

CUI

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CUI

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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

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

REAR ADMIRAL [REDACTED]: All right Mr. [REDACTED] so uh my name is [REDACTED]. I'm the Admiral in charge of the investigation uh supporting me I have two lawyers, Commander [REDACTED] and Commander [REDACTED]. Um, Master Chief [REDACTED] is serving as my CMC, senior enlisted, and YN2 [REDACTED] will be taking notes. So, as part of this uh questioning we won't be asking you any questions. It's all going to come from the Coast Guard. They have the lead for that. So, I'll turn over to Lieutenant [REDACTED] who will introduce his team which does include Captain [REDACTED] over there.

[REDACTED] Yes sir.

LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, good afternoon.

[REDACTED] Good afternoon, sir.

LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] I'm Lieutenant [REDACTED] I am the Senior Investigating Officer for the U.S. Coast Guard Activities Far East here in Japan. Under the Authority of Title 46, U.S. Code 6301 and Title 46 CFR Part 4 an investigation is being conducted into the circumstances of the collision between the USS Fitzgerald

1 and the ACX Crystal, which occurred on June 17, 2017. This
2 investigation is intended to determine the cause of the
3 casualty to the extent possible and to obtain information
4 for the purpose of preventing similar casualties in the
5 future. To assist with the accuracy of our investigation,
6 we will be recording today's interview, which is taking
7 place on June 24, 2017 at 14:46. Assisting me, I have Mr.
8 [REDACTED] from our National Center of Expertise for
9 Investigations. I also have Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED]
10 who works with me in our office and has previous experience
11 as the CO of the Coast Guard Cutter. And finally, I have
12 Captain [REDACTED] who is working as a Liaison Officer between
13 the Navy and the Coast Guard to assist us and make sure
14 that understand operations and the information being
15 provided to us.

16 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, before I go any further, I
18 want you to u-nderstand that if you have a need to take a
19 break, you need some water, you need to get up, walk
20 around, any of that, please let us know. We'll pause the
21 recording and let you take care of that. And, then
22 secondly if there are any questions that you have uh or any
23 questions that we ask where you simply don't know the
24 answer to, it's perfectly fine to say I don't know. It's
25 much better than trying to come up with an answer and, and

1 come up with something that it may be speculation. If you
2 simply don't know, saying I don't know is an appropriate
3 answer.

4 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

5 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right. If we could start with
6 your uh first and last name please?

7 [REDACTED] Uh, [REDACTED]

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And it's [REDACTED]?

9 [REDACTED] [REDACTED], yes sir.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Excellent. And, what's your
11 position onboard the Fitzgerald?

12 [REDACTED] I am a Mark-160 tech FC2. I stand watch
13 on the OSS Optical Site System.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Um, how long have you been in the
15 Navy?

16 [REDACTED] Uh, two year and a month.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Is the Fitzgerald your first
18 vessel then?

19 [REDACTED] First. Yes sir.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And when did you come aboard the
21 vessel?

22 [REDACTED] Roughly five months ago, um [REDACTED]
23 [REDACTED]

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So you've been on the board the
2 vessel following it's dry-dock period. I understand there
3 were some sea trials.

4 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

5 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And certifications and then an
6 underway period for several months earlier this spring?

7 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And during this time, is that when
9 you uh completed your OSS --

10 [REDACTED] Qualification?

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Qualification. How long does that
12 usually take?

13 [REDACTED] Um, a good two weeks to a month.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so plenty of your
15 experience, watch every night?

16 [REDACTED] Uh, five hours a day.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Five hours a day, yeah. So help
18 me out here. What is an OSS System?

19 [REDACTED] Okay, Optical Site System. We use it
20 for spotting 5-inch, so whenever we fire the gun we uh for
21 our adjustments. That's its primary use, um.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] But it has secondary purposes as
23 well?

1 [REDACTED] Um, uh, that's why we stand it up uh
2 24/7 just due to um use it for spotting ships, um
3 surveillance.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] I understand it might have some
5 night vision capabilities.

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10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so at nighttime that
11 daylight camera just doesn't --

12 [REDACTED] Uh, well we can switch to it, but it's
13 basically ineffective. You won't, it--there's not enough
14 light.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] But it may be able to pick up
16 maybe a ship's light off in the distance?

17 [REDACTED] Probably not.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Probably not?

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LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] It's just --

[REDACTED] They search through camera, they will,
they will s-slew, basically we move it --

LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And it's up to you to pick out
that signal?

[REDACTED] To see what it is, yes.

LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] What's the magnification
capabilities on that camera.

1 [REDACTED] Uh, I'm not positive on this. I'm not
2 sure, sir.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, I-I'm trying to say if you're
4 looking at uh civilian Marine traffic uh and you're using
5 the TIS, the thermal uh what sorts of things pop up at
6 night?

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED]

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1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] On the night of the uh 16th and
2 17th?

3 [REDACTED] It was very clear weather actually.
4 Very clear. Heavy traffic. There was a lot of little
5 ships moving.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right. So, let's go, go to
7 that day.

8 LCDR [REDACTED]: I'm sorry, one second, uh while uh.
9 What does your display look like? Is it in color or black
10 and white?

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15 sitting at and uh technically we are a GFCS operator so the
16 Gun Fire Control Supervisor. Basically, we're in charge of
17 5-inch and the OSS when on watch. And, so we'll use the uh
18 SPS-67, one of the range indicator or not range indicator,
19 the display console right there. So I kind of, you can use
20 that to kind of range where things are. And visually see
21 it on the camera.

22 LCDR [REDACTED]: So, the display that your looking at
23 through uh what the camera is looking will be varying
24 shades from black to white?

Alpha Transcription

678-646-5330

1 [REDACTED] Black to white, yes sir. It is not uh
2 color.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] : : Mm-hmm.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So let's talk about the uh 16th of
5 June. And that was the Friday where the vessel got
6 underway. Do you know what time you might have woken up
7 for that day?

8 [REDACTED] I believe for sea and anchor, I was on
9 sea and anchor detail. I don't recall, I think it was
10 sometime around 8 or 7 that we uh set sea and anchor. I'm
11 not, I don't recall, no sir.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so sometime before 8 o'clock
13 you're up and ready for the day.

14 [REDACTED] Ready for the day. Yes sir.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So the vessel got underway, might
16 have gone to anchorage for uh some supplies, got underway,
17 did flight and uh --

18 [REDACTED] Flight Quarters.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Flight Quarters?

20 [REDACTED] I guess. I don't know what it's called,
21 but it's where the uh the helicopter will come and the helo
22 will come land on the deck.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do you have any responsibilities
24 during Flight Ops?

25 [REDACTED] Uh, no sir.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Uh, any responsibility during Boat
2 Ops?

3 [REDACTED] No sir.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So your watch was again set for 22
5 to 0200?

6 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did you get plenty of rest before
8 uh that watch?

9 [REDACTED] Um, no sir, I was busy working on PQS's
10 and stuff. And I've been well rested, you know, we've been
11 in port, so I had plenty of sleep.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did you get any sleep uh before
13 your watch?

14 [REDACTED] No sir. Not since sea and anchor.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right. So you get on watch at
16 uh, w-when is the normal watch switch out?

17 [REDACTED] So, we turn over 15 minutes prior, so uh
18 21:45 is when I was supposed to relieve them by.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And what, what kind of details are
20 passed between yourself and the previous?

21 [REDACTED] Um, usually it is what's going on, how
22 the traffic is, the weather conditions, any sp-special
23 events or anything that's going on. Um, what, how the
24 camera, what condition it's in. If there's any faults
25 popping up cause I mean it's a very old system. So,

1 sometimes we have small issues, you know things that we
2 deal with.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mm-hmm. Any uh particular issues
4 or anything out of the ordinary?

5 [REDACTED] Uh, no sir. The camera was working
6 fine.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So you get on watch and uh at some
8 point in time Boat Ops completes, and the vessel starts
9 heading on a southerly direction of some sort.

10 [REDACTED] I believe so sir.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Uh, does traffic increase as you
12 move along?

13 [REDACTED] Yeah the closer we are to the uh coast
14 obviously the more ships and more vessels we'll see. And
15 it was a little bit heavier than a usual night.

16 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Have you uh stood duty going in
17 and out of the Yokosuka before?

18 [REDACTED] Uh, yes sir.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And, so you're saying that this
20 event on the uh evening of the 16th was a little bit more
21 traffic than normal?

22 [REDACTED] Yeah. A little bit higher traffic. Yes
23 sir.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Is it the most traffic you've ever
25 seen? Just, just in general in all your experience?

1 [REDACTED] No sir. Not the most, um.

2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] I'm going to steal a question from
3 Captain [REDACTED]. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being there's nobody
4 out there and 10 it's rush hour.

5 [REDACTED] Uh, it was, it was a good 7 or 8. I'd
6 say it was pretty high.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And, again, when you're on the
8 camera and you're looking around, are you doing that
9 independently or is there direction from --

10 [REDACTED] Um, usually I'm independently looking
11 unless Surface or the Bridge calls out a bearing or a
12 contact that they want me to look at.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And then so if you see something
14 that maybe hasn't been reported who, who do you give that
15 report to?

16 [REDACTED] Uh, usually I just tell Surface, let
17 them know what the contact is, where it's at, and what it's
18 doing.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And if it's a valid contact,
20 they're going to mark it and make sure that --

21 [REDACTED] Mm-hmm. Usually they're checking uh AIS
22 validating that it's the correct contact that they say they
23 are.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And, and what are they checking
25 that on? Is it --

1 [REDACTED] They have a laptop set up beside their
2 uh station.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do you know if there's any other
4 AIS stations onboard the vessel?

5 [REDACTED] I'm not sure sir.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do you ever look at the AIS
7 laptops?

8 [REDACTED] Uh, often, yes sir. I don't understand
9 quite how it works, but uh yeah I sit two feet from Surface
10 so we talk a lot and we um I hear a bunch of stuff, I
11 guess.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right, so you said there was a
13 lot of traffic. Could you give an, is there a rough number
14 of how many uh vessels you're probably -- uh or how many
15 targets you're tracking?

16 [REDACTED] Um, well there's nothing specific that
17 we track. We're just looking for suspicious activity or
18 anything out of the un, out of the usual. There was
19 roughly, I'd say 20-30 ships in my camera view in my
20 vicinity.

21 LCDR [REDACTED]: Would that be at anyone given time or
22 was that sort of over the course of your watch?

23 [REDACTED] Over the course of the watch usually.
24 Um, so that was very heavy traffic per the usual. I
25 obviously can't track all of those targets at once. Um, we

1 just do our best to slew the camera, just scan the area as
2 much as we can.

3 LCDR [REDACTED]: So, in the, in the course of that, of
4 that midwatch, that ended with the collision you came on at
5 21:45. It ended about 0130. How many Surface contacts or
6 vessels would you say you put your camera on?

7 [REDACTED] I'd say nearing 100, maybe 80 or so, um.

8 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay.

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22 [REDACTED] You can see whether it's a cargo or
23 maybe a small fishing vessel.

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1 [REDACTED] I could tell maybe it's a (indiscernible
2 - 00:18:07 Japanese word) or it, or exactly what kind of
3 fishing vessel it is.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Fantastic. Excellent. And then
5 uh for the camera range itself in terms of degrees, uh
6 range of view.

7 [REDACTED] Um, just for wide and narrow I'm not
8 sure it's in the pubs.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. Let me try to ask. If you
10 put the ves, the camera from one side of the vessel all the
11 way to the other side of the vessel do you know how, you
12 know in a 360, how many degrees that might be?

13 [REDACTED] Um, from scanning all the way left to
14 right?

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

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20 LCDR [REDACTED]: The mast?

21 [REDACTED] The mast. Thank you, sir. Sorry, I'm-

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11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Thank you. So, we're seeing all
12 these ships up to 80 to 100 over the night. Are you making
13 frequent Comms to the Bridge or is it primarily going to
14 Surface?

15 [REDACTED] Primarily Surface, unless it's something
16 very important or something that I need to say, I usually
17 avoid using Comms. Just to keep traffic down and I don't
18 know.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Are listening, do you have a
20 headset that you get to listen to?

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24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay so there's an actual headset
25 on you listening to that.

1 [REDACTED] Yes sir. So, that all of combat can
2 talk with each other. Which, most of the time I verbally
3 seeing as Surface is so close to me.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

5 [REDACTED] I verbally uh address or inform them of
6 stuff.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So again, you got on the 2145, a
8 couple of hours have gone by. It's 0100, you're getting
9 close to the end of your watch. Do you have a rough idea
10 of how many contacts you were tracking or?

11 [REDACTED] I'd say roughly 25, 20-sih, it's very
12 hard to keep track of the exact number, I mean there are so
13 many small fishing vessels.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] What was the closest distance that
15 you believe the vessel came to on any one of those vessels?

16 [REDACTED] Um, they come very close. Uh,
17 especially being around the coast sometimes you know, a
18 nautical mile, 2 nautical miles, some gliding right in
19 front of us by. Very invasive, I'd say. For us being a
20 warship, the definitely come very close in our vicinity,
21 especially the small fishing vessels, they ignore all the
22 traffic laws. I mean they're riding a couple hundred yards
23 away from us at any point in time.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. How about the larger uh
25 container ships.

1 [REDACTED] We, of course, keep uh a bit more of an
2 eye on them. Um, trying to keep those roughly you like 2
3 to 3 nautical miles away. And that's when I'd start
4 reporting or informing Surface of where they at saying hey
5 they're getting, they're getting close. I usually will
6 inform Surface.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so when, and, and we've kind
8 of danced around this question. So let me ask you
9 directly. At what point do you tell Surface that you have
10 a contact? Is it immediately upon seeing it or is it when
11 they hit a certain distance that you can say there is a
12 blank, blank over here?

13 [REDACTED] Um, I'd say it all depends on the
14 traffic. The heavier the traffic there's too many contacts
15 to identify. Like when we get farther out at sea I inform
16 Surface of every contact that I see cause they want to
17 record it in uh AIS. I think it is ASI, one or the other.
18 They want to record it and keep track of what kind of
19 contacts are out there. But the closer we are to uh land
20 there's just no way to inform them of every contact.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, during this night, uh what
22 would usually be your trigger to bring that up to Surface
23 that there is this vessel?

24 [REDACTED] I'd say, like I say anything out of the
25 usual. So uh Surface, if uh they're coming directly at us

1 that's obviously an indicator. Their speed, size,
2 obviously looking for any weapons on the ship, um.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So things that might be more of a
4 threat perhaps?

5 [REDACTED] A threat, yes sir. Um usually the
6 Surface will call out anything they're interested in.
7 That's my first indicator, though; surface is usually the
8 one to tell me when something's getting too close.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so if there's anything that
10 you clearly say this is definite, I need to bring this up
11 now you bring it up?

12 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Otherwise, it's them giving --
14 it's up to you?

15 [REDACTED] The Surface or the Bridge usually
16 sending me uh contact information.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. Do you remember Surface or
18 Bridge asking you about any vessels?

19 [REDACTED] Um. I do remember the incident, the one
20 they asked right before we were hit, but usually they ask
21 us so many, um. Surface or Lieutenant [REDACTED] asked me to
22 check out a bearing at contact 163. Um, which I informed
23 him was a cargo vessel. I'd say roughly 4 to 6 nautical
24 miles out. And, uh moments later I just naturally on my
25 own slewed the camera over and witnessed the uh cargo

1 vessel coming at us way too close for me to do anything.

2 It was probably a couple seconds afterwards we were hit.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So Lieutenant [REDACTED] mentioned a
4 vessel 163, is that true?

5 [REDACTED] 1 uh 163 true. That's usually how we
6 give out things.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And you identified a cargo vessel?

8 [REDACTED] A cargo vessel 4 to 6 nautical miles
9 out.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. And then you continued
11 moving right?

12 [REDACTED] I continued moving starboard, yes sir.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Starboard? And that's when you
14 saw the other container ship?

15 [REDACTED] Yes sir. A couple degrees, I slewed my
16 camera a couple degrees farther over and uh witnessed the
17 cargo coming our way.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. Did you make any reports?

19 [REDACTED] No sir. I was --I couldn't believe it.
20 I was so, so shocked that I couldn't say anything.

21 LCDR [REDACTED]: Does the OSS record?
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2 [REDACTED] I'm not sure sir.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Were there any other vessels that
4 -- so again the, the first vessel you said was 4 to 6
5 nautical miles out. The other vessel clearly much closer.

6 [REDACTED] A couple hundred yards.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And did you see any other larger
8 vessels? Not, not the fishing vessels cause I understand
9 they're doing their thing. The larger, of larger vessels.
10 Did you, during the night see anybody at a ranger closer
11 than that 4 to 6?

12 [REDACTED] Yes sir. All the time. Plenty of cargo
13 vessels come that close. I'm sure there were others
14 around. I'm sure there were others at different bearings.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do you remember any uh course
16 corrections that might have come about trying to get
17 further away from these vessels?

18 [REDACTED] Uh, well I know they make course changes
19 and speed changes all the time sir, but I'm not sure the
20 purpose behind him. I just hear them over the Net. The
21 Bridge will call down and inform the uh, the um Watch Sup I
22 think it is.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. So bridge doesn't always
24 tell why they're making the course change?

1 [REDACTED] Uh, no sir. They'll just inform them of
2 the bearing and speed changes.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And does Surface or SWS --
4 [REDACTED] SWS is usually the one who uh will
5 repeat back. So they'll tell SWS and SWS -- well it's
6 between SWS and Surface, whoever hears it kind of thing.
7 We usually let Watch Sup know or the OS's, whoever is over
8 there.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Do they ever question back why are
10 we making this change?

11 [REDACTED] No sir, never.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Is there anyone in the CIC who'd
13 uh might ask that question?

14 [REDACTED] Not that I've ever heard sir.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Uh, so let's talk about collision.
16 And I'm just going to let you tell the story as it, what
17 you, you saw the vessel on the camera and then what
18 happens.

19 [REDACTED] I froze sir. For a solid 6 to 8 seconds
20 I'd say at least. Um, I couldn't say anything. I couldn't
21 do anything.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And was that how much time it took
23 for the vessel to strike, for the collision to occur?

24 [REDACTED] Uh yes sir. I sat there and watched it
25 hit us, sir. There was nothing I could do or say.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. And to help us understand
2 do you know what uh what bearing that container ship was
3 coming in in relation to the uh Fitzgerald?

4 [REDACTED] Not exact sure sir, but um like I said I
5 was looking at 163 and adjusted the camera probably 10-15
6 degrees farther over. Um, and that's when I saw, um, I
7 remember our speed was roughly 21-24 knots. They had just
8 made us uh speed change.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did you hear anything from the
10 Bridge of uh --

11 [REDACTED] No sir. Uh, I heard nothing of the
12 Comms, no alerts, no Comms. The only thing I felt was a
13 small um like jerk I'd say or shift, or course change the
14 last couple of seconds. Um, so def--someone definitely saw
15 it a couple moments before it hit us. Someone on the
16 Bridge tried to do a move the ship but nothing over Comm.
17 No alerts.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. And, again, uh just to ask
19 again the Fitzgerald was going this way.

20 [REDACTED] Keep going, yes sir.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And the Crystal was coming at a,
22 would you say 90 or --

23 [REDACTED] Not, not quite 90, probably 80-ish, 75.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay. So, so more --

1 [REDACTED] Somewhere right there. Um towards the
2 bow.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mm-hmm. Okay. So what, what
4 happens with CIC following the collision?

5 [REDACTED] Um, so the collision, everyone of course
6 uh, what is the word? They, they held on, stuffs falling
7 everywhere, it's pretty rough. Um, I believe I heard
8 general quarters after that.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay.

10 [REDACTED] Um, people were asking what happened?
11 What happened? Everyone looked pretty shocked though. Um,
12 down from Surface up in TAO, like no one obviously knew
13 what was going on.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did you stay in the CIC?

15 [REDACTED] Uh, yes sir. I was very, like I said I
16 was in shock sir. Um, and for general quarters, they
17 signed general quarters and no other 5-inches were in uh
18 CIC, so that's another reason why I stayed. Cause my usual
19 general quarters station is down is deep mack [phonetic].
20 But um, I was going to wait until one of the MACH 160 guys
21 came in.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mr. [REDACTED].

23 MR. [REDACTED]: Just a couple questions. Just to
24 be clear.

25 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

1 MR. [REDACTED]: During your watch, did you guys
2 receive any calls down from the Bridge, swing camera to
3 here, look at this, any direction like that?

4 [REDACTED] Not from the bridge, not that night sir.

5 MR. [REDACTED]: Did you get or did SWS ask you to
6 look at any particular vessel besides um the one at 163?

7 [REDACTED] Uh, that was Surface.

8 MR. [REDACTED]: Surface. I apologize.

9 [REDACTED] No, it's fine, sir. Um, Surface is
10 usually the main person I'm talking to. No one else
11 usually talks to me.

12 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. Now are you familiar with
13 the captain standing orders about CPAs?

14 [REDACTED] CPAs?

15 MR. [REDACTED]: Uh any? Don't let this vessel
16 get within this min--this distance of us.

17 [REDACTED] No sir. We have the book there but I'm
18 not sure where it is.

19 MR. [REDACTED]: You're not sure? Okay.

20 [REDACTED] There doesn't, this seems to be more of
21 a gray area. I mean depending -- on either way, at least I
22 was trying to get some more better judgment I'd say that's
23 in a direct -- there hasn't been a clear specification as
24 to how far out or what exactly we need to report.

1 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. All right. So Surface and
2 SWS are looking at radar?

3 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

4 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. Did they report having any
5 issues with their radar?

6 [REDACTED] No sir, but I did walk over to SWS and
7 talk to him for a minute or two throughout the watch and um
8 their radar did appear to seem cluttered, very uh -- I'm
9 not sure if was weather or whatever but it seemed, appeared
10 to be a lot on the screen.

11 MR. [REDACTED]: All right. So, you noticed some
12 clutter when you were talking to um SWS?

13 [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

14 MR. [REDACTED]: Um, did you recognize the
15 distance that the clutter was or anything like that?

16 [REDACTED] It seemed to be right around the ship.
17 That's where the radar gets -- it bounces off the waves you
18 know.

19 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay.

20 [REDACTED] Say there's a ring right around the ship
21 that's usually very distorted and it's very hard to read
22 out through. So usually you want to identify the contacts
23 before they start entering. We don't want them to get --
24 the ring probably is a couple nautical miles out, uh four

1 or five. So, you don't allow contacts in that close. It's
2 kind of hard to see on radar.

3 MR. [REDACTED]: So the idea is to ID the vessels
4 prior to them reaching the ring.

5 [REDACTED] As soon as possible, of course.

6 MR. [REDACTED]: All right. So you said you moved
7 your camera to 163 and you said you -- it tailored off --
8 you tailored it 15 degrees and when you scanned it what did
9 you scan to starboard or did you scan to port?

10 [REDACTED] I went starboard.

11 MR. [REDACTED]: Starboard?

12 [REDACTED] I just continued on scanning it. Prior
13 to Lieutenant [REDACTED] asking me to check bearing 163 I had

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21 MR. [REDACTED]: Mm-hmm.

22 [REDACTED] So, I centered it and when you do a 90-
23 degree sector it goes 45 over and then 45 back the other
24 way. And I had it at a rate 1. I don't know what exact
25 speed that means but that's just the camera going back and

1 forth. So, the camera didn't move far enough to see that
2 ship --

3 MR. [REDACTED]: Right.

4 [REDACTED] -- approaching us from whatever angle
5 attack it hit us on.

6 MR. [REDACTED]: Mm-hmm.

7 LCDR [REDACTED]: Uh you had mentioned that uh it's
8 customary for you to make reports when vessels approach
9 anywhere within the 2 to 3 nautical mile range.

10 [REDACTED] Usually sir.

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: Did you have any close calls that
12 evening? Any, any vessels that were in that bubble that
13 you made reports to either Surface or to the Bridge?

14 [REDACTED] Maybe a couple fishing contacts sir.
15 Uh, I don't quite recall.

16 LCDR [REDACTED]: Would you remember if that was earlier
17 in your watch, midwatch, end of your watch?

18 [REDACTED] I'd say midwatch, earlier in the watch.

19 LCDR [REDACTED]: That's all I have.

20 MR. [REDACTED]: One, one helluva -- (inaudible
21 00:37:36). Um, you noticed that there was some clutter on
22 the radar on 67. You were on Net 15?

23 [REDACTED] Net 15, yes sir.

1 MR. [REDACTED]: Did you hear anybody from CIC
2 call the bridge and make them aware that you guys were
3 having radar problems?

4 [REDACTED] I wouldn't classify it as radar
5 problems.

6 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay.

7 [REDACTED] It's just typical shitty equipment I'd
8 say. I mean it's the kind of stuff that you usually see
9 every night.

10 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay. So, that's uh, would you
11 say that's a usual occurrence?

12 [REDACTED] It's not the -- we always don't have the
13 clearest images sir, you know?

14 LCDR [REDACTED]: I'll, I'll ask that question about the
15 radar clutter a different way. The clutter that you saw
16 that night. You got up and went over and you looked over
17 SWS's shoulder to see what was going on.

18 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

19 LCDR [REDACTED]: Was that a typical amount of clutter
20 that you guys normally see with the 67 or was it more than
21 normal, less than normal?

22 [REDACTED] I think it was slightly more, but not
23 that bad. I mean it's what they typically can see.

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1 hearing everything the OOD and the TAO and Surface and SWS
2 and everybody's talking about.

3 [REDACTED] Yes sir. Every word.

4 LCDR [REDACTED]: Do you recall any conversations
5 between the OOD and the TAO and Surface about calls to the
6 Commanding Officer to make reports about close CPAs?

7 [REDACTED] No sir.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. O-over the course of your
9 watch?

10 [REDACTED] None at all sir.

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay. And just a followup question on
12 AIS. So, the layout is you get your console right and then
13 the GFCS is to your left.

14 [REDACTED] And then to the left of GFCS is Surface.

15 LCDR [REDACTED]: Is Surface, right?

16 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

17 LCDR [REDACTED]: So, where the AIS laptop is, can you
18 see it?

19 [REDACTED] No sir. It is turned uh, it's turned
20 towards Surface. So Surface sits here. It has its
21 console, then a computer screen, and then the laptop. So
22 they have like three different screens to look at. Then
23 you have GFCS and then I sit OSS right here. So, I'd say
24 roughly that distance is probably six feet, I'd say. But,
25 I can't see the AIS. I just, I can look at Surface.

1 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay. Did you recall whether Surface
2 was actively using and referencing AIS that night?

3 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

4 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay. Is that, is that normal?

5 [REDACTED] Yes sir. They constantly are making
6 updates, adjustments.

7 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay. So, based on your observation
8 that night AIS was up and running and it was being actively
9 used?

10 [REDACTED] Yes sir. Very actively used.

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay. Okay I just got a last
12 question.

13 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, again, you said you've done
15 this watch five hours every single day uh since you've been
16 on?

17 [REDACTED] Since I've been qualified, yes sir.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Since you've been qualified. So,
19 you've see a lot different vessels between that 14 nautical
20 miles at the horizon up close --?

21 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] --Passing close and heard the
23 communications between the Bridge, between Surface, between
24 what's going on with CIC, where the vessels are and what's
25 being tracked. You, you've seen the whole picture?

1 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

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13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And that's probably one of the
14 reasons we have that aft Lookout back there just in case.

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22 [REDACTED] Roughly sir.

23 LCDR [REDACTED]: Um, actually I have two more questions
24 for you too. Uh, how, how involved -- again you're

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1 helping Surface and OOD work through managing the Surface
2 picture?

3 [REDACTED] Surface and OOD.

4 LCDR [REDACTED]: Is the TAO part of that conversation,
5 especially if, if ships get out of close CPA and there's
6 conversation about having to maneuver to avoid you know a
7 close, a close encounter. Is the TAO typically active in
8 that conversation or, or is it really just between the OOD
9 and Surface and SWS?

10 [REDACTED] I would say no. Not typically sir. At
11 least, through a couple of my experiences.

12 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay. Wow, you and your ship mates
13 had a helluva experience.

14 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

15 LCDR [REDACTED]: Um, a collision and saving the ship
16 and losing some shipmates and getting, getting the Fitz
17 back home. There was, I'm sure you witnessed personally
18 and certainly heard about some of your shipmates that did
19 some pretty amazing things that day, heroic actions.

20 [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

21 LCDR [REDACTED]: Hazarding themselves above and beyond
22 the call of duty and that kind of thing and we're just
23 curious, uh we ask this of everybody. We're just curious
24 if there's anybody in particular that you, that you want to
25 point out either individually or as part of a group that

1 you think are worthy of special mention? Anybody come to
2 mind?

3 [REDACTED] Um, I really think [REDACTED].

4 LCDR [REDACTED]: I'm sorry, say that again.

5 [REDACTED] [REDACTED], I believe, uh what's his name. I
6 can't remember his full name right now. He definitely.
7 He's one of the DC guys running around. He was definitely
8 -- no hesitation he just went straight to trying to you
9 know repair the ship. He, from what I saw, he definitely
10 hands in everything kind of thing.

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay. Anybody else?

12 [REDACTED] Uh, since you've um pressed, he kind of
13 a took command. He said uh leave your shift and kind of
14 helped bring everyone back together and get a plan going.
15 Cause a lot of people were shook up and didn't know what to
16 do, didn't know where to go. You know, helped organize us
17 and get us on track. I would like to state one thing y'all
18 didn't ask was uh I hear that the lights were not on or the
19 other ship's navigation lights but from what I remember was
20 is I remember their lights cause they're very visible, very
21 easy to see obviously with the thermal they, they glow
22 super bright, and I remember them having lights on.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Thank you.

24 [REDACTED] From what I remember at least.

1 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay, when you, when you slewed the
2 camera there in the last few seconds that you saw it.

3 [REDACTED] It was, I saw a large cargo vessel, full
4 of cargo, and I saw lights on

5 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay.

6 [REDACTED] From what I remember.

7 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Thank you for that.

9 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

10 LCDR [REDACTED]: Anybody else come to mind?

11 [REDACTED] No sir.

12 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay. Thank you.

13 [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Uh, since you mentioned lights I
15 wanted to ask. When you're at the camera are you able to
16 see Fitz-Fitzgerald's lights as well?

17 [REDACTED] No sir.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, un-unable to verify if your
19 vessels lights were or were not on using the camera?

20 [REDACTED] No sir.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Just making sure I understand
22 that. All right. Well thank you again for all of this
23 information. You've been a great assistance to our
24 investigation in helping us to understand uh the events to
25 that night. I want to open the floor to you now to see if

1 there's any questions you may have for us that we could
2 possibly answer for you today?

3 [REDACTED] Not at this time, sir.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Thanks. Um, well likewise if you
5 have any further questions in the future or if anything
6 comes to mind later, uh something that we didn't ask or
7 that was on your mind similar to your lights comment here
8 that you say I really wish I'd mentioned this please feel
9 free to, feel free to reach out to us. We'd be glad to
10 take whatever information or questions you have at that
11 time.

12 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right. Thank you so much for
14 your time here today.