

# CUI

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# CUI

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 1

1 UNITED STATES COAST GUARD  
2  
3 PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON  
4 BEHALF OF NTSB BY THE U.S. COAST GUARD  
5  
6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, Quartermaster Chief, I'm Captain  
7 [REDACTED]. I'm the Navy's representative on the Coast Guard's  
8 NTSB Investigation Board. The purpose of this interview  
9 and the purpose of this process is to find out what  
10 happened with the collision and why it happened and how it  
11 happened. Any questions about that?  
12 CMC [REDACTED] No sir.  
13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so good morning.  
14 CMC [REDACTED] Morning.  
15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] I am Lieutenant [REDACTED]  
16 the Senior Investigating Officer for the US Coast Guard  
17 Activities Far East here in Japan.  
18 Under the authority of Title 46, US Code 6301 and  
19 Title 46, CFR Part 4, an investigation is being conducted  
20 into the circumstances of the collision between the USS  
21 Fitzgerald and the ACX Crystal, which took place on June  
22 17, 2017.  
23 This investigation is intended to determine the cause  
24 of casualty, to the extent possible and to obtain

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 2

1 information for the purpose of preventing similar  
2 casualties in the future.

3 To assist with the accuracy of our investigation, we  
4 will be recording today's interview which is taking place  
5 on June 30th at 9:10.

6 Assisting me on this investigation, I have Mr. [REDACTED]  
7 from the Coast Guard's National Center of Expertise for  
8 Investigations. I also have Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED]  
9 who's in our office and is a previous CO of Coast Guard  
10 Cutters. Captain [REDACTED], again, is working as a Liaison  
11 Officer between the Coast Guard and Navy and is also  
12 stepping in as a subject matter expert.

13 We also have Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] from the  
14 Navy Safety Investigation Board sitting in on the side  
15 here, as well as Mr. [REDACTED], also from the Coast Guard's  
16 National Center of Expertise for Investigations.

17 Before we begin, can I get your name? First and last  
18 name?

19 MC [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] with a -- B-R-I-C-E, [REDACTED] B-  
20 A-L-D-W-I-N.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Fantastic. Thank you very much.

22 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: Good morning, Master Chief.

23 CMC [REDACTED]: Morning.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So if you could start off -- age,  
25 please?

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 3

1 CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And uh, when did you first join  
3 the Fitzgerald?  
4 CMC [REDACTED] Um, most recently was October of 2014.  
5 I said that because I'm plankowner so -- when I first  
6 joined the Fitzgerald it was back in 95, so -- little bit  
7 of history.

8 LCDR [REDACTED]: And you were CMC for the previous  
9 Commanding Officer, uh Commander [REDACTED]?

10 CMC [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: If you could, let's start off with  
12 just some background of what's life like on Fitzgerald?

13 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, in, in what sense?

14 LCDR [REDACTED]: How do you wanna paint that?

15 CMC [REDACTED] Um, operationally? Busy, focused, um,  
16 we've been -- you know, through the yards, most of last  
17 year spent in the yards getting her ready and then, you  
18 know, ramping up with a lot of crew change and uh, getting  
19 our certifications. We managed to get LOA out through  
20 December and then the first part of January to wrap that up  
21 and then underway.

22 And uh, that -- that's pretty much life. Underway.

23 LCDR [REDACTED]: So the, uh, the busy part, um, you  
24 feel that that OPTEMPO sustainable or were they feeling

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 4

1 fatigued, was it uh, too much in the ask category and not  
2 too much in the deliver?

3 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, out -- out here across the board,  
4 the OPTEMPO is extreme. Having to do, um, with the  
5 certifications on top of real world ops and not fully  
6 manned, not fully, you know, all our missionaries, if you  
7 look across the board, not just with our ship but other  
8 ships across the DESRON are not fully certified the way the  
9 Navy would like to do it. And out there just trying to  
10 incorporate training certifications and real world ops.  
11 And those real world ops with a schedule of constantly  
12 changing from day-to-day, week-to-week, and we initially  
13 set sail, we're expecting about six weeks underway which  
14 turned critically into four months.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] And you feel that that, uh, is fleet-  
16 wide or Fitzgerald specific?

17 CMC [REDACTED] No, it's, it's FDNF. It's an FDNF  
18 problem, especially given the number of assets out here.

19 LCDR [REDACTED]: And so how do the sailors on board the  
20 Fitzgerald respond to such high OPTEMPO demands?

21 CMC [REDACTED] We, for the most part, the more seasoned  
22 ones they get it and um, we try to focus on what's  
23 important to get the mission done at that time. Don't take  
24 any unnecessary risks, I think we're very measured, very  
25 deliberate in our approach to handling that and recognizing

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 5

1 where we need to slow things down, even if that's moving  
2 stuff off the table that we would like to get done, just so  
3 we can make sure that uh, did good, right amount of rest or  
4 we put the right -- assume the right level of risk.

5 You know, if it's -- if we like to get -- DLQs done,  
6 but we're working full day or something like that, we'll  
7 change the schedule up on Fitz to help handle that kind of  
8 stuff.

9 LCDR [REDACTED]: So in talking about schedule, what  
10 role do you play with ship schedule and the operations  
11 officers' demand signals that they're getting from outside  
12 for these certifications, uh missions that they've been  
13 tasked with? Is there like an open meeting to talk about  
14 the schedule?

15 CMC [REDACTED]: There is, uh, meetings and uh you know,  
16 our weekly planning PBFT, Planning Board For Training. Try  
17 to take care of that. TRAINO plays a huge role in that,  
18 then operations and just scheduling that and then all the  
19 principal assistants and department heads feeding into what  
20 their needs are and us providing feedback, saying, "Hey,  
21 those things are incompatible, it's -- it's not capable of  
22 doing that. Um, because those are independent ops and they  
23 need to be stove-piped in that sense. Can't do it  
24 concurrently.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 6

1 LCDR [REDACTED]: How about the, uh, the makings of  
2 watch schedules and watch bills?

3 CMC [REDACTED]: Um, I'm not -- I don't drive watch bill,  
4 the Senior Watch Officer drives the watch bills in  
5 fabricating those as well as the -- each department lead  
6 Chief as well as the Senior Enlisted Watch Bill  
7 Coordinator.

8 LCDR [REDACTED]: But again, it doesn't cross your desk  
9 or have any input?

10 CMC [REDACTED]: No, I don't provide a review or a CHOP  
11 or --

12 LCDR [REDACTED]: So run me through each department on  
13 board and any particular challenges of note, whether  
14 they're having difficulties with new personnel or if  
15 they're having difficulties with another department on  
16 board. Any of those types of issues that cross your desk?

17 CMC [REDACTED]: Well, I mean that's -- that's been the  
18 wholesale problem since really we came in the yards last  
19 year and went, you know, switched phases from an  
20 operational phase to a maintenance phase. And then that  
21 went back up. Typically it's about 30 percent turnover  
22 annually. We were hitting in high 30's -- 39, I think, is  
23 what we peaked out like in a nine-month period. Thirty-  
24 nine percent of the crew turnover.

25 So that with some advancement in selections, I think

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 7

1 that had a huge amount of turnover and in fact we ended up  
2 flossing up earlier in our this year's underway schedule  
3 for personnel from Blue Ridge and Benfold. Other ships  
4 cross the waterfront just to be able to man deck so they  
5 can take care of basic operations, watch standing as well  
6 as, you know, con reps and reps. Flight Ops, all that kind  
7 of stuff.

8 LCDR [REDACTED]: So you took the members in as  
9 permanent party or --

10 CMC [REDACTED] No, TDY. TDY. And they're in the  
11 process of -- the whole PACT sailor thing is one of those  
12 things that are disruptive to the manning process for deck  
13 in there. They had a -- I think they were greatly affected  
14 by that. Um, they were -- they're in a process of getting  
15 better. As far as getting home -- homeships company  
16 assigned and trained up. And we had plans in there  
17 mitigating, taking those that were advanced and put into  
18 other departments, still standing watches in there to help  
19 maintain continuity and provide subject matter experts in  
20 training to get those sailors taken care of. That was one  
21 of the ways that the operations department was mitigating  
22 those shortfalls.

23 LCDR [REDACTED]: So help me understand the dynamics  
24 just a little bit as the Coast Guard would normally do it  
25 is that we would have a daily XO requesting complaint mast

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 8

1 where sailors would have an open door policy with the XO to  
2 talk about issues and whatnot.

3 CMC [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

4 LCDR [REDACTED]: We don't always have the Commanding  
5 Master Chief constructive play depending upon unit make-  
6 ups. Do you have a similar mask for Command Master Chief?

7 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, it's not as formal as a mast but the  
8 doors always open and not only sailors coming forward but  
9 just even other principal systems, department LCOs, other  
10 Chiefs always discussing and working on any kind of issues  
11 with sailors.

12 We also have the CDBs, Career Development Boards that  
13 help discuss some of the development of sailors and their  
14 uh, development in the watch standing or just career path.

15 LCDR [REDACTED]: So if you could, take me through a  
16 typical daily routine for Command Master Chief aboard the  
17 Fitzgerald.

18 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, sync up with the XO and get the  
19 daily schedule, find out what the crunch points are, where  
20 we need to get people movement and then getting that with  
21 the other department heads of principal systems across the  
22 command following that.

23 Uh, then uh, my schedule has changed over the last  
24 couple weeks and it's been kind of varied. Going through  
25 any administrative paperwork, chits, leave --

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 9

1 LCDR [REDACTED]: So admin.

2 CMC [REDACTED] Any request. Yeah, a lot of  
3 administrative.

4 LCDR [REDACTED]: You'd mentioned the admin chits and  
5 whatnot so what role are you playing with -- are you in the  
6 approval chain for leave and --

7 CMC [REDACTED] Not leave, per se, except for some of  
8 the Chiefs as far as just getting the CHOPs -- and not  
9 approval. Just a recommendation or assay to find out who -  
10 - which one of the Chiefs are going on leave, where are the  
11 shortfalls and how are we mitigating any shortfalls there.

12 As far as other leave, there are some leave that, uh,  
13 especially when it comes to underway period, revealing,  
14 making sure that we're not shorting watch stations,  
15 shorting departments and doubling and tripling up personnel  
16 so we've got the right level on there.

17 And we've been very deliberate about that, especially  
18 last three months or so, four months, it's been extremely  
19 deliberate just because of the uncertainty of our schedule.  
20 We didn't know who we needed, we didn't know what our  
21 mission tasking was going to be so we really limited the  
22 amount of people that were leaving, um, Fitzgerald just to  
23 make sure that we did have all the important players there  
24 and we weren't creating the additional level of, of uh, you  
25 know, somebody else making do.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 10

1 Because sailors will make do. They'll get the job  
2 done but there's a cost associated and we realize that and  
3 try to minimize the cost that some other people were  
4 willing to assume just because they wanted to get somebody  
5 on leave.

6 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay, so after an admin period.

7 CMC [REDACTED]: Admin period, uh, their work with the --  
8 depending on the day we'll have a Chief's meeting just to  
9 help get everybody synced up. Get all the khaki, the E7,  
10 E8 synced up across the departments. Find out where the  
11 pinch points were and that.

12 Uh, vital mentoring counseling where needed across the  
13 ship. Do some command PT with a little 365, uh, on there  
14 and then uh, tend the daily ops entail as well, just to get  
15 a good assay as far as first command deployment is and  
16 yeah, any -- any other issues.

17 Uh, also sync up with the Captain during the day to  
18 try get together, sync up, talk about concerns, uh, and  
19 make any plans that were necessary for the day.

20 And then into the evening, another time to sync up  
21 with Captain and work whatever else the concerns are.

22 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay, so if we could now let's take it  
23 to the day of getting underway. It was a busy scheduled  
24 day and uh, just walk me through some of the more  
25 remarkable things about the day that you were involved in.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 11

1 CMC [REDACTED] Mmm, just uh, getting everybody ready  
2 for sea and anchor, set sea and anchor, just going around  
3 to the different controlling stations, seeing if there's  
4 any issues, you know, from the bridge down to CCS down to  
5 folks on fantail, making sure have the right manning  
6 personnel and provide assistance wherever needed.

7 LCDR [REDACTED]: Any issues, any confusion as to the  
8 watch bills, everybody was where they needed to be?

9 CMC [REDACTED] No, I had no issues at all, I was very  
10 professional and we got out to Anchorage -- I think --  
11 yeah, we did some ammo movements there. Uneventful there.  
12 Had, uh, one pitch point where we needed some air fittings  
13 for uh, moving some gas management. Didn't have it so --  
14 we'd still be able to take care of what we needed to, it  
15 was just hey in the future make sure we get these things  
16 taken care of.

17 Uh, and that was working with NMC, the Navy Munitions  
18 Command. Uh, got underway from, uh, Anchorage, headed out,  
19 uneventful, seemed nice and smooth, uh, that I could tell.  
20 I didn't hear anything else. And then head over to Sagami  
21 Wan to get set up for DLQs and uh, do some certifications  
22 there. The intent was to get that done, do some balances  
23 during the day. Um, I think we missed a little bit of that  
24 because uh, of the confusion on the gas management, I think

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 12

1 that just set us back an extra, about an hour, if I  
2 remember right.

3 Uh, and then set flight quarters, got the DLQs, did  
4 our night DLQs so we could finish up certifications for  
5 aviation. Didn't hear any issues or concerns. After we  
6 got done with that, we set the Boat Ops, put the RHIB in,  
7 went up there, that was getting close to about -- I'm not  
8 quite sure of the exact time, it was around 2200, I think.  
9 I didn't really make a note of it other than it was dark.

10 I went up topside, checked the seas, I was on the  
11 fantail as they're boarding up the RHIB and waited for  
12 PACTs to transfer, said goodbye to ATG that was observing  
13 the evolution; said there no issues. "Commander, I thought  
14 it was fantastic, it was a great night." Um, and as they  
15 set off for dropping off ATG, left the flight deck, entered  
16 my office. I think it was close to about, I don't know,  
17 about 2300, midnight. Spent another hour in there just  
18 taking care of some paperwork and then hit my rack after  
19 that.

20 Um, and then woke to -- I don't know what time it was  
21 -- to some violent shaking. I thought I was having a --  
22 first thought went through my head, I'm like why the hell  
23 are we driving so fast because I had that shuttering feel  
24 and kind of then it -- and then as I was -- felt things  
25 slow down, I said, "Oh good, some people are, you know, the

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1 bridge's slowing down, maybe the just had a -- you know,  
2 point of contact," I don't know what happened, just went  
3 through my mind and then the doors flung open that, you  
4 know, "Just had a collision, get out of your racks."

5 Whole ship, and we're processing that and then I'm  
6 hearing over the LMC flooding on the starboard side and  
7 then major flooding Ops 1.

8 And then as the Aft berthing uh, starboard quarter  
9 about 18, nine -- nine Chiefs in there, we all, got our  
10 gear on and we got out and began damage control.

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: Do you have any backups on that?

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So, what, uh, if you could  
13 continue from there, what, what else did you provide  
14 following the collision?

15 CMC [REDACTED]: Uh, following the collision, the teams  
16 were getting together. Repair five was functional, they  
17 were very focused, they were driven, they were following  
18 their, uh, their procedures. They had cons before setting  
19 GQs, helping, uh, setting ZEBRA, assisting with that and  
20 just guiding personnel to make sure they can find the  
21 valves they're looking for and assisting there.

22 Went forward, portside because the access past repair  
23 five was blocked on the starboard side just with personnel  
24 and flooding and -- and teams getting together and they

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Audio transcription - CMC Brice [REDACTED]

14

1 shut the door right -- right around frame 154. In front of  
2 Ops 1. Or behind Ops 1.

3 They had that secured, I saw the electricians and  
4 repair team coming up with their isolation plan for the  
5 spaces, so they were functional, they took direction from  
6 EM1 [REDACTED] [phonetic]. Headed over this, uh, portside, check  
7 the status of repair two, saw a lot of EFFF foam and  
8 personnel coming out of there, they were motivated. So  
9 they had the situation under control the best they could at  
10 the -- at that point.

11 Then I headed up topside to see if we had anybody over  
12 the side or -- had no idea on the, um, on the situation.  
13 Things looked, uh, fairly you know, normal with the  
14 exception of the starboard side. Uh, and then headed up to  
15 the bridge, get an assessment up there, see what we had and  
16 which was virtually no communications. They were in the  
17 process of getting meridian phones and making contacts  
18 there.

19 Oh, so the -- those process were running, then went  
20 back to CCS and see where they needed some more assessments  
21 and they were definitely engaged in they had all phone  
22 talkers manned up and they were working the problem. Then  
23 started assisting, moving people where we needed it. Back  
24 to repair three and then any other materials they were  
25 needed -- hoses, pumps, whatever the case. And then headed

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 15

1 back up to the bridge, find out what was going. They  
2 mentioned something about getting -- needing a, uh, tow as  
3 a possibility. So uh, I got BMC [REDACTED], informed him and  
4 then, uh, asked him what he needed to help rig the anchor  
5 for a tow. The anchorage for a tow and he needed to get  
6 some bodies.

7 Went down to the mess decks, there were some personnel  
8 that were not trained so they couldn't assist in the  
9 flooding efforts and other damage control efforts so they  
10 just needed a man guard to feed -- and those were the  
11 midshipmen and then a couple of new reports, we had a few  
12 personnel that just reported.

13 Took them, got them up on the focsle, fitted up with  
14 life jackets and glow sticks and had them start assisting  
15 rigging the anchor chain for tow. Then that was the next  
16 two hours.

17 I kept them focused, kept them under control because  
18 they were starting to panic. They were listening on the  
19 mess decks and everything was going around and everybody  
20 else was moving and, uh, they were starting to panic a  
21 little bit. So we got them up there safe and then it was -  
22 - trying to get a full accountability of crew to find out  
23 who are missing for the reports. We had four missing and  
24 then over the next couple hours, it matured into seven.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 16

1 LCDR [REDACTED]: And how is that accountability taking  
2 place, was it being done by division reporting up to the  
3 department heads making their way?

4 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, it was a variety of ways. It was  
5 Chiefs going there and putting eyes on their personnel  
6 because uh, the chaotic nature of it, we're going through  
7 repair lockers and see more people motivated and -- and  
8 where they were uh, positioned in their efforts. So it was  
9 going back and forth and -- and looking at each controlling  
10 station and every place we had personnel and getting  
11 accountability for it because we had to have all hands in  
12 various places just to control the casualty.

13 Those reports got up to the bridge and managed up to  
14 the bridge and then had them all consoled.

15 LCDR [REDACTED]: And I should have asked you this  
16 earlier, what's your rate? I know --

17 CMC [REDACTED] Uh Command Master Chief, previous rate  
18 was ET.

19 LCDR [REDACTED]: ET.

20 CMC [REDACTED] Electronics Technician.

21 LCDR [REDACTED]: So you've been on -- on Fitz since  
22 2014 for your second go-around.

23 CMC [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

24 LCDR [REDACTED]: Um, what's the climate like?

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1 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, overall I think climate is, you  
2 know, it's family. I think it's tight there, uh, we -- got  
3 a good culture in that sense. Um, there are some areas  
4 that are a little bit tighter than others and each  
5 department's got their own, uh, little microclimate as well  
6 as you'd expect.

7 Deck is pretty tight, um, just -- I mean that's the  
8 nature of, all those departments, they're tight in there.  
9 MP, I think, is tight but they're overworked. Again, it's  
10 getting a lot of -- especially after getting into LOA and  
11 they're fixing all the gear and they're getting the stove,  
12 the sink to operate and stuff. They get kind of beat up  
13 there.

14 And then, the other thing that comes up relative to  
15 the climate would be just a liberty posse out here and then  
16 at the time, SS Junior had to fill out daily, uh, liberty  
17 plans and that becomes one of those realms that is kind of  
18 a distraction.

19 Overall, I think the -- I think the climate is good.  
20 Um, but there -- it's not perfect and I, and I wouldn't  
21 expect it to be perfect given some of the challenges that  
22 we have and I mean it's -- but depending on where we're at  
23 in our schedule and obviously it gets better if we're  
24 coming home and spending more time home. And then a little

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 18

1 bit rougher as uh, you know, we don't have some fidelity in  
2 our schedule.

3 LCDR [REDACTED]: So schedule changes were providing  
4 some, uh, friction and sore points?

5 CMC [REDACTED] Yes. Definitely friction points.

6 LCDR [REDACTED]: How would you say that the Fitz  
7 sailors are, would you find them, uh, compliant, creative  
8 compliant or non-compliant when it comes to like the -- the  
9 letter of policy.

10 CMC [REDACTED]: Uh, overall, I would say compliant. Uh,  
11 yeah, I would say overall compliant because I get pushback  
12 a lot and it's like -- wait a minute, we don't have enough  
13 time to get this stuff done, to get all this stuff done  
14 correctly.

15 Okay, good. I need that kind of feedback so I can  
16 push that up. If you need more time and space, what's the  
17 policy, what's the procedure, let's get the time and space  
18 so we can do the five hours' worth of maintenance in five  
19 hours and not try to do it in three.

20 And when I'm checking sailors in, I preach to them  
21 about the watch stander's daily shipboard operation  
22 principles, talk to them about that, talk to them,  
23 especially to the new sailors getting in. "You've got  
24 fresh eyes, you'll see things. You may not have 21 years  
25 of experience in the Navy but you've got 21 years of life

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 19

1 experience. When you see something your gut that says it's  
2 wrong, bring it up. Talk about it, let's find out. Maybe  
3 there's a policy you don't know about or a procedure you  
4 don't know about it. Maybe somebody missed it. Because  
5 you do, you know, there's places everybody can be engaged  
6 to provide feedback on it and there are places you can  
7 learn from."

8 So it's what they start off with and it's what we keep  
9 going at and driving at and I -- and in that sense,  
10 compliant.

11 Um, do catch every once in a while someone will try to  
12 get things done quickly and you know, sometimes that's  
13 maybe skip a -- skip a step or interpret it to get -- meet  
14 the intent but not verbatim as it's listed. Sort of infer  
15 the steps.

16 LCDR [REDACTED]: What areas would you find that you'd  
17 see that most common?

18 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, I -- I can't find -- I can't find a  
19 common area, it's just been like -- doing a spot check on a  
20 maintenance MP so it's watch the, for the HPR flask as you  
21 drain the water out of them, watch for debris coming out of  
22 that.

23 And they turn the valve, but to watch the debris come  
24 out, you need another person down there but it never says

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 20

1 to have somebody watch it down there and so -- you need the  
2 feedback for that kind of stuff.

3 You know, they were trying to look down and see it and  
4 then they'd go down and look at the -- what came out of the  
5 drain in there to see if they could see the funnel that  
6 collected it.

7 But it wasn't as I interpreted it 100 percent in that  
8 sense. So those are the little nuances for people like --  
9 okay, I got it done type thing -- but it wasn't in my ET  
10 background binary verbatim compliance in that sense. But  
11 it did meet the intent of providing feedback, let's get the  
12 feedback in order to get that fixed.

13 LCDR [REDACTED]: And how about in terms of like crew  
14 endurance? I know, uh, I know on a Coast Guard environment  
15 where we would have a patrol and we would at the end of the  
16 patrol have a crew endurance survey, kind of feedback of,  
17 uh, kind of the softer stuff. Is there some type of  
18 program or feedback mechanism that's taken into  
19 consideration by the command for --?

20 CMC [REDACTED]: So um stateside, yes. Yeah, there's a  
21 pre, post and then a six-month follow-up post-deployment  
22 survey for those type of things.

23 We don't fit the model out here. In the three years  
24 I've been out here, never once executed because we didn't  
25 fit that model. And because, you know, you're supposed to

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 21

1 do a post -- or pre-deployment and if I'm only supposed to  
2 go out six weeks, I don't need to do it. But my six weeks  
3 turned into four months. And there's no way of predicting  
4 that it would do that.

5 LCDR [REDACTED]: And so you can't do the pre, do you do  
6 the post in those circumstances?

7 CMC [REDACTED] Um, no we haven't. In fact, the DESRON  
8 just got that triggered for us yesterday. To do the post  
9 on that.

10 We, we, we don't even follow -- we don't have -- our  
11 schedule doesn't allow us even to follow up POM period, pre  
12 or post, out here. That's in our operator 201 and they  
13 haven't done that because they -- I don't know. I don't  
14 know why. I don't know why.

15 LCDR [REDACTED]: You do get the annual holiday stand  
16 down, correct?

17 CMC [REDACTED] You could call it that. But my annual  
18 holiday stand down includes preparations for LOA, uh, I  
19 have personnel coming off of leave to complete LOA  
20 requirements, so yes. On paper, I've got it. In  
21 execution, I don't. And since I've been here, that period  
22 has been eroded from 14 days to 13 days to 11 days. Okay?  
23 And trying to get 100 percent of the crew with some  
24 meaningful leave once a year in two periods -- impossible.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 22

1 I've got -- we try to execute as much leave as we can  
2 but the reality is, you know, I had people set up for leave  
3 this year in June or March or April and May because our  
4 scheduled allowed for it. And then I started yanking that  
5 away because our schedule has us underway.

6 And so their life plans and everything else creates a  
7 whole 'nother level of stress and angst on them that they  
8 can't execute because we don't have it. I mean and then  
9 you add OTEIP on top of it. You know, I've got a lot  
10 people hitting, you know, 60 days and you say you're  
11 gonna give them an OTEIP to stay out here another year out  
12 here in this kind of demand and not all of them are getting  
13 it and that OTEIP for 30 days if they choose that option,  
14 gets turned into maybe 15 days and a plane ticket that  
15 turns into \$2,000 cash.

16 So it's a challenge for them, especially returning  
17 sailors, the ones that are a little bit older and mature  
18 and have experienced that, we've got calluses that allow us  
19 to, you know, handle that kind of stuff. But even those  
20 guys are hitting the breaking point. I've got senior  
21 chiefs that are, you know, I have to take leave or I'm  
22 gonna lose my family or I'm just gonna lose it. And then  
23 once I get done with this tour, I'm done. So they're  
24 checking out after 20 years. Soon as -- if I can make it.  
25 If I can make it to 20, I'm getting out of here. That's --

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 23

1 that's the conversations I've had with the chiefs and first  
2 classes and senior chiefs.

3 So the OPTEMPO doesn't support it because the mission  
4 doesn't support it. It is mission always -- the mission  
5 will get accomplished out here.

6 LCDR [REDACTED]: About how often would you say leave  
7 chits are pulled, uh, not granted when requested?

8 CMC [REDACTED] Well, I remember our schedule last year  
9 was seven year -- or six months effectively -- so we got a  
10 lot of leave taken care of last year but that was on the  
11 tail end of being heavily operational and even getting  
12 extended an extra 30 days before -- and getting our PSRA  
13 moved or DSRA shifted to the right a little bit in order to  
14 support mission. Lose a lot of maintenance that way, too.

15 Uh, just this recent time has really been the only  
16 time that we've really started pulling back on the leave  
17 because the -- we did catch up on some leave last year, um,  
18 but that doesn't account for those that couldn't because  
19 they were still operation down for the maintenance side of  
20 it. Like one or two chiefs had to take care of it there  
21 but for the most part, we're supporting -- because not only  
22 are we supporting the leave side of it but I also have to -  
23 - because we're not demand of with all the NECs, the  
24 technical training that we need -- I'm also actively  
25 training personnel and sending them to the states or

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 24

1 leaving them behind in Yokosuka to get -- so hey, I've got  
2 another TACS when I leave and get underway of manning.

3 So you know, if you look at my manning where I'm at  
4 right now is I think we're at what, 89, something like  
5 that, 89 percent. But when I get underway, I still have,  
6 you know, another five percent left behind for LDO, medical  
7 or schools. That's not even counting leave.

8 LCDR [REDACTED]: Is that list of LDOs and schools and  
9 whatnot larger than previous experience with other units?

10 CMC [REDACTED] Schools, that's not even counting leave.

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: Is that list of LDOs and schools and  
12 whatnot larger than previous experience with other units?

13 CMC [REDACTED] Um, schools, yeah. When you talk about  
14 deployment, it's absolutely 100 percent because when the  
15 ship leaves from their fleet and heads out on deployment to  
16 execute the mission, they're already fully trained and  
17 they're 100 percent manned. Everybody has done their pre-  
18 deployment leave, stand down type period. So they don't  
19 even have to think about leave in the middle of their  
20 deployment for the next six-months plus.

21 So they're already rested, they've already got their  
22 family stuff taken care of and they can go focus on the  
23 mission. Not only do I have to focus on the mission, I've  
24 gotta focus on training and I've also gotta focus on the  
25 health and welfare of the sailors and giving them some

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 25

1 rest, getting them trained, send them off to school and  
2 then any kind of medical issues.

3 When I'm leaving from the states, they're already  
4 trained up, I've got -- I've already identified my LDO  
5 personnel and I've got somebody else already filling that  
6 before I even set, you know, pull the anchor. Pull in all  
7 the lines and head out.

8 LCDR [REDACTED]: And you, you feel that that's based  
9 upon your geography, being here in seventh fleet?

10 CMC [REDACTED] Not --

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: Cause you used the -- you used the  
12 term back stateside a different model over here in the  
13 seventh fleet?

14 CMC [REDACTED] One hundred percent different model.  
15 It's a different model in our training manual, it's a  
16 different model in the way we are manned, it's a different  
17 model in the way we're utilized, we don't do deployments,  
18 we do patrols but our patrol materialized into something,  
19 whatever -- whatever the mission needs. Which is why we're  
20 here. Because we can be that flexible but there's a cost.

21 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Is this your first FDNF tour or you  
23 prior FDNF?

24 CMC [REDACTED] It's my first sea FDNF, so prior to  
25 doing Fitzgerald, I spent two years at Far East, NCTS Far

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 26

1 East in a computer telecommunication station Far East which  
2 was good because it was a good primer as far as getting the  
3 culture of the liberty, getting a culture of what the  
4 expectations are but --

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So total, you've been here about what,  
6 five years?

7 CMC [REDACTED] Five years, yes. It'll be five in --

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So just for your SA, I'm an FDNF guy  
9 XO and CO out here so uh, I understand where you're coming  
10 from.

11 Let's get back and talk more about the command  
12 culture. Because for the Coast Guard investigation, that's  
13 really the value of talking to you. Obviously, you know,  
14 you were not involved in the actions leading to the  
15 collision but as the Coast Guard as further investigation  
16 seeks to paint a picture, a bigger -- the broader Fitz and  
17 what were the factors that may have contributed to, and  
18 this is -- your perspective is invaluable.

19 So we talked about compliance, um, how about  
20 discipline? What's -- what's the culture of discipline on  
21 the ship?

22 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, I think the, the discipline in, uh,  
23 in being deliberate and measured is -- as far as getting  
24 things done and the way we execute, I think it's -- I think  
25 that's how we describe it, deliberate and measured.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 27

1 As far as discipline on the punishment side of it, um,  
2 our -- I -- I think that's been really good. I mean if you  
3 look at it, I think our mast cases are down over the last  
4 year. We just recently had one that was over -- out of PI,  
5 just violation of some of the liberty policies out of PI  
6 but um, I think that's been, I think better than some.

7 I don't think there's that um, overarching fear of  
8 people, you know, if they got it wrong, we wanna find out  
9 why they got it wrong and not necessarily punish for  
10 punishment's sake as -- but I think it's -- the culture is  
11 open enough to say -- hey, I screwed that up, can you get  
12 this fixed or -- you know, whatever the case is. More than  
13 it say the culture of -- hey, I screwed that up, I'm not  
14 gonna, hey can I hide that so no one knows that I messed  
15 that up. I, I, that's.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, if you'll look, there's what,  
17 there's eight ships in the squadron at this point, I think.

18 CMC [REDACTED]: Yeah.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: In terms of you look around the  
20 waterfront and you talk to your fellow CMCs, where would  
21 you say Fitz stacks up in terms of, you know, discipline  
22 issues.

23 CMC [REDACTED]: Uh, I think we're lower if, um, you  
24 know, like at DESRON, DESRON is probably the best one for  
25 that overarching data on some of the liberty incidents and

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 28

1 stuff like that. Our liberty incidents are low, I think,  
2 compared to the rest of the squadron. I think we had maybe  
3 three last year that were violations of the liberty policy  
4 which is, I think, quite remarkable given six months in the  
5 yards. People get too much time off and sometimes they --  
6 they think they can do a lot more than they should at that  
7 time. But I think overall, we're pretty good on that side  
8 of it.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, with this, with this Commanding  
10 Officer, I know he was the XO before he was the CO. What,  
11 you know, what are his -- does uh, um, were there any clear  
12 signals on the deck plates of what's gonna get a sailor a  
13 trip to NJP? They know, they know absolutely, positively  
14 there's a line they shouldn't cross and therefore it shapes  
15 out the crew? Acts

16 CMC [REDACTED]: Um, yeah. The -- really it was just a  
17 compliance in general. A non-compliance in general was the  
18 trip wire. Not necessarily if you perform this act you're  
19 going there, obviously, you know, a blatant violation of  
20 liberty policy is always a big one there but uh, for --  
21 across the board, I wouldn't say anything specific other  
22 than just non-compliance of what you had to do.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So like maintenance procedural  
24 compliance --

25 CMC [REDACTED]: Yes.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 29

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Tag out program.

2 CMC [REDACTED]: Tag out program.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: PMS.

4 CMC [REDACTED]: Yes.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Standing orders?

6 CMC [REDACTED]: Yes, all those.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. I want you to talk to us a  
8 little bit about the culture of training. Is there a ship-  
9 wide integrated training program or not?

10 CMC [REDACTED]: Yes, there is, um, and incorporated also  
11 with, you know, East WOS training. Been really focused and  
12 measured on that just because we recognized how much  
13 turnover was happening and what we needed to do in -- in  
14 managing the PQS DEP program and getting people focused,  
15 uh, on training. Uh, we had a period of time where there  
16 was a little bit of frustration because PQS quals weren't  
17 going as quickly as some people wanted them to. Um, but  
18 the pushback from the qualifiers was I need to know that  
19 they're ready before qualifying which is the kind of  
20 pushback you want.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So is there, I just wanna be clear, is  
22 there an environment of an element of undue haste in  
23 qualifications or do you think there's a good balance there  
24 where --

25 CMC [REDACTED]: Oh no, it's balanced.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] Baldwin 30

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Qualifiers feel like they can say this  
2 guy or gal is not ready, they need more time.

3 CMC [REDACTED] Right, that's -- they -- absolutely,  
4 they don't hesitate to say, um, need more time. In effect,  
5 uh, that's where some of the frustration was coming from.  
6 Some of the people that wanted to be qualified was the  
7 qualifiers were saying, "No, you're not ready, you need  
8 more time." And I'm very deliberate on that and I think  
9 the board process is good and we have a good mix between  
10 the wardrooms as well as the Chief's mess to make sure  
11 that, especially for the controlling stations and any, um,  
12 uh, watch station like that kind of stuff.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What's your sense of the wardroom  
14 training program? Specifically things like OOD, JOOD,  
15 CONN, TAO.

16 CMC [REDACTED] The, the sense I get on that is -- and  
17 the conversations that are held is that it's very  
18 deliberate and um, exact. I mean to the point where hey we  
19 need to get them over there and get them with the bridge  
20 trainer more. Then we'll spend more time in there and then  
21 I want my second tours in there to make sure that they're  
22 doing some good mentoring in there and developing and then  
23 as well as the XO and CO going in there and providing time  
24 to help mentor and train and watching them up on the  
25 bridge, XO and CO, on the bridge working with the entire

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 31

1 wardroom or whoever is up there on there, coaching and  
2 mentoring uh, the team up there.

3 We had a chance to observe that quite a bit and quite  
4 impressed as far as little details that they're adding in  
5 there -- and things to watch for and things that made them  
6 successful.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, how about uh, how about just  
8 general standards supplied -- cleanliness, preservation,  
9 stowage, good order and discipline. Uh, honors and  
10 ceremonies, respect for rank?

11 CMC [REDACTED] Um, so cleanliness, I think, um, and not  
12 using my own metric, I'm using feedback I received from ATG  
13 and other ship riders and such. We usually get high marks  
14 from our -- our visitors on that. And they see a lot of  
15 ships and it's like -- surprise, this ship's 22 years old,  
16 21 years old, didn't expect to see that down there. And  
17 the differences between the other ships, uh, just even  
18 locally.

19 So I think cleanliness and stowage for the most part,  
20 uh, fairly good. Especially coming out of the yards and  
21 just trying to get things straight there. Taking back the  
22 ship.

23 Um, the respect for rank and the good order of  
24 discipline there, I see a different ship, especially as I'm  
25 getting more millennials in, it's a little bit more

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 32

1 familiar and especially for E-6 and junior. I see that  
2 happening a little bit, just you know, 'sup kind of thing,  
3 attitude that's happening with them but --

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So is there a culture of -- does the  
5 Chief mess and the wardroom act to stop that or is it -- is  
6 that something that's just kind of taken root?

7 CMC [REDACTED]: Um, it's -- we enforce that but there's  
8 a -- there's a, I guess, a compromise that's made. I won't  
9 say balance but more of a compromise that's made because of  
10 uh, some of the other stressors that we put on them that --  
11 am I going to stress them about their workload and  
12 everything else that they've gotta do and then I'm gonna  
13 add this other thing on top.

14 So I see, I see that sometimes there's a compromise on  
15 some of those items there. But -- and making, um, made  
16 strides over the last few months, I would say, in  
17 tightening up a little bit of that but it's -- a lot of  
18 it's just we've got sailors coming in and such a turnover  
19 of sailors. A lot of junior ones, um, that that's just  
20 part of their culture and they're just still trying to be  
21 institutionalized as well.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Boot camp failed to beat that out of  
23 them?

24 CMC [REDACTED] Well, right, or it gets reinstated when  
25 their --

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 33

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: A school.

2 CMC [REDACTED] -- hit A school, C schools. Especially  
3 some of these smart guys.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right. So one of the things we were  
5 especially interested in is, you know, with the accident  
6 board, it's called human factors, right, it's the  
7 relationships among key players. So I'm gonna ask you some  
8 questions about that.

9 CMC [REDACTED] Okay.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What's your uh -- what's your  
11 observation of the wardroom and how it functions as a, as a  
12 unit as the senior leadership team on the ship,  
13 relationship between the Captain and the officers, between  
14 the Captain and the XO and between the XO and the officers?  
15 Uh, the Senior Watch Officer as the, as the third ranking  
16 officer on the ship, talk to us about them. You get a  
17 front-row seat to a lot of that.

18 CMC [REDACTED] Yeah.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do JOs, are you one of those CMCs that  
20 JOs come by and talk to?

21 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, I get them occasionally. Still  
22 don't understand full -- full role but I do have, um, a  
23 couple JOs come in.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay so --

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 34

1 CMC BALDWIN: Not all the time, but they come in  
2 there.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So you're in a unique -- you're in a  
4 unique position to observe the wardroom, right?

5 CMC [REDACTED] Yes.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So talk to us about the wardroom.

7 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, over the last three years, the  
8 wardroom has been functioning in a lot better fashion  
9 through Commander [REDACTED], Commander Benson, um and then uh  
10 with Commander Babbitt as XO. And just seeing that mature,  
11 that has been really good. Very deliberate, um, CSO  
12 working well with the other department heads. Um,  
13 Commander Babbitt definitely bringing in, I think, a good  
14 team effort and good communication. I think good  
15 communication and work -- they're working well to a common  
16 goal on that.

17 Um, and then with uh, Commander Benson being pretty  
18 good as far as intent, putting out his intent and uh,  
19 people understanding what that -- and maybe and then when  
20 if they fell short or didn't understand it was a good point  
21 as far as constructive um, not emotional, just feedback.  
22 Need it this way, let's get that on point and continue that  
23 in that, in that fashion.

24 But no, I think overall I would say that they function  
25 well, um, across the board.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 35

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, how does CO and XO get along?  
2 Benson and Bab?

3 CMC [REDACTED] Um, real well. I think it's good  
4 communication and uh, good teamwork.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How does the Senior Watch -- Watch  
6 Officer fit into that? You know, it's not uncommon for the  
7 single longer tour department head, it's easy to fall into  
8 an overly familiar relationship with the CO and/or the XO  
9 because you've been there on board so long and they come to  
10 lean on you.

11 CMC [REDACTED] Yeah, uh, so CSO got a little -- little  
12 too familiar at one point and uh, Commander Benson drew  
13 that line really clear and made it very evident to him that  
14 -- [REDACTED], you stepped over this line, this is not where I  
15 need you, this is not where your role is, you need to step  
16 back. And be careful on turning, making recommendation to  
17 your guidance type thing.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So do you recall when that calibration  
19 occurred, roughly?

20 CMC [REDACTED] Probably -- mmm, I wanna say it was  
21 probably within about three weeks. Two weeks or so of him  
22 taking command. So about two weeks after he took command.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So in June.

24 CMC [REDACTED] Yeah, I think so. I think probably the  
25 first week in June.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 36

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

2 CMC [REDACTED] I just can't remember but I remember  
3 that conversation from Commander Benson.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Uh, do you get a sense for  
5 whether, you know, so the senior CO is also the senior  
6 watch officer, there's a lot of -- there's a lot of  
7 influence on qualifications, a lot of influence on how  
8 watch bills are constructed, which done correctly should  
9 account for relative experience.

10 CMC [REDACTED] Yes.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Uh, interpersonal relationships,  
12 volume of UIs, that kind of stuff. Cross balancing watch  
13 sections. Did uh -- you know, talk to us about what --  
14 what's your personal evaluation of how effective was the  
15 senior watch officer in his role as the senior watch bill  
16 writer for the ship.

17 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, since he, uh, took it home as that,  
18 as the Senior Watch Officer.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And when did he assume those duties?

20 CMC [REDACTED] I wanna say it was late February.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

22 CMC [REDACTED] Late February, early March.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So before the big pump. Or right at  
24 the beginning of the big pump?

25 CMC [REDACTED] Yes.

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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

2 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, very deliberate in looking at that  
3 and in fact, we were getting less churn on watch bills and  
4 were more deliberate in that sense. And thoughtful as far  
5 as going through there, it's like, okay, why do you have  
6 this person here? Doesn't make sense.

7 You know, hearing those conversations and seeing those  
8 kind of churns on the watch bill, which was good, I mean  
9 they were looking at teams and how the teams interrelate.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, any complaints within the mast  
11 about the watch bill process inputs?

12 CMC [REDACTED] No.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Feedback? Lack of?

14 CMC [REDACTED] Like I said, it's been getting better on  
15 there between CSO as well as Senior Purchasing Officer, the  
16 uh, Senior Enlisted Watch Bill Coordinator there was less  
17 churn on those watches and they're more effective in  
18 getting watch bills out and making sure that they have  
19 teams

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, I've got a -- I kinda  
21 sidetracked a little bit so getting back to the original  
22 question about the Senior Watch Officer. So, so you know,  
23 how effective do you think the Senior Watch Officer was at  
24 designing watch bills that accounted for experience, that  
25 accounted for personalities, that accounted for the level

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 38

1 loading of under instruction watches so that watch bills  
2 were not lopsided and one watch section wasn't  
3 disadvantaged over another.

4 CMC [REDACTED] I, I think very effective because they  
5 were looking at that and making sure that there was a right  
6 fit and that there was backup in different areas.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So the ops officer was a TAO on watch  
8 that night. Talk to us about the -- what's your  
9 observation of the ops officer? Uh, competence, um, any  
10 human factors issues there? Relationships within the  
11 wardroom? Um, effectiveness as a TAO.

12 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, I haven't observed her as far as  
13 effectiveness as a TAO and her sitting in seat. Um, I  
14 couldn't really speak to that. If I was to have an  
15 adjective to describe her at times, it would be quiet.  
16 That would be the only adjective I could -- and I don't  
17 know if that translates into uh, her watch station there,  
18 as TAO, I have no idea. Or throughout the department,  
19 that's I hadn't seen, um, her performance there in all  
20 and I haven't observed her up on the bridge either, so  
21 don't know.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How about the ASW, she was the OOD  
23 that night?

24 CMC [REDACTED] Um, I think she's very directive and I  
25 think she comes in there with a plan and -- but uh, I'm

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 39

1 trying to remember how many times I've seen her up on the  
2 bridge and when I have seen her, I can't recall the number  
3 of times I've seen her on the bridge but definitely  
4 directive and working problems but -- and I'm not sure --

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How about relationships with her, any  
6 -- again, you know, you've got -- you're the deck, a lot of  
7 stuff gets discussed in the Chief's mess, observations, any  
8 comments about her interpersonal relationships, any -- any  
9 --

10 CMC [REDACTED] I haven't heard any interpersonal  
11 relationships, I haven't heard anything -- noise on that.  
12 I know that uh, definitely focused in the ASW world and  
13 driving any problems with submarines and, and 2AS.

14 Um, yeah, when she first checked on board, she uh,  
15 within hours had to give a brief on it and very  
16 knowledgeable and was able to take care of that. But as  
17 far as driving other interpersonal relationship thing.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Were you aware that she was  
19 apparently not taking meals in the wardroom and she was  
20 eating on the mess decks as a matter of habit?

21 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, I was not aware of -- of that.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. How about the Yeoman officer,  
23 Lieutenant [REDACTED]? She was the JOOD that night.

24 CMC [REDACTED] Hmm, I didn't realize she was the JOOD.  
25 Um, she's uh, a little feisty at times. I think sometimes

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 40

1 she'd, uh, you know, she -- honestly, uh, at times it feels  
2 like she's got a, uh, bit of um, authority issues. Just  
3 dealing with her as the admin officer and -- hey, we need  
4 to get this done. She'll tell you that it's done and I got  
5 it done this way. I'll say well, that way's gonna be wrong  
6 and it's not gonna be helpful and we need to get this stuff  
7 done.

8 And um, just that kind of friction causing with that  
9 and my role is just trying to make sure that we've got  
10 admin taken care of and personnel taken care of. Just  
11 getting friction there so that's -- that's why -- how I  
12 come to that conclusion. I didn't see her as far as acting  
13 up on the bridge. I've seen her drive and just coming  
14 alongside and stuff, uh, as we're doing CONREP, seemed  
15 engaged up on bridge but uh, other dealings that I've had  
16 with her, that's the only thing.

17 I know she's close with her guys, too, down in the  
18 office. And I think she uh, gets personal -- personalities  
19 and her feelings wrapped up in not making her objective in  
20 her decisions when she's dealing with her personnel.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, how about SIWO, he was the SWCC  
22 on watch.

23 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, again, very, uh, deliberate in  
24 measure with his decision-making process. My interactions  
25 with him has always been deliberate and uh, I think he was

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 41

1 focusing on the right things. I haven't seen him in his  
2 operation, uh, on a watch station for SWCC. That I  
3 couldn't speak to.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Not any, any personality issues or  
5 conflicts, excuse me, among these people?

6 CMC [REDACTED]: I, um, I haven't seen any conflicts or  
7 anything, uh, like that.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: No chatter in the mess. SIWO, ADMIN  
9 O, ASW, OPS.

10 CMC [REDACTED]: Uh, no. I -- I haven't heard any  
11 chatter around there.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Were you aware of any, uh, any  
13 major equipment degradations? Do you sit in on the weekly  
14 or daily department head meetings with the Captain?

15 CMC [REDACTED]: I, I would be, yes. We get the  
16 department heads --

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Eight o'clocks get discussed?

18 CMC [REDACTED]: -- eight o'clocks are discussed and then  
19 also during uh sea and anchor or the sea and anchor briefs.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, so were you aware of any --

21 CMC [REDACTED]: The only, uh --

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: -- any degradations from anyone?

23 CMC [REDACTED]: The only major equipment degradation  
24 with respect to the bridge would have been the, um,  
25 portside rotor angle indicator, being the split and

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 42

1 inaccurate indications really concern was coming alongside  
2 or more the uh, mitigating factor we put on there was just  
3 to cover it up to keep from distractions on there until it  
4 was repaired. So wouldn't see a split indication.

5 The -- I'm not sure the status of it, the only other  
6 degradation that I saw was in CIC for the SPA-25G. I can't  
7 recall if that's been repaired by them or not.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What's the -- are you aware of what  
9 the degradation is to the SPA?

10 CMC [REDACTED] I think it was tracking but the ET in me  
11 also sees that was a little big oblong and egg-shaped  
12 instead of perfectly round. That's an annoyance for me.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, so there's no other, uh, no  
14 other equipment degradations that you're aware of that  
15 might have had an impact on the resulting collision.

16 CMC [REDACTED] No.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: 73 radar, AIS, nav lights bridge-to-  
18 bridge radio, VMS, ARPA?

19 CMC [REDACTED] No. No.

20 UNKNOWN: Sixty-seven radar.

21 CMC [REDACTED] No, the -- I don't think -- I'm trying.  
22 I don't know if it got fixed in those nine days or eight  
23 days that we were in port. I think there was an issue with  
24 sensor processor on the 73 track but I think, I don't know  
25 if that's accurate or not. If I recall it correctly.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 43

1 Um, no, I'm not aware of any other degradations.

2 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So we talked earlier a little bit  
3 about OPTEMPO. Let's go into a little bit more detail. So  
4 when did Fitz go into the -- into SRA? Sometime last year.

5 CMC [REDACTED]: Yeah, I was -- like right around May or  
6 June.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So May, May 16 we'll call it, right?

8 CMC [REDACTED]: Yeah.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And when did you come out of SRA and  
10 first go to sea, for say sea trials or your NavCheck ride?

11 CMC [REDACTED]: NavCheck ride was in January of 2017.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: January 2017, okay. And then when did  
13 Fitz push off for the three-week patrol which turned into a  
14 longer patrol?

15 CMC [REDACTED]: Um, that was in first week of January.  
16 Or February.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: All right, so you -- and then you, so  
18 you left, went down for MultiSail.

19 CMC [REDACTED]: Right.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Then you got the bonus package and so  
21 when did Fitz come back from that patrol?

22 CMC [REDACTED]: Uh, June --

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So beginning of this month?

24 CMC [REDACTED]: June 8th, 9th. I know it was only for  
25 nine days and then we're heading back out again.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 44

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right. Okay.

2 CMC [REDACTED] Take seaman's tasking. That's probably  
3 what's so frustrating. Just the personal pride everybody  
4 had with making sure the equipment was working and that we  
5 could execute the mission whenever asked.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So when the 12 months, I'm gonna sort  
7 of summarize this, you tell me if I'm right or wrong. So  
8 in the 12 months between entering SRA and returning from  
9 patrol for the import period right before the collision --  
10 in those 12 months, the last four essentially were spent  
11 underway. The previous eight were in-port.

12 CMC [REDACTED] In-port.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: In some capacity as deep maintenance  
14 or--

15 CMC [REDACTED] Deep maintenance.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Leaving upkeep period and for, you  
17 know, immediately following SRA.

18 CMC [REDACTED] Correct.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. And in that time period, you  
20 had 39 percent-ish turnover.

21 CMC [REDACTED] Maybe a little bit more but yes. I mean  
22 I get 30 men for separating out for the next nine months.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

24 CMC [REDACTED] So could be more by that time.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 45

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Okay, so tell us about the, uh,  
2 the relationship between the CO and the rest of the crew.  
3 CO in the mess decks, the CO and Chief's mess, CO in the  
4 wardroom.

5 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, I think it's -- I think it's really  
6 good. It was a little hesitant at first because um, his  
7 role as XO, a little bit different relationship and then --

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Actually, let's go back to that, so  
9 how was Commander Benson as the XO?

10 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, very deliberate. Very deliberate  
11 and focused on training and in establishing a very well-  
12 thought out routine and minimizing those friction points  
13 and I thought we were more effective, we were getting -- we  
14 were definitely more effective with him as he came on board  
15 for XO in working with Commander [REDACTED] -- for the ship, the  
16 ship was running a little bit smoother.

17 Given as many, uh, friction points as we were going to  
18 have with the training and the maintenance and especially  
19 since we were dialing up was very deliberate and well  
20 thought out and um, it was good. Yeah.

21 You know, when he first got here as XO, um, he checked  
22 onboard, there was a big friction point that he created  
23 with the crew when he -- first time he had TQ7s, a little  
24 long and he was like -- if we don't get a set within seven  
25 minutes, there will be no ice cream. And so that became --

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 46

1 he's speaking with the ice cream social and then that  
2 became a little bit of running joke and then people were a  
3 little bit upset with him at first because they took it  
4 very serious.

5 But as time went on over the, you know, coming  
6 quarters, things were a lot more, uh, the saw the value in  
7 where he was heading and in the de-confliction and removing  
8 some of the -- help, help remove some of the friction  
9 points with schedule and where people had to be.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Looking back on that, on that  
11 timeframe where he uh, he uh, held the auto dog  
12 machine hostage because the crew couldn't sit zero in the  
13 standards, I mean how -- was that normal for the Fitz not  
14 to be able to set zero within standards?

15 CMC [REDACTED]: Um, no, it wasn't normal, it was coming  
16 after not having, you know, a period of time that we had  
17 some crew turnover, locker turnover, it was just people  
18 getting familiar with where the -- where there -- where  
19 their ZEBRA card have and where people were supposed to be  
20 and it was the first major drill that we had after him  
21 checking on board.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. In his transition from XO to  
23 CO, because you know, XOs, sometimes they've gotta do what  
24 they gotta do to execute the Commanding Officer's  
25 priorities.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 47

1 CMC [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

2 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Was there anything about the way he  
3 acted? How big of a -- I guess what I'm asking is how big  
4 of a change in his approach to leadership occurred in his  
5 transition from XO to CO? Was there a dramatic change?  
6 Like was he pretty consistent?

7 CMC [REDACTED] Oh no. He was consistent and he was  
8 still predictable as far as the -- what he was expecting.  
9 There wasn't any kind of changes in that and so I think  
10 that's where it made that transition smoothly.

11 The only change was the leadership style change from  
12 Commander [REDACTED] and Commander Benson.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So help us about that. What was the -  
14 - how were they different, what was the delta?

15 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, the delta is Commander Benson, uh,  
16 more directive and intent and not necessarily, uh,  
17 requiring consensus for leadership.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

19 CMC [REDACTED] So Commander Benson, uh, took the inputs  
20 and would still go with his intent and not necessarily have  
21 to build a consensus in order to make a decision.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Okay, so back -- back to my  
23 original question, so how, you know, how was the, how was  
24 the relationship with the crew, the E-6 and below, the  
25 Chief's mess, and the wardroom. Specifically in

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 48

1 willingness to approach him. Is this somebody that people  
2 could talk to? Could you bring him bad news?

3 CMC [REDACTED] Yes, absolutely. Very approachable and,  
4 and could talk to him and bring him bad news. Open door  
5 with the mess and wardroom, and he demanded that, you know,  
6 if there's something that he needed for a decision or if  
7 there was an issue, he needed to know about it so he can  
8 make a decision and assume the right risk.

9 With E-6 and juniors, especially when it came to some  
10 personnel issues and stuff, open door, but in order to knock  
11 on that door to come in and you've gotta make sure you have  
12 a chit and you know, there's a process, making sure that,  
13 you know, the rest of the leadership is engaged, know what  
14 the concerns are and have an opportunity to solve whatever  
15 that problem is.

16 But yes, very approachable. In fact, you know, just  
17 walking the links with him and -- he's very engaged with  
18 them, with the crew, you know, knows them, very relatable  
19 in perspective overall.

20 I liked his approach, um, that he changed with like  
21 CO's suggestion box. In a previous couple COs, they'd  
22 address it in different fashions whether it's directly  
23 talking to the sailor or, you know, okay, we'll make that  
24 change and we'll help take care of that problem.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 49

1 Um, Commander Benson changed that word. He wanted to  
2 hand write a response when appropriate, you know, if it's  
3 gonna be a longer response, sit down with the sailor and  
4 respond to their concern if provided.

5 If it was an anonymous, just write a letter to crew or  
6 whatever the case is, if it's appropriate.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, how about his relationship with  
8 the wardroom?

9 CMC [REDACTED] Um, again, very respectful and I think  
10 it was open in that sense.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Anybody across the crew that you  
12 think, that you retract and they had some kind of problem  
13 with Benson, they didn't like his style, they didn't like  
14 his personality. He had -- he had -- you know, maybe he  
15 laid into them when he was XO and how he was living with  
16 the consequences of how he treated somebody earlier in his  
17 tour.

18 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, I don't think -- he had a -- first  
19 couple days after he took command, he had probably  
20 delivered the most bad news in one sitting to the greatest  
21 number of people that I've seen. Denying a lot of leave  
22 chits that were pending and going up for -- after our  
23 Sasebo visit and -- and the -- he turned away just because  
24 their schedules changed. So he was very deliberate in  
25 bringing them in there.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 50

1 There was a couple of people that were angry and  
2 frustrated with that. I think Officer [REDACTED] was  
3 probably, couldn't look him in the eye after she received  
4 that news. IT2 [REDACTED]. Um, after receiving the news that  
5 she can't go on leave with family because we need her here,  
6 we've got all these certifications plus we're -- we don't  
7 know what our future is so I want my sailors here, you  
8 know, you have value to me, to our organization and this is  
9 the conversation he had with them as he was telling them  
10 that, you know, most don't like the bad news but I really  
11 appreciate it.

12 Our youngest sailor, probably impacted the most, OS3  
13 [REDACTED], um, breaking down in tears but understood that.  
14 And then two or three days later I'm getting very  
15 constructive feedback from her and how we can make  
16 Fitzgerald better. So I don't think there was a lot of  
17 people that didn't like or had something strongly against  
18 Commander Benson. And that's across the crew.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. So it just occurred to me, uh,  
20 so you were -- you were on board as CMC when he reported as  
21 XO. So you've been here the whole time with them.

22 CMC [REDACTED]: Absolutely. Absolutely.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: All right. All right. Um, so how's  
24 your mess?

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 51

1 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, young. Uh, growing. There's --  
2 there's places that they're really strong on the mess and,  
3 you know, I've got groups with different microclimates on  
4 there.

5 So kind of frustrated with me, my leadership in the  
6 way, uh, I want them to figure out the problems and I won't  
7 necessarily answer all their problems for them because some  
8 of that is forcing them to talk amongst themselves and look  
9 at things because a lot of them might have the answers  
10 within and they're trying to hit the easy button.

11 So I've got a little bit of friction in there, um,  
12 maybe they've seen something or wanted something different  
13 than who I am and -- and how I lead there. But overall,  
14 fantastic. They're driven for the crew, they're driven  
15 about mess with each other and uh, I think they've focused  
16 on the right things.

17 Then I'd like to, you know, I'm working with getting  
18 them stronger and then I've seen them, a couple of them, a  
19 lot of the develop in -- or develop into some damn good  
20 Chiefs and they're ready to be Senior Chiefs and we've made  
21 a couple since that, too, because of that, so.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, how about the wardroom, what's  
23 your evaluation of the wardroom?

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 52

1 CMC [REDACTED]: Uh, wardroom is all -- this wardroom  
2 right now is a lot better than it was three years ago and  
3 um, better than it was, uh, you know, a year ago.

4 They're definitely more mission-focused and  
5 maintenance focused in solving problems together and a lot  
6 of in-fighting that was there three years ago.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What do you think of new XO?

8 CMC [REDACTED]: Uh, I like him. Um, I like him a lot.  
9 He's got a very measured approach, very thoughtful, cares  
10 about the crew, he understand the workload that's out here,  
11 the pressures that are out here and the consequences if we  
12 just drive till, you know, we run out of gas.

13 So I like that a lot and I've seen him put some things  
14 in place, uh, that were very helpful a couple times. A  
15 little frustrating but, you know, doing -- making some  
16 decisions and wish I would've been involved in that  
17 decision process but some of it I'm attributing to just how  
18 disconnected we've been in the last two weeks as far as  
19 different places, we're getting pulled like taffy.  
20 Everybody wants a piece of us. So some decisions are being  
21 made, you know, without us getting synced up together  
22 because they just need to be made.

23 But we're working through that and I don't think that  
24 there's any -- there's no animosity, anything like that,  
25 between us or through there and then when necessary, you

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1 know, it needs to be modified, he's open to that which is,  
2 I think, healthy and that's the way it should be.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So prior to the collision, how was the  
4 relationship among the CO, XO and you?

5 CMC [REDACTED] I think good, we're still developing as  
6 a team. I mean it's been a month-and-a-half. What, was it  
7 May 13th? Yeah, so about a month.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: May 13th was the change of command?

9 CMC [REDACTED] May 13th was change of command and uh,  
10 Commander Babbitt checked on board and during MultiSail in  
11 March. So working with him, getting it all done in his  
12 style and you know, us meshing, you know, learning about  
13 each other and how we can help support one another as well  
14 as where our strengths and weakness are both.

15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So no -- no personality conflicts, no

16 --

17 CMC [REDACTED] No. No.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: -- big disagreements. Not ever tribe  
19 gets along swimmingly.

20 CMC [REDACTED] Well no, and where there were  
21 disagreements, it was respectful disagreements. I just  
22 don't see it that way.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, you referred to an issue with gas  
24 management during the ammo onload was that? It was  
25 fittings?

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 54

1 CMC [REDACTED] They needed air fittings to move the gas  
2 management for the missiles, to switch them out.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And they would be in the ship's --

4 CMC [REDACTED] Yeah, NMC. In the ship's weapons  
5 department. So there's a different air fitting that they  
6 needed to help lift that up and move it. I don't know the  
7 exact details.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Was this missing on the -- was this a  
9 ship issue, procedural operation or was it an NMC issue  
10 that when the bars came out they were missing the  
11 equipment?

12 CMC [REDACTED] I think it's a combination of both.  
13 One, they didn't know what -- we didn't know what they had  
14 and they didn't know what we had and no one knew to ask  
15 that question what was in there. Normally the gas  
16 management, we have time to take care of that pier-side and  
17 it's already vented. We didn't have that option so it was  
18 just a process of discovery.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Are you aware of a close call, near  
20 collision the evening prior to pulling into Sasebo?

21 CMC [REDACTED] I heard about that, XO mentioned that to  
22 me, uh, that uh, morning as we were coming in that we had a  
23 close call that we had to go all back. Caught me off guard  
24 and surprised on that. I don't know who was on watch -- or  
25 the environmental conditions.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 55

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: When did you find out about it?  
2 CMC [REDACTED]: That morning coming in for uh --  
3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: The following day?  
4 CMC [REDACTED]: -- the following day, yes.  
5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Was there a, was there ever a formal  
6 debrief?  
7 CMC [REDACTED]: I don't know if there was a formal  
8 debrief on that. I don't have knowledge on how that was  
9 handled.  
10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. So it's pretty clear that the  
11 CO and XO laid below on the night of the collision  
12 following boat operations about 2300. Were you on the  
13 bridge during boat ops?  
14 CMC [REDACTED]: No, I went to the, um, fantail.  
15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, so you were on the fantail.  
16 CMC [REDACTED]: I was on the fantail. Commander Babbitt  
17 came down on the fantail, we talked for a minute and he  
18 went up to the -- back to the bridge, I think. I don't  
19 know if that's true or not.  
20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.  
21 CMC [REDACTED]: He left uh, the fantail.  
22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: All right, it sounds like you leave  
23 below to go do some work and then hit your bed after Boat  
24 Ops.  
25 CMC [REDACTED]: Right.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 56

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So the CO and XO laid below after Boat  
2 Ops and they were not -- they did not come back to the  
3 bridge until the collision occurred.

4 How many times have you, as a Fitz sailor, transited  
5 through that area? South of Sagami Wan, taking Oshima to  
6 port or starboard, depending on whether inbound or  
7 outbound, Izu Peninsula.

8 CMC [REDACTED]: Shoot, I don't know, that's just our  
9 usual path for --

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So --

11 CMC [REDACTED]: Yeah, I ballpark it. I don't know, I  
12 think about 10 times, eight times in the last two years.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, so in your recollection, let's  
14 say -- let's say it was 10 times. In your recollection of  
15 those 10 times, how many times were the CO and/or the XO on  
16 the bridge?

17 CMC [REDACTED]: Oh, I have no recollection of where  
18 their whereabouts were going through that during that  
19 transit. So.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. They could have been there  
21 every time, they could've been there -- never been there.  
22 As far as you know.

23 CMC [REDACTED]: Yeah, I have -- I have no idea. I mean  
24 I couldn't -- I couldn't give an answer to that.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 57

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do you recall CO or XO or any of the  
2 other senior officers expressing concerns about -- watch  
3 standing confidence of Ms. [REDACTED] or Ms. [REDACTED] or Ms.  
4 [REDACTED] or Mr. [REDACTED].

5 CMC [REDACTED] No, the only time that -- Mr. [REDACTED] --  
6 the only time any comments on that with watch stand  
7 performance came up was probably -- I don't know if it was  
8 this time last year. It was before he was qualified from  
9 Senior Chief [REDACTED] because she was saying that -- for  
10 Lieutenant [REDACTED] -- um, because she was saying that and  
11 part of the -- she was part of the qualification.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: For SWCC?

13 CMC [REDACTED] For SWCC, yes.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What were her concerns?

15 CMC [REDACTED] Her concerns was just his -- it seemed  
16 more of a vabology issue with him. As she described the  
17 problem, she said he wasn't ready and then I said, "Well,  
18 what -- what makes him not ready to be qualified yet?" "He  
19 doesn't know how to do certain functions on there, on that  
20 vabology." Or "He's doing it slow on the vabology."

21 But you know, that was the thing that was holding him  
22 up on her stint.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay was he community officer  
24 qualified?

25 CMC [REDACTED] He was officer qualified but I don't

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 58

1 know what -- I think it was another month or so after, you  
2 know, she raised those concerns as far as why it was taking  
3 so long.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Any other -- any other concerns  
5 expressed by any other officers I just talked about?

6 CMC [REDACTED]: No sir.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do you -- are you OOD qualified  
8 previously or --

9 CMC [REDACTED]: No sir.

10 UNKNOWN: -- anything? Okay.

11 CMC [REDACTED] No, CSC is the only other watch station  
12 qualified.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: You ever been, you ever been in space  
14 with the Captain when he took a call from the OOD, took a  
15 contact report?

16 CMC [REDACTED]: Yes, sir.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How did he -- what's his MO for how  
18 he, how he interacts with the OOD during those calls?

19 CMC [REDACTED]: How he interacts anytime, he's just  
20 professional and taking a contact report and asking me any  
21 relevant questions and then, you know, provide direction or  
22 asking what their recommendation was or how they were gonna  
23 handle the problem.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. I've got some questions at the  
25 end but I'll pass the baton.

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1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Going back through some of the  
2 things that have been asked and mentioned during our talk  
3 here today.

4 UNKNOWN: Water?

5 CMC [REDACTED] I'm good right now, thank you sir.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] You had mentioned that at some  
7 point there had been some TDY personnel on board the ship  
8 to try and fill out roles. Upon departure on the 16th,  
9 were there any TDY personnel still on board?

10 CMC [REDACTED] Mmm, yes, I -- think we were down to  
11 like one or two TDY personnel. Um, [REDACTED] he's TDY from  
12 Benfold but he's in the process of a -- shift, a command  
13 shift between us and Benfold for one of our BM1s. We're  
14 trying to get an BM2. So I mean it just bridged that gap  
15 and just sort of permanently TDY'd him to the ship.

16 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so nobody like new, new, new  
17 to the ship that had been --

18 CMC [REDACTED] TDY?

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] TDY maybe for a while?

20 CMC [REDACTED] No.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] You mentioned you were probably  
22 about 89 percent manned? So when you say 100 percent, is  
23 that optimal or is that the minimum?

24 CMC [REDACTED] So the way the Navy is manning FDNF, our  
25 target manning is 95 percent manned. Uh, just a overall

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] Baldwin 60

1 manning with a 92 percent fit meaning, I have the right  
2 paper and the right experience and schools. And when I say  
3 89 percent, I'm meaning that we're 89 percent of a manned  
4 but not necessarily fit, I don't know where the Fitz at.

5 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Is -- is there -- I almost wanna  
6 say minimum manning that, you know, the vessel cannot get  
7 underway if you're at.

8 CMC [REDACTED]: There are red lines, um, that we will  
9 not get underway without certain skillsets. I need a SAR  
10 swimmer. I need two SAR swimmers. So those are the things  
11 that will keep me from getting underway. Not necessarily,  
12 you know, having a navigator. I need those things. Saying  
13 that I need so many USSs or CSSs or cooks or enginemen or  
14 something like that, there's not a redline for that. So if  
15 I'm short, figure it out.

16 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So there are not redlines for all  
17 positions.

18 CMC [REDACTED]: No. No.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do you believe if the Commanding  
20 Officer thought it was unsafe to get the ship underway that  
21 he would let DESRON 15 know that?

22 CMC [REDACTED]: Absolutely, 100 percent. He would not  
23 take that risk.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: One of the things that came up in a  
25 lot of our talks was that the watch for the helm, lee helm

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 61

1 aft lookout had a significant number of break-ins that both  
2 the new watch bill that came out pretty much had the vast  
3 majority of break-ins all in one spot.

4 CMC [REDACTED] What do you mean by break-ins?

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Under instruction.

6 CMC [REDACTED] Okay.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So a lot of folks who were under  
8 instruction were all put in one spot so that they could all  
9 train together and have the best of the best and work out  
10 the process all together. Do you recall if that had been  
11 discussed at the command level if this was something?

12 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, it wasn't at a triad conversation.  
13 I know that, from what I understand is that that was a  
14 mitigation plan to help get our new report personnel  
15 trained up as effectively, efficiently as possible going to  
16 the different watch stations during their UI watch.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so it got brought up in just  
18 kind of a passing -- okay, that sounds good, let's give it  
19 a go.

20 CMC [REDACTED] Right, because we still had the  
21 qualified personnel at those and they were rotating them  
22 through there so they could see as much as they can and  
23 experience as much as they can and as soon as they could.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. Another thing that came up  
25 was that there may have been a radar upgrade for the 73s

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 62

1 that may have been delayed. Do you have much information  
2 on that?

3 CMC [REDACTED]: I don't know about a radar upgrade but  
4 that was the thing as far as like it was not certain as far  
5 as the degrade, it was not an upgrade but a -- there's a  
6 card that was supposed to be replaced that had -- I'm not  
7 sure of the function of the card but it was a minor  
8 degradation and then I think got repaired prior to that. I  
9 don't know the extent of the casualty.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And would that -- again, that  
11 repair that card replacement, would that be, is there like  
12 an open action tracker that says this was a casualty, this  
13 is what's been reported?

14 CMC [REDACTED] It would have been either listed on  
15 their 8:00 reports or there would've been a job opened up  
16 to order the part and to repair the problem.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Are those orders kept on board or  
18 is there a separate system outside of the ship to track?

19 CMC [REDACTED] There -- it's the supply system so I  
20 mean the supply system outside the ship will order the  
21 part, get the part, it's got a tracking number as well as  
22 on board the ship but um, part of our systems being --  
23 computer systems being down with the crash of the network  
24 and stuff, corrupted the normal ordering process that would

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 63

1 automate that. And uh, I don't know if that fell into that  
2 or not. I don't know the status of that.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So and it could've been that this  
4 part was ordered, we need to get this.

5 CMC [REDACTED] There's been a -- it would've been done  
6 through a paper tracking and a submission either by phone  
7 call or -- I don't know exactly how supply made that  
8 process work but they've got a process in place to mitigate  
9 that.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And I think you touched upon, I  
11 just wanted to kind of hear it again, is that you feel that  
12 there was environment on the ship that if somebody had a  
13 question, they had a concern, had a problem, had an idea,  
14 had anything that they wanted to float up, there's no  
15 barriers to that, they -- other than a meeting of chip if  
16 you're E-6 and below, you could knock on the CO's door and  
17 say, "Sir, we need more ice cream." And --

18 CMC [REDACTED] Yes.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And that'd be opened.

20 CMC [REDACTED] Yes, absolutely.

21 MR. [REDACTED]: Mr. Chief, you had said if you were a  
22 plankowner -- where was the vessel stationed at that time?

23 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, it was built in Bath, Maine and we  
24 were stationed in San Diego.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 64

1 MR. [REDACTED]: Stationed in San Diego. Now you said  
2 that was in 1994?

3 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, '95.

4 MR. [REDACTED]: Ninety-five. So you're looking at tail-  
5 end gulf war timeframe?

6 CMC [REDACTED] Yes, and -- yeah, for the most part, yes  
7 sir.

8 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay, so compared to then and now, as  
9 far as mission, you know, days afloat, days underway,  
10 personnel -- what are the changes that you're seeing?

11 CMC [REDACTED] Uh, tremendous. If you look at there,  
12 the manning was completely different. There wasn't the top  
13 six rollback that happened 12 years ago, 14 years ago where  
14 we reduced senior leadership and manning to go from, you  
15 know, where I had a chief before, E-7, now it's first  
16 class. And where I had first class, now it's an E-5 and  
17 just rolling back like that.

18 I had, I had more um, senior leadership there, more  
19 experience quite frankly on a ship 22 years ago. I don't  
20 have that now. You know, in some cases when a senior  
21 person like in weapons for BLS, if someone that just got  
22 rated, okay, and is going to school right now, in fact is  
23 off the ship doing that because we're sending her to school  
24 to get her trained up.

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1 Those are the kind of things that, you know, I had to  
2 kind of say well I take my senior one was a senior chief  
3 and we wouldn't let him go on an emergency leave to take  
4 care of [REDACTED]. Because we didn't have  
5 any other one trained up. She was getting trained. Those  
6 are the kind of gaps that we have and we've removed, as I  
7 see it, some of the backups, the safeties and the mentoring  
8 that we used to do 20 years ago. We don't have that now.  
9 Because I don't have the depth of knowledge, I don't have  
10 the depth of experience that I can rely on.

11 MR. [REDACTED]: So you were, um, what about the underway  
12 timeframes?

13 CMC [REDACTED]: The underway time frames?

14 MR. [REDACTED]: Yeah.

15 CMC [REDACTED]: Oh, different model, different manning  
16 of ships, a lot more ships than -- more predictable six  
17 months underway, do you know, POM period. And that's  
18 stateside, too, because that's a stateside cycle. FDNF,  
19 you know, constant. We had scheduled patrols and then  
20 we're the duty ship or if something flares up -- go hang  
21 out and do defensive command for the indeterminate amount  
22 of time.

23 So it's apples and oranges there and then I don't know  
24 what the change was for FDNF schedule 20 years ago, I can't  
25 speak to that.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 66

1 MR. [REDACTED]: You were talking about capabilities.  
2 She came fresh out of the yard, brand new. You had --  
3 let's say you had your brand-new Cadillac.

4 CMC [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

5 MR. [REDACTED]: Has your Cadillac dropped down to a  
6 Pinto or where are you at?

7 CMC [REDACTED] No, no. The crew maintain the uh, where  
8 she was mission ready. Yeah, we were -- I think we were  
9 carrying about 12 or 13 CASREPs. Twelve or 13 CASREPs and  
10 which were kind of light considering how much work we got  
11 but yeah, we can scorch around all over the South China Sea  
12 and East China Sea and all over the Pacific at full speed  
13 or whatever we needed, flying. And she'd run. And the  
14 crew keeps her up and she's -- I think we're doing better  
15 than most ships out here and that's one of the personal  
16 pride that Fitz had was that -- yeah, if somebody else  
17 breaks, we'll take your mission. We can because we're  
18 capable.

19 MR. [REDACTED]: The 12 or 13 CASREPs. Was any of those  
20 in relation to uh, navigation?

21 CMC [REDACTED] I don't recall the specifics. I know we  
22 cleared a lot, like 16 cleared when we were in our Sasebo  
23 visit which was you know, seven days, eight days,  
24 phenomenal and we had -- some were communications, some --  
25 they were varied throughout there.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 67

1 MR. [REDACTED]: All right, so you spoke about uh,  
2 pulling leave for individuals aboard the vessel. Now I  
3 know you had the six-month drop out period which allowed  
4 people to catch up. But prior to that, I mean was that  
5 becoming an issue to some extent? I mean -- I mean there's  
6 a lower level grumblings, there's mid-level grumblings and  
7 then there's, you know, it gets to a point.

8 CMC [REDACTED] So the concern was that some people  
9 couldn't take leave because of whatever role or position  
10 they had during that six months in port. Just because  
11 you're in six months port doesn't mean you're not that  
12 person that needs to be there to get us through whatever  
13 that -- that maintenance period. Because we had some  
14 people that were in that position.

15 And we got them a week or two leave prior to going in  
16 there knowing that they would, uh, not be able to for the  
17 next six months afterwards.

18 And then as we started ramping up, there were people  
19 that could go on leave because during the holding period  
20 and such that they knew they couldn't because of we're  
21 doing our certification. Okay, got it. When do I get a  
22 spot? We gave them that window, it was in April. That's  
23 what -- they understood, we've gotta be in in March or  
24 February, we have to get to Guam. March we're gonna be  
25 around Guam, we've got our mission to do. April we're

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 68

1 supposed to be in port, we'll be able to get some leave  
2 caught up then.

3 And then our schedule changed and the leave went away.  
4 And then our schedule changed and then the other future  
5 leave went away and plans that people had started eroding,  
6 um, because we had our mission. So things -- they would've  
7 gotten leave in the period that they're looking for and  
8 they put off for because, you know, we always make that  
9 bargain. I'll save up, I'll take care of the mission, I'll  
10 answer the mission now and then I I'll catch you over here.  
11 Yes, I'll support that.

12 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. I know how we do it in the Coast  
13 Guard but what's the maximum amount of leave that most  
14 people, you guys can carry on your book?

15 CMC [REDACTED]: Um So that -- used to be a little bit  
16 higher. Now it's at 60 days, however, you can put in an  
17 operational waiver in there. I know I was amazed with  
18 Commander [REDACTED] before he left, he had 119 days of leave on  
19 the books.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: That's four years of leave banked.

21 CMC [REDACTED]: Yeah, four years of not taking any leave  
22 and I've had quite a few people that are over 60 so we've  
23 got, you know, anywhere from like right now I've got two  
24 days to use or lose. So the last two years, yeah I've  
25 taken leave. I take five days in December just -- that's

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 69

1 it. But you know, we still have two days use or lose so  
2 there's a lot of time where I haven't taken and wasn't able  
3 to take because of other operational commitment.

4 So people have -- some of them have 70, 80 days leave  
5 carried over. Some are at 60. We try to buy down as much  
6 as we can but it's a mad scramble. And some have taken  
7 like a couple days. Couple days over a weekend. Not  
8 really leave. Not really shutting down.

9 MR. [REDACTED]: All right, so as far as you know, let's  
10 ball park it procedure wise. Of your crew, how many people  
11 were in the 80s or use or lose or actually lost leave?

12 CMC [REDACTED]: Uh, it's -- I'd say probably 30 percent  
13 because of the turnover we've had and everything like that.  
14 Anywhere between 20 and 30 percent right now. If I was to  
15 throw a dart at a board and say that's where we're at right  
16 this instant, probably 20, 30 percent because of the  
17 transfers that we've had and everything else.

18 MR. [REDACTED]: Just for my own clarification, you had a  
19 30 to 39 percent transfer in leaving you with 61 percent of  
20 the crew that was still there. That 61 percent, 30, you  
21 said only 30 percent of that 61 is left on board was  
22 actually losing it.

23 CMC [REDACTED]: We're in a position where we had to  
24 submit a waiver to say keep your leave.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 70

1 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. So then I have to re-ask the  
2 question. Was there a lot of grumbling because of these  
3 issues?

4 CMC [REDACTED]: There's -- there's grumbling and like I  
5 said, we had to -- I had sailors crying because they had  
6 the XO or the Commanding Officer tell them, "You're not  
7 going on leave, you're not gonna go see your mother get  
8 married. You're not gonna go see, you know, this  
9 happening. Your family members graduate because I need  
10 you. The ship needs you."

11 MR. [REDACTED]: So with that, and that issue, how do you  
12 feel morale is going?

13 CMC [REDACTED]: Morale? Here's the thing. Morale takes  
14 a lot of different heads out here. And uh, morale, when  
15 you talk about personal pride and accomplishing a mission,  
16 and having teamwork and doing the phenomenal things that we  
17 have, that brings that personal pride. Because that's  
18 where we really get paid at out here. We get paid in that  
19 personal pride of service and job accomplishment that we're  
20 doing here.

21 The leave side of it should help, is that  
22 counterbalance on the end that brings that down and it  
23 doesn't allow it to go as high as it can so it goes in  
24 waves and it depends on where we're at and so I -- you talk

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 71

1 about morale right now? It's in the dirt. This instant,  
2 it's in the dirt.

3 Prior to the incident, there was a group that knew we  
4 had a mission to do and they understood because they've  
5 experienced that here. And so morale was flat. I'd say,  
6 you know, 50 percent being flat. There was a group at 50  
7 percent, there was, you know, maybe about 20 or 30 percent  
8 who were the negative, the ones who were just understanding  
9 what this meant to be out here. And then there's some that  
10 were like at 55 percent. I'm not saying that they're at  
11 100 percent but they weren't. But most of the crew was not  
12 negative based on our schedule because we knew that what we  
13 were getting into, we knew that this was our mission and  
14 the morale was really based off of -- what's our schedule  
15 change.

16 Pulling into Sasebo morale was high even though we  
17 were doing an extra three months. Some families were able  
18 to come down and that's the beauty of being out here.  
19 Can't do that when we're on a third fleet deployment. And  
20 it was high when we had nine days here. But uh --

21 LCDR [REDACTED]: I know he asked this last two, give me  
22 one and I'll see if I can grab it.

23 CMC [REDACTED] All right, sir.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] I'll offer you that water again if  
25 you want.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 72

1 CMC [REDACTED] I think I'll take that now.

2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] We'll pause the recording for a  
3 minute here and be right back.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Where is your office, so are you right  
5 there across from -- on the mess line?

6 CMC [REDACTED] Absolutely. I love it being there, I  
7 have a chance to hear everybody on break.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So uh, you know, in your view, how did  
9 this happen? How did the USS Fitzgerald and another vessel  
10 Crystal come to occupy the exact same spot of water on the  
11 night of the collision?

12 CMC [REDACTED] I- I'm wracking my brain on that, sir.  
13 Um, because you're looking at the failure of two teams.  
14 The back-up the CIC provides as well as the whole bridge  
15 team. Full two teams failed to support one another and to  
16 navigate the ship safely.

17 To have that kind of breakdown systematically between  
18 two different teams -- I don't know how that can happen  
19 other than -- I mean the conversation -- we were concerned  
20 about this as far as just the operational side of it. And  
21 everything that we had to do for that day, because it was  
22 gonna be a long day, we knew that. We knew that going in  
23 there and trying to reduce it down and telling people to  
24 get some rest where you can because you're gonna be up late  
25 if you got the Boat Ops, so make sure that during the ammo

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1 offload you get a chance to get some rest and you know, we  
2 were concerned about it.

3       You know, asking the question, what's your SOA? Are  
4 we gonna be scorching down in South China Sea? No, it  
5 looks good, like around 13 knots. Good, we're not, you  
6 know, pushing 16. We're going a little bit slower. That's  
7 any a good measure to approach, right?

8       The only thing that I can think of that makes any  
9 sense is when you stretch a rubber band too tight, it's  
10 gotta relax a little bit so it can come back and do its job  
11 because it needs a little bit of tension on there but you  
12 can't keep it stretched forever. Otherwise it's gonna snap  
13 so it'll naturally wanna come down there when you take some  
14 of the load off, and pull a few things out of it.

15       And you know, I -- I don't know the exact time and if  
16 they're doing the watch turnover and it's just the  
17 distraction between the watch turnover at that time or if  
18 it's just that that seemed to be the most quiet moment that  
19 that rubber band could relax a little bit and then  
20 everybody, both teams relaxed and kept their eyes off of --  
21 and the decisions being made of what actually needed to be  
22 done. That's the only thing I can theorize that happened  
23 in that situation.

24       I don't know. I don't know how that could happen.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 74

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Well, what's your sense of the normal  
2 underway day-to-day collaboration between the bridge and  
3 CIC?

4 CMC [REDACTED] I think that's fairly good. I mean  
5 they're hauling up and down, you know, any course changes,  
6 speed changes, you know. Or they're calling up there and  
7 they're getting feedback if they notice that -- like CIC  
8 notices a change in course quickly and then say -- hey,  
9 bridge, what are we doing?

10 You know, if there was, you know, a two-second delay  
11 in that order and that change they noticed it.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: That's been your -- that's been your  
13 observation?

14 CMC [REDACTED] That's been my observations.

15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How much time do you spend on the  
16 bridge and CIC, just in the course of a normal day? I know  
17 you're not a bridge watch stander but you've got your  
18 bough-bill circulation.

19 CMC [REDACTED] Yeah, I'll go up there in the morning  
20 and evening just to see how they're doing and -- and you  
21 know, if there's any issues. Nothing that would raise any  
22 kind of flags or -- what are we doing, why are doing -- why  
23 are we doing something wrong or you know, let's fix this,  
24 this is broken. How much -- not hours, you know, 10  
25 minutes maybe a day in both in going through there. Maybe

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] 75

1 that's the problem, I didn't spend enough time up there and  
2 I don't know. I'm dumbfounded that this was able to occur.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, so you were involved, you were  
4 out and about it sounds following the collision helping to  
5 rally the crew, so I'm sure you saw a lot of individuals  
6 and collective heroics. People rising above and beyond the  
7 call and you know, at great -- at great risk themselves.  
8 So we ask the same question of everybody we interview. Are  
9 there any individuals or groups of individuals that you  
10 think are particularly worthy of mention or recognition?  
11 And if so, who are they?

12 CMC [REDACTED] Um, I was really impressed and driven  
13 with Chief [REDACTED], Chief [REDACTED] 1 and Chief [REDACTED]. With  
14 DCA and the way she was driving the column.

15 Um, Petty Officer [REDACTED]. E.M. [REDACTED].

16 CAPTAIN ADAMS: E.M.?

17 CMC [REDACTED] E.M. yeah, and the way he was driving  
18 his team with -- he was -- and giving the electrical  
19 isolation and getting a bunch of young firemen and  
20 electricians driven to safely isolate and take care of that  
21 problem.

22 Uh, Petty Officer [REDACTED], ET-3. He'll be ET-2 here  
23 Monday, uh, with MAPs.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What did [REDACTED] do?

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 76

1 CMC [REDACTED] His focus on repair lockers and he was  
2 everywhere. I saw him down there doing flooding covered in  
3 EFFF coming back out through just -- and then next thing I  
4 know he's up here setting -- getting ready for emergency  
5 flight course.

6 Uh, he -- he was focused on just damage control  
7 efforts across the board. And it didn't matter where the  
8 efforts were, he was there.

9 OSC [REDACTED] and driving and keeping the bucket brigade  
10 going and his, his uh, focus for the crew and the shipmates  
11 down there and getting them rotated and getting them up  
12 high and making sustainable dewatering efforts.

13 Uh, DC1, don't ask me to pronounce his name. Uh, the  
14 way he was -- he was calm and cool and driving that,  
15 working with DCC and DCC [REDACTED], his focus and drive on the  
16 problem in trying to solve, you know, structural as well as  
17 deflooding and dewatering throughout, they were absolutely  
18 impressive.

19 Um, but I mean it was such a blur. But those were the  
20 highlights that really stood out. DMC [REDACTED], first  
21 underway with -- second underway with the ship and driving  
22 a new team and getting, you know, non-players in there as  
23 well as with [REDACTED], [REDACTED], just you know, ready -- and  
24 ready for the next problem and try to figure out how to  
25 solve that and being predictive.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 77

1           Yeah, we didn't have to tow but by God they were ready  
2 to get the whole thing rigged in the middle of the night  
3 under -- under darkness -- to get it rigged properly ready  
4 to receive towing.

5           Uh, you know, and then also looking at the other  
6 problem because don't know how much this progressive  
7 flooding is gonna expand. So hey, we better work for the,  
8 you know, Plan C which we hope we never have to use.

9           So, yeah. And then even just getting the emergency  
10 Flight Quarters rigged and his whole team there and man,  
11 the flexibility of shifting gears. Our docks, you know,  
12 from HMN all the way up to HMC. We are dealing with shock  
13 and just the initial casualties and treating everyone else  
14 and keeping it cool and calm and preparation for medevac.  
15 Absolutely phenomenal. I mean just even stow up there and  
16 keeping calms and working through what else occurs.  
17 Working through the problem up there on the bridge and  
18 helping with confusion at its least. Absolute chaos and  
19 you know, trying to help get clear lines of communication  
20 and keep them open and get the right kind of help they  
21 need.

22           Yeah, it was quite impressive and amazing so I don't  
23 think I could ever capture everyone. I know I'm missing a  
24 lot in this just going off but just -- answering the  
25 immediate question right off the top of my head.

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] Baldwin 78

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: All right, thank you.

2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Well, we'd like to say thank you  
3 for all your information here today that you provide to us.  
4 All the questions we've given you. We want to open the  
5 floor to you, Master Chief, to see if you had any questions  
6 for us or if there's anything maybe on your mind that  
7 didn't come up through questions that you wanted to ensure  
8 that we were aware of.

9 CMC [REDACTED]: Uh, no, I appreciate this opportunity to  
10 be able to speak and help tell the story and how we got  
11 here and you know, we need to find an answer to this  
12 problem. Um, you know, whatever that is, I don't know. I  
13 know that we need help as an organization if we have a  
14 fundamental problem, you know, navigating the ship at night  
15 through the seas with all the, you know, electronics that  
16 we have, with all the training that we have, something  
17 fundamental is wrong and I don't know what that is. My gut  
18 tells me it's something -- accumulation of manning,  
19 training, and OPTEMPO. I mean that's the only thing that  
20 makes sense.

21 So I -- it sounds like your -- from the questions I'm  
22 being asked, that you're addressing those. But I think  
23 it's an organizational issue, not unique to FDNE, I think  
24 it is something that is fleet wide and that if something  
25 doesn't change rapidly, we're gonna have more of these and

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Audio transcription - CMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 79

1 if you look in the back, past three years since I've been  
2 out here, we've had significantly -- some significant  
3 casualties that just should not have happened. And um, so  
4 I don't think the Fitzgerald is unique. I think we were  
5 just that straw.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, thank you for that, that'll  
7 certainly help us to frame as we move on and put our  
8 reports together how we can put all this information and  
9 make our recommendations here in the future.

10 Um, if you do come up with any additional questions or  
11 some thoughts that you want to share with us later, do feel  
12 free to reach out, we'd be glad to get that information as  
13 well. And likewise, our interviews are starting to wrap up  
14 here but we ask that you not discuss this information that  
15 -- our questions with anyone else just so that we make sure  
16 that the information stays separate.

17 CMC [REDACTED] I understand.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Thanks so much for your time  
19 today.

20 CMC [REDACTED] Thank you.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I'll walk ya out Master Chief.  
22  
23  
24  
25