16 cruise uh somewhere out in the Pacific.

17 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Are you uh fully qualified at the
19 uh SWS position?

20 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And was that qualification done
22 through an A school or is that onboard?

23 [REDACTED] That is a uh ship-board PQS, sir.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] How long did you take it, take to
25 complete that?

1 [REDACTED] Um, I want to say around two
2 months, I was UI.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. Excellent. So, as you said
4 the vessel had gone underway for a little bit, came back to
5 home port here sometime in early June, had a port period of
6 a little over a week, I believe.

7 [REDACTED] I think it was exactly a week, sir.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Hmm. And then got underway again
9 on June 16th, uh Friday a week ago?

10 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did you get a lot of rest during
12 that port period?

13 [REDACTED] During the port period? Yes sir, I
14 did.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do you remember what time you woke
16 up on Friday to get ready for the deployment?

17 [REDACTED] 4:45 um we had to be there at 6:00
18 and I live on base so I walk. It's about a 15-minute walk,
19 and I at 0445.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And what sort of preparations did
21 you have to uh assist with in getting the vessel ready for
22 uh getting underway?

23 [REDACTED] Um, the only thing I really did
24 before we went underway was I did maintenance on one of
25 the, we have pre-underway checks that the OS's do in Combat

Audio transcription - [REDACTED]

6

1 and I did maintenance on the Aztec [phonetic] console and
2 other than that I just stood by until sea and anchor.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And then getting underway are you
4 in the CIC or is there any particular duty you have to
5 stand?

6 [REDACTED] Uh, well when we're getting
7 underway for the sea and anchor I-I stand watch on the boat
8 deck for whenever we need to, if we ever need to drop the
9 boat in the water I'm up there for the entire sea and
10 anchor.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right. So, going out to sea
12 and anchor did some ammo transfers or something, got
13 underway again. I heard there was maybe some Flight Ops
14 that occurred.

15 [REDACTED] Yes. Um I'm on the Crash and
16 Salvage team, so I was a part of the uh, I'm on uh the-the
17 fire team for that, so I was a part of the Flight Ops. I
18 think it was about, I can't exactly recall it. It was like
19 3-1/2 hours I think around there. That's what it felt like
20 at least.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. But in the late afternoon,
22 maybe earlier evening time period?

23 [REDACTED] Uh, that ended at 2145 around that
24 area.

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1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. And, so your watch is that
2 midwatch there 22 to 02?

3 [REDACTED] Yes. I was supposed to stand the
4 uh 17 to 22 but because I was on uh Flight Ops they put the
5 person that was supposed to relieve me on my watch and I
6 ended up taking his.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so you did switch watch
8 between uh one other crew member?

9 [REDACTED] Yes.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And then following Flight Ops,
11 I've heard that there was a Boat Ops period.

12 [REDACTED] Yes.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Were you involved with that as
14 well or did you go to watch?

15 [REDACTED] I was standing watch in Combat when
16 that happened.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So roughly when Flight Ops ended
18 about 2145, you went down to CIC to start your next, next
19 watch?

20 [REDACTED] Yes.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did you get any rest during the
22 day uh?

23 [REDACTED] No sir.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So no sleep?

1 [REDACTED] I took a nap between like 07 and
2 08. I don't remember for how long.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. So earlier in the day?

4 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

5 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right. Uh, so 2145 you take
6 watch. Anything interesting to report at the time? Like,
7 like what is the changeover for, for SWS?

8 [REDACTED] Yeah. So, uh whenever I get to the
9 console the person that's standing the watch before me um
10 they let me know what they have on the screen, what they've
11 been tracking, um, usually if we have any contacts of
12 interest, which we didn't, or if we're doing anything
13 specific um they'll let me know. But, that, that's usually
14 the turnover process.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. And when you say screen
16 what are you looking at?

17 [REDACTED] I'm looking at the console. It's
18 just a little um I don't know the, just a little TV screen
19 pretty much.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

21 [REDACTED] And it's just the, the radar.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And which radar would that be?

23 [REDACTED] Uh 67.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Are you able to pull up the other
25 ones, the 73?

1 [REDACTED] We can use 73.

2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] On that same screen?

3 [REDACTED] On the same screen, yes.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Any other tools that you use to
5 help uh besides the screen to help give you an idea of
6 what's going on?

7 [REDACTED] Um. Not so much tools, just my
8 Surface um ES AIS and stuff like that. Um, but other than
9 that no, all I have is my radar, and if the Bridge were to
10 report anything down.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And, and I'm still trying to
12 understand who's who and what spaces. Um, so as SWS,
13 Surface reports to you?

14 [REDACTED] No, I'm basically Surface's
15 assistance. He puts contacts in and my job is to, I'm --
16 he puts tracks in on top of uh video feed that we have
17 through the radar and my job is to update um those tracks
18 to stay with the contacts so we have an accurate -- it'll
19 make a box over the little uh radar video and it just tells
20 us our course and speed and I just update it.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Is there an automated option as
22 well? Is the computer able to calculate that and figure
23 that out or is that something --?

1 [REDACTED] I believe there is an option but
2 it's not. I-I've never used, I've always automatically
3 done it.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] So, is the normal mode for you to man
5 the track.

6 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

8 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] So, it requires manual updating by the
10 operator?

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And, when you say updating that
12 information is that as simple as you like clicking on a
13 target and it pulls up the information or are you --

14 [REDACTED] I'm just making sure that it
15 doesn't drop out, so basically um as time goes the contact,
16 if I don't it's called POSCOR, which is position
17 correction. If I don't do that, it'll drop out, so I'm
18 literally just there to make sure that the uh, among other
19 things to make sure that the contact doesn't drop out.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. And, I've also heard
21 there's another position OSS, which is a camera?

22 [REDACTED] That is correct.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And do they report to you or
24 Surface?

1 [REDACTED] So, it's kind of um back and forth.
2 If they see something, they will let us know or if Surface
3 sees something in AIS that he doesn't see on the screen he
4 can tell OSS to move the camera to that position to see if
5 he can see anything or if there is ever a time where there
6 is uh video feed that I'm not sure if it's a contact or
7 weather or uh sea clutter, I'll ask him to check it out.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, it's kind of an open resource.
9 Any of you can ask, hey please take a look at it.

10 [REDACTED] Yeah.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Is there a priority on who gets
12 first call if both of you have something you want to look
13 at?

14 [REDACTED] I mean me and Surface work
15 together, so I would usually -- I usually run it through
16 Surface like I'll ask the Surface hey can you ask OSS if he
17 can move the camera to whatever bearing.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Excellent. So, again it's Friday
19 the 16th, we're underway, uh you've just taken the watch,
20 the 21:45, uh is the vessel underway at this time or are
21 they still doing the Boat Ops?

22 [REDACTED] We were underway the whole time.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Underway. How would you explain
24 or describe the traffic in that time when you were
25 underway?

1 [REDACTED] Um, the radar screen was uh really
2 bad. There was a lot of clutter. I couldn't see a lot,
3 um, but other than that I remember only tracking about two
4 or three contacts that were flight and I can't remember
5 exactly how far but they were nowhere near us pretty much
6 and I believe they were going the opposite direction.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Explain this clutter to me.

8 [REDACTED] So, I-I'm just an operator, so I
9 can't tell you a lot about how radar works. I'm not too um
10 knowledgeable in that area but a lot of the times when
11 we're as close to land as we were we get a lot of return so
12 the radar shoots out and when it picks something up it'll
13 show that video back to us but when we're close to land and
14 the weather's bad um we pick up everything. Like the radar
15 can pick up clouds, the radar can pick up the curves of a
16 wave, um and it sends land back to us, so it's just a
17 bunch of like -- like imagine like the white fuzzy stuff on
18 a, on a TV when like a channel drops.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

20 [REDACTED] That's how it looks. Basically,
21 just a ring of it around the whole ship and then like
22 further out I can see, but --

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Would you have a rough idea of
24 those scales of what, how, the distance that was cluttered
25 the distance that was clear.

1 [REDACTED] Um, I don't know sir.

2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, what happens if there's a
3 vessel in that clutter? Is it just more difficult to track
4 it?

5 [REDACTED] Um, for the most part I can't see
6 it if it's in the clutter. If it's uh really bad, I can't
7 see at all and it was pretty bad that night.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Are you able to make adjustments to
9 the gain?

10 [REDACTED] I am able to make adjustments sir
11 and uh I did um. I adjusted it the best I could.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] All right. Fair enough. Thank you.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Is there anything that like an ET
14 or, or whoever works on the electronics who might be able
15 to improve that?

16 [REDACTED] I don't believe so, sir.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And in your previous operations in
18 this area uh is that clutter, is this clutter common during
19 your departure from Yo-Yokosuka?

20 [REDACTED] To be honest, sir, this was the
21 first time I actually stood uh that watch while leaving
22 Yokosuka. Um, I wasn't the last two times we left I wasn't
23 qualified.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Have you had any previous
2 experience, like in between say Tokyo and Nagoya where all,
3 a lot of the marine traffic is?

4 [REDACTED] Uh, I-I don't think so sir.

5 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] But a-along the shores as, as
6 you're getting underway uh the vessel's heading on a
7 southerly course, uh from what you could see at your
8 station for marine traffic nothing really concerning, this
9 feels like normal traffic, a couple of vessels at sea.

10 [REDACTED] It was -- nothing seemed to be out
11 of the ordinary as far as traffic.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]

13 MR. [REDACTED] You said this was your first time
14 standing this watch out of this port. Have you stood other
15 watches in congested ports prior to this?

16 [REDACTED] Um, well, uh we've been to Sasebo.
17 This deployment we went to Sasebo, Guam, and um the
18 Philippines, and I can't remember if I stood watch at the
19 time that we were leaving but I've stood watch in congested
20 areas, yes.

21 MR. [REDACTED] And in those congested areas were
22 you experiencing the same clutter.

23 [REDACTED] Um, I mean clutter on the screen
24 isn't necessarily due to -- I think the congested areas
25 definitely have like, like have the more uh effect on it

1 but I mean we can, the radar can get like that in the
2 middle of the ocean, so I have had experience with clutter
3 like that before, yes, um and I was trained on how to fix
4 that to the best of our abilities using like the toggle
5 options on the screen and uh most of the time it works just
6 fine. Uh, a lot of times it doesn't though, as well. And,
7 uh this time I adjusted it to the best that I could.

8 MR. [REDACTED] In those other times when, when
9 that was an issue did you call anybody, make a report?

10 [REDACTED] I-I always just tell -- whenever
11 it's bad I always just tell the Work Center Sup. I'm sorry
12 the-the Watch Sup.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Since you brought up the uh Watch
14 Sup, how was the communications that night between uh the
15 folks you were working with on Surface and the uh
16 supervisors there in the CIC you were reporting to?

17 [REDACTED] I would say it was really good. It
18 was the first watch of the underway that we were all
19 standing and uh everyone was standing a vigilant watch.
20 Um, the only, the only um fault in communication that I
21 remember is um whenever the Bridge was calling down there
22 was a lot of course changes and uh I don't know if it was
23 Comms or if it was the person that was calling down just
24 wasn't speaking up, but we could barely hear them, so um a

1 couple of times I had to call back up twice and ask them to
2 repeat the course changes.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did they tell you why they were
4 changing course?

5 [REDACTED] Uh, no. They, if the TAO needs to
6 know why she'll call up and ask, but all I do as far as
7 course change is the Bridge will say Combat Bridge change
8 course whatever, and I'll just repeat it and then uh I
9 always roger up to the course changes the SWS does and
10 Watch Sup just records it in a log. Those are my only
11 responsibilities as far as course and speed changes.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do they tell you if they do a
13 course change based on uh collision avoidance, like there
14 may be a vessel that they feel, eh let's move a little to
15 the side. Do they tell you that?

16 [REDACTED] Um, I've actually, I-I believe that
17 would, would happen yes sir. I've never been in that
18 situation, except for this time and that, that didn't
19 happen, but I would assume that in that situation they
20 would say that. They are supposed to say that.

21 LCDR [REDACTED] So, more generally, when uh the Bridge
22 calls down and says you know uh Combat Bridge coming right
23 220, do they give you, is that followed by an explanation?

24 [REDACTED] Negative sir.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, so it's just, there just telling
2 you action they take, and they don't put it in context as a
3 matter of habit?

4 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And wh--I'm sorry. And, when they,
7 they pass uh down those course changes is there any
8 required uh like kind -- I'll, I'll use that as a Nav eval
9 statement you know I, I hold track 200 say for 4,000 yards
10 until next turn, next turn and X number of minutes.

11 [REDACTED] Um, I believe that is a
12 responsibility of the Surface.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Of Surface?

14 [REDACTED] Yes.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Just to make sure I'm clear on the
16 role, as SWS and you're watching the radar your primary
17 duty is contact tracking or what, what is your primary duty
18 in watching that radar?

19 [REDACTED] My primary duty is to uh keep up a
20 Surface picture for Combat. So, the way it works is
21 Surface will see a contact or if SWS sees a contact um they
22 will uh, they'll track that contact, they'll create a
23 contact over the track over the video um, and then so
24 Surface will put in the contact and then my job is to
25 update the position of it and keep it alive.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So yours isn't exactly identifying
2 contacts, it's keeping track of the ones that have been
3 identified?

4 [REDACTED] That's correct, sir.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] Just one clarification there. It's
6 not just contacts that have been identified. It's any
7 relevant Surface contact that has been identified from
8 radar video. Like it could be a pending track. Right? If
9 it hasn't been identified yet? But you're going to
10 maintain track on it manually if you've been directed by
11 Surface or if you've identified it's obviously some kind of
12 a ship. You know, you're going to put it in the system
13 yourself right?

14 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] And over time, if it gets identified
16 then you add more and more and more information to the
17 track right?

18 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you.

20 [REDACTED] Well, when you say add to the --

21 LCDR [REDACTED] So, like it, it starts up as a pending
22 track and all you know is that it's a Surface contact,
23 right?

24 [REDACTED] Yes.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] And then maybe somebody gets a visual
2 and then it gets evaluated and the, the symbology changes
3 and then you guys start filling in the data -- you have the
4 option of filling in data into the track store right?

5 [REDACTED] Yeah, certain, certain stuff, yes
6 sir.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Right.

8 [REDACTED] We can, we can add the um the ID to
9 it so like it's the 4-digit code where it's the origin and
10 the platform. Um, most of the time whenever there's a
11 contact and we know it's a Surface contact, uh we'll put it
12 in as an unknown Surface. Um, Surface will then look at
13 AIS and see if we have any information on it. Um, most of
14 the time we do. If not, OSS can identify the ship. Um,
15 like if it's during the daytime they can see a flag or they
16 can see uh the name of the vessel and that's usually how we
17 identify.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, if you identified something on
19 your radar, do you add that in as, as a contact to track,
20 or do you br-brief Surface and say hey I saw this over
21 here, do you see that?

22 [REDACTED] Yeah. If I see something on the
23 screen, um that's gone past Surface, I'll just tell him.
24 I'll say sir, or ma'am or Chief whatever, we've got this

Audio transcription - [REDACTED]

20

1 contact uh can you try to get an ID on it so I can create a
2 track.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right. And, and you don't, so
4 there's no hesitation -- there's no barrier there to say
5 hey Surface what is this?

6 [REDACTED] No.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Yeah, how, how close do you and
8 Surface sit to each other?

9 [REDACTED] Right next to each other.

10 LCDR [REDACTED] Yeah. So like if you could give me,
11 give us an exact distance.

12 [REDACTED] Um, pretty much me and Master
13 Chief.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] So 2 feet?

15 [REDACTED] Probably a little more.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay 2-3 feet.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, the watches continue on, the
18 vessel's continuing on its track, some course changes that
19 we're not sure why they changed but we're keeping track of
20 where we're going still. Are there any updates or anything
21 you have to do to the VMS or is that just automatic of
22 we're on this track now?

23 [REDACTED] Um, no, VMS is not, is not me.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay and whom might do that?

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1 [REDACTED] Um, most of it's taken care of on
2 the Bridge I believe. I don't think we update it at all
3 down in Combat.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] Do you have any interaction in your
5 capacity of SWS with VMS?

6 [REDACTED] No, sir.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, it's a little after midnight
8 now, you, you switch over at uh 1:45?

9 [REDACTED] Correct.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. So, it's uh 0100, still on
11 that southerly course, any contacts come to mind as being
12 unusual or closer than normal or anything that raises
13 tension or alarm on the uh watch?

14 [REDACTED] From what I recall, sir, I had n-
15 nothing physical within a maybe greater than 10-mile,
16 nautical mile radius. But, like I said, within the clutter
17 I couldn't see anything.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mm-hmm. And, and, again we are
19 unsure how far that clutter was?

20 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so, it could be and tell me
22 if I'm getting you know absurd here. Uh, you know, uh as-
23 as little as one nautical mile. Could it be nine nautical
24 miles?

1 [REDACTED] It could. Yes sir. That's uh, I
2 mean it varies, so there's no way I mean it's, it's
3 unexpected. I know the clutter was in, it was in a perfect
4 circle around our ship. Um, and it was thick.

5 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do you know if this was ever
6 communicated to the Bridge? That uh --

7 [REDACTED] I can't remember sir.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Would, would you call that a
9 degradation of your capabilities with having this clutter
10 in place?

11 [REDACTED] Uh, not fully, but to an extent.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Cause with the clutter in place
13 what's, what's the CIC's primary means of identifying
14 contacts?

15 [REDACTED] Um, it would be Lookouts and OSS.
16 So, the Bridge and OSS.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Was OSS picking up a lot of
18 contacts?

19 [REDACTED] Um, I think there were -- you mean
20 like using the camera? Was he seeing a lot?

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Yeah.

22 [REDACTED] I can't, I can't remember sir. I
23 know him and Surface were communicating a lot through the
24 night.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Like, and so in times of this
2 increased clutter do you know if they start doing like a
3 general scan, just roving, or is it a certain time -- how,
4 how, how do you, you use OSS to help increase your picture?

5 [REDACTED] Um, so there's a, I think there's
6 a-n option where, I f-forgot what it's called but the
7 camera will just keep scanning and uh I-I remember him
8 saying that he was using it and he had walked over, OSS had
9 walked over to my console I believe around the time that I
10 was toggling with the options to try to fix my picture.
11 Um, so he was aware of it, that I couldn't see to a certain
12 extent, and I think um, well yeah, he-he knew that there
13 was clutter on my screen. And I don't know if that's why
14 he put that option on or if that was normal uh operation-
15 operating standards for him but that's, that's what he was
16 using from what he said.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And we, we haven't talked to OSS
18 yet, so some of these questions probably are better for
19 him, but uh is that camera 360 or what's the limited range
20 on that?

21 [REDACTED] Um, there is, because of I think
22 the location of it and I don't know all the specs -- um he
23 could answer it better -- I think there is a blind spot and
24 I think it is aft.

25 LCDR [REDACTED] That's correct.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, it's primarily for looking and
2 to the sides you can get a pretty good view?

3 [REDACTED] Yes. Yes.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And, then hopefully my last
5 question on this. Does it automatically select targets?
6 As, as the camera's scanning across can it point something
7 out that probably is a vessel or a contact?

8 [REDACTED] The camera?

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Yes.

10 [REDACTED] I don't believe so, sir.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Alright so we're at 0100, no
12 contacts within 10 nautical miles. No--nothing's been
13 communicated from the Bridge of any contacts that they've
14 seen.

15 [REDACTED] Nothing.

16 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Were there many other, other than
17 the course changes, any significant Comms from Bridge?

18 [REDACTED] There was a couple of speed
19 changes.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Any rough ideas on those times or
21 would that be in the log somewhere?

22 [REDACTED] Um, that's logged sir in the
23 General Log.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Any of them stick out to you in
25 particular?

1 [REDACTED] Um, I remember the last, it might
2 not be the last, but the one that I do remember is when we
3 sped up to 20 knots. Um, we were going really slow for the
4 Boat Ops and then we gradually got up to 20 knots.

5 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so, some course changes, a
6 little speed changes. No reports of contacts from the
7 Bridge. So walk me up to the collision. What what's going
8 on at the time.

9 [REDACTED] Um, standing my watch, looking at
10 my screen. Um, the contacts that I did have, which were
11 further away, I was normal procedure updating them. Um,
12 last thing I remember uh Surface said something to OSS and
13 I think it was uh look at 162 or maybe 163. And, he did
14 and after that we just got hit.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Question. When SWS -- when Surface uh
16 directs OSS, in this case he says look at 162, is that a
17 relative bearing or a true bearing.

18 [REDACTED] Uh, that would be, that would be
19 true sir. That would be true.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, so it'd be 162 true.

21 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So those few contacts that you
24 were tracking. Could you say if that was to the portside,

1 starboard side, are they heading away from the vessel? Wh-
2 what can you remember of those contacts you were tracking?

3 [REDACTED] Not a lot sir. Just that they were
4 near like, they, they were further out past the clutter. I
5 could see them. I don't remember their speed, their
6 course, um I don't even really remember where they were in
7 relevance to us.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] That's fine. Thank you. Just,
9 just trying to see if we can't line up some, some things
10 we've heard from other folks of saying who was what and
11 where. Just trying to get that picture in our own heads.
12 So the vessels hit. What happens in the CIC?

13 [REDACTED] I mean. When it hit, like everyone
14 was like you know freaked out a little bit at first.
15 Innocently, I heard OPS say set ZEBRA, and I sprinted out
16 of the Combat to the starboard side P-way. Um, I mean I
17 knew something bad happened just how it felt. I-I I knew,
18 I knew we got hit by something, so I went out to right,
19 the P-way right outside of Combat on the starboard
20 side and I set ZEBRA. And that's when I, after I got ZEBRA
21 set I ran to my repair locker.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And which locker would that be?

23 [REDACTED] Uh repair 5.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mr. [REDACTED].

1 MR. [REDACTED] Um, correct me if I'm wrong.
2 There's multiple screens in CIC. Was any of the other
3 screens showing 67 and if so were they having the same
4 clutter issues?
5 [REDACTED] Surface was showing. He, he
6 should've been on 67. I don't remember verifying this.
7 There is no reason why he wasn't on 67. Um, he did not
8 have the same clutter I had. I remember at one point I
9 looked at his screen for his options. He, he, there was
10 some clutter. It wasn't as bad as mine. I-I checked his
11 options on my screen so I could switch them to the exact to
12 see if that would help but nothing changed for me. Um,
13 other than that, I don't believe anyone else was using the
14 67, sir.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Is there a uh chat computer
16 located near you?

17 [REDACTED] Um, Surface mans that.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Surface mans that?

19 [REDACTED] Yes.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do you happen to know if chat was
21 particularly busy that night during watch?

22 [REDACTED] I can't recall sir.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Uh, were you in Combat for the
24 entire watch?

Audio transcription - [REDACTED]

28

1 [REDACTED] Um, because of the busy day that I
2 had and I'd just come from uh Flight Ops about 15 minutes
3 in I-I wasn't expecting to stand watch. I went in there to
4 check in and that's when they told me. So, I think I sat
5 down for 5 minutes, 10 minutes maybe, and then I asked um
6 OS1 [REDACTED] [phonetic] Watch Sup if I could go take a
7 shower. Um, so the UI OS3 [REDACTED] took the console from me
8 and I went down. I don't think I was more than 10 or 15
9 minutes. And, other than that I-I came back and sat in the
10 console. That was right at the beginning of the watch.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And you said approximately like 10 to
12 15 minutes into, into your watch time?

13 [REDACTED] Uh, yes.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Uh, during your watch did the XO, CO,
15 any Senior Department Heads visit Combat?

16 [REDACTED] I don't think so. I can't really
17 remember, but I don't think so.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And, uh, during your watch was uh was
19 Combat particularly busy? Was there a lot of chatter over
20 Net 15 or um any one particular person uh not too focused
21 on their duties not being aware of what's going on?

22 [REDACTED] It seemed like a normal night in
23 Combat, sir.

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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] A normal night in Combat? Um, as part
2 of your watch station you're required to take a uh Nav
3 Rules Exam or uh Rules of the Road Examination?

4 [REDACTED] No sir.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Okay.

6 LCDR [REDACTED] Are you required to read the CO
7 Standing Orders?

8 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] And, uh in your own words what, what
10 are those standing orders say to you as a watch stander?

11 [REDACTED] Um, basically stand a vigilant
12 watch, uh communication, and I mean just it, it touched up
13 a lot of vigilance to me. That's what I always got out of
14 it. Just don't mess around on watch, take it serious for
15 the most part among other things.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] As part of uh your rounds in preparing
17 for watch have you ever been encouraged to visit the
18 Bridge, check in with the Bridge to get a visual display of
19 what's going on in the --

20 [REDACTED] You mean like before my watch?

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Before your watch, yeah.

22 [REDACTED] No sir.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] So, it's usually just straight to
24 Combat?

25 [REDACTED] Always.

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Always. I think that's it.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] OS2 where are you from?

3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

4 LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] So when did you uh, when

5 did you qualify SWS? How long have you been qualified?

6 [REDACTED] Um, whenever we left Subic Bay, I

7 think the first time.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] So, what, what month would that be?

9 [REDACTED] Uh, I think it was either March or

10 April, sir.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, so in the last two or three

12 months?

13 [REDACTED] Yes.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

15 [REDACTED] Uh, this, this last deployment was

16 when I got qualified.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. And have you been, have you

18 been standing SWS consistently since you got qualified?

19 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. And, if I understood you right,

21 uh on the, on the night of the 17th of June that was the

22 first time you had been standing SWS leaving Yokosuka?

23 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Is that right?

25 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Had you stood watch as SWS uh
2 on an inbound track into Yokosuka?

3 [REDACTED] Uh no sir because I usually man sea
4 and anchor for that and I'm, for-for the majority of this
5 deployment I've been um topside, actually the entire
6 deployment I've been topside for sea and anchor. So,
7 whenever we come inbound or when we leave um I never stand
8 SWS.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. All right. Um, do you recall
10 what the Captain's Standard is and his standing orders for
11 uh, uh CPA range mandatory reporting?

12 [REDACTED] Um, I'm a little fuzzy on it now,
13 10 nautical miles.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. So do you recall any, let's see
15 you came out and you did, you did Flight Ops, you did Boat
16 Ops, and, and you departed the Tsunami 1 [phonetic]
17 probably around 2300, 2330 right. So you were actually on
18 watch while you were still doing Boat Ops, right?

19 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. And, then you guys shaped
21 course southwest and you started moving out and you
22 accelerated to 20 knots. Uh, and then the collision
23 occurred 2-1/2-3 hours later or so. During, that, that
24 period when you were actually transiting, do you recall any
25 close CPAs where you know for a fact that the ship maneuver

Audio transcription - [REDACTED]

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1 to avoid or to manage the CPA or, or there was clear
2 discussion between the Bridge and you or the Bridge and SWS
3 about a contact that was going to have a close CPA?

4 [REDACTED] Uh, uh, I can't remember so. I
5 don't believe something significant like that happened, but
6 I'm, I'm real fuzzy on it all.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Um, do you recall any
8 discussions cause -- cause you're on Net 15 right?

9 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

10 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, so you're listening to the
11 chatter between the Bridge and, and Surface and the Bridge
12 and EOOW and you're talking on Net 15 too right?

13 [REDACTED] Uh, yes sir.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. All right. So you're, you're
15 plugged into that Net.

16 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Do you recall any, any conversations
18 on Net 15 about uh the OOD making any calls to the captain
19 to make a contact report during your watch?

20 [REDACTED] I can't remember.

21 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Do you recall doing so, uh what
22 does the Captain's Standing Orders say about MoBoard when
23 you have to use MoBoard.

24 [REDACTED] I believe it's within 10 nautical
25 miles.

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1 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. And who does that down in
2 Combat?

3 [REDACTED] Who does that?

4 LCDR [REDACTED] Who does the MoBoard?

5 [REDACTED] That would be the uh Watch
6 Supervisor.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] The Watch Supervisor? Okay. Do you
8 provide support? I mean do you provide bearings and ranges
9 and that kind of stuff, or?

10 [REDACTED] If we were to do a MoBoard they can
11 get that information off of VMS, but it's more accurate
12 from me, so usually I would give them um, I'd give them the
13 hits on the track for them to put in. So, every three
14 minutes, we only do one, so I give them uh where the track
15 is, bearing range, and then three minutes later I give them
16 another hit on the track bearing and range.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay so they call the mark and you
18 give the information?

19 [REDACTED] Correct, sir.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Do you recall any MoBoards
21 being done during your watch? Uh, leading up to the
22 collision as part of a contact management process?

23 [REDACTED] I don't sir.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. You, you had used the term
25 earlier in, in our conversation about uh you know you paid

Audio transcription - [REDACTED]

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1 particular attention to contacts of interest. What, what
2 qualifies, what do you think qualifies as a contact of
3 interest?

4 [REDACTED] A-a suspect track. Um, anything
5 that's been deemed um a contact of interest by the Bridge.
6 Uh, when we were in the South China Sea we had, we were
7 being followed by a uh Chinese vessel, so stuff like that.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Um, so, uh does a Surface
9 contacts, CPA, does that ever enter into your mind as being
10 qualifying a track as a contact of interest or it sounds
11 like it's mostly by identity and activity.

12 [REDACTED] Um, well, if, if, if I was aware of
13 a contact with close CPA I would definitely call that up to
14 the Bridge.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Okay. So, a little bit more
16 about AIS. So, SWS, Surface has got the laptop, it's on
17 the right side right?

18 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] Kinda maybe above and behind the chat.

20 [REDACTED] So I can't actually see the laptop
21 the, he's got a uh his chat console right here with screen,
22 and then AIS is like a, I think it's like a laptop or
23 whatever right behind it.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

1 [REDACTED] So he, whenever he goes like he
2 checks but I can't even see it.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Got it. Um, was it, was it
4 working that night?

5 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

6 LCDR [REDACTED] So, was, in your recollection was
7 Surface actively using and referencing AIS?

8 [REDACTED] Um, I can't really remember that
9 sir, but the Surface that I had at the time, he's always
10 on, on top of AIS.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay who was the Surface at the time?

12 [REDACTED] Lieutenant [REDACTED].

13 LCDR [REDACTED] Lieutenant [REDACTED]? Okay. Um, is
14 there anywhere else in CIC that AIS information is
15 available. Do you know?

16 [REDACTED] No sir.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. How about up on the Bridge. Do
18 you know where on the Bridge they've got access to AIS
19 information?

20 [REDACTED] I know they have AIS up there. I
21 can't really remember where it is up there, but I know they
22 have it. At least I believe they have it.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Uh, as the SWS, did, did you
24 ever have any situational awareness of the motor vessel
25 Crystal prior to the collision?

1 [REDACTED] No sir.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Do you recall ever having a track that
3 you think in hindsight correlated, would've correlated with
4 the Crystal?

5 [REDACTED] Uh, the ship was huge, so if, I
6 don't know, if it was on my screen I don't know how I
7 could've missed it. I-I don't remember seeing anything
8 that big or anything that close.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Okay. Thank you. I just got
10 my closing.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Uh, so you mentioned that the uh
12 Watch Sup UI had taken the spot for a little bit uh while
13 you showered before you came on watch. Was there any other
14 uh points in time when, when somebody switched out in your
15 position or, or maybe Surface --

16 [REDACTED] No sir.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Or OSS that you, you remember?

18 [REDACTED] If, if they walked away, is that
19 what you're saying?

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Yeah. Like, I-I-I don't know if
21 there's a head call or you know --

22 [REDACTED] I think Lieutenant [REDACTED] uh made
23 a head a call. He always lets myself and TAO know when he
24 does that. Uh, I don't remember the timeframe. I remember

1 that it was very quick, but it always is whenever he does
2 that.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so the U--Watch Sup UI would
4 come and fill that position or do you switch into his --
5 who, who takes his position during the head call?

6 [REDACTED] Uh, no one sits at his console when
7 he does that. I just uh listen for anything that's passed
8 to him and roger up for him and that's pretty much it.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And then a question on Bright
10 Bridge uh we've been getting some conflicting reports. Is
11 that usually manned or working or

12 [REDACTED] Um, Bright Bridge, I'm not, when I
13 first got here last year um it was an OS watch, but for
14 this um underway an OS has not stood that watch at all.
15 Um, and I'm not sure how they do that up there, sir. I
16 don't know if there is a QM or a BM or something that
17 stands it because we're not up there anymore or if someone
18 just like occasionally looks at it. But, I-I don't know
19 how it works for them.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do you know if it's operational?

21 [REDACTED] Um, I don't sir, I don't know if it
22 is or not.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Do you know why an OS wouldn't stand
24 that watch anymore. Is it due to manpower, recent
25 turnover, lack of qualified people?

1 [REDACTED] So, I-I uh actually never stood a
2 watch up there and I'm not sure. From what I heard, I
3 don't know how true this is but one of the Senior Chiefs
4 that stands Surface thinks that when -- cause when the
5 Bright Bridge is uh stood up there there's no Surface in
6 Combat. So like, er -- I'm sorry there's no SWS. So, if I
7 were to stand Bright Bridge I would just stand my normal
8 watch but on the Bridge and something about they think that
9 it's too much on the Surface. I don't really know. I-It
10 was kind of before my time as a CIC watch standard.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so just scuttlebutt things
12 you've heard.

13 [REDACTED] Yes.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Nothing really. No one, no one
15 came down and said hey team we're going to eliminate this
16 position?

17 [REDACTED] Uh, yes sir, that's correct.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] All right. Thank you.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] A quick question on Net 15. You
20 said that's monitored. Do you, are you actually having a
21 headset listening to it, or is it just playing within the
22 space?

23 [REDACTED] Yeah. I have a headset.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And once again, nothing unusual on
2 that, uh, that headset on the night of question? Just Ops
3 normal, no panic, no nothing?

4 [REDACTED] From what I remember it was, it was
5 all normal.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Captain [REDACTED]

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] I'm good.

8 MR. [REDACTED] Um, you, you said before you had
9 the clutter on 67, um, now was anybody on the Bridge aware
10 that you was having trouble with your radar?

11 [REDACTED] To be honest, I can't remember if
12 that was called up, but any time in the past when there was
13 clutter I-I absolutely always made the Bridge aware. But,
14 I'm not going to tell you that I did that because I really
15 can't remember. But that is normal practice for me as a
16 Watch Standard Op SWS.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Uh, one last question [REDACTED] You know
18 you and your ship mates uh went through a pretty traumatic
19 experience with the collision and the damage control
20 efforts after, you lost some shipmates, you were fighting
21 to get the ship under control and then bring her back in.
22 So, this is a question that we're asking everybody that
23 we're interviewing. Um, is there anybody, individual or a
24 group of people that uh you know just if somebody were to
25 ask you, you want to call out by name so they can be

Audio transcription - [REDACTED]

40

1 recognized for exceptional performance or heroism you know
2 who, who might those people be?

3 [REDACTED] Um, there's a couple people. And
4 it's with damage control efforts. I was a part of the fire
5 team and uh when I went out um Senior Chief [REDACTED] helped me
6 um with a couple of things specifically. There was people
7 stuck in Sonar and DCC sent me and uh another person that
8 I'd like recognized MM2 [REDACTED] back there helped him out
9 and Senior Chief [REDACTED] was back there and he helped us um
10 with no regard to his own safety. MM2 [REDACTED] also uh was
11 back there and helping me get them out. Um, DCC [REDACTED],
12 DC1 [REDACTED] [phonetic], DCFM [REDACTED] [phonetic] ET3 [REDACTED],
13 and FC2 [REDACTED] with the investigators, and they were going
14 down to Berthings and when you know things were going bad
15 and uh they were just all over the place doing a lot.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] E23 [sic] [REDACTED] and who was the last
17 one?

18 [REDACTED] It was uh ET3 [REDACTED] and FC2 [REDACTED].

19 LCDR [REDACTED] All right I want to make sure I got
20 this list right. [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED] ?

22 [REDACTED] Correct.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Okay. Thank you.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So we definitely appreciate all
25 the information you provided to us today. Uh, definitely

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1 helping fill out the picture of what we know and what we
2 don't know about this casualty. At this point in time, I
3 want to give the floor to you. If you have any questions
4 for us, or if there is anything that's been on your mind
5 that we didn't ask about that you want to make sure that we
6 did know about.

7 [REDACTED] Um, no, I felt it was very
8 thorough. Sorry, I couldn't remember all of it but I told
9 you guys everything, so.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And we appreciate that.

11 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Um, so from uh from here if you do
13 have any further questions or some information comes up an
14 hour later -- oh I wish I had told them uh please feel free
15 to reach out to us. We'd be glad to collect that
16 information. And, additionally, as the investigation is
17 ongoing we ask that you please not discuss uh these
18 interviews with anyone else because we want to make sure we
19 have a clear picture and a clear story from each person and
20 not start getting different stories mixed together. Um, so
21 we would appreciate it if you really didn't discuss what we
22 talked about with other personnel.

23 [REDACTED] Okay.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Excellent. Thank you so much for
25 your time.

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[REDACTED] Thank you.

CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Thank you too.

Redacted portions of this page have been designated as Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) or as Personally Identifiable Information (PII) by the US Navy.