



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594
Office of Marine Safety

Interview Summary – DCA18FM029

Interview of: Kenneth Mac Sr., Captain and owner of fish tender Pacific Quest

Date/Time: December 18, 2018

Location: Telephone interview

Interviewed by: [REDACTED] USCG, Adam Tucker – NTSB

Case: Sinking of the fish tender Pacific Knight with one fatality

- The Pacific Quest was in the area until about midnight local time the night before the Pacific Knight went down.
- The Pacific Quest was about 100 yards away from the Pacific Knight anchored amongst other fish tenders in the area. All the fish tenders were pretty close to each other.
- At about 1930, the evening before the accident, a tender from Icicle called the Amanda C stopped by the Pacific Knight and give them salt sacks filled with ice. He estimated each sack weighed between 700 to 900 pounds.
- Each time the Pacific Knight used the crane to load the sacks aboard, the boat would roll to the starboard side, the side he was lifting off. Within the hour, they noticed the back of the Pacific Knight was going down.
- They have two tanks in that boat, and Mr. Mac Sr. watched the captain of the Pacific Knight at the back of the wheelhouse move back and forth from inside the wheelhouse to the deck behind it.
- They noticed the name of the boat on the stern eventually went under the water as they loaded more ice. The water was at the deck level and they couldn't see the name on the stern anymore. Mr. Mac Sr. thought the captain on the Pacific Knight must have been filling a back tank, or maybe something else was wrong. Mr. Mac Sr. could tell by the motion of the captain on the Pacific Knight that he was really focused on looking at the back deck.
- Observing with binoculars, Mr. Mac Sr. could see there was concern on the face of the captain of the Pacific Knight.
- The captain of the Pacific Knight was not looking at the vessels side. He was looking at the aft deck. He never saw him go and look over the side. He never left the upper deck behind the wheelhouse.
- When asked who was operating the crane on the Pacific Knight, Mr. Mac Sr. stated the crew were operating the crane, no the captain.
- The captain of the Pacific Knight seemed to be in the wheelhouse all the evening from the time they noticed them take on ice from the Amanda C to the time the Pacific Quest departed.
- After departing the anchorage, about 0130 when it was dark, the Pacific Quest headed towards the cannery. When they got tied to the dock and stated unloading, Mr. Mac Sr. went to sleep.
- Between 0700 and 0730, the fishing vessel Fayette got on the radio and hollered out. Mr. Mac Sr. did not wake up until 0800 when everything was all done with. The cannery the Pacific Quest was at was Peter Pan Seafoods.

- The accident with the Pacific Knight happened right in front of the Queens Slew.
- When asked if it is a good spot to anchor, Mr. Mac stated it is a real good spot but there are a few spots closer to Clarkes point where you get more current and a build up of a pretty good swell so they all go more forward in the anchorage. All the 58 ft boats go forward and the bigger boats can lay in that current a lot better. He has tried to anchor there but has gotten bounced around.
- When asked if the Pacific Knight was in a good spot, Mr. Mac stated he was in a good spot, and that his boat would behave the same as the Pacific Knight in that if he don't turn his rudder hard over to starboard, the boat would just sheer back and forth constantly. He stated, he couldn't imagine the captain sitting there and listening to the cable go back and forth. It would be noisy and not comfortable. There can be up to 5 knots of current and tide there.
- Four days before the accident, from what he recalled, he heard the captain of the Cornelia Marie, Casey McMannis, and another fish tender had called the captain of the Pacific Knight because they were concerned of the Pacific Knight going back and forth on his anchor and laying way over. They asked him right out if he had some problem because the boat would lay over so far when going back and forth on the anchor.
- When asked to clarify this, Mr. Mac stated that when the boat would swing over to starboard and the cable could become tight the boat would lay to the port and vice versa when it would swing the other way. He recalled the morning of the accident; the tide was a 4-foot minus tide so the ride was "really roaring".
- Mr. Mac stated that the captain of the fish tender Fayette, Ron Jolan witnessed the sinking of the Pacific Knight from the window of his vessel.
- Pacific Quest (Official #523544) is a 50-foot steel boat out of California. With the tide, they have horrible time laying in one spot like the Pacific Knight would have, and they would sheer back and forth. It is not comfortable. They must leave the rudder either hard over to port or starboard, what ever works the best, to keep the vessel from sheering.
- When asked if he had seen the Pacific Knight in the area before, Mr. Mac stated this is the first year he has seen the vessel there. He though he saw the boat for sale last year. He recalled the original owner was Nick Jurkovic.
- Mr. Mac stated it is their fourth-year tendering in Nushagak Bay. He has been working in the fishery 40 to 41 years.
- When asked what time the Pacific Quest departed Queens Slew the morning of the accident, Mr. Mac stated they left about 0130 because they had to be at the dock at 0430 to start unloading.
- He stated when he did see the skipper of the Pacific Knight, he could tell by his movements in the wheelhouse that the skipper had concerns of what was going on. Mr. Mac said he had concerns of what was going on with the boat as well.
- When asked if the Pacific Quest was anchored as well, Mr. Mac stated they were and he estimated they were about 100 yards at the most away from the Pacific Knight.
- He noted that on the Pacific Quest, they have to watch themselves when the tide slackens and may even have to run ahead on the anchor. Everybody swings a little different and there is not a lot of space in the anchorage. He estimated within the 100 to 200 yards there were 4 vessels in the area. And within ¼ mile to ½ mile behind them he estimated a total of 8 vessels. All vessels were fish tenders.

- The Pacific Quest had just taken fish at the time and everyone was waiting for another fleet to get in.
- When asked of the Amanda C, Mr. Mac stated they had just come out of Dillingham, perhaps from unloading there, because he came and dropped some ice off on the Pacific Knight. They tenders carry sacks of ice to give to the drift and set netters.
- The Icicle cannery operations are more driven by the tide than Peter Pan because it is further upriver.
- When asked if they could stay at the Peter Pan dock for a whole tide cycle, Mr. Mac stated they can stay there for a whole cycle on a stand up tide. Peter Pan put a 30 foot extension out into the river a couple of years ago which made the dock more accessible. Prior to that, everyone had to get away from the dock otherwise they would go dry. Even the Pacific Quest tipped over at there back then.
- When asked what type of bottom, holding ground, was in the area where the vessels were anchored Mr. Mac stated that it was sandy and silty. Sometimes there were silty spots that would cause them to move. They were not anchored in the main channel.
- When asked, if it was daylight when he witnessed the transfer of ice sacks from the Amanda C to the Pacific Knight, Mr. Mac stated it was. It was also fairly decent light at 0130 when they departed too - it just gets dusk and that is about it up there.
- When asked how many crew he saw working on deck on the Pacific Knight, Mr. Mac stated there were two. That was all he had was two crew.
- When asked about where the sacks of ice were stowed when taken on board the Pacific Knight, Mr. Mac stated they were left on deck. They leave the ice in the sacks on deck where they are to be transferred over to the small fishing boats. There was a crane used to lift the sacks of ice over to the deck of the Pacific Knight.
- Mr. Mac stated he thought the crane on the Pacific Knight was too big for that size of boat. He noted he did not take pictures of what he witnessed with the lift of the ice with the crane. He did take a picture when it came in the bay the first time because it was such a nice-looking boat. Even then when he saw the crane on the vessel, he thought “wow what are these guys doing”.
- When asked if he had any objection to sharing the picture he took, he stated he had no problem with that.
- When asked about the Pacific Knight being down by the stern so deep that the name couldn't be seen, Mr. Mac stated, the name on the stern was under water. Prior to taking on the sacks of ice, he could see the name on the stern.
- When asked about the hoist of ice from the Amanda C to the Pacific Knight to clarify about the list he saw on the vessel, Mr. Mac stated he would list over way more than that boat should have for lifting a 700 to 900-pound sack. He didn't think the boat would even move with that kind of weight. When they were swinging it in with the crane, that was when it was the worst.
- When asked if the sacks of ice the canneries provide are standard size and weight, Mr. Mac stated they were, and that was because the canneries receive salt in sacks and in turn they reuse the salt sacks to send ice out to the fishing vessels. Hence, the sacks of ice are commonly referred to as “salt sacks”.
- When asked what he remembered of the trim of the bow of the Pacific Knight in the condition with the stern name under the water, Mr. Mac recalled the bow was a little bit to an angle but nothing considerably noticeable with the bow. The deck at the middle of the boat was under

water and he thought that is what the skipper of the Pacific Knight was looking at when he in and out. The vessel had been pushed down in the midship.

- When asked what side Mr. Mac was observing, he stated that when he departed, he left on his port side. He was sitting level at the time they departed. The scuppers on the side of the boat were in the water.
- When asked if he noticed any discharge of water from the Pacific Knight, Mr. Mac stated he did not but noted they likely would have not been able to see that since those outflows are usually under water.
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End of summary