

CUI

ATTENTION

Use this space to indicate categories, limited dissemination controls, special instructions, points of contact, etc., if needed.

ATTENTION

All individuals handling this information are required to protect it from unauthorized disclosure.

Handling, storage, reproduction, and disposition of the attached document(s) must be in accordance with 32 CFR Part 2002 and applicable agency policy.

Access to and dissemination of Controlled Unclassified Information shall be allowed as necessary and permissible to any individual(s), organization(s), or grouping(s) of users, provided such access or dissemination is consistent with or in furtherance of a Lawful Government Purpose and in a manner consistent with applicable law, regulations, and Government-wide policies.

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

CUI

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

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

CAPTAIN [REDACTED] All right, I'm Captain [REDACTED] I'm the Navy's rep on the Coast Guard's NTSB Investigation Board. I'll be participating in the Q&A. Just to make sure we're all in the same -- sheet of paper here, the purpose of this particular investigation is to establish what happened and how in the events leading up to and immediately following the collision.

[REDACTED] Absolutely, sir.

CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Any questions about that?

[REDACTED] No, sir.

CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Okay, over to the Coast Guard.

LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Good afternoon.

[REDACTED] Afternoon.

LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] I'm Lieutenant [REDACTED] I'm the Senior Investigating Officer for the US Coast Guard unit here in Japan, the activities Far East.

Under the authority of Title 46, US Code 6301 and Title 46 CO 454, an investigation is being conducted into the circumstances of the collision between USS Fitzgerald and the ACX Crystal on June 17th, 2017.

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

1 This investigation is intended to determine the cause
2 of the casualty to the extent possible and to obtain
3 information for the purpose of preventing similar
4 casualties in the future.

5 This is for the accuracy of our investigation, we will
6 be recording today's interview which is taking place on
7 June 28th at 1509.

8 On my team I have Mr. [REDACTED] from the Coast Guard's
9 National Center of Expertise for Investigations. I also
10 have Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] who is a -- works in our
11 office and is a previous CO of Coast Guard cutters.

12 Okay and Captain [REDACTED] here is working as a Liaison
13 Officer to ensure that communications flow freely between
14 the Navy and the Coast Guard.

15 I also have Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] from the Navy
16 Safety Investigation Board sitting in.

17 Before we begin, if I could get the spelling of your
18 first and last name, please.

19 [REDACTED] Uh, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and last
20 name [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Thank you so much. And you are
22 the vessel's navigator, correct?

23 [REDACTED] That's correct.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Mr. [REDACTED]

25 LCDR [REDACTED] Uh, if I could, how old are you?

1 [REDACTED] Uh, [REDACTED].

2 LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]? I wish I was [REDACTED].

3 [REDACTED] Um, I wish it wasn't [REDACTED].

4 LCDR [REDACTED] So from that, could you please tell me

5 a little background information about yourself? So when'd

6 you join the Navy and then, uh, what positions and roles

7 that you fill on board?

8 [REDACTED] So I joined in, I guess, officially

9 commissioned through OCS [REDACTED]? Yeah, [REDACTED].

10 Uh, I went to -- from there I went to Pearl Harbor, I was

11 on the USS Chosin where I was a First Lieutenant for a

12 little over two years. I stayed on a little longer because

13 we were putting her in the layup, if you will.

14 Then from there, I left the command in July. From

15 there I went to then ADOC and then NAV School. Or ADOC,

16 came out here for a month, not officially accepted by the

17 Command yet and then went back to NAV school and then from

18 NAV school came out here the end of October of last year.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] For the record, ADOC is Advanced

20 Division Officer Course, it's a refresher course that

21 Division Officers get between their first and second sea

22 tours.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] So it's safe to say that you joined

24 Fitzgerald at that point for good in [REDACTED]?

25 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And so as the Navigator, can you talk
2 about your responsibilities as a Navigator, who you report
3 to and any, uh, any other duties you may be assigned?

4 [REDACTED] So usually -- well, I don't know it's
5 usually anymore. Usually a Navigator is also in charge of
6 NAV ADMIN but we had an ADMIN Officer so I was only in
7 charge of Navigation.

8 Um, I was under OP's -- the Operations Department.

9 [REDACTED] was officially, I guess, my next in line for the chain-
10 of-command except underway I report directly to the Captain
11 for a safe navigation.

12 Other than that on board, my only real priorities was
13 navigation and the training of uh, bridge watch standers.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And training of bridge watch standers,
15 specifically the Quartermaster on the watch or all bridge
16 watches?

17 [REDACTED] All bridge watches. Well, correction
18 -- trains the officer of watch standers. Like you're CONN,
19 your OOD and getting them ready to be OODs. Then also my
20 Quartermasters. I'm in charge of training my
21 Quartermasters.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] So not Helm Lookout?

23 [REDACTED] No, that would be taken care of,
24 that's done by the Boatswain Mate of the Watch, effectively
25 the deck department.

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] All right, so talk to me about your
2 role as navigator in terms of routing track lines for
3 approval, how that process works.

4 [REDACTED] So I've -- usually I'm told, you know,
5 hey, we need to be here at this certain time. Put together
6 a track. I go through and do my usual research.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Just to be clear, who would tell you,
8 would OPS be telling you the timeline?

9 [REDACTED] OPS would be telling me the timeline.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Okay.

11 [REDACTED] Or I'd be cc'd on some sort of email
12 coming from -- usually like N -- N4. The DESRON operations
13 officer.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Okay. Sorry to interrupt, go ahead.

15 [REDACTED] No, not at all. So I get those and
16 then I usually plot them out. Normally sit down with OPS
17 to make sure the route hits all the operational commitments
18 that we need to do and make sure we are where we're
19 supposed to be at the correct times and then [REDACTED] can go
20 back to whoever and talk to them and make sure that on our
21 side we're doing everything they want us to.

22 Then usually go through picking out the routes based
23 on what operational commitments we're trying to do at the
24 time like try to get as outside certain distances as soon
25 as possible that make water, dump water kind of thing.

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

1 And then based on where we're going, do the research
2 for the harbor or the transiting area to help solidify the
3 route and then once that's done it is -- then goes to --
4 well, this one particular case so I had made the route and
5 then I have to make a move REP to say where we're going,
6 when we'll be there and all that.

7 My move rep had to get approved this time by DESRON
8 itself because we were gonna be entering the [REDACTED]
9 [REDACTED]. So any time any ship enters [REDACTED], all move
10 reps and voyage plans have to be vetted by DESRON to make
11 sure we're [REDACTED].

12 So then once they came back saying, hey, your move
13 rep, your route is good to go, uh, I then call up the XO,
14 XO will come up to the pilot house, we go through the
15 route. Me and the XO will go through the route. Usually
16 it's just all set, click straight through the route and
17 make sure I'm not crossing anything, going into any shore
18 water.

19 A lot of the questions they like to ask is how quickly
20 we'll meet certain distance or how far away can you get us
21 away from land.

22 Once XO approves it or recommends it or says okay to
23 the route, then I get the Captain to do it as well. Same
24 thing, I go through the entire route with the Captain.

25 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] So to be clear, when you said that you

1 plot it, do you plot it electronically or do you plot it on
2 paper?

3 [REDACTED] Electronically. So with an electronic
4 chart system on board, I can't -- I have charts on board
5 I'm supposed to have them on board but I can't use them as
6 primary plot.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And so entering the plots is done
8 typically where, is it a computer you can do in your
9 stateroom or do you have to go to --

10 [REDACTED] No, so I have to go -- well, so we
11 have -- it's VMS and there's notes so there's basically
12 [REDACTED] that are all talking to each other like a
13 continuous loop.

14 [REDACTED]
15 [REDACTED]. One's called the [REDACTED]
16 [REDACTED] and then one's the [REDACTED] at the
17 [REDACTED] and then there's one in [REDACTED] which is
18 directly [REDACTED].

19 So I have to go to one of those to do it, to plot it
20 in and typically I chart it on the [REDACTED].

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] So on the evening of the 16th, um, or
22 I'll go back even further than that, sorry. So you had a
23 NAV brief the morning of the 16th?

24 [REDACTED] Correct.

25 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And your NAV brief consisted of track

1 lines to what geographic area?

2 [REDACTED] So the -- so the NAV brief is just for
3 our restricted waters transit and then we were outside
4 restricted waters we went into flights ops in Sagami-Wan,
5 So my NAV brief was all the way out to basically the
6 [Inaudible00:08:55] buoy here.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Okay, so NAV brief covered that and
8 how, um, early in advance was the NAV brief routed?

9 [REDACTED] Routed?

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] For approval.

11 [REDACTED] For approve -- so it was approved
12 right after I gave the brief.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Okay.

14 [REDACTED] So um I make a brief, the last part
15 of the brief there's a slide for the X, myself, the XO and
16 CO to sign it to approve it. If there's any changes that
17 need to be done to it after the brief, because once we get
18 done with the briefing then we talk to everyone else, then
19 of course that's when things start coming out.

20 And then they're -- well, we don't wanna do this now
21 or hey, this RHIB is messed up so now it's not the ready
22 RHIB for outbound or hey, the timeline changed, now we're
23 not getting underway at this time.

24 Then I do the approvals -- or then I will fix it from
25 the NAV briefing and they'll sign it or approve it.

1 Usually they just one-line it. Just one-line it, write it
2 in, make sure everyone at the brief knows, which is
3 basically the entire crew. Knows that that's the change
4 and then they sign it and date the last page. And then we
5 have to retain them on board for an entire year. The
6 signed paper copies.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] All right, so uh, so you have the NAV
8 brief. Oops, sorry. You have the NAV brief, you get
9 underway, carry out, get the flight OPS area, uh, outbound
10 the sea track lines, when did they come into the picture?
11 When were they uh, prepared and reviewed and approved?

12 [REDACTED] So, um, reviewed and gone over, we'd
13 gone over days in advance. Um, we didn't officially
14 approve it till the night before we made the transit
15 because we -- in case the time changed, I wanted to update
16 the temp. Because you can manually plug in the time then
17 it will be associated with it.

18 So we weren't sure we were gonna be able to do night
19 flight quarters. We hadn't gotten confirmation till -- I
20 don't know. So the Captain and I both were like, "Well,
21 let's just wait and see if we actually do flight quarters
22 or if something wrong, maybe we'll get underway early." In
23 which case I might have had to do new move reps. We didn't
24 wanna approve it until we actually knew and in case the
25 Captain wanted to change anything.

1 But he approved it that night at 10:00. The outbound
2 to sea. Ten, 10:30. We were down the RHIB ops. He didn't
3 wanna go inside, he was watching the RHIB. So he didn't
4 wanna go inside till we finished RHIB ops.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Okay, so 2200 you get the approval,
6 and tasked the OD with carrying out.

7 [REDACTED] Carrying out the track, yes.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Okay, so I would imagine the
9 origination point was somewhere within your flight box?

10 [REDACTED] Uh, no it was right here so we did the
11 RHIB ops off of uh, I'm drawing a blank on the area here.
12 But uh, so we, I put the start track right here because I
13 knew we'd be recovering the RHIB in this area.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And then uh, any questions you may
15 have received from the OOD, any uh, uncertainty as to the
16 directions of what your intentions were for that outbound
17 track line?

18 [REDACTED] No. The only question usually is warp
19 speed and it's SOA.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And for the night orders, it had an
21 SOA of 20 knots?

22 [REDACTED] Well, the SOA was 16. Captain
23 authorized them to use up to 20 to try to get ahead of PIM
24 because there was -- we wanted to get as much time as we
25 could on PIM because we knew we were coming into uh,

1 engineering drills and stuff coming up.

2 So if engineering drills which were gonna be
3 propulsion limiting, we were expecting to lose time if we
4 had to slow down. So we were trying to give us that time
5 buffer.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And how is the -- the Captain,
7 usually, about planning, uh, pretty easily going off skip -
8 - off schedule, excuse me, sorry.

9 [REDACTED] By what, as in --

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Like so when you're planning out the
11 track lines of where to be and when to be there, uh, is he
12 a stickler to make that or --

13 [REDACTED] He's a stickler.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Does he like to deviate?

15 [REDACTED] No, he does not like to deviate, he's
16 a stickler. And he also requires -- originally he required
17 that if you were to deviate anywhere from the track more
18 than 500 yards, you had to call him. But he one-lined that
19 that night and gave the OD's a thousand yards.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Any indications to you as to why he
21 made that one-line?

22 [REDACTED] Uh, I think he was just getting -- no,
23 I have no idea. I actually did not know he one-lined it
24 until uh, everything had calmed down on the bridge. And I
25 started to look at the MAG orders to see what anyone else

1 had said in regards -- just kinda -- at that point, I was
2 just kind of curious what they had said.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] Let me ask a quick question here. So
4 based on Fitz's bridge watch standing culture, when the
5 Captain says you can deviate plus or minus 1,000 yards from
6 PIM track before you have to call me, does that imply that
7 the OD has the authority to maneuver within that left and
8 right limit of 1,000 yards for contact avoidance?

9 [REDACTED] No.

10 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

11 [REDACTED] Because you're not supposed -- so the
12 culture for the bridge -- to expand on that -- um, was that
13 you're not allowed to deviate from contact to open CPA.
14 You must let the Captain know. That deviation of 1,000
15 yards was for send out of something, I can't remember what
16 it was.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Environmental?

18 [REDACTED] Environmental and um --

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] It's a pretty standard standing order
20 entry, it gives the OD some latitude.

21 [REDACTED] Yeah, basically to maneuver how [REDACTED]
22 saw fit if [REDACTED] -- or yeah. [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] But there's not -- there's not a -- I
24 mean I'll ask my question again. So there's not a link
25 between AOD, you've got plus or minus 1,000 yards for PIM

1 track before you need to call me to let me know that you're
2 off track that is not connected to a license to maneuver
3 within that one-mile corridor.

4 [REDACTED] Correct.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] For contact avoidance.

6 [REDACTED] That's correct.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] So would it be accurate to say that if
8 an OD feels like they need to maneuver for contact
9 avoidance, that the Captain expects to get a phone call.

10 [REDACTED] Absolutely.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So the events planned for the day,
13 unusual for the first day back at sea?

14 [REDACTED] No.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Heavy?

16 [REDACTED] No. I mean -- no. Normal. So if
17 that's normal heavy, then that's heavy, I guess. I mean
18 it's not uncommon for us to go to ammo Anchorage outbound
19 because it's Yokosuka and you have to do your ammo
20 anchoring. You have to do any swinging of that ammo
21 Anchorage.

22 And then doing flight ops to get bounces and
23 [Inaudible00:16:31] or to get qualified MOB-A -- uh, air
24 not-uncommon either. And then usually if ATG's on board to
25 evaluate them, then you have to get them off somehow so --

1 then doing RHIB OPS. But it's not uncommon for us to do
2 any of that.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] Do you know of any, uh, any latitude
4 in the schedule or was DESRON pretty much demanding that
5 you get down to the [REDACTED] as quickly as possible?

6 [REDACTED] Not so much [REDACTED] but we had
7 to go through [REDACTED], uh, on the -- pretty solid on
8 the day of the 20th. I mean there wasn't that much leeway.
9 And once we got through the -- once we got through the
10 [REDACTED], too, then we had other tasks that we had to get to
11 which was gonna require us to speed up as well.

12 The 16-knot SOA going down was kind of the best I
13 could do with where we needed to be at what time to also
14 give the engineers a chance to take care of the stuff they
15 needed to take care of.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Was there, uh, was there any room in
17 the schedule to not do those training objectives prior to
18 going in or did they have to be complete prior to going
19 into your op? Could you have foregone the slowing down for
20 the engineering drills and maintaining your 16-knot SOA,
21 uh, to still meet mission objectives?

22 [REDACTED] Yeeee, yes. We would have had to done
23 this -- we -- once we -- because once we hit [REDACTED],
24 we had to completely add it to it we were gonna have to
25 speed up. Like the best time to -- the only time really to

1 have done it would have been prior to [REDACTED]. And
2 we're not trying to -- the last thing I think we would want
3 to do would be limiting engineering casualty drills in the
4 [REDACTED].

5 We also had issues with, um, engineering -- getting
6 those engineering drills scheduled and completed. And they
7 were -- they vitally needed to get done this assessment.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] You have an engineering certification
9 event, right?

10 [REDACTED] Yes.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Because MOB-A 1.0 Charley 1.0 Charley?

12 [REDACTED] It was something like that. And this
13 was our second attempt at it because we had the #3
14 switchboard go down coming back from Sea of Japan.

15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Did you have a watch scheduled for,
16 uh, getting underway or that evening?

17 [REDACTED] So I'm navigator outbound -- once we
18 secured from sea and anchor detail, I had to remain on the
19 bridge because we were still in MOD NAV for the vast
20 majority of the flight ops.

21 And then I was gonna take the deck as Officer of the
22 Deck the morning, the next morning, the 7:00 to 12:00 was
23 my watch.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] So you were in your rack at the time
25 of collision?

1 [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

2 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] If you could, talk to me a little bit
3 more about when full NAV is required, modified NAV and then
4 uh --

5 [REDACTED] So restricted water inside two
6 nautical miles required full NAV detail. Uh, then the two
7 to five or inside five is uh, modified NAV detail. Then
8 once you're outside five nautical miles it's a regular
9 bridge watch standing.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] So for the planned track line through
11 this area here on the chart, uh, how close do you come
12 within land?

13 [REDACTED] Uhh, I believe it was like ten to -- I
14 think it was out -- tried to get outside 12 nautical miles.

15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And that's -- that's shooting the
16 distance equally between the two?

17 [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Is that shipboard instruction that
19 dictates that or is there a larger Navy instruction that
20 dictates when navigation details are to be set?

21 [REDACTED] That's larger navigation.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] So it's on the NAVDOR?

23 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. But then there's portions
24 of the NAVDOR that can be obviously tailored by the
25 Commanding Officer. Which then becomes the NAVDOM.

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And so for that, uh, that transit, are
2 you normally up on the bridge during the full transit
3 outbound for sea?

4 [REDACTED] I'm always on the bridge outbound for
5 sea.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] And through this area as well?

7 [REDACTED] Nah. So once we got outside five --
8 inside five, myself or my ANAV has to on the bridge no
9 matter what. But once we're outside of five then I'm not
10 required on the bridge anymore. Then my Quartermaster of
11 the watch takes over.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] How about the Captain, even though
13 he's not required to be up there, does he have a certain
14 routine or habit that he likes to either be on the bridge
15 for certain events or certain locations?

16 [REDACTED] So any event, I guarantee you that
17 this Captain would be on the bridge. Um, I haven't quite
18 figured out his personal pattern yet, just because he's
19 brand new as a Captain. But as an XO and the limited time
20 I saw him as Captain, he was always on the bridge.

21 Not because of -- I'd say nervousness, he just liked
22 being on the bridge.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] How about the previous CO, Commander
24 [REDACTED]? What was [REDACTED] pattern?

25 [REDACTED] Commander [REDACTED] pattern? Uh, [REDACTED]

1 always go up there for the major evolutions and then [REDACTED]
2 usually would swing by in the morning and in the afternoon.
3 And if we were ever anywhere close to land -- well, usually
4 if I was up there for MOD NAV, within five, [REDACTED] 'd be up
5 there as well. But major evolutions, they're always up
6 there.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Had the previous CO ever been up on
8 the bridge during this transit?

9 [REDACTED] Yes.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] As a matter of habit or only
11 sporadically every now and again?

12 [REDACTED] Sporadically. But I'd only done this
13 transit three or four times with [REDACTED]. Commander [REDACTED].

14 LCDR [REDACTED] How many times have you done it
15 overall? Either inbound or outbound?

16 [REDACTED] Six or seven now.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Of those three or four times with uh,
18 the previous CO, about how many times would [REDACTED] be up there
19 for that transit?

20 [REDACTED] For this particular transit?

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

22 [REDACTED] Sir, I can't remember.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Okay, no worries.

24 [REDACTED] I know he was definitely up there once
25 because we did -- we were in the early stages of our

1 engineering event -- several months ago, we did do a full
2 power run through here so I know he was up there for that.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] Let me jump in for a second.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] Sure.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] I want you to talk to us -- so you
6 said you were -- part of your duties were navigator. I'm
7 an old navigator, was actually on CO out here. So, your
8 role as sort of being in charge of bridge watch standing,
9 why don't you talk us through what is your bridge watch
10 standing training program? What does it focus on and how
11 frequently and in particular we're interested in how does
12 this bridge team get trained for service contact
13 management.

14 [REDACTED] So a lot of the training is done
15 through the OD. Because the OD is on watch with them.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] So ODT, right.

17 [REDACTED] So a lot of that's done on watch with
18 them because, (a) it's good for the OOD to be constantly
19 training [REDACTED] watch team, it is [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] watch team. So
20 obviously investment there and the people around them.

21 Uh, myself as navigator was more, at least with this
22 group, was more towards the rules of the road side of it
23 and then the actual navigation side of it, you know, what
24 do these mean and what are -- how to navigate and how to
25 use VMS and the surface picture. Or not really the surface

1 picture but the equipment if you will.

2 Um, the surface picture and how to manage contacts
3 would -- the training would've been done through the OD
4 just because the OD's with them up there when there's
5 context being seen at night. And I'm not up there every
6 time there's a context.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] So talk to us about the rules of the
8 road training.

9 [REDACTED] Sure.

10 LCDR [REDACTED] How that, since you've been on board,
11 since October of last year, how does that work?

12 [REDACTED] So sir, when I first came on board, we
13 were -- rules of the road test almost every other week. We
14 try to do them every two weeks. I also did, when we first
15 started off, we did training straight through the entire
16 book. So we sat down and over several sessions, went
17 through all the rules of the book.

18 And then also there would be officer training
19 scheduled. We always have officer training scheduled
20 whether or not there was actually something plugged in
21 there or it didn't work out, rules of the road is always a
22 good fallback, too, so sometimes we'd have rules of the
23 road multiple times a week. That was as simple as going
24 over one particular rule or we would do -- I have Jeopardy
25 made up on Power Point. I also have rules of the road

1 cards and we would quiz each other. We'd have kind of a
2 competition of it of -- we'd have different groups and it'd
3 be like -- because the cards are like all black and they
4 have like the lights on them if you will to be like, kind
5 of like --

6 LCDR [REDACTED] Just flashcards.

7 [REDACTED] Flashcards, yes sir, and we'd do
8 competition or something like that. So that was, that's
9 the vast majority rule, going over the book, make sure they
10 understand it, give them a test, flashcards, any --
11 honestly, any way I could try to make rules of the road not
12 mundane and do it over again.

13 And also, it was usually a requirement of my night
14 orders that they take a rule for each watch and discuss it
15 amongst their team.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

17 [REDACTED] And then as an OD myself, my favorite
18 thing to do always was playing kind of the, you know, the
19 game between my JOOD and my CONN or if there's a UI there
20 and make the two youngest try to stump each other with
21 lights on the horizon.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. So who is required to
23 demonstrate proficiency over rules of the road through
24 things like quizzes and tests?

25 [REDACTED] Well, all watch standards are expected

1 to be proficient rules of the road. To become an officer
2 of the deck, it was this ship's response -- this ship's
3 rule that you had to have at least one 100 quiz score
4 before they'd give you your OD letter.

5 And then for officer of the decks, I have quarterly
6 boards with the requirements out of the, uh, the NAVDOR
7 side of things.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, so quarterly -- quarterly tests.

9 [REDACTED] Yes sir.

10 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, all right.

11 [REDACTED] I was only on board long enough for --
12 so they did a quarterly -- my old NAV did a quarterly test
13 for that last one and then I did one in conjunction with
14 MOD-N in February.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Right, okay. So is it fair to say that
16 prior to getting underway for your -- your three-week
17 underway that turned into a two-and-a-half month underway.
18 Or three month underway earlier this year, all the OD's had
19 demonstrated proficiency through a test of the rules of the
20 road.

21 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, all right.

23 [REDACTED] I'd say all of the watch standers are
24 good. Minus the ones, the young ones who haven't been to
25 BDOC yet.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] Right, okay. So that's the rules of
2 the road so let's talk about the equipment, so you've got
3 AIS, you've got 7 through the ARPA.

4 [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] You've got VMS.

6 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] And you've got spot 25 gulf.

8 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] You've got a bridge to bridge, couple
10 different radios, right? Are there any deg -- were there
11 any degradations to any of those major SA or Contact
12 Management Systems leading up to that mid watch before the
13 collision occurred?

14 [REDACTED] No, sir.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] So as far as you're concerned,
16 everything was working properly.

17 [REDACTED] For that underway, yes sir.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, this is another question we've
19 got. In your particular configuration, does AIS integrate
20 with the [REDACTED] information on the ARPA?

21 [REDACTED] No, sir.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, does it integrate with VMS?

23 [REDACTED] No, sir.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] So AIS, it's a stand-alone system.

25 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] does integrate
2 with VMS.

3 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. Only if it's -- so it only
4 integrates with VMS if the contact has been hooked. And
5 it's tripped. So if it's never hooked, it won't show up in
6 VMS.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Right.

8 [REDACTED] It's not like a -- so like my last
9 ship, I had a more modern VMS and you could do overlays
10 with like, you know, your [REDACTED]. The
11 overlay would appear on VMS. Can't do that on this one.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

13 [REDACTED] And honestly, it'd probably --

14 [REDACTED]. Our VMS is very old and had to work
15 very hard and be very diligent in cleaning it and keeping
16 it running smoothly.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] What do you guys do for an upgrade?

18 [REDACTED] VMS?

19 LCDR [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

20 [REDACTED] I have no idea, probably mid life-
21 cycle.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Um, so tell us, ship-wide, what
23 is the AIS configuration?

24 [REDACTED] So on the bridge there is just the
25 [REDACTED]

1 which is, I guess, not normal. Most ships, I guess, have
 2 [REDACTED]. This ship and my last ship
 3 didn't, so what I had [REDACTED] is what I was used to
 4 using. The normal AIS configuration using the N2 numbers
 5 and list all your targets within a certain distance and
 6 yeah, you click the target to be course speed over ground.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Are there any other AIS laptops
 8 on board the ship to your knowledge?

9 [REDACTED] No sir, just -- as far as I know, just
 10 [REDACTED].

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

12 [REDACTED] Which I had known and I guess they'd
 13 been having issues with but I hadn't heard of any issues
 14 leading up to this underway.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] What were those issues you had caught
 16 wind of?

17 [REDACTED] I'm sorry, I don't know.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, who owns the AIS laptop?

19 [REDACTED] Uh, the ETs.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] So CE division? EMO?

21 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. Well, they ran and worked
 22 at, I guess the laptops are technically owned by Radio.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, in the terms operability of the
 24 --

25 [REDACTED] ET, so it's EMO.

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

1 LCDR [REDACTED] EMO, C-division.

2 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, and right now EMO has been
4 limited for awhile, so Stowe is acting EMO, is that right?

5 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

6 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, shifting gears a little bit
7 here, what would you say is the -- how would you evaluate
8 the quality of the coordination between the bridge and CIC
9 in general on Fitz?

10 [REDACTED] Mixed.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Mixed? So let me give you a scale,
12 you hear a lot of one to ten during this interview, right?
13 So ten is manned perfect, synchronization, you know, CIC
14 completes every sentence the bridge starts, right? Perfect
15 alignment, 100 percent overlap on contacts.

16 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] One being is a being there's a
18 complete air gap between what bridge is seeing and talking
19 about and what combat is seeing and talking about. What
20 would you say on average across the -- across the different
21 watch sections where does Fitz fall?

22 [REDACTED] So on average across all the watch
23 sections, put it anywhere from like five to a seven.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. How about the watch team in
25 question on the mid that night? With OPS and [REDACTED] team and

1 CIC and I forget who's the OD --

2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [phonetic]?

3 LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] team and bridge.

4 Because you get to see them all. You have six navigators
5 right, over time.

6 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. So you're asking how was
7 the relationship between those two teams in question?

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Right. Relatively, you said the ship
9 was ship was kind of a five to seven so that sounds like
10 average, maybe a little bit above average based on your
11 experience --

12 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

13 LCDR [REDACTED] -- in quality. So if you were
14 specifically told that particular watch team.

15 [REDACTED] Well, I would say above average in my
16 experience. Experience before this was much better than
17 this. I'd definitely say on this ship there was -- who's -
18 - who do you have down in combat and you'd hear, [REDACTED] be
19 like, "Aaarrrr". But um, that particular one, OPS is very
20 aggressive. [REDACTED] -- I don't wanna say usually but OPS is
21 normally very aggressive when it comes to the contacts and
22 wanting to know what the OD is doing, what's the picture up
23 there.

24 Uh, [REDACTED], can be mixed, I'd say. I'd say if it's the
25 right person down there, [REDACTED] very good with working with

1 combat. Um, I have issues with the surface side of it.
2 Because per CO standing orders, they're supposed to be
3 tracking everything outside the 25 area, inside 20,000
4 yards.

5 And there'd be times like hey, we just picked up this
6 guy, like what's going on, like what's the CPA kind of
7 thing and -- and when I first came to ship, I'd say 50/50
8 they were tracking it or they weren't. Things were getting
9 better mainly because we started kind of going off on them
10 being like, you know, "What the hell, why don't you -- why
11 aren't you tracking this one?" Or "Why didn't you pick it
12 up or--"

13 But it was mixed, like I said, it depends who's on the
14 console and some of them were more aggressive and more
15 eager about it and some not as much.

16 We started getting a lot of them up onto the bridge to
17 see, you know, what it was like to do it and it was also
18 helping that we had a, um, a GMC who was actually going for
19 his CD letter, who was actually on my watch team, standing
20 bridge watch because [REDACTED] finally was like, "Ooh, like, oh so
21 this is -- this is a little bit more like -- it'd a little
22 bit -- can be a little bit more hectic than we realize
23 sitting down in combat."

24 So [REDACTED] started turning around to them and being like,
25 "Hey, you guys need to get this shit up to the bridge. You

1 guys need to be a little bit more aggressive about this."

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Going back to a comment you
3 made, it sounds like your experience on Chosin, you had, it
4 sounds like uh, you thought more highly of the bridge CSE
5 collaboration relative to Fitz.

6 [REDACTED] I did.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] So where would you rate Fitz's
8 collaboration overall based on your experience and kind of
9 talking to your counterparts around the waterfront chief.

10 [REDACTED] Well, I don't know about the
11 waterfront, I can only really say to my -- it's below
12 average compared to my last ship.

13 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

14 [REDACTED] So that was one of the things that I
15 was trying to work on.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] When did you get your OD recall?

17 [REDACTED] March.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] So in March of this year?

19 [REDACTED] It was before Antietam.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

21 [REDACTED] I can't remember when I got it.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] So you showed up in [REDACTED]. Ships in
23 holiday stand down, comes out of SRA, goes into sea trials,
24 stood some watch and you got your recall sometime in March.

25 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, all right. You've been standing
2 bridge watch ever since?

3 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. How would you rate -- so the
5 watch team on watch that night on the bridge and I'm
6 talking specifically the officers. So it was [REDACTED] --

7 [REDACTED] Um, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Let's start with the accounting
9 officer. Level of experience, how long has [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] been
10 on board?

11 [REDACTED] Not very long, sir, and [REDACTED] had just
12 come back from BDOC maybe a week before.

13 LCDR [REDACTED] So how much bridge watch standing
14 under the belt at that point?

15 [REDACTED] I can't -- I know [REDACTED] came for a little
16 bit before [REDACTED] went, they sent him back to BDOC. I can't
17 remember if we were -- [REDACTED] was underway with us at that time
18 but sir, very little.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, how about [REDACTED]? [REDACTED] a
20 Lieutenant, right?

21 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

22 UN LCDR [REDACTED] So how does a Lieutenant, what's the
23 story there, how does a Lieutenant and upstanding JFV.

24 [REDACTED] So sir, [REDACTED] a third tour.

25 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

1 [redacted] [redacted] a third tour, um, all I know is
 2 rumors from [redacted] previous command so uh, [redacted] was on board
 3 and [redacted] came for whatever reason, was working on getting --
 4 [redacted] hadn't had EL either so [redacted] was working on getting an
 5 EOW.

6 LCDR [redacted] [redacted] was not SPO qualified, right?
 7 [redacted] [redacted] was SPO qualified.
 8 LCDR [redacted] [redacted] was SPO qualified, okay. All
 9 right.

10 [redacted] I don't know if [redacted] was an E qual on
 11 last ship, [redacted] second tour.
 12 LCDR [redacted] Okay, but somewhere along the line [redacted]
 13 got an OD letter.
 14 [redacted] Yes, sir.
 15 LCDR [redacted] For whatever reason. Something about
 16 [redacted] performance under a third division officer tour.
 17 [redacted] Yes, sir. [redacted] also -- I don't know if
 18 [redacted] had it and got pulled or [redacted] didn't have it but [redacted]
 19 needed a department head req.
 20 LCDR [redacted] Okay. Uh, okay and then [redacted]. How
 21 long has, uh, how long has [redacted] been on board? Do you have
 22 a sense for how long [redacted] been qualified?
 23 [redacted] [redacted] been on board for a fair amount
 24 of time. I'm just gonna say like a year, year-and-a-half?
 25 LCDR [redacted] Is [redacted] a first-tour DIVO?

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

1 [REDACTED] Second tour, sir.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Second tour, okay. Do you know where

3 [REDACTED] did her first tour?

4 [REDACTED] Uh, Sasebo.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] So probably amfib?

6 [REDACTED] Yes sir, I believe it was the Ashland.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Okay. So looking at those

8 three in combination, like from a bridge resource

9 management perspective, right. How would you rate their

10 proficiency as a crew?

11 [REDACTED] Um, sir when I first found out that

12 that was a bridge watch team, also I didn't -- I didn't

13 know they were gonna be a watch team till basically that

14 night. I was not pleased.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Why is that?

16 [REDACTED] Well, [REDACTED] very weak, very

17 inexperienced so I don't know if that weakness is from

18 inexperience (sic) but I was gonna keep a closer eye on

19 [REDACTED] because I wanted to see how [REDACTED] was going -- keep an eye

20 on how [REDACTED] was going to be and then uh, Lieutenant [REDACTED] --

21 I have very low expectations with [REDACTED] as a watch standard.

22 I don't think [REDACTED] was, uh, I don't think [REDACTED] was very good

23 or very aggressive when it came to being a bridge watch

24 standard.

25 Now I hadn't had [REDACTED] on my team at all, this was just

1 through observation of being on the bridge. [REDACTED] didn't
2 ever work directly beneath me. [REDACTED] might have for like a
3 couple days at one point but not to get a good sense of who
4 [REDACTED] is or who [REDACTED] was as a watch stander but from what I
5 saw, sir, it was a very -- in many ways I thought it was a
6 weak and poor choice of the managing of a watch team.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, how about [REDACTED] how about [REDACTED]
8 skills?

9 [REDACTED] I thought highly of [REDACTED] skills. Uh,
10 the only reason why I wasn't completely like -- like let's
11 come full nilt and let's not go underway is because I have
12 faith in [REDACTED] skills to run a good watch team.

13 LCDR [REDACTED] Did you approach the CO, did you
14 approach anybody about your concerns, the OPS boss, the
15 senior watch officer, the XO or CO to tell anybody your
16 concerns?

17 [REDACTED] I talked to -- no sir. I talked to, I
18 know I talked to someone, I can't remember who it was.
19 Like I said, sir, I didn't figure that out until basically
20 like -- okay sir, it's approve the thing he went down, I
21 was talking over with the mid watch people, I was like --
22 who's taking it is basically when I found out is when they
23 took the watch. I'm a -- there was no signed watch bill
24 leading up to flight quarters condition three sight watch
25 bill. I don't even know when they signed it and they put

1 it out.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] So the -- all right, so I'm gonna
3 repeat this back to you and you can tell me if this is
4 accurate or not. So what I just heard you say is that to
5 your knowledge, there was no signed and CO approved
6 underway watch bill until sometime after -- in that
7 evening.

8 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] After the ship had already gotten
10 underway.

11 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] Where the normal -- the normal fleet
13 standard is it's generated, reviewed, approved, signed and
14 posted and distributed prior to the ship ever getting
15 underway.

16 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. All right. Let's talk about
18 the CO and XO and your presence on the bridge. What's the,
19 uh, well, for starters, I know you were in your rack but did
20 you get any indication after the fact that the CO or XO --
21 my, our understanding is they laid below after you secured
22 from boat ops.

23 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Which was about 2300.

25 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] And they weren't seen again until the
2 collision.

3 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Um, in your experience, what is
5 their battlefield circulation, I'll call it, through the
6 pilot house? When did the CO and XO make it out of there
7 going to the pilot house?

8 [REDACTED] So like I said, sir, I'm still getting
9 to know and feel out their routine. Um, I don't know if
10 the CO was -- had a routine yet but he was, generally he's
11 usually always on -- in the pilot house. Like I said,
12 before not so much of distrust but he just enjoyed being up
13 on the bridge.

14 XO was pretty regular in coming up AM and PM and
15 throughout the entire day kind of randomly. He'd sit in
16 his chair and he'd sit, listen and watch watch standards
17 and -- but he was pretty consistent on coming up.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, so how about the previous, so
19 they had just recently taken over.

20 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

21 LCDR [REDACTED] So how about Commander [REDACTED] when [REDACTED] was
22 CO and the current CO when he was XO, what was their
23 routine on the bridge?

24 [REDACTED] CO not as much, XO or CO when he was
25 XO, pretty consistently he'd come up. CO would always be

1 up there for any special evolution or any time we were
2 particularly close to land. Or heavy traffic areas.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] Did either one of them make it out or
4 come up on the mid or red watch to spend any time with the
5 evening watch? Outside of special evolution.

6 [REDACTED] Nnnno sir. XO, current XO would
7 surprise them in the evenings. This CO, current CO,
8 Commander Benson, uh, I mean up till like maybe 22 maybe,
9 23, you'd see him. But then let's say midnight on till
10 sunrise.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] So kind of taps, reveille.

12 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

13 LCDR [REDACTED] Unless something calls him up there,
14 he's not up there.

15 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. How about your presence on the
17 bridge, what's your battle rhythm?

18 [REDACTED] Sir, I'm always on the bridge. Not
19 having admin to worry about, I'm just usually always on the
20 bridge or at least -- very least in the chart room. I
21 lived with the CSO who constantly worked out of [REDACTED] room so
22 I never spent any time in my room. My stateroom other to
23 sleep. So usually I was always on the bridge.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Uh, how about the use of
25 MOBOARD? What, in accordance with the Captain's standing

1 orders, what is the requirement to use MOBOARD for contact
2 management?

3 [REDACTED] Well, so also we were still under
4 Commander [REDACTED] standing orders. We haven't -- [REDACTED] hadn't
5 officially been gone but within -- at 10,000 yards, you
6 would be, you have, you're tracking MOBOARD.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. In your experience, how -- how
8 faithfully does the bridge watch team adhere to that
9 requirement?

10 [REDACTED] Pretty faithfully.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, how about down in combat?

12 [REDACTED] I'd say equally as much. So much to
13 the point that there were -- we were, we were below
14 MOBOARD paper.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, how about bridge-to-bridge, any
16 material issues with bridge-to-bridge to your knowledge?

17 [REDACTED] No, sir. I know they -- a while back
18 they had had some issues with the centerline, the master
19 one. But um, not any as of recently.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, how proficient are the bridge
21 watch teams in using it and do they have the authority to
22 use it as they see fit?

23 [REDACTED] They have -- they can use it whenever
24 they want.

25 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, how about proficiency?

1 Confidence?

2 [redacted] Good. Especially the ODs and then
3 obviously the junior officer that's on the cons were
4 growing in it. But I -- none of the ODs, I've never seen
5 any of the ODs ever hesitate to get on bridge-to-bridge.

6 LCDR [redacted] Okay, so in the night in question,
7 when did you lay below?

8 [redacted] 2330.

9 LCDR [redacted] So about the same time the CO and XO
10 did? Maybe a little bit after?

11 [redacted] Probably about 45 minutes to an hour
12 after them so close to midnight.

13 LCDR [redacted] Okay, and then you weren't back on the
14 bridge at all until after the collision.

15 [redacted] No, so I woke up -- I don't know if
16 you guys know where my stateroom is, it's directly aft of
17 the CO's. I woke up essentially with the roof coming down
18 on top of me. CSO was out using the restroom because [redacted]
19 had the 2:00 to 7:00 TAO watch. [redacted] came in, [redacted] pulled me
20 out of my rack because I was like kind of pinned waist
21 down.

22 And [redacted] had blood so like we were -- I was putting
23 pressure on [redacted] head and our COMO ran by and I was like,
24 "Here, grab [redacted]. You hold it, you stick with [redacted]." And
25 that, so I was about to run to the bridge and I get out of

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

1 my stateroom and the door going up to the bridge which is
2 directly in front of my stateroom flies open and QM1 is
3 running down and [REDACTED] says [REDACTED] got a call from the Captain
4 that he's trapped.

5 At this point, I don't think it quite dawned on me
6 that the stateroom is basically crunched. And I didn't
7 think about where that was so we go to his stateroom and
8 we're trying to punch the code in, or at least what we
9 thought was the code and at that point, it just wasn't
10 happening. There was wire coming down from a busted chill
11 water pipe above his stateroom.

12 So we just started like banging away on the door and
13 it was like -- it was like hitting concrete or like --
14 something. I said, "We're not gonna get in this way." And
15 at that point, GMC and FCC came running up out of nowhere
16 with a sledge and we all just kind of took turns blowing
17 away on the door.

18 At this point, I realized, I was like there's a lot of
19 people here and the door was starting to cave in that I was
20 like -- I grabbed QM1, I was like, "We've gotta get back to
21 the bridge." So QM1 and I ran up to the bridge and then at
22 that point it was immediately -- [REDACTED] and
23 we immediately started taking all -- trying to just gather
24 as much navigational data as we possibly could.

25 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Did you receive any calls

1 between the time you laid below and the collision?

2 [REDACTED] No, sir.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Are you aware if the Captain
4 got any calls? You wouldn't have first-hand knowledge of
5 that but.

6 [REDACTED] No, but I asked and they -- so I was
7 like, "Did anyone ever call the Captain?" And they were
8 like no. No one called the Captain.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Were you aware of any -- I'll call it
10 a close call -- that occurred earlier on the watch during
11 the transit part of the collision?

12 [REDACTED] No, sir.

13 LCDR [REDACTED] And by a close call, I mean the ship
14 taking a -- taking a vessel inside the 6,000 yard CPA
15 range?

16 [REDACTED] I -- no sir. Not aware of any.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] How about a close call that was to
18 have taken place uh, the, um, the underway before pulling
19 into base?

20 [REDACTED] I'm not aware of any close calls. Or
21 tell me, what would be a close call?

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Uh, a uh, an unplanned inadvertent
23 encounter between Fitz and another surface vessel at a
24 range that presented a risk of collision.

25 [REDACTED] No, sir.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] That was undesired.

2 [REDACTED] No sir, I'm not aware of any other
3 close calls like that.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] You're not -- you're not aware of
5 scuttlebutt of a -- was it inbound or outbound Sasebo?

6 UNKNOWN: Inbound Sasebo.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Inbound Sasebo. I think prior to the
8 change of command. Kind of blundering into a vessel.

9 [REDACTED] I mean I heard of -- not with -- sir,
10 not with any -- not with any certainty. Maybe scuttlebutt.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] It would've been on June 15th. What's
12 that?

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED] No, this was the -- I was just
14 pointing out to you

15 [REDACTED] That's a watch bill.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, is there a habit on Fitz of --
17 did you guys have a kind of a near miss whether it's
18 navigational or contact management? Do you guys come
19 together and do some kind of hot wash or AR or?

20 [REDACTED] The ship's actually very good about
21 after action kind of heed that stuff. Especially with this
22 CO, this CO really stressed that one hard. So we -- we're
23 pretty good about doing debriefs on anything like that.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Great, how about with the previous CO?

25 [REDACTED] Same. Just he wasn't as involved, the

1 ODS were more -- the ODS were aggressive about doing it so
2 maybe that's why he didn't. It's a weird -- it's just a
3 different level of aggression. This one -- this current CO
4 is very hands-on. Very into the PBED process and then old
5 CO was like, "Good, you guys are doing PBED, what have you
6 learned?" But not as puppeteering, [REDACTED] very much wanted us
7 to do it.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Good. For the record, PBED stands for
9 planning, briefing, exercise, debrief. Okay.

10 MR. [REDACTED] Uh, going back to the near miss. And
11 coming back in to um, Sasebo. You said you're not aware of
12 it or you hadn't heard anything about it.

13 [REDACTED] I'm not aware of it.

14 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

15 [REDACTED] I've heard that -- the only thing I --
16 the only thing I can relate this to is they said at one
17 point they were like -- oh, we CPA a vessel close but, you
18 know, I was not aware that this was an unplanned CPA. So I
19 didn't think no other because I mean we had done -- that
20 happens all the time with like fishing vessels and stuff.
21 And usually they're all very good about being -- this is
22 gonna be a close call no matter what and call the Captain.
23 Just get him up here. Lots of times that's because we're
24 about to make a 100 contact reports to you so you might as
25 well just come up here.

1 MR. (b) (6) (b) (7)(C) All right, so I understand that the CO
2 was on the bridge at the time.

3 (b) (6) (b) (7)(C) Of the accident?

4 MR. (b) (6) (b) (7)(C) In Sasebo.

5 (b) (6) (b) (7)(C) Oh Sasebo. I don't know.

6 MR. (b) (6) (b) (7)(C) Okay. Now is it your practice to be on
7 the bridge when the CO's on the bridge?

8 (b) (6) (b) (7)(C) Uh, no. I would say that I'm usually
9 always on the bridge when the CO comes up just because that
10 -- those are my spaces, that's where I work out of.

11 UNKNOWN: So one other question that's come up in our
12 interviews is the various traffic separation schemes that
13 go on in this area. I was just wondering if you could kind
14 of explain which ones are which and how does it work out
15 here.

16 (b) (6) (b) (7)(C) So, for this particular one, obviously
17 this is the -- the Tokyo line traffic separation scheme.
18 Pretty straightforward traffic separation scheme. You let
19 them know when you're outbound or you're inbound and to get
20 into it, you usually just look for the opening and go. Not
21 very difficult. Twelve knots.

22 And then there's uh, volunteer -- or voluntary ones.
23 There's one here and there's one here and then there's one
24 coming out through here.

25 UNKNOWN: Are those voluntary TSS's shown on VMS?

1 [REDACTED] No. At least not on our VMS. I'd
2 have to manually go in there and create just release
3 indicators.

4 UNKNOWN: Do you -- has any training been done or
5 notifications even just a note given in the plan of the day
6 or anything to the other watch tenders that there is a
7 voluntary separation scheme through these areas.

8 [REDACTED] They are aware of them.

9 UNKNOWN: And how are they aware of them?

10 [REDACTED] Myself or -- well, and a lot of the
11 ODs have been here before so they know they're there.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] So I guess the question is, is the
13 OD's knowledge of those voluntary schemes, is that a matter
14 of explicit training or is it what I'll call travel
15 knowledge that gets handed down? New OD comes in and an OD
16 that's been around for a while passes that knowledge on.

17 [REDACTED] I would say both.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

19 [REDACTED] And I -- no one told me, I had to find
20 them myself. My -- I never got underway with my
21 predecessor.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Is that uh, that note, that
23 instruction posted anywhere on the bridge?

24 [REDACTED] The traffic separation notes? No sir.
25 It's not posted but it is in my record binders. I do

1 binders with them.

2 UNKNOWN: For the NAV line that was drawn out to get
3 out to sea, did that go along the traffic separation
4 schemes or was the track line meant to go across and like
5 how -- how did you compare?

6 [REDACTED] Well so the traffic separation scheme
7 here is very much close to the land and we ended up leaving
8 way up here instead of coming down and then with that we
9 plotted it to come straight down. And this traffic
10 separation is closer here to this land so we were trying to
11 stay away from land and we're going this way and it's more
12 towards that way so --

13 UNKONWN: All right, so would it be safe to say in
14 departing Sagami-Wan that the vessel met up with one of
15 the traffic separation schemes and then later was designed
16 to cross the traffic separation scheme?

17 [REDACTED] We didn't cross or meet up with the
18 traffic separation scheme.

19 UNKONWN: All right.

20 [REDACTED] We met up with -- yeah, we did not
21 cross the traffic scheme.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Well, maybe a better way to ask the
23 question is since you explicitly did not design the track
24 to conform with the voluntary scheme, did the track, how
25 was the track laid in relation to the general flow of

1 traffic?

2 [REDACTED] So this general flow of traffic here,
3 you -- then you got them that go across. So there's just a
4 lot of traffic in the area.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] Your track was intentionally -- I've
6 been there -- designed to cross that flow.

7 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Right. In a situation where the
9 traffic is approaching off the starboard bow.

10 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Putting Fitz into a -- in a burden
12 condition.

13 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] In accordance of rules of the road.
15 We would need to give way vessel.

16 [REDACTED] That's right.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

18 [REDACTED] This is no knowledge going down here
19 because there's no way to go south without crossing this
20 flow of traffic.

21 LCDR [REDACTED] How well do you think the ODs
22 understand that that's -- that's the situation they're
23 sailing into when Fitz transits down that route?

24 [REDACTED] I would say that they know it very
25 well. Especially the one in -- on the deck at the time,

1 [REDACTED] also -- [REDACTED] a SAS boat sailor, [REDACTED] knows the area.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, how well do you think combat
3 understands that? As far as the general maneuvering
4 context.

5 [REDACTED] General-wise? I think they know it
6 very well. I think they're all well aware of the amount of
7 traffic that's out here. Especially in this particular
8 area because we -- I mean we've done this transit a lot and
9 we're all well aware of the amount of traffic going in and
10 out of Tokyo.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] And so again, that track line, was
12 approved by the CO prior to the vessel departing Sagami-
13 Wan.

14 [REDACTED] Correct.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] So the CO laid below and he was in his
16 stateroom doing whatever right up until the time of
17 collision.

18 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] Is it unusual that a CO or the XO,
20 neither one of them to be on the bridge during that
21 particular leg of the transit? Going through all that
22 traffic?

23 [REDACTED] I'd say yes, it's unusual.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, any insight as to why on this
25 particular night they chose neither -- they chose for

1 neither one of them to be on the bridge to provide top
2 cover for the bridge watch team? Was that discussed? Was
3 that an exclusive decision, to your knowledge?

4 [REDACTED] Wait, so let me ask, let me go back to
5 that question. Unusual for them to be up there?

6 LCDR [REDACTED] To not be on the bridge.

7 [REDACTED] No, that's -- them not being on the
8 bridge for this particular incident is a common occurrence.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Day or night?

10 [REDACTED] Day or night.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

12 UNKNOWN: How is the traffic in and out of Tokyo
13 compared to other ports that the vessel transits around?

14 [REDACTED] About the same.

15 UNKNOWN: Okay so this traffic is basically the same
16 kind of traffic that you see anywhere you go. Or that
17 you've seen on the voyage to [REDACTED].

18 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. Except for maybe the
19 Philippines because I, I had -- larger traffic going in and
20 out of the Philippines is less but even then it's about the
21 same. Still see a fair amount of traffic. Uh, it might be
22 different in varying degrees of, I mean, time of day. Time
23 of month. Whether or not it's more large merchants or more
24 fishing boats.

25 LCDR [REDACTED] If you were an OD at this time and you

1 were going through, would you have been comfortable not
2 having an XO or CO on the bridge?

3 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] How likely is it, in your experience,
5 how likely is it, do you think, for that transit to occur
6 without Fitz being put in a position where the OD has to
7 call the CO for a CPA less than 6,000 yards?

8 [REDACTED] Say that question again, sir?

9 LCDR [REDACTED] I'm trying to get at since neither the
10 CO nor the XO were on the bridge, uh, is --

11 [REDACTED] Like basically --

12 LCDR [REDACTED] Based on your knowledge of the traffic
13 density in that area, right, and the nab track that you
14 guys picked to transit that region, especially creating
15 your crossing situation or you're gonna be set up to be the
16 giveaway vessel down south there, what do you think a
17 likelihood is that the OD would not be in a position to
18 make a call to the captain at some, at some point.

19 [REDACTED] I would have expected, so going
20 through there at night, I would have expected at least
21 probably three or four.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Calls to the Commanding Officer.

23 [REDACTED] Calls to the Commanding Officer.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Right, to report a CPA inside of
25 6,000, to propose a maneuver --

1 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] -- to keep it safe, to gain the
3 Commanding Officer concurrence and then move on.

4 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. All right.

6 [REDACTED] That's just -- and like I say, I went
7 to them and told them they should expect to do that but it
8 wouldn't -- they are all aware because of the amounts of
9 the times we've transited this area that you are going to
10 be making CPA reports. It's just this area is -- this
11 traffic coming in from every single angle.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] Let's go back to when you were on
13 Chosin.

14 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Let's say you guys, uh, did you guys
16 deploy to the West Bank in Chosin?

17 [REDACTED] No.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, so let's say you did. And let's
19 say you came in to Yoko one morning, you know, great
20 conditions, you stayed for -- over the weekend to do some
21 work, you got underway on a Monday morning -- on a Monday
22 afternoon. You took ammo, you did the exact same routine
23 you guys did on the Fitz and the next thing you know, it's
24 -- it's 2330 and you're exiting Sagami Wan and you're
25 transiting on that same route.

1 Based on the level of proficiency and competence of
2 the Chosin team, would you have expected the CO or the XO
3 or maybe both to have been on the bridge during that
4 transit until you got into open water?

5 [REDACTED] No, sir.

6 LCDR [REDACTED] No? Okay.

7 [REDACTED] I mean a lot of -- you knew how and
8 when the traffic's coming. You know there's, you know,
9 insight a thousand for the Captain to make a proposal. You
10 know you track all the context, keep out of the way. As
11 long as you follow in accordance of the rules of the road,
12 there's really nothing here that says qualified ODs
13 shouldn't be able to handle.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] Um-hum. Okay.

15 UNKNOWN: On your old vessel, what was your navigation
16 watch set up with regards to lookouts? You had one aft,
17 did you have one port, starboard and the bridge wings?

18 [REDACTED] So halfway through, in the beginning
19 half when I first got there, they were -- port and
20 starboard bridge wings and one aft and then they removed
21 port and starboard bridge wings and just had one aft.

22 UNKNOWN: Why?

23 [REDACTED] Lack of people.

24 MR. [REDACTED] On that particular watch, there was
25 roughly four UIs. And they were all breaking in Helm, Lee

1 Helm. Of those, how many of them were already qualified
2 lookout?

3 [REDACTED] I don't know, sir.

4 MR. [REDACTED] And how long had the vessel been without
5 the port and starboard lookout?

6 [REDACTED] Are we talking about Fitzgerald or are
7 we talking about my previous --

8 MR. [REDACTED] Chosin then moving on to Fitzgerald.

9 [REDACTED] All right, so how many were lookout
10 qualified on my previous ship?

11 MR. [REDACTED] Oh no, that was Fitzgerald. I'm
12 questioning, you said that they had a port/starboard
13 lookout. Was that your previous vessel or --

14 [REDACTED] That was previous vessel.

15 MR. [REDACTED] Previous vessel and they removed.

16 [REDACTED] [Inaudible01:07:08].

17 MR. [REDACTED] Okay, when you arrived at the Fitz, did
18 they have a port and starboard lookout?

19 [REDACTED] No.

20 MR. [REDACTED] Okay and was there ever, did you know
21 who they didn't have a port and starboard lookout?

22 [REDACTED] No sir, I did not know.

23 MR. [REDACTED] Okay, so based on your experience and if
24 you were only moving in and out of this particular waterway
25 at night, would you feel more comfortable with a port and

1 starboard lookout?

2 [REDACTED] No. I only would have added to it.

3 If anything, there'd be more people up there. I mean you
4 have a con, you have a JOOD and you have an OOD. Those are
5 three qualified officers that should be more than capable
6 of being lookouts.

7 UNKNOWN: Last Chosin question, hopefully.

8 [REDACTED] Sure.

9 UNKNOWN: Uh, so previously you said that you felt
10 more comfortable, you felt uh, maybe that bridge resource
11 management was a little bit better on that vessel and --

12 [REDACTED] Just the communication between combat
13 and the bridge.

14 UNKNOWN: Okay, communication between combat and
15 bridge. Um, did that ever get brought -- did you bring
16 that up as -- hey, on a previous ship I thought things went
17 a little bit better because we did this, this, and this.
18 Was that ever discussed in like a war room discussion.
19 Said, hey, I think we can improve this.

20 [REDACTED] Yes. And that was something we as a
21 ship were actively working on and improving.

22 UNKNOWN: Do you feel it has been improving?

23 [REDACTED] It has been improving.

24 UNKNOWN: But still work to be done.

25 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. And it really started with

1 the ODs just being more aggressive on, "I need this. I
2 need this."

3 LCDR [REDACTED] I think we stated previously that the
4 equipment, as far as you know, the radars, the AIS, the
5 VMS, everything was working and operational during boat ops
6 and during -- the watch. Um, what about blind spots
7 whether it's a physical blind spot because of the mast and
8 where its radar is positioned to is there a limitation on
9 that radar that says, you know, vessels within a certain
10 range just don't get picked up or there's too much noise.
11 Anything like that aboard the Fife?

12 [REDACTED] Well, there's the blind spot for [REDACTED]
13 which is [REDACTED]. And that's
14 -- that's a known given. You can see it on the radar
15 itself with the cluttering.

16 Other than tracking or picking up context, there's no
17 limitations on wherever.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] And so that's -- from the skin on the
19 ship out, do you know what the rough range is?

20 [REDACTED] So we were pretty good about for [REDACTED].
21 You pick up really good contacts about [REDACTED] nautical
22 miles. You get really good hits on it. And tracking.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] I'm guessing you normally don't put it
24 out at [REDACTED] nautical miles?

25 [REDACTED] It would depend on who the OD is.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] All right, so you personally, what do
2 you -- what range do you like?

3 [REDACTED] I like [REDACTED].

4 UNKNOWN: In that, in that situation where you're
5 transiting, you know, between Izu Peninsula and Yoshima,
6 what would the range skill -- what would you expect the
7 range skill to have been on [REDACTED]?

8 [REDACTED] [REDACTED].

9 UNKNOWN: Okay. What's the clutter zone for the [REDACTED] if
10 it's working right? How far out do you get so you return
11 clutter?

12 [REDACTED] It would depend, sir, on if they've
13 been messing with like STC and FTC.

14 UNKNOWN: But what would you say the average if it's
15 properly tuned and they're being attentive?

16 [REDACTED] Nautical mile, less than a nautical
17 mile.

18 UNKNOWN: Okay. What's your experience with the [REDACTED]
19 with regards to zero return clutter close to port?

20 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] great. I think it's a
21 lot better than [REDACTED].

22 UNKNOWN: That's based on your experience working on
23 [REDACTED] up on a bridge?

24 [REDACTED] Mm-hmm.

25 UNKNOWN: Okay.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] Do you know, again, off the top of
2 your head, what the range is, same, same questions on
3 clutter?

4 [REDACTED] I don't, not off the top of my head,
5 Clutter on the [REDACTED] was a lot better so -- between the [REDACTED] and
6 the [REDACTED], you get a very good contact picture.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Are there any warning presets that
8 are, uh, dedicated for the [REDACTED] radar when it's set up? Any
9 danger range warning features?

10 [REDACTED] Not that I'm aware.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] So I'll ask a more general question.
12 What kind of -- what kind of explicit training do the OD,
13 GOD CON get on using the APPA? Or is it all OJT?

14 [REDACTED] The ones getting both, I mean I
15 actually recently had all the actual operators brought up
16 to the bridge and we did a complete training of all bridge
17 watch attenders on [REDACTED].

18 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, how about the [REDACTED], what kind of
19 training does the bridge team get on using the [REDACTED]?

20 [REDACTED] That's more, I guess, on-the-job
21 training but it's -- the training's based on the actual
22 manual itself.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, who leads that training?

24 [REDACTED] The ODs.

25 MR. [REDACTED] Do they, uh, bring up the, um, surface

1 being that he has the AIS laptop in front of him? Does he
2 participate in that training?

3 [REDACTED] Did he or does he?

4 MR. [REDACTED] Did he, does he both.

5 [REDACTED] Yes.

6 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. You said yourself and who did the
7 operator training?

8 [REDACTED] All the ODs. So all the Officer of
9 the Day served on-the-job training based off of the manual.

10 MR. [REDACTED] No, I was referring to operator training
11 ARPA.

12 [REDACTED] Well, the ARPA is done by the
13 operators, the actual -- the various ETs who use it and
14 operate it. And then the more practical side of it's done
15 by the ODs.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] For the ARPA the [REDACTED], are the ODs
17 trained to use the different selected features to tune the
18 radar STC, FTC, gain, etcetera?

19 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

21 [REDACTED] We also, we all get additional
22 training from -- it's a -- you get it out of ADOC as well.

23 UNKNOWN: Okay.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] You good?

25 UNKNOWN: Okay.

1 LCDR [REDACTED] So I have two more questions for you.

2 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] So how do you explain how this

4 happened? I mean I know you weren't there. You were in

5 your rack. But how do you think this happened?

6 [REDACTED] Sir, [REDACTED] made a -- [REDACTED] made a grievous

7 error somewhere down the line.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] being [REDACTED] ?

9 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. And it snowballed out.

10 Whether it was incorrectly judging the CPA and thinking

11 that [REDACTED] was safe and then not coming back to it. Or

12 taking an understanding of [REDACTED] situational awareness prior

13 to making a course change and then not coming back to it

14 and reevaluating with the new course change. So I don't

15 know. I don't know how [REDACTED] did this because it's pretty

16 straight forward and the whacked us right in the green

17 light, so.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] Do you think CIC should have provided

19 sufficient force and backup to bridge whatever skull block

20 [REDACTED] had?

21 [REDACTED] Absolutely.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] It didn't happen, [REDACTED] didn't do it by

23 herself.

24 [REDACTED] No. Absolutely not. I don't know how

25 CIC didn't see it either. I don't know how they didn't see

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

1 it on their radars, I don't know how the bridge didn't pick
2 it up on [REDACTED]. When you've got three qualified watch
3 standers who at the very least know what a blip looks like
4 on a radar screen.

5 Uh, when I came up afterwards, I didn't find any
6 MOBOARD papers there so I have no idea if they did them
7 onboard or not. But in collecting all this stuff for the
8 investigation, the last MOBOARDS I could find were wind
9 MOBOARDS from flight quarters.

10 UNKNOWN: Okay, so no MOBOARDS were done recently as
11 figuring out -- figuring out different winds for a flight
12 ops or whatever you need.

13 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. As far as I can tell, they
14 didn't do any moboards for this contact. I asked my QMs if
15 they say anything on [REDACTED], they said they didn't see anything
16 on [REDACTED] so I can only assume that they didn't hook it on --
17 I'm sorry, they didn't see anything on VMS. I can only
18 assume they didn't hook it on [REDACTED]. And the first knowledge
19 of my QM seeing it really seems as though they finally
20 looked up and saw them, they were -- yeah, the only time
21 they saw it was when they physically saw it themselves.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, so the last question. This a
23 the question we ask everybody we interview. Uh, so you and
24 your shipmates had a hell of an ordeal -- the collision --
25 dealing with the damage control efforts to save the ship,

1 you know, the loss of some shipmates, fighting to get the
2 ship back in port and I'm sure that you either -- you
3 either personally witnessed or heard through the grapevine
4 about individual groups of people being particular heroic
5 particularly courageous, you know. You know, acting above
6 and beyond the call of duty.

7 So we'd like to know if there's any names that pop
8 into your head of people that you think are particularly
9 deserving of note.

10 [REDACTED] I mean I didn't leave the bridge but
11 uh, XO. I thought the XO did a fantastic job. I thought
12 it would have been a lot worse, especially when you see the
13 CO go down like that. And he obviously came in and took
14 over.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Anybody else?

16 [REDACTED] Ensign [REDACTED] (phonetic).

17 LCDR [REDACTED] What did [REDACTED] do?

18 [REDACTED] Uh, [REDACTED] stayed in aft steering the

19 entire day. And then obviously I have to -- QM1. [REDACTED]

20 the one that took the phone call because the Captain was --

21 the Captain was able to call up from his IVCS, I have no

22 idea how. But QM1 is the one who went down there and just

23 started wailing away on the door for the CO. And I don't

24 know if anyone would've realized or acted as quickly as QM1

25 when [REDACTED] heard, got the phone call from the CO. Because at

1 that point, none of us really had any idea of the level of
2 damage on that side of the ship.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] Mm-hmm. Anybody else come to mind?

4 [REDACTED] No sir, I can't remember.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, that's fair enough. Okay, thank
6 you.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So we definitely appreciate your
8 time here today and giving all this information to us. We
9 want to open the floor to you now to see if there's any
10 questions you may have had for us or if there's anything
11 that you had on your mind that maybe didn't come up in our
12 conversations that you felt was uh, wanted to share with
13 us.

14 [REDACTED] Yes, actually.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Sure.

16 [REDACTED] The only thing I can think of --
17 because the only, the one thing that bothers me the most is
18 why was the CO not called. [REDACTED] was not happy in this
19 command. [REDACTED] felt that [REDACTED] was not treated well by, uh,
20 XO, then CO. I do not think [REDACTED] trusted him and I don't
21 think he trusted [REDACTED].

22 LCDR [REDACTED] This is Benson?

23 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. Um, the only thing -- it
24 bothers me that [REDACTED] didn't call him but I'm not surprised
25 [REDACTED] didn't call him. I think there was a relationship of

1 distrust between the two.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Based on what?

3 [REDACTED] I don't know, sir. For whatever
4 reason, it was felt throughout the ship that [REDACTED] did not
5 feel liked by him.

6 LCDR [REDACTED] Do you think it was personal or
7 professional? Both? Or maybe both.

8 [REDACTED] I think a little bit of both.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Is there a particular -- is there a
10 particular event?

11 [REDACTED] Well see, I know [REDACTED] stopped -- didn't
12 eat in the wardroom anymore at a certain given point and
13 was withdrawing herself to some degree.

14 Uh, the only event that ever comes to mind was we were
15 having someone -- someone come on board, I can't remember
16 who. Uh, old Commander [REDACTED] was like, you know, hey --
17 address -- bring [REDACTED] on and address [REDACTED] as such, you know,
18 for your honors. Uh, they did it but I guess it was wrong
19 and XO Commander Benson reprimanded [REDACTED] pretty severely for
20 it.

21 LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was import OD?

22 [REDACTED] CDO.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] Oh, CDO? Okay.

24 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was CDO. Um, and then ever since
25 then he found out about Commander [REDACTED], uh, instructing [REDACTED]

1 that's how he wanted it to be called and proceeded to rip
2 into [REDACTED] even more for not protecting the Captain from his
3 decision, if you will.

4 But ever since that particular event it's always --
5 it's gone downhill. And it was apparent to the vast
6 majority of the wardroom.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] Anybody address this to the Captain or
8 the new XO?

9 [REDACTED] So yes and no. I think the new XO was
10 starting to become aware but I'm not 100 percent sure. But
11 that was the other issue is that the person that you would
12 go to would either be the XO or the SWO if you will. And
13 the SWO and the Captain were friendly. Two really good
14 friends, I would say.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] This is the CSO.

16 [REDACTED] Yes, the CSO. Were really good
17 friends. They'd been around for a long time. Been --
18 forever -- and I think the vast majority of the group felt
19 like you -- as a department, I -- if the Captain was doing
20 something, I don't think I could go to the CSO about it.
21 Or the SWO about it.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] But it's -- just so we're clear, the
23 CSO and SWO are the same person.

24 [REDACTED] Yes, they are the same.

25 LCDR [REDACTED] Senior Watch Officer.

1 [REDACTED] Senior Watch Officer.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Got it.

3 [REDACTED] Probably which is what -- I bring that
4 up only because of the watch bills.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] What about the watch bills?

6 [REDACTED] So that tradition, not seeing that --
7 not -- CSO would get [REDACTED] watch bills out kind of late. At
8 least I felt that it was late and not calling it in earlier
9 and not discussing it with a lot of other people. And that
10 was, in my mind, allowed to happen because of [REDACTED]
11 relationship with the CO.

12 LCDR [REDACTED] So as Navigator, did you get an
13 opportunity to chop on the watch bills? Especially to
14 review the bridge watch structure?

15 [REDACTED] No. So I mean I made my inputs on
16 them and it'd be completely different by the time it
17 finally would come out. And I've heard other parts as
18 well, other people putting input like, "Hey, this is what I
19 need, this is what I need", and just ignored.

20 I think the XO was aware and was doing something about
21 it, I just think he -- he hadn't been here long enough to
22 fully grasp the situation.

23 But I wanna take -- at least make -- have made that
24 point that I didn't feel comfortable about this particular
25 watch team and I didn't feel comfortable with the

1 relationship between the OOD, [REDACTED], and the CO.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, and I'll ask you again, so did
3 you tell anybody about your concerns?

4 [REDACTED] About the watch bill, you mean?

5 LCDR [REDACTED] Both.

6 [REDACTED] I didn't tell anyone about the watch
7 bill concerns just because I didn't really figure out, I
8 didn't find out about it way too late and it didn't dawn on
9 me until literally when this accident happened.

10 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, what about the poor relationship
11 between the Captain and the AWO? Sounds like that's been
12 stewing for a while.

13 [REDACTED] It has. Um, I discussed it with some
14 second tours about it just because I, myself, am very new
15 and I wasn't 100 percent sure if what I was seeing was just
16 my interpretation of it just because I haven't been on
17 board long enough and I didn't know either of their
18 personalities.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay, so the -- is it accurate to say
20 that this was sort of scuttlebutt, that you had not
21 personally observed that relationship, that negative
22 relationship by action?

23 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

24 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Okay, that's good enough, thank
25 you.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] We definitely appreciate that and
2 that gives us another angle as to the entire picture that
3 we're looking at so we'll certainly be discussing that and
4 helping us to figure out what questions we're going to be
5 asking in the next couple of days.

6 Moving on from that, if you do have any further
7 questions later on or if any more information comes to mind
8 that you wish you had brought up, please do feel free to
9 reach out to us. We'd be glad to receive that information.

10 Additionally, as the investigation is ongoing, we ask
11 that you not discuss our interview today with other
12 personnel, as we'd like to make sure that the stories are
13 kept separate and not mixed together.

14 So once again, thank you for your time here today, we
15 certainly appreciate it.

16 [REDACTED] Thank you.

17 UNKNOWN: I'll walk you out.
18
19
20