

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SINKING OF TOWING VESSEL *JACQUELINE* * Accident No.: DCA23FM044
A NEAR NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH *
CAROLINA ON AUGUST 8, 2023 *

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Interview of: OLLIE SEAMAN, JR., Second Captain/Mate
Jacqueline A

Georgetown, South Carolina

Wednesday

August 9, 2023

APPEARANCES:

CWO [REDACTED], Investigating Officer
DDO Myrtle Beach
United States Coast Guard

LT [REDACTED], Senior Investigating Officer
Sector Charleston
United States Coast Guard

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Ollie Seaman, Jr.:		
By LT [REDACTED]		4
By CWO [REDACTED]		6

I N T E R V I E W

(2:42 p.m.)

CWO [REDACTED]: It's 14:42, August 9th, Station Georgetown.
Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED], Lieutenant [REDACTED], and Mr. Ollie
Seaman.

INTERVIEW OF OLLIE SEAMAN, JR.

BY LT [REDACTED]:

Q. All right. So Mr. Ollie, what was your position onboard the
Jacqueline A?

A. I was a second captain mate.

Q. Second captain. And how long had you been in that position?

A. I've been since 2008. So be about 15 years.

Q. As a mate?

A. As a --

Q. The second --

A. As a captain.

Q. Okay.

BY CWO [REDACTED]:

Q. You're a holder of a -- what's your --

A. 100 ton. That's how long I've held the 100 ton.

BY LT [REDACTED]:

Q. Okay. And how much experience did you have on the
Jacqueline A?

A. Just a few days.

Q. Okay. So how did you get to become a crewmember on the

1 Jacqueline A? How did that come to pass?

2 A. He called me, and asked me. Because I've delivered, I've
3 delivered at least five boats to New Jersey prior. And that's --
4 he knew that I delivered boats before, and he asked me if I wanted
5 to go with him.

6 Q. Who did?

7 A. David.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Captain.

10 Q. All right. So let's see. And as the mate, I guess, or
11 second captain, could you just explain like what your duties and
12 responsibilities are or your day-to-day job on the boat?

13 A. Basically to just watch, wheel watch. We split wheel watches
14 up, time-for-time, 11 to 5, 11 to 5, 11 to 5, me and David.

15 Q. All right. And I guess just go back to the first day when
16 you all got on the boat. Talk about what you did, and how the
17 trip went up until the time --

18 A. When we started David was on that morning until --

19 Q. Which date was that?

20 A. Which date was that? I don't know what --

21 Q. Today is Wednesday.

22 A. We left, we left Sunday morning, I think. We left Sunday
23 morning or Monday morning. Sunday morning we left. Okay. And he
24 was on -- he left, and I laid down. So I'll get up at -- he left,
25 you know, I, I get on my shift at 11. We work from 11 to 5, 5 to

1 11, 11 to 5, 5 to 11, 6-hour shifts, me and David. So that is
2 basically what we done until the accident, 11 to 5, 5 to 11. You
3 understand?

4 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

5 Q. Yeah. So when you all left Weems, Weems Point or Weems --
6 the dock where you all picked the boat up, you had the first
7 shift?

8 A. No, he did.

9 Q. He had the first --

10 A. He worked 5 in the morning to 11 in the morning. Now I come
11 on at 11 and work 'til 5 in the evening. And then he goes from
12 5 to 11 that night, and then I go from 11 to 5 that morning.

13 BY LT [REDACTED]:

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. That's the way we was doing it.

16 Q. Yeah. How does this vessel compare to other vessels that you
17 worked on as a captain before?

18 A. Typical. I mean, it was typical. Everything was going good.
19 This boat had a nice engine room. I mean, everything was clean
20 and in place.

21 Q. About how many trips would you say you've done like on this
22 route like from the (indiscernible) up to the East Coast?

23 A. Five times.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Were those on tugboats also or different kinds of boats?

2 A. No. They was on scallop boats.

3 Q. Okay. This isn't your first time working on a tugboat
4 though, right?

5 A. No. We just brought a tug from, from Bayou La Batre. I got
6 on at Bayou La Batre.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And went from Bayou La Batre to Weems.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. We took that tug up there to replenish her, and then we got
11 -- we transferred all of our groceries over on this one because
12 that was the point to take this boat back to New Orleans. But
13 anyway, we transferred everything, went and got groceries, and
14 checked everything out, and took off Sunday morning.

15 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

16 Q. When you say checked everything out, like, what, what did you
17 visit? What did you check out?

18 A. Well, he --

19 Q. What's --

20 A. -- now I go down in the engine room. I don't, you know, that
21 ain't really my job, but I got to know everything too.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. Far as wanting to know where the pumps, where the fuel valves
24 is at, far as the pump out. You've got the pump on each side of
25 the engine room.

1 Q. Were any of the pumps tested before you all got underway?

2 A. It come on and off, yeah.

3 Q. Come on and off meaning did you -- were you -- did you --
4 were you able to see that they were actually pumping?

5 A. No. Didn't have no water in it.

6 Q. Okay. So they pump from the inside out? They're not using
7 -- it's not a pump where you have to like self-priming pump coming
8 through the, through the sea chest or anything like that?

9 A. No. It pumps. It's two electric pumps; one on each side of
10 the engine room.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Okay. And the truth is, is when we, when we went -- when all
13 that happened I'm jumping all the way to the, to the day we was
14 sinking, but I mean I'm just telling you that we went -- that's
15 what I went down there to do. See, I was in, I was in the bed.
16 It was probably -- I don't know what time it was. Let's just say
17 three o'clock because I don't, I honestly don't know.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. I'm laying in the bed, and David hollers we're sinking.
20 Okay. When he hollers we're sinking, you know, I'm asleep. And I
21 jumped straight out of the bed, went straight to the engine room.
22 Okay. And then when I went in the engine room that back port
23 corner --

24 Q. Right.

25 A. -- was that deep.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. You know what I'm -- so I go straight to the pumps, make sure
3 the valves is on, and go to this pump, and turn it on. Well, when
4 I did, when I'm doing this, and going to do this, Roger come
5 walking down the steps, and he walks over to, to the port side.
6 And I said hit the switch on that pump. So he walks over there,
7 and hit the switch on that pump. That water's that deep in that
8 corner. It's all on one side. She's sloshing, but main parts on
9 it. And I looked up, and when I looked up at the back of the
10 engine room it was a through-hull pipe that I can't tell you what
11 size. It looked this big around to me. But anyway probably
12 wasn't that big around. It was water pouring through there.

13 Q. Was there wires in this pipe? Was it -- was this like a
14 through-hull penetration like -- I'm not a through-hull -- like a
15 (indiscernible)?

16 A. No, no, no.

17 Q. No wires?

18 A. It doesn't look like it to me because it looked like to me it
19 was just a straight pump coming out. And then it's one over that
20 engine, it's one over this engine.

21 Q. With water coming --

22 A. And -- water coming --

23 (Crosstalk)

24 Q. -- water coming in.

25 A. Water's coming in the engine room.

1 Q. No wires or pipes or anything?

2 A. It didn't look like. Don't look like it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 BY LT [REDACTED]:

5 Q. Was it just like an opening or a pipe?

6 A. Well, see, I didn't even know it was there. I'll be honest
7 with you. But these pipes like through-hull to that tank is what
8 I'm -- to the rudder room.

9 Q. Right.

10 A. Okay. So anyway, I -- we turn -- and she's leaning bad. And
11 told Roger I said turn that pump on. I said come on get out of
12 here. I mean because it, you know, because she feels like she was
13 going to roll over right there.

14 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

15 Q. So we'll get up to the point where all that happened.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. But going back to prior you getting underway you said you
18 guys were taking a look around the boat. Visually did you take
19 note of any conditions of the deck or the deck -- any wastage, or
20 did you see holes anywhere? Were there -- did you take note of
21 any way, shape or form that water would have ingressed the hull?

22 A. No. This engine room it was immaculate.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. It was clean as this room.

25 Q. The engine room was clean, but deck, I'm talking about

1 deck --

2 A. When you look up you see white. It's white, painted white.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. The whole engine room is painted white. I don't -- floors
5 might have been aluminum. I can't remember. But anyway, she's
6 white in the -- you don't see no holes.

7 Q. No daylight coming in from anywhere?

8 A. Not that I know of. I mean I -- no, I don't think so.

9 Q. Okay. The hatches on the back do you remember taking any,
10 like, notice of the hatches on the back --

11 A. All I know is that -- no, I didn't. They said -- Roger
12 (indiscernible).

13 Q. Okay. And you never looked in there, never looked in the
14 steering compartment?

15 A. No, they did.

16 Q. Okay. They told me they looked in there, and it wasn't any
17 water in there before --

18 BY LT [REDACTED]:

19 Q. Who did?

20 A. Roger and David.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Roger did or David did. I think David looked too. I can't
23 speak for him, but I heard them talk about it. There was no water
24 in the rudder room.

25 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

- 1 Q. But you didn't look in there?
- 2 A. No.
- 3 Q. Okay. All right.
- 4 BY LT [REDACTED]:
- 5 Q. And you said you all were turning the pumps on and off, the
- 6 bilge pumps on and off?
- 7 A. We turned them on.
- 8 Q. You did turn them on?
- 9 A. We turned them on and left.
- 10 Q. You -- no, sorry. Like before you all got underway, and you
- 11 all were kind of looking around the boat --
- 12 A. Yeah, you --
- 13 Q. -- did you all --
- 14 A. -- turn them on. Hear them come on, and turn them off. Make
- 15 sure the pumps run.
- 16 Q. So you all did that from the bridge?
- 17 A. No. You do it in the engine room.
- 18 Q. Okay.
- 19 A. It's on and off switch on each one of them.
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. On the wall.
- 22 Q. So you all tested both of the bilge pumps when you were at
- 23 the pier on what Sunday or Saturday?
- 24 A. Saturday.
- 25 Q. Okay. Who else was there with you doing that?

1 A. Mr. John Ward.

2 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

3 Q. Was there any --

4 A. He's the one that showed us everything, Mr. John.

5 Q. Is there any pumps that are driven off the engine? Like an
6 engine-driven pump with a bell or anything --

7 A. No.

8 Q. (Indiscernible). Okay. What about electric submersible
9 bilge pumps like, like a Rule type bilge pump that would be down
10 at the bottom?

11 A. We had one, but we, we didn't -- it wasn't hooked up.

12 Q. When you say it wasn't hooked up, do you mean it's like -- it
13 wasn't -- it wouldn't have worked even if you needed it like the
14 wires aren't hooked up or --

15 A. It wasn't ready to go. You know what I mean? The pump
16 wasn't. I don't know. They said we had a submergible pump, but I
17 didn't see the pump. I didn't see that pump.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. They said we had one but I didn't see it.

20 Q. All right. So you said they said you had one.

21 A. Um-hmm.

22 Q. And you said it wasn't hooked up. So the pump was, was not
23 in operation?

24 A. Right. Wasn't in operation to my knowledge.

25 Q. Okay.

- 1 A. All we had was the two side pumps.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. But at that point --
- 4 MR. SEAMAN: Go ahead.
- 5 LT [REDACTED]: Sorry.
- 6 BY LT [REDACTED]:
- 7 Q. I was going to ask where were they? Were they like aft of
- 8 the engine or --
- 9 A. Right at the front part of the engines on each wall.
- 10 Q. Okay. So like in the forward part of the engine room is
- 11 where the bilge pumps were?
- 12 A. Yeah, half, half, three-quarter, half to three-quarter this
- 13 way forward, not to the stern, to the bow.
- 14 Q. Okay. To the forward part of --
- 15 A. Yeah. On the wall.
- 16 Q. A third of the way back or something?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. Okay.
- 19 BY CWO [REDACTED]:
- 20 Q. Were there any other valves that you would have had to open?
- 21 A. They was open.
- 22 Q. They were open.
- 23 A. Got a little flip up right there in the middle, and I imagine
- 24 they was open.
- 25 Q. Okay. Were you able to ever visually verify that the pumps

1 were, like, pumping water out of the boat? You had no way of
2 seeing --

3 A. No. I couldn't do it --

4 (Crosstalk)

5 Q. But you --

6 (Crosstalk)

7 Q. But you could hear them running.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. You could, you could hear the pumps energize when you hit --

10 A. They came on.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. They came on.

13 Q. Okay. And then is it fair to say that the amount of water
14 that you saw coming through those two openings in that aft
15 bulkhead in the engine room would have exceeded the amount of
16 capability that the pumps had to pump that water out?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay.

19 BY LT [REDACTED]:

20 Q. Was there a high level alarms in the bilge room, engine room?

21 A. I didn't hear any go off. Okay. I can't answer that. They
22 said -- Roger and David said they didn't hear the alarm. Like I
23 told you I was asleep. I was asleep.

24 Q. But you don't know if there were any like installed in the
25 engine room or in the lazarette?

1 A. I don't think it was any in the lazarette because that's
2 where, that's where it should have been. That's what I
3 (indiscernible).

4 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

5 Q. All right, you want to -- so let's -- we kind of jumped
6 forward in time. So let's go back. You guys left Weems Point
7 Saturday morning at 0630. Captain David was at the helm. You
8 were asleep --

9 A. Um-hmm.

10 Q. -- resting off your rest period. During that timeframe
11 Captain David was there anything unusual about the boat, anything
12 that you noticed like, like you tell me.

13 A. No.

14 Q. Everything was --

15 A. Nothing was unusual. I came on at 11.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Took my watch. He came back on at five, took his watch. You
18 know what I mean? And then yesterday was Wednesday, right?

19 Q. Yesterday was Tuesday.

20 A. Tuesday. I'm sorry. Okay. Yesterday was Tuesday. So until
21 then we done our regular watches.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. That's what I'm saying. Everything was normal. We came out
24 of Cape Fear everything was normal.

25 Q. Was the departure at Cape Fear was, was that discussed going

1 out into the ocean? Did you and Captain David discuss going out
2 into the ocean?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. So that was a planned event that you were going to go out
5 into the ocean?

6 A. Yep.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. We was going to go out, and come out, and go skirt the coast,
9 you know, go -- so that's what I did when I come out the channel I
10 turned in at an angle toward the beach.

11 Q. Was there any concerns of the conditions offshore?

12 A. It had a little sea, you know, right there at the pass, a
13 little sea. And then I went to the beach, and I turned about a
14 half three-quarters of a mile of the beach, and started heading to
15 (indiscernible).

16 Q. You said that you were -- there was -- what was the sea state
17 at this time when you got out on the --

18 A. Three feet. Three feet.

19 Q. And the sea state would have been on your port side? Seas
20 would have been coming at your port side?

21 A. Yep.

22 Q. What was the wind?

23 A. It had a little more -- it was supposed to have been south
24 southwest. I thought it had a little bit more south in it.

25 Q. Okay. And what was like --

- 1 A. I was rolling pretty good. I was side (indiscernible).
- 2 Q. What was the wind speed?
- 3 A. 15, 20.
- 4 Q. Gusting to anything?
- 5 A. 20 on the side, yeah.
- 6 Q. 20 on the strong side?
- 7 A. Yeah.
- 8 Q. Was there -- were you taking any water or sea spray onto the
- 9 deck? Were you getting any white water coming onto the deck?
- 10 A. Yeah.
- 11 Q. You were?
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. Was the white water like -- was it coming from like coming
- 14 onto the boat from the bow all the way to the stern or was it
- 15 just --
- 16 A. No. Just coming from, from half, half back.
- 17 Q. Okay. And then how much water was coming onboard? Was it
- 18 washing the deck?
- 19 A. It washed the deck little bit because she's low in the water.
- 20 Q. Would white water -- or would water that had come onto the
- 21 deck would that water, would it have been covering or washing
- 22 across the tops of those two scuttles going into the lazarette?
- 23 A. Yeah, some, yes.
- 24 Q. Okay. Would that -- with the water coming onto the deck
- 25 would there have been anywhere else other than the two scuttles at

1 the lazarette that that water would have then come ingress into
2 the hull? You would have been taking on water anywhere else?

3 A. Shouldn't have been.

4 Q. Shouldn't have been. Okay. Were the doors to the engine
5 room open or closed --

6 A. Shut.

7 Q. -- at that time?

8 A. Shut.

9 Q. They were shut.

10 A. We discussed all that before we went out. We're going to
11 shut all the doors.

12 Q. Okay. You were in the rack at the time that the, the
13 incident took place. So the -- so you're -- you wouldn't have --
14 so you, you -- the relief took place out after you all exited Cape
15 Fear River, right?

16 A. Yeah. I came out of Cape Fear, I come out of there, come
17 straight out the channel, and I turned toward --

18 Q. Turned south.

19 A. -- beach, yeah, toward the beach.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. At an angle.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Going to angle it. And then I kept -- and I, and I turned.
24 I was going toward the beach. I got to the beach, and I turned to
25 south.

- 1 Q. Okay. Go on.
- 2 A. And then --
- 3 Q. What time did you all do the shift change? So that would
- 4 have been?
- 5 A. 11.
- 6 Q. 11. Kind of like 11 sharp, 11 --
- 7 A. Yes, sharp.
- 8 Q. And at the time you all did the shift change those -- the sea
- 9 state was the same; is that correct?
- 10 A. (No audible response.)
- 11 Q. And --
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 Q. And at that time you were still taking some water, some sea
- 14 spray over the --
- 15 A. Not much. I done turned into the sea.
- 16 Q. Okay. So you were --
- 17 (Crosstalk)
- 18 A. We, we was --
- 19 Q. -- condition?
- 20 A. -- more head. We had a little bit on the quarter, the front
- 21 quarter.
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 A. You understand what I'm saying? That was it.
- 24 Q. So when Captain David relieved you --
- 25 A. Um-hmm.

1 Q. -- at that time you were not taking water over like the
2 (indiscernible) sea state. So how long, what was the period, what was
3 the length of time that you would have been at the course where you were
4 taking water, like, when water was like hitting the tires and coming
5 onto the boat? How long would that have taken place?

6 A. Couple hours.

7 Q. Would you say that the amount of water during the couple of hours
8 -- are we talking -- when you say couple of hours, we talking two hours,
9 we talking --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Two hours.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Is the amount of water that came onto the deck in that timeframe
14 in your opinion would enough water come on the deck to have filled up
15 the lazarette?

16 A. If the holes was open you mean?

17 Q. If the, if the hatches were not properly sealed, would there have
18 been enough water washing across the deck during that time to fill
19 up the lazarette?

20 A. I don't know. I can't answer that one.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. When I -- here's the thing. When I turned, and I'm still
23 pretty head (indiscernible) sea, and it come down a little bit
24 because I'm in shore. So it come down. If it was three foot out
25 there, it was two and a half in there. I'm just saying.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Okay. And then it got a little better; maybe down to two
3 foot by the time David relieved me.

4 Q. Okay. Captain David mentioned that at like 1500, 1550 rpm
5 somewhere around there he noticed the vibration when he was on
6 watch at, at a certain rpm. Did you notice any vibration changes,
7 any vibrations that was affected by speed changes?

8 A. I wasn't running, but when I was on we always run them at
9 1300.

10 Q. Okay. But did you ever notice any vibrations that were --

11 A. When you sped up.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. If you sped up, like when you first, you know, how sometimes
14 the throttles will speed up?

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. I felt a little vibration, but I cut them back.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. But at 1300 there wasn't.

19 Q. Was any of -- did you ever notice at any time while you were
20 operating the boat did you ever notice any sluggish rudder? Like
21 you give a command and the rudders didn't follow-up?

22 A. No. When he took over she was fine.

23 Q. Okay. Did -- based off of what you felt while you were on
24 watch and you were at the helm do you think that the, the
25 vibrations were coming from the shaft, wheels, rudders?

- 1 A. Yeah, I --
- 2 Q. Kind of what was you feeling? Like where --
- 3 A. That shake, like I told you, that shake feels like a, a bent
4 wheel.
- 5 Q. Like a wheel out of balance?
- 6 A. Yeah, something, yeah.
- 7 Q. Okay. So Captain David -- you're down in the, in your, in
8 your rack in your rest period. Captain David calls for help. The
9 vessel's taking on water. You get out of the rack, and you go
10 where?
- 11 A. Straight to the engine room.
- 12 Q. And when you went to the -- that's when you said you noticed
13 going back to your conversation a few minutes ago --
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. -- that's when you noticed a large quantity of water in the
16 port side of the engine room?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. You energized both pumps?
- 19 A. I energized that pump. Roger come -- while I was -- because
20 I went to the valves.
- 21 Q. Okay.
- 22 A. The little flip in the middle, and I was down there, and then
23 when I walked over to turn this one on Roger --
- 24 Q. When you say this one, the port one?
- 25 A. That'd have been the starboard.

- 1 Q. Okay. You turned the starboard --
- 2 A. No, no, no. Wait a minute.
- 3 Q. The water was on the port side.
- 4 A. It was starboard side. I turned the starboard side on.
- 5 Anyway, when I turned that one on he come down the steps.
- 6 Q. Okay.
- 7 A. And he walked over there. I said turn that pump on.
- 8 Q. So both pumps would have been turned on within a few minutes
- 9 of each other at the same time?
- 10 A. Within 60 seconds from each other.
- 11 Q. Okay. All right. And you had audible confirmation that both
- 12 pumps started?
- 13 A. Yeah. Before we, yes.
- 14 Q. Okay.
- 15 A. I didn't -- no, no, I didn't, I didn't turn that one on.
- 16 Q. The pump you turned on you could hear it audible; you could
- 17 hear the motor come on. And the pump that he turned on did you
- 18 ever --
- 19 A. No, I can't tell you if that one came on.
- 20 Q. Okay.
- 21 A. But he -- them be checked at the dock prior when you punch
- 22 them on they come on up.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. Okay. I mean --
- 25 Q. Got you. All right. So both pumps were energized. And then

1 you made -- you said you made the decision for both of you to
2 leave the engine room, right?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And where did you go after you left the engine room?

5 A. Went to -- I got my lifejacket on, and I went up. And like I
6 said she was, man, it felt like she was fixing to roll over when
7 we got back up there.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I told Roger come on up. I said get your, get your
10 lifejacket on, I said, because she's fixing to go.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And anyway, David was heading in shore. So that's -- I think
13 that's what saved her from, from rolling over.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. He was -- he had, I think he said, I think he said he had one
16 engine. I don't remember what he said on that, but we -- we was
17 traveling.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. I don't remember why if the one engine they done lost it or
20 what, but we was traveling at least one engine going toward the
21 beach.

22 Q. Correct.

23 Q. And then when we went toward the beach, I don't know, we got
24 outside. It was just -- it was fast.

25 Q. Did you -- so you never heard the forward engine shut down?

- 1 You never --
- 2 A. No, no, I can't say I did.
- 3 Q. Do you recall the starboard engine shutting down?
- 4 A. Yeah, she was -- yeah. We was all out on the bow.
- 5 Q. Okay.
- 6 A. All out on the front little steps on the bow.
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. We was all out there when that one shut down. I mean, he,
- 9 he just didn't have time to, to shut it down whatever.
- 10 Q. Okay. Prior to getting underway did you look at any of the
- 11 lifesaving equipment onboard, lifejackets, floats, life rafts?
- 12 Did you look at it, all that stuff?
- 13 A. I mean, yeah, I looked at it, yeah.
- 14 Q. The life raft do you recall it having a hydrostatic release
- 15 on it? Are you familiar with --
- 16 A. No. I didn't go inspect the life raft. It was up on that
- 17 second deck. I know it was there in that corner back there, but I
- 18 didn't go inspect it.
- 19 Q. Okay. The life raft whenever the boat sank do you remember
- 20 what -- did it, did it --
- 21 A. Floated.
- 22 Q. -- did it float free? Was it deployed when --
- 23 A. Nope.
- 24 Q. -- you saw it last?
- 25 A. Nope.

1 Q. Life ring. Do you recall it ever -- it having a life, a
2 float light attached to it? You familiar with what it is?
3 Like --

4 A. I don't think it did.

5 Q. Okay. Was it still in its bracket or was it floating away?

6 A. We had them.

7 Q. You had the life ring?

8 A. I had two. We had them.

9 BY LT [REDACTED]:

10 Q. Like you all were holding onto them?

11 A. Yeah, we, we carried them up to the, to the bow where we were
12 standing, and David had one in his hand; I had one in mine.

13 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

14 Q. Was that the only two that were onboard? Was there just two
15 onboard that --

16 A. I don't know that one. I mean, it's only two we --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- you know.

19 Q. EPIRB. Do you ever recall seeing an EPIRB?

20 A. I don't recall seeing the EPIRB. I don't know.

21 Q. Okay. Satellite phone.

22 A. No. All we have is radios and cell phones.

23 Q. Radios and cell phones. Okay. Did you, like, going back to
24 the discussion -- all right, prior to getting underway was any
25 discussion ever had with, like, hey, like -- did you ever look at

1 any documentation on the boat?

2 A. Yeah, I did.

3 Q. What did you look at?

4 A. I just looked -- I just seen the depth and the length, and
5 the, the hull number.

6 Q. Any Coast Guard issued certificate?

7 A. No, I didn't look none of that.

8 Q. No CODs, COIs?

9 A. I didn't look for any of it.

10 Q. Do you know what a COD is?

11 A. COD.

12 Q. Certificate of Documentation. Coast Guard issued document
13 that says like the tonnage of the vessel.

14 A. Yeah, that, yeah, I seen that.

15 Q. Do you recall if it was expired or if it was --

16 A. No, I don't recall.

17 BY LT [REDACTED]:

18 Q. Tonnage -- not tonnage -- load (indiscernible)?

19 A. No, I never seen that.

20 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

21 Q. With the owner, with Mr. Ward, were you ever advised either
22 way to either go out into the ocean or stay inside the
23 intracoastal waterway?

24 A. He expected us to go outside.

25 Q. He expected you to go outside.

1 A. Yeah.

2 BY LT [REDACTED]:

3 Q. Why was that? Did you all --

4 A. Because of the draft of the boat. For the draft of the boat.
5 She --

6 Q. What was the draft of the boat?

7 A. About 8 foot, 7, 8 foot they say. So --

8 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

9 Q. Was there a concern in draft constraints in the intracoastal
10 waterway?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. In your opinion, do you think the vessel was seaworthy enough
13 to make the voyage on the outside?

14 A. I thought so, yeah.

15 BY LT [REDACTED]:

16 Q. What are you basing that on? Like as the captain what's
17 going through your mind when you're --

18 A. Well, she --

19 Q. -- deciding that this is the right decision --

20 (Crosstalk)

21 A. -- I mean she --

22 Q. -- and this --

23 A. -- she had rust on her, but she was a well-kept boat on the
24 inside. You understand? So I was thinking that, that she been
25 took care of. We just took one from the Bayou to Virginia that

1 was in a little worser -- wasn't clean as this boat.

2 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

3 Q. The boat that you delivered --

4 A. Um-hmm.

5 Q. -- did you take note of the condition of the hatches on that
6 vessel?

7 A. Yeah. It had different -- it had manhole covers, bolts.
8 That's what it had.

9 Q. And this vessel was different?

10 A. I think it's got them, you know, what I'm saying? Like I
11 said, I --

12 LT [REDACTED]: (Indiscernible)?

13 MR. SEAMAN: Yes.

14 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

15 Q. Like the Freeman hatch that you turn one handle and it pops
16 up?

17 A. Yeah. You know how you can take it out? Know what I'm
18 saying? Or flip it up. I think (indiscernible) I didn't inspect
19 them.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. That's what Roger (indiscernible) David said. No, they
22 looked in it. That's -- I'm just -- I didn't look in it, but they
23 looked in there. She didn't have any water in her.

24 BY LT [REDACTED]:

25 Q. The owner told you that they looked in it?

1 A. No. David. David and Roger, the captain and the -- and
2 Roger. They looked in it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And said there was no water in it. I don't remember exactly
5 when that was. I think it was while we were underway. I was --
6 it was a shift that I was asleep.

7 CWO [REDACTED]: Okay.

8 BY LT [REDACTED]:

9 Q. Was there another reason why you all needed to transit
10 offshore instead of an ICW? You said you think it was because of
11 the eight-foot draft.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Was that it? Were there any other reasons why he wanted you
14 all to go that way?

15 A. (No audible response.)

16 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

17 Q. Were you under any time constraints?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Were you trying to make a certain, like, got to be there by
20 this day or anything like that?

21 A. No.

22 Q. What was the discussion about that?

23 A. None.

24 Q. Just get there when --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Get there when you, when you get there. We based it on the
3 draft constraints from the other boat that we just took. We took
4 her all intracoastal except from Appalach (ph.) to Fort Myers
5 which you got to cut across. Okay. Other than that she was all
6 intracoastal. And we ran aground a couple of times, and she
7 didn't (indiscernible) five foot.

8 Q. On the boat you delivered?

9 A. Yes. And that was what we based that on. We was going to
10 try to at least skip, at least skip South Carolina and Georgia on
11 the outside because it's --

12 BY LT [REDACTED]:

13 Q. You all grounded around the South Carolina, Georgia area?

14 A. South Carolina and Georgia in the intracoastal is terrible.

15 Q. But you all grounded there on your way up?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Was it just like a bump and go like --

18 A. No. We had to stop. Had to stop, and wait on -- we stopped
19 one time, and waited on high tide.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. That was in South Carolina. And then in Georgia, you had to,
22 you had to dig through some of those bayous to get to the next
23 river or whatever.

24 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

25 Q. But in all those cases you got off on your own power?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. You didn't need assistance to get pulled off?

3 A. No. And we had a little trouble in Florida too with the,
4 with the first boat. So I don't think we -- we -- I don't think
5 we could have got through there with this boat. That was the
6 whole idea of it.

7 Q. Okay.

8 BY LT [REDACTED]:

9 Q. Just a couple standard questions. Do you have any
10 prescription medications you take?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. When was the last time you had alcohol before this
13 incident?

14 A. I don't drink.

15 Q. Okay. Any recreational drugs?

16 A. None.

17 Q. Anything else unusual about that day up until the point of
18 the incident?

19 A. No.

20 Q. With you or with the vessel or --

21 A. No.

22 Q. -- with anyone?

23 A. No. Everything was fine.

24 Q. So all-in-all like just in your opinion why do you -- what do
25 you think happened? Why do you think the boat sank?

1 A. She took on -- I don't know where she took the water on from;
2 in the lazarette which is the rudder room, I don't know where she
3 took it on from. I don't whether she had a foul in the hull up
4 underneath her, up on the deck. I can't say.

5 Q. But you think it definitely originated from the lazarette?

6 A. Yeah. I think that water that I seen coming through them
7 pipes that tank was full, full, full. I never -- I mean, it was
8 coming out like jet pump.

9 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

10 Q. And that, that pipe, I think you may have mentioned, the
11 diameter of that pipe was like five inches?

12 A. I'd say at least four.

13 Q. Four-inch pipe. Okay.

14 A. I mean, because it was pumping. I --

15 Q. Two of those.

16 A. One over each engine.

17 Q. And both of those have water in --

18 A. Coming out.

19 Q. Ingressing.

20 A. I'll say this, this one on the port side was probably worse
21 than that one. That's the reason it had more water over here.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. And she's doing that. But it had started coming out of that
24 one too.

25 Q. Okay.

1 BY LT [REDACTED]:

2 Q. And it was like -- so it's about a four-inch diameter, and it
3 was full with water coming? So it wasn't a drip. It was --

4 A. No.

5 Q. -- a pool like --

6 A. No.

7 Q. -- fire hose --

8 A. Yes. I mean, it wasn't shooting from here to the door, but
9 it was shooting enough probably --

10 Q. It was a solid flow of water --

11 A. Yes. Yes.

12 Q. -- through the --

13 A. That one definitely was. And the other one was running
14 pretty good too.

15 Q. Were these like steel pipes or --

16 A. I would say I didn't know them was there. I don't understand
17 the reasoning. I'm thinking, I just, I'm thinking that a solid
18 bulkhead, and there's no hole -- I mean, I don't want -- I don't
19 get this, and I can't believe this. I've never -- I'm thinking
20 this is watertight. And then when I seen that I'm like, I mean,
21 it's too late. I mean, but I'm just saying what is that?

22 Q. When you all came out of the engine room, did you all shut
23 the door behind you or does it lock or I guess --

24 A. You shut -- Roger come behind me, but he shut the, the door.
25 When you're coming in -- you come up the steps, and it's a little

1 walkway. The doors over there they've been shut the whole time.
2 But he, when he come through this it's a bunk room right here, you
3 know, through the hall like. He shut that door.

4 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

5 Q. Is that a watertight door?

6 A. I mean, it's a dog door.

7 Q. It's a dog door. Okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. So it's a watertight door.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Not like --

12 A. No, it's, no --

13 (Crosstalk)

14 A. -- it's watertight.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. So all the doors were shut. All the doors were shut, but
17 then when we came out of the galley on the, the starboard side,
18 she was leaning like that, and we left that one open.

19 Q. Do you know if there's -- so you got the, you got the
20 steerings, the lazarette, the steering rudder room, and then
21 obviously the engine room. Are there any more voids back there
22 that would have been -- that would have had water in it that
23 you're aware?

24 A. What do you mean?

25 Q. Like are there any -- is there any more tanks back there like

1 a, a -- that would have, that would have been -- that water could
2 have got into? Like a water tank or a --

3 A. I think --

4 Q. -- lube oil tank or --

5 A. I think that wall in the (indiscernible) rudder room.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. The water was up forward.

8 Q. Okay. I'm just trying to see if there was anything else that
9 would have -- water could have gotten into.

10 A. To my knowledge that was all the way across the rudder room.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Okay.

13 BY LT [REDACTED]:

14 Q. Sorry if I missed it, but so when you came out of the engine
15 room it sounds like you put on a lifejacket, and you went up to
16 the bow.

17 A. I went up, well, went up, yeah, basically. I went up, and
18 David was up. I can't really remember now. We all pretty well
19 after we come out of the engine room he had drove -- while we was
20 in there, he was driving toward the beach. That's what he said
21 anyway. I mean, and then we got up there. Because we thought
22 she, she was -- we thought she was going to roll right then, and
23 we didn't want to be trapped. That's the reason I --

24 Q. How much of a list was it would you say at that time?

25 A. I mean, straight, I mean --

1 Q. Like 45 degrees?

2 A. I would say yes. I mean, I, I thought she was gone. We all
3 thought she's fixing to roll over. I think the only thing that
4 saved her when we went in when -- started bumping on the butt on
5 the stern, and that kept her from -- you know what I'm saying?
6 Then that water started filling up for instance and she
7 straightened kind of back up. She was pretty well straight when
8 they picked us up -- have a little bit sticking out when they
9 picked us up. Well, when we left, that little, that little
10 doghouse sitting straight up when we left, and they said she went
11 on down. I don't know (indiscernible) to that. I'm just saying.
12 But it was straight up when we left.

13 Q. I think the top part of the mast is still above water.

14 A. Okay. And you all were taken off by the, the North Myrtle
15 Beach rescue boat. Did you all go straight onto their boat or did
16 you have to like swim over to them?

17 A. That swimmer come and got me, and me and Roger. Took us to
18 the little orange boat, little orange boat, and we got on it. And
19 then David got on the other boat the one we rode in on, Andrew.

20 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

21 Q. Is the -- I know the boat you're talking about, but I don't
22 know the name of it. The one that's got the little wheels on it
23 like the beach access boat or --

24 A. I'm talking about we, we got on beach access when me and
25 Roger did first, and then they brought us over to the one, the

1 aluminum boat with the bigger house on it.

2 Q. The Horry County Fire and Rescue boat?

3 A. I think so, yeah, yeah. They brought us over to that one,
4 and that's when we went -- all three went in --

5 Q. There's two boats that were on scene. I think the first boat
6 that got on scene -- three boats were on scene?

7 A. Three (indiscernible).

8 Q. The first boat that was on scene was the -- I don't know the
9 name of it but --

10 (Crosstalk)

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. The one, the one that me and Roger went and got on first.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. That one.

15 Q. All right.

16 A. And then David got on the other one, and then they said --
17 transfer us over. So we got over there and transferred over onto
18 the aluminum one.

19 BY LT [REDACTED]:

20 Q. Did you all have to swim over to the boat or did --

21 A. We, we --

22 Q. -- step over?

23 A. -- swam over to the orange boat.

24 Q. Okay. And then they transferred you --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- from the orange boat onto the aluminum boat?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And then they brought you back to the station?

4 A. Yep.

5 Q. And all three of you all had your lifejackets on?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And you were carrying a life ring?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. All right. Is there anything else we should know about?

10 You said you had some comments at the beginning about -- or some,
11 some suggestions.

12 A. Coast Guard --

13 (Crosstalk)

14 Q. -- Coast Guard.

15 A. -- is always requiring stuff, and there needs to be an alarm
16 in each one of them compartments.

17 Q. Like a bilge alarm?

18 A. Yes. If you'd had had an alarm sitting on the front -- see
19 it's no way to know. So if you had alarm sitting on the things --
20 I used to own boats, my own boat, we set them on there with a
21 siren, and for instance if water starts sloshing, you get -- water
22 hit it. You understand what I'm saying? That means you got some
23 water. One of the first things you do (indiscernible) you go pump
24 it. When you hear that water you go pump it. You go down in
25 there because you've got always got a pickup. You understand?

1 You go pump it.

2 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

3 Q. What was your, like, when you got on this boat you got --
4 took the job to get on the -- were -- are you -- I'm trying to --
5 are you under the impression that this is a Coast Guard inspected
6 boat?

7 A. No, I didn't know. I don't know. I wasn't under any
8 impression, be honest with you.

9 BY LT [REDACTED]:

10 Q. It just wasn't something you were thinking about?

11 A. No, it wasn't. Because some of the boats that I delivered I
12 don't look at it that much on that because some of the boats that
13 I've delivered before is not COI. And they, you know, scallop
14 boats and stuff they're not.

15 BY CWO [REDACTED]:

16 Q. They're not certificated --

17 A. No.

18 Q. -- fishing boats.

19 A. Fishing boats.

20 BY LT [REDACTED]:

21 Q. How many other tugboats have you captioned in the last couple
22 years?

23 A. Last couple years just that one. We took a -- I haven't
24 worked on tugboat --

25 Q. Do you know if that other one you all took up -- I'm not

1 familiar with it -- if it had a COI or --

2 A. I don't think it did, no, huh-uh.

3 Q. And that was the replenisher?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Okay. And it -- you all took it to the same port where this
6 one came from?

7 A. (No audible response.)

8 Q. But it's not owned by the same owner, right?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Someone different?

11 A. Yeah, different man.

12 LT [REDACTED]: All right. I think that's about all we have.

13 We have your contact information if we need anything.

14 MR. SEAMAN: Okay.

15 LT [REDACTED]: And if you have anything else for us, feel free
16 to provide it, and I'll give you a witness statement so you can
17 write down your thoughts as well.

18 MR. SEAMAN: All right.

19 LT [REDACTED]: So we will end the interview at this time. It
20 is 1537.

21 (Whereupon, at 3:37 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

22

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: SINKING OF TOWING VESSEL *JACQUELINE A*
NEAR NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH
CAROLINA ON AUGUST 8, 2023
Interview of Ollie Seaman, Jr.

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM044

PLACE: Georgetown, South Carolina

DATE: August 9, 2023

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Katherine Motley
Transcriber