

CUI

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ATTENTION

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CUI

1 UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

2
3 PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
4 BEHALF OF NTSB BY THE U.S. COAST GUARD

5
6 REAR ADMIRAL [REDACTED]: So, a lot of folks in the
7 room here with you. My name is [REDACTED]. I'm the
8 Admiral in charge of the investigation for the Navy.
9 Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] is my legal advisor. Master
10 Chief [REDACTED] is serving as my senior enlisted advisor, and
11 LN2 [REDACTED] will be taking notes. During the course of
12 discussion hearing, we won't be asking you any questions
13 from the Navy side. The Coast Guard will be leading with
14 all the questions. So, Lieutenant [REDACTED], here, will
15 introduce his team, which does include Mr. [REDACTED] as one
16 of his liaisons. So, over to you.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So, good afternoon.

18 [REDACTED]: Good afternoon.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: I am Lieutenant [REDACTED].
20 I'm the Senior Investigating Officer for the U.S. Coast
21 Guard Activites Far East Unit here in Japan under the
22 authority of Title 46, U.S. Code 6301 and Title 46 CFR part
23 4. An investigation is being conducted into the
24 circumstances of the collision between the USS Fitzgerald
25 and the ACX Crystal, which occurred on June 17, 2017. This

1 investigation is intended to determine the cause of the
2 casualty to the extent possible and to obtain information
3 for the purpose of preventing similar causalities in the
4 future. To assist with the accuracy of our investigation,
5 we will be recording today's interview, which is taking
6 place on June 22nd at 1410.

7 With my team, I'm being assisted by Mr. [REDACTED] who is
8 an expert at our National Center of Expertise for Marine
9 Causalities. I also have Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED],
10 who works with us at Activities Far East and has previous
11 experience as a commanding officer of a Coast Guard cutter,
12 and we also have Mr. [REDACTED] here, who's working as our
13 liaison officer to help communicate with us and make sure
14 that we understand everything of the Navy use workings and
15 to make sure we understand that. Any questions?

16 [REDACTED]: No.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Fantastic. If we could just begin
18 with your name, experience, a little bit about yourself in
19 the Navy?

20 [REDACTED]: What, what do you mean by experience?

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Well --

22 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Like --

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Well -- well --

24 [REDACTED]: Sorry.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: No, that's okay. Let's start with
2 your name.

3 [REDACTED]: All right. My full name?

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Sure.

5 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED]. It's [REDACTED], [REDACTED],
6 and then [REDACTED].

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And when did you join the Navy?

8 [REDACTED]: Uh, I started boot camp [REDACTED]
9 [REDACTED]

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So, is it safe to assume that the
11 Fitzgerald is your first cut -- your first vessel?

12 [REDACTED]: Yes.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And when did you arrive here on
14 the Fitzgerald?

15 [REDACTED]: The [REDACTED], I believe.

16 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Did you arrive here in Yokosuka or
17 did you meet the vessel elsewhere?

18 [REDACTED]: So, I arrived here in Yokosuka and then a
19 day after, I flew to Sasebo and met the vessel in Sasebo.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So you got a nice coastline cruise
21 up to come back home. I understand that after your cruise
22 from Sasebo, the vessel was in port for a period of time,
23 maybe a week or so?

24 [REDACTED]: We were -- so -- yes. We were in port
25 for about a week.

Audio transcription - [REDACTED]

4

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And what's your normal duty
2 onboard the vessel?

3 [REDACTED]: So, I'm undesignated. So, I'm part of
4 the deck crew.

5 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And your watch standing duty
6 currently would be?

7 [REDACTED]: I do helm and lee helmsman, aft lookout.
8 But I'm a UI, so I'm just kind of getting my qualifications
9 right now.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. How is that working?

11 [REDACTED]: I think it's going pretty -- pretty well.
12 We actually -- one of the guys that we lost was one of our
13 -- one of my people that trained me, so he -- yeah.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And I do want to -- to enforce you
15 -- this is -- this is -- we're trying to be informal and
16 relaxed here, if at any time you need a break or if you,
17 you know, need to use the restroom, get some water, step
18 out for a little bit, just let us know and we'll be glad to
19 pause the interview and give whatever time you need. So,
20 don't feel pressured that we have to answer, answer,
21 answer, answer, answer. Nothing like that. Okay? So,
22 qualifying as helm and aft lookout, you probably have a
23 like a little PQS book?

24 [REDACTED]: Yes.

Alpha Transcription

678-646-5330

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Any other materials? Or is mostly
2 just on-the-job training?

3 [REDACTED]: It's on-the-job training.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: All right. So, the vessel came
5 in. You've been here for a week. You got to see Yokosuka
6 a little bit. And on Friday the 16th, I believe it was,
7 the vessel got back underway?

8 [REDACTED]: Yes.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: All right. Tell us a little bit
10 about that since it's your first time getting underway from
11 Yokosuka.

12 [REDACTED]: Uh, I mean -- I don't know. We -- I know
13 we left because we had to go help with what the CM was
14 supposed to be doing. I know we were supposed to be going
15 to the South China Sea -- I think -- I believe. You know,
16 I mean everything changes. It wasn't my first time going
17 underway anyways, so -- I mean, because we left Sasebo and
18 -- twice. So, I was in amidships, and I love amidships.
19 It's -- uh -- uh -- I mean, we set everything up beforehand
20 and then just -- then we had our ammunition onload earlier
21 like in the day, right after we left port. We did flight
22 ops right after that and then that lasted -- it was like
23 1700 until 2130 maybe? And right after that we did - I
24 want to say it's -- it was RHIB ops. I don't know if

1 that's the correct word for it. When we dropped -- we
2 dropped the RHIB because we had to take people back.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: I think we've just been calling it
4 boat ops. So, same -- same idea.

5 [REDACTED]: That's -- that's what I think it's
6 called.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Boats in the water. Okay.

8 [REDACTED]: And then I went on watch right after
9 that, around 12:00, 2400.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Close to 2400?

11 [REDACTED]: So, it was a very long day.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: A very long day. Do you remember
13 when you woke up on Friday to -- to start your day?

14 [REDACTED]: Um, I want to say 0700. I don't really
15 remember because it was all such a jumble, because if you
16 woke up and then we're up for so much longer after that. I
17 want to say 1700 because we had quarters at 08.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: 08, okay. So, in all these
19 operations - getting underway, ammo, boats, flights,
20 everything, did you get much down time or any time to sleep
21 in between all that?

22 [REDACTED]: So, I -- I mean, we didn't -- since I'm
23 UI and for the flight ops, we just wait and make sure we
24 don't have to drop the RHIB. So we kind of just stay
25 vigilant. We had down time, but, I mean, we didn't get to

1 go down into our berthing, but I think I rested for like a
2 half hour maybe.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: That's fine.

4 [REDACTED]: Uh, yeah. It was mostly like move, move,
5 move, and then after watch we were gonna go to bed, so

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: That's a good plan [REDACTED]. Okay.
7 So, 20 -- or -- well midnight --

8 [REDACTED]: Yes.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: --comes around. You're going to
10 watch and your watch for the, now 17th, would've been on
11 the bridge?

12 [REDACTED]: Yes. I was actually on the bridge the
13 whole night.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Is that normal or do you usually
15 switch back and forth?

16 [REDACTED]: We normally switch back and forth, but we
17 just kind of switched around our watch bill. So, we had a
18 lot of our UIs on that night. They switched it so most of
19 the UIs were on -- in duty section 3. So, we were all kind
20 of bunched together and had -- they kind of picked who they
21 thought was the best to train us and they just put us all
22 in a group. So, we had a lot of people. We had 2 people
23 on aft lookout and we only had a 2-hour watch after that
24 because -- it was until 0230, so -- yeah, 0230, because I
25 had the mid-watch. So, we only had 2 hours. So we just

1 figured if whoever wanted to go aft could go aft. I love
2 being up on the bridge, so that's where I was.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And I know you said the watch
4 sections had just recently switched around and got
5 rearranged. Which watch section were you -- or the new
6 watch section, what number was that?

7 [REDACTED]: Three. So, we had 1 -- we had 3 watch
8 sections with the deck compartment, so. And I didn't
9 actually switch my watch. I mean, they were getting
10 switched around before we went underway, like when we came
11 -- before we came back. But we had to come back for like
12 our -- like we came back a few days early because stuff
13 happened to the ship. So like -- so we didn't get to
14 actually feel that out. So that's why they changed it, so.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: When you say, "made changes," was
16 there -- how so? Were they moving people around or were
17 they moving times around?

18 [REDACTED]: Just moving people. They -- we had
19 certain people in different sections. We had, I think, 2-3
20 UIs in each section and then they just moved all the UIs
21 into one section.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: All right. So, you're up on the
23 bridge and standing watch. You've got a number of trainees
24 there with you. Everyone gets a turn at the wheel of the

1 boat? What order did you -- do -- did you get to be on the
2 helm?

3 [REDACTED]: So, we did a -- since we only had 2
4 hours, we did -- everybody did a half hour. So, I was the
5 third person. I just switched over at 2:00 with the last
6 UI that had the drive.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So which -- which time?

8 [REDACTED]: So, I switched over at 2:00, so it was
9 1:30 to 2:00.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. So, 1:30 --

11 [REDACTED]: And I was -- I was still up there at the
12 time, because even once we switched, since our watch time
13 really wasn't over --

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: I -- okay. I'm backing up a
15 little bit. So, I think we've heard before from other
16 interviews that even though the 2:00 watch, most times 30
17 minutes prior, you report and switch over. Okay. So, it's
18 about 1:30, the -- has the other group come up? Or maybe
19 I'm getting confused.

20 [REDACTED]: Oh. I think the -- isn't the mid-watch -
21 - I think I'm having a brain fart then. Sorry.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: That's fine. This is why we're
23 asking.

24 [REDACTED]: Yes. So, the mid-watch is 20 to 2022, so
25 it must've been 1:00 to 1:30 that there's a better

1 clarification. Because we -- we're -- yeah, I switched
2 over with the other UI at 1:32 because she was the last
3 driver. I'm sorry about that.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: That's -- that's -- we're just
5 trying to --

6 [REDACTED]: Get the right --

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Your memories and your information
8 is exactly what we're looking for, so. So, 01 to 0130. Do
9 you remember who it was before your time and who was after?

10 [REDACTED]: Yes. So, I had Seaman [REDACTED] was before
11 me and then Seaman [REDACTED] was after me.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. So tell us a little bit
13 about your time at the helm. Anything unusual? I mean,
14 you'd done the helm training a couple of times before?

15 [REDACTED]: Yes. I'd been at the ship for 3 weeks,
16 so -- and we do it every night. So, I mean, I was getting
17 -- I'm getting pretty used to it. It's hard for me with
18 the whole like lee helm side, but we didn't change speeds
19 or anything when I was driving. I didn't see anything
20 unusual. We -- honestly, I can't really remember if it was
21 unusual or not cause we kind of just -- it's like any other
22 night pretty much.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And what would every other night
24 look like?

1 [REDACTED]: The - I just listen to the Conning
2 Officer and then do what I'm supposed to. Do what I'm
3 told, pretty much.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. So they're not instructing
5 you to look out for a vessel that's, you know, on this side
6 or that side or?

7 [REDACTED]: No. They're more focused on us staying
8 on course and they have -- we have other people up on the
9 bridge that the Conning Officer goes out on both sides and
10 then we have other people that go out and -- I couldn't
11 even tell you what they are like for their watch. They
12 just -- they go out and they look on both sides.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And then when these -- these
14 individuals are roaming about and checking for points of
15 contact and whatnot, are they communicating that to anyone
16 specifically or is it?

17 [REDACTED]: If they find a point of contact, they
18 normally tell the Officer Of The Deck.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And during this morning of the
20 17th, were there many contacts being reported? Do you --

21 [REDACTED]: I -- normally, I don't know. They were
22 all kind of talking about different -- like, I don't want
23 to say different stuff, but I mean, like I said, it was
24 like any normal night and I -- honestly, I don't remember.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And I -- I mean, I understand some
2 of this vessel traffic, some of it's probably just chatter
3 about - oh yeah, I went to this restaurant - or --

4 [REDACTED]: I -- I think they're -- I think they stay
5 pretty professional up on the helm because I honestly -- I
6 don't really hear them talking about what they do outside
7 of work. So, I think it's more of like if they see a
8 vessel and what's going on, where we're going, what our
9 course is gonna be, and they communicate back to CCS a lot.
10 I think that's what they are. Do you -- do you know? C --
11 I don't know. Like it's the other -- I don't know how to
12 explain it. They're who we work with when we drive.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: I would call it the secret scroll
14 room, but that's probably not it either. CIC?

15 [REDACTED]: Maybe.

16 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: Combat Information Center?

17 [REDACTED]: Yes.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. Do you recall if any
19 conversations with the CIC? I --

20 [REDACTED]: I -- I don't.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So, all right. Let me -- let me
22 try to gather this all together. You're at the helm,
23 you're waiting for the helm command, and you're zooming in
24 on that and --

1 [REDACTED]: Yes. And I -- in a sense, I was -- I'm a
2 UI. Normally, our boatswain's mate of the watch will --
3 and the person that's training us, which would have been
4 Seaman [REDACTED]. He was running night orders, so our
5 boatswain of the watch was up there and they -- they sit
6 there and they train us. They ask us questions and have us
7 respond back -- or repeat back is our main thing, and then
8 questions about the helm. So, normally we just kind of try
9 to train because that's what they're trying to get us to
10 do, is to be able to kind of -- I don't -- not be -- like,
11 I want to say be an expert on helm, because that's their
12 main goal, but try to get us to learn as much as we can,
13 so.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Sure. Sounds like a good plan.
15 So this is one of the questions that's kind of come up and
16 we're just trying to ask, to try to nail it down. So,
17 Seaman [REDACTED] was on watch that night and was on the bridge
18 and was running the night orders.

19 [REDACTED]: So, he ran -- he ran the night orders and
20 then I want to say it was just right before the incident
21 happened, is when he got back up to the bridge. But the
22 response time, it was just -- I don't even know how to
23 explain it.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Oh, okay. So, close to the time
25 of the incident --

1 [REDACTED]: He returned.

2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Returned. And was there another
3 qualified helmsman aside from BM1 who was assisting? I
4 forget his name. It's got way too many letters in it.

5 [REDACTED]: Oh, [REDACTED]? He was -- he was helping and
6 then he went down to -- oh no, he was up on bridge all
7 night. I wanted to say -- I was gonna say he was up -- he
8 went down to aft lookout, but he was on the bridge all
9 night, because he ended up landing on me, so.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. Well, we're almost to that
11 point, so. Okay. So you're on watch. It's -- you said
12 you were at the helm from 01 to 0130?

13 [REDACTED]: Yes.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: You had switched with [REDACTED],
15 Seaman [REDACTED]. And so, did everyone stay on? Because,
16 again, you said the basic watch switchover was like 0130.
17 Did the other watch come up onboard yet?

18 [REDACTED]: The -- we -- our -- the person who was
19 supposed to turn -- like, switch watches with us never
20 ended up coming until after the incident. The aft lookout
21 got relieved right before the incident happened.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And how do we know that?

23 [REDACTED]: Because they did a COMMSCHECK with us.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: They did do a COMMSCHECK. Did you
25 hear that COMMSCHECK?

1 [REDACTED]: No. Um, I am very close with the -- with
2 his -- its [REDACTED]. He was -- so, I actually made sure that
3 we did a COMMCHECK after the incident to make sure he was
4 okay. And they -- I heard the people on aft lookout say,
5 "temporarily going offline," to switch phone talkers and so
6 they -- I know that they turned over.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. But you don't recall
8 hearing the aft lookout back on line?

9 [REDACTED]: I don't remember.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Would you have a time period of
11 when that check -- or -- that switch may have happened?

12 [REDACTED]: I don't.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Were you still at the helm at the
14 time?

15 [REDACTED]: No. I don't -- no, I was not.

16 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: All right. So, the aft folks have
17 switched over. You switched with [REDACTED]. You're still on
18 the bridge because the other team has not come yet to
19 relieve you.

20 [REDACTED]: Yes.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And what happens from there?

22 [REDACTED]: So, BM1 told us that we could leave since
23 we were just waiting for [REDACTED] to come up and relieve us. I
24 told him that I would wait for him because -- I don't know
25 why, and I'm thankful that I did. Seaman [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

1 left the bridge -- er -- it may have been Seaman [REDACTED] and
2 [REDACTED]. [REDACTED], I think was on aft lookout. I just know
3 those 3 were not up on the bridge when it happened. And I
4 was waiting with BM1 and then -- do you want me to, like,
5 just tell it like I remember it?

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: It's your story. So however you
7 remember it, whatever timeline you can remember. We want
8 to hear it in your words.

9 [REDACTED]: Okay. I'm not -- I don't know the exact
10 times or anything because, I mean, we were just waiting.
11 All I remember is the officer of the deck freaking out and
12 -- I don't want to curse in front of you, but she was
13 cursing.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: I think we've heard it. Don't
15 worry.

16 [REDACTED]: Well, she was -- I don't know the exact
17 words, but she basically said that we were, "fucked." And
18 then told [REDACTED] -- we were going 20 knots, told [REDACTED] to
19 go 5 knots. And since [REDACTED] was UI, we had BM1 was --
20 did sit for her and we kind of just -- you know, it was an
21 emergency situation, so we -- like, people were trying to
22 help each other. And then she said, "Hard left rudder."
23 And then right after that, she had us flank and then I --
24 you know, I held on to the, "oh-shit bar." I don't know
25 what it's called, but that's what I consider it, because, I

1 mean, we all knew something was gonna happen. And it was
2 just like I held on and then it happened. Because the way
3 that people were acting and I looked over and you could see
4 the ship and we were so close. It just hit right after I
5 looked over. And then the next thing you know, everybody's
6 like laying on top of me and we're trying to handle the
7 situation from there.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Did you experience any injuries?
9 And are you okay?

10 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED]

11 [REDACTED]

12 [REDACTED]

13 [REDACTED]

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Excellent. Glad to hear that.
15 And again, all these rudder commands and all the throttle
16 commands are coming from the OOD?

17 [REDACTED]: Yes. They switched -- she, out of
18 nowhere, just switched over from the -- like, without the
19 Conning Officer. She was just like -- she kept saying,
20 "officer of deck's in charge." She like, kind of like --
21 cause [REDACTED] kept saying, "Conning Officer." And she's
22 like, "Officer of the Deck's in charge." So, I honestly
23 don't even know where -- I think the Conning Officer was
24 out on the side wings trying to observe, but I really

1 couldn't tell you where he was because we were more focused
2 on everything that was happening.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Lots of things happened, indeed.
4 Do you recall any radio communications, either from the
5 Fitzgerald, from the Crystal, from CIC, just any
6 communications at all?

7 [REDACTED]: No.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And the other popular question out
9 here is any sound signals, any whistles, any horns, bells,
10 anything from any vessel?

11 [REDACTED]: So, I didn't hear anything from the
12 oncoming vessel. I know we sounded our collision alarm,
13 but it was after we hit. I think it may have been because
14 we were trying to avoid it, but I honestly don't know. I
15 don't know the process in that. It's -- obviously, it's so
16 new to me to begin with, so everything that happened is
17 just like I don't know -- you know, I don't know what the
18 normal response would've been. Um, and -- yeah.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Uh, that's fine.

20 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: Could you clarify what may have
21 been tried to have been avoided to use your own words?

22 [REDACTED]: Um, I just know that they saw the ship
23 was -- the other ship was really close to us and I think we
24 were trying to avoid hitting it a certain way. But I don't

1 know because they didn't say that out loud and I don't want
2 to like assume things.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. But again, that collision
4 alarm was sounded after the initial hit. Is that correct?

5 [REDACTED]: Yes.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And so there's a collision,
7 everyone fell down. What were the actions taken by
8 yourself and the rest of the bridge crew after that
9 incident?

10 [REDACTED]: They tried to get a hold of our captain -
11 - or our CO, and he was not responding. So we sent people
12 up to go check on him and they ended up having to get him
13 out of his room. People -- they were trying to get comms
14 with the -- what is it called?

15 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: CIC?

16 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: The Combat Information Center?

17 [REDACTED]: CIC. They were trying to comms with CIC
18 and that's -- we were talking back and forth with them,
19 trying just to get as much information that we could. We
20 sounded -- we did general quarters flooding and we sounded
21 the collision alarm. And it was all over the LMC, so
22 everybody knew -- everybody -- I mean -- I don't know what
23 happened down at the bottom of the ship because I was up in
24 the bridge.

25 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: I understand.

1 [REDACTED]: I didn't know what to do. So, I was just
2 up there trying to do as much as I could. After that,
3 there was a lot of -- like we kept getting comms with the
4 CIC and they kept -- they would just -- they were telling
5 us what parts of the ship were flooding, what size of the
6 holes we had, what we were doing to try to fix it. By that
7 time, our CO came in and he was very -- I don't even know
8 how to explain it. But, I mean, shocked. And then he
9 ended up going into shock and then I ended up having to
10 talk to him. And that freaked me out, because I'm not good
11 at that kind of stuff.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: I believe you've done a fantastic
13 job. So, no worries.

14 [REDACTED]: And then he just -- he stopped
15 responding. That freaked me out. And then after that, I
16 kinda -- I went out on the port wing and I needed to like --
17 -- just like take a second to breathe. We -- BML and I went
18 down -- went down the stairwell into officer country to
19 get a stretcher for the CO. And after that, we went down
20 to aft lookout so we could get everything ready to try to
21 see if we could get stuff ready for the towing. I don't
22 know what it's called. And --

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Probably a hawser. Probably a
24 hawser?

25 [REDACTED]: I think -- I think that's what it is.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay.

2 [REDACTED]: And then [REDACTED] and I worked down in
3 Boatswain 1 for a while cutting natural fiber, because we
4 ended up breaking the anchor part, in case we needed it for
5 towing. And all these -- I mean, people were just trying
6 to do as much as you could. The AFFF went off so there was
7 people coming out of the hatch and the FOCSLE all covered
8 in bubbles. And we just -- we had all the -- we'd just got
9 a whole bunch of midshipmen on the ship and they all helped
10 us. And then the sun rose and we went from there. I
11 remember hearing the Officer Of The Deck and then another -
12 - I don't know what her rank -- rate is, so I don't -- or
13 rank is. I don't want to misander -- like I don't want to
14 say the wrong thing.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: No, they're another person.

16 [REDACTED]: But I heard them communicating with the
17 Japanese Coast Guard to try and -- because we completely
18 lost power. So we couldn't get a hold of anybody. When we
19 went outside, the ship that we collided with was completely
20 gone and I didn't see it at all the rest of the time. Uh -
21 - yeah.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: A very unique event and I
23 appreciate your side of the story of it and trying to
24 figure out from A-Z what happened. I think you've answered
25 a lot of the questions I have for now. I'll hand it over

1 to Mr. [REDACTED] to see if he has any questions for you as
2 well.

3 MR. [REDACTED]: I just want to take the opportunity to
4 commend you on those actions. I'm sure it was
5 extraordinarily difficult, being so junior. And I am
6 assured that the CO was comforted by your presence. A
7 scary event for all, so bravo to. If you could tell me a
8 little bit about the watch just in general. So, like when
9 you first came on watch and throughout the watch. Was it
10 particularly noisy? Were people distracted or nonfocused?

11 [REDACTED]: I don't believe so. Normally, we're
12 quiet up there and we just try to focus. I honestly, like
13 I was saying before, I just kind of try to focus on what
14 I'm doing. A lot -- all of the deck crew that came up to
15 switch with the watch, we were all tired because we did all
16 the operations in the day. But I know that the OOD and all
17 the rest of the people up there, they weren't -- I don't
18 know what they were doing before. I don't know if they got
19 sleep. I don't know any of that because they were already
20 up there. I just know that us that came onto the bridge
21 after boat ops, we were all very tired and we were just all
22 ready to go to bed. But we still focused on what we needed
23 to do because that's what we do. We were focused to get
24 through our watch until it turned over and then we were
25 ready to go to bed. I mean, it wasn't -- I don't think it

1 was abnormally loud. I don't think there was a lot of
2 chatter. They -- we normally try to keep professional up
3 there. But I don't recall any reports of like -- before
4 this happened, they didn't -- I mean, it's not like we had
5 a warning. We didn't -- they didn't say a warning to us.
6 I remember we kept -- we kept changing our course. I
7 remember that, but we didn't -- I mean, it's not like --
8 we're deck. We're the helmsmen. We don't get an
9 explanation. We just get told orders pretty much, so.

10 MR. [REDACTED]: Do you have any idea as to why you were
11 changing courses so much? Was it for training or was it
12 following a track line or?

13 [REDACTED]: I have no idea. I just -- I know we were
14 in a busy -- I mean, we weren't all the way out yet. We
15 weren't all the way out of, like out into open sea area,
16 because normally when we do that we just kind of circle
17 around. So I don't know, it may have -- I have -- I have
18 no idea.

19 Mr. [REDACTED]: All right. Um -- well, we're waiting on
20 the Commander. Talk to me about the vessel's climate. I
21 mean, you got a lot of new people in a confined space. You
22 know, did everybody get along?

23 [REDACTED]: Yes.

24 Mr. [REDACTED]: Okay.

25 [REDACTED]: We -- we're like a family on our ship.

1 Mr. [REDACTED]: So there wasn't a beef between deck and
2 engineering or nothing like that?

3 [REDACTED]: I know -- I know there's always talk
4 about that, but we all get -- we all get along. We always
5 get along. I think that's what I -- I mean, that's the
6 best I could hope for for my first ship or any of my ships
7 that I'm on, is that we're all like a little family.

8 Especially, this is my first time away from home, so it's
9 all I need.

10 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: How was the general morale? Was
11 everyone excited to be underway? Any complaints about
12 being underway or how long people were underway for?

13 [REDACTED]: No, I think -- well, I don't know if that
14 a no -- a yes or no question. But --

15 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: Take it in pieces because there's
16 a lot of questions in there.

17 [REDACTED]: I think everybody was okay with us going
18 underway. We came home for a week. We were supposed to be
19 back longer, but we understood. Cause we always say that
20 the mission comes first and we knew -- like, we weren't --
21 we weren't supposed to be gone for a long time, so we were
22 just like let's get this mission done. Let's do what we
23 have to do and then we'll be able to come back. I think
24 everybody was just excited and happy that they got to come

1 back for that time that they -- that we were back for. I
2 don't know if I answered all your questions.

3 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: Yeah. No worries. But morale,
4 everyone was in good spirits?

5 [REDACTED]: Yes.

6 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: And answering the call for the
7 mission. So, that's all that I have.

8 MR. [REDACTED]: All right. And just running through the
9 evolutions of the day, that was a fairly long day.

10 [REDACTED]: Yes.

11 MR. [REDACTED]: All right. How often were you guys
12 having these long days? That was one of the first ones
13 since you've been onboard?

14 [REDACTED]: That's the first one that I've been
15 through. Um, yeah, I mean, we normally -- normally, it
16 depends because deck, we work -- sometimes we work long
17 days. Sometimes we don't. But this is the first time that
18 a lot of us -- I mean, there's people -- the people that
19 had the rev watch, they had 2 hours to sleep -- 2-3 hours
20 to sleep until they had to get on watch. So it was just --
21 I mean, it was a lot different than what our normal day is,
22 but we were told to expect it. We were told before we even
23 went underway that we were gonna have all these evolutions
24 going on and for us to get as much rest as we could the day
25 before.

1 MR. [REDACTED]: So, Ms. [REDACTED], where you from?
2 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED].
3 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. What part?
4 [REDACTED]: [REDACTED]
5 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. All right. So, what was your
6 first indication that there was a problem?
7 [REDACTED]: I want to say it was definitely the OOD
8 freaking out.
9 MR. [REDACTED]: All right. So when you heard her voice,
10 the way she talked and what she said, that was kind of --
11 that kind of clued you in that something wasn't quite
12 right.
13 [REDACTED]: Yes.
14 MR. [REDACTED]: And how long -- how much time would
15 estimate passed between the time you sensed that from her
16 and the collision itself?
17 [REDACTED]: Not even a minute.
18 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. Do you recall -- and I know it
19 was kind of a truncated watch for you because you were
20 coming off of doing other stuff. But do you recall ever
21 seeing the CO or the XO on the bridge during your time on
22 watch?
23 [REDACTED]: I know the XO came on afterwards, but the
24 CO, no. Just because normally we can -- we just call him.
25 We call them if we need anything. And sometimes they just

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1 show up, because that's what they do, and that's -- it's
2 expected for them to just show up. But it was a long day
3 and I --

4 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. So, just so we're clear. So,
5 from the time you came on watch until the collision, you
6 don't recall seeing the CO or XO?

7 [REDACTED]: No. But it was also very dark, so, I
8 mean, they may have been on. I have no idea.

9 MR. [REDACTED]: You guys have a habit of announcing them
10 when they come on the bridge?

11 [REDACTED]: Yes.

12 MR. [REDACTED]: Do you recall whether the navigation
13 detail -- or -- the modified navigation detail was set
14 while you were on watch?

15 [REDACTED]: Can you explain what that is? I'm sorry.

16 MR. [REDACTED]: It'll be, you know, the navigator, maybe
17 an extra quartermaster will come up and they'll actually
18 stand watches and the navigator will make navigation
19 reports. Or was it just a normal underway watch?

20 [REDACTED]: I think it was just a normal underway
21 watch and we were right at turnover, so there was more
22 people on the bridge than normal because of -- because
23 people were turning over. We never actually got a
24 turnover, but that's what we were trying to do.

1 MR. [REDACTED]: Uh, do you remember whether there were
2 any of the oncoming officers for the rev watch, were any of
3 them already on the bridge starting the turnover when this
4 happened?

5 [REDACTED]: I -- I -- I don't remember.

6 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. Um, just one more question. So,
7 I mean, I'm sure you got to see a lot of heroics that
8 evening and into the next day, you know, between the
9 collision and when you guys were back in Yokosuka. Is
10 there any individual or series of individuals that you
11 think are particularly worthy of mention for having done an
12 incredible job?

13 [REDACTED]: I think the whole ship, honestly. We all
14 had to pitch in. I am -- like I said before, I was not
15 down in the spaces. I know Seaman [REDACTED] was down in the
16 spaces a lot helping out. I don't -- I'm not very good
17 with -- I don't know everybody on the ship yet. And I was
18 up -- I was -- well, I was down in Boatswain 1 with [REDACTED]
19 like cutting the -- cutting line, and everybody pitched in.
20 That's all I know, because that's what we had to do to get
21 back to port. There was no standing around. There was
22 everybody working and everybody doing what we had to do.
23 So, I can't -- I can't name out certain people.

24 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. That's fair enough. Thank you.

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So 2 questions I just came up in the
2 last review here that I want to make sure I went over
3 again. In terms of visibility and weather, could you see
4 other lights? Was it the darkest night you've ever seen?
5 Was it bright and sunny and --?

6 [REDACTED]: Well it was not bright and sunny. I
7 think it was -- it was actually -- it was pretty dark out.
8 The nights seem to mix together when you're on watch, so it
9 was hard to tell like what the weather was like. I know it
10 wasn't raining. But I --

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Other lights were still visible or you
12 could --?

13 [REDACTED]: I didn't see any lights out there,
14 honestly.

15 MR. [REDACTED]: No lights from land? It doesn't have to
16 be vessels or anything.

17 [REDACTED]: I didn't see any lights from land.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: That's what we want to hear. And
19 finally, it didn't come up in conversation, but there were
20 no mechanical issues that you're aware of? Any
21 malfunctions in equipment? But nothing as far as you know
22 of that things were working, not working, ops normal?

23 [REDACTED]: I -- not that I know of. But like I said
24 before, I don't really -- I try not to pay too much

1 attention about stuff that I don't need to pay attention
2 to, like what I think I don't need to pay attention to.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Just asking if there's anything
4 that pops up to say, oh yeah, they did say we lost a pump
5 or something, so. If there's nothing, then there's
6 nothing, so. That's great. All right, with that in mind,
7 I want to open the floor to you to see if there is anything
8 you had questions about or if there's anything that was on
9 your mind that we didn't bring up that you'd like to bring
10 to our attention so that we can make sure that we're aware
11 of it.

12 [REDACTED]: I don't know. Um, I mean -- I don't
13 know. It's -- I mean, it's a big thing that happened and I
14 know that it shouldn't have happened and I don't know why
15 it happened. But I know that it did, so. And I understand
16 why we have to investigate it and see like how. I -- I
17 don't know. It's really --

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And that's totally fine. What
19 we'll end out interview with today is to say if for some
20 reason you do have some questions later on or something
21 does come to mind that you want to let us know, please
22 reach out to us because we'd be glad to receive that
23 information. And likewise, if for some reason we look over
24 our notes and we say, "Oh wait, we wanted to ask you
25 something." We may reach out to you as well for that

1 additional information. Likewise, as this investigation is
2 ongoing, we're gonna ask that you please not discuss this
3 with other crew members because we want to get their
4 opinions without starting to get stories mixing and so on
5 and so forth. So, we'd appreciate your cooperation in
6 that. Anything further?

7 [REDACTED]: I don't believe so.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Great. Thank you so much for your
9 time.

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