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

CUI

Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

1

1 UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

2
3 PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON
4 BEHALF OF NTSB BY THE U.S. COAST GUARD5
6 ADMIRAL [REDACTED]: Have a seat so we will introduce
7 everyone. So BM1 as I mentioned my name is [REDACTED]. I
8 am the Admiral in charge of the Navy's investigation. A
9 couple of folks on my team so I have LCDR [REDACTED], LCDR
10 [REDACTED], they are my two legal advisors. Master Chief
11 [REDACTED] he is acting as my CMC Senior Enlisted Advisor and
12 LN2 [REDACTED] will be taking notes. During the interview this
13 afternoon, we won't be asking you any questions. The Coast
14 Guard is leading the interviews so I will turn it over to
15 Lieutenant [REDACTED]. He will introduce his team which does
16 include Captain [REDACTED] who is serving as one of his
17 liaisons.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So good afternoon.

19 [REDACTED]: Good afternoon, sir.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: I am Lieutenant [REDACTED]. I
21 am Senior Investigating Officer for U. S. Coast Guard Unit
22 Activities Parties here in Japan. Under the Authority of
23 Title 46, U. S. Code 6301 and Title 46 CFR Part 4 an
24 investigation is being conducted into the circumstances of
25 the collision between the USS Fitzgerald and ACX Crystal

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

2

1 which took place on June 17th, 2017. This investigation is
2 intended to determine the cause of the casualty to the
3 extent possible and to obtain information for the purpose
4 of preventing similar casualties in the future. To assist
5 with the accuracy of our investigation we will be recording
6 today's interview which is taking place on June 23rd, 2017
7 at 1353. Assisting me with this interview I have Mr.
8 [REDACTED] of the Coast Guards National Center of Expertise
9 for Investigations. I also have Lieutenant LCDR [REDACTED]
10 who is also in our unit who has experience as a Commanding
11 Officer of Coast Guard vessels and I have Captain [REDACTED] who
12 is working as a liaison officer from the Navy to ensure and
13 understand operations on the Navy's side. If we could
14 begin just by stating your name and position aboard the
15 vessel.

16 [REDACTED] : BM1 [REDACTED], Boatswain Mate Assistant
17 Lead to Petty Officer for deck duties.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] : Okay and maybe a little bit about
19 yourself, how long have you been in the Navy?

20 [REDACTED] : Um ten plus years, next month will be
21 eleven.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Excellent. So a number of
23 different vessels over the years?

24 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. This is my second ship, third
25 command.

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1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Was your previous ship a destroyer
2 as well?

3 [REDACTED] It was a cruiser, sir.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And when did you come aboard the
5 Fitzgerald?

6 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So definitely been on board for a
8 few years, done quite a few patrols and.

9 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And underway, thank you. So we
11 have talked to a number of people, learned about the
12 vessels drive out period, all the testing and what-not out
13 of the dry dock, first time away from port earlier this
14 year, came back to port, had been here for maybe a week or
15 so and then was preparing and got underway on June 16th.
16 Is that correct?

17 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so let's go ahead and start
19 on June 16th then with what time did you wake up?

20 [REDACTED]: About 0600.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So reveille?

22 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And roughly what time you do you
24 believe the vessel got underway?

25 [REDACTED] Um, I think shortly after 1100.

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

4

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And we've been told that the
2 vessel went to Anchorage shortly thereafter for ammo?

3 [REDACTED] Yes, sir immediately after underway.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] What are your primary duties
5 during this sea anchor detail?

6 [REDACTED] I'm the Boatswain Mate at Watch.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So primarily on the bridge or
8 would that be forward bridge on the bow.

9 [REDACTED] Bridge.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Bridge. How long did you stand
11 that watch on Friday?

12 [REDACTED] A long time. I got underway, Boatswain
13 Mate watch, and then I had the first watch up there as
14 well, so I think we were at Anchorage four hours, so from
15 the time we got underway until we got underway again from
16 Anchorage. I was up there the whole time.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Would you say about 1600 or so, or
18 1300?

19 [REDACTED] I'd say 1600 - 1630.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] During that first watch was there
21 anything unusual on the vessel's operations, anything
22 mechanical, anything out of the ordinary let's put it that
23 way?

24 [REDACTED] Going to Anchorage and at Anchorage?

25 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Yes.

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1 [REDACTED] Everything was pretty, everything was
2 pretty smooth. Nothing really out of the ordinary or
3 anything to be concerned with.

4 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So 1630 vessel gets underway and
5 doing some flight ops as part of certification?

6 [REDACTED] Yes, I called away flight quarters for the
7 finishing up my day for night vision.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Are there any particular duties
9 you are responsible for during that time.

10 [REDACTED] Chock 'n chain.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And that involves the junior
12 personnel as well on, I keep messing this up, on deck team?

13 [REDACTED] Yes on the flight deck.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Approximately how long do you feel
15 that operation lasted?

16 [REDACTED] Four to five hours, five hours, a long
17 time, day and night hits.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Do you know if any changes were
19 made to the navigation lights during that operation if they
20 had been dimmed due to night ops?

21 [REDACTED] I can't say for sure. I'm not in charge
22 of that so.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Certainly and let me clarify a few
24 things here during these interviews, if there is an answer
25 you don't know, there is no problems with saying don't know

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

6

1 cause we're asking from a whole view, a whole picture of
2 everything and it is more of a would you know this, could
3 you know this, would this have come up during your day.
4 Saying I don't know is a perfectly normal answer.

5 [REDACTED] Just to add on, I don't want to say for
6 myself yes it definitely happened but I know there is a
7 flight quarter like checklist that we take out, we know an
8 order to follow certain things.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Sure. And likewise I want to make
10 sure that you are at ease here, at any time you need a
11 drink or get up take a breather, one op please let us know
12 we will be glad to pause the recording and give you what
13 time you need to before we fully start with further
14 questions at any time.

15 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

16 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: All right, so the flight training
17 goes for four or five hours and then boats op would happen.
18 Is your team involved with in that as well?

19 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

20 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And what sort of duties did you
21 and your team perform?

22 [REDACTED] Pretty much launching the RHIB, but like
23 POIC and just taking the ATG guys off and one of our LSEs
24 that was just TAD with us from the village went off the
25 RHIB and the coxswain took him back to shore and they came

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1 back and then we recovered RHIB. That was it for the boat
2 ops.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So in between the time when the
4 boat is launched in water and on its way and when it comes
5 back, is there any downtime for the crews, like are they
6 allowed to go back to their rack and get some rest or is it
7 they have to be on standby?

8 [REDACTED] We were all standby on the boat. Some of
9 us can use the head, take a smoke break but nobody went to
10 the rack though.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And when do you feel that those
12 operations had ended?

13 [REDACTED] When we recovered the RHIB, secured the
14 RHIB, we had a little like debrief, talked about what we
15 were going to do for the morning as far as mustering and
16 then everybody broke to go to sleep or go to do lunch.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And rough timeframe?

18 [REDACTED] Timeframe at the end of boat ops?

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Yes.

20 [REDACTED] At the 2300 to I got on watch immediately
21 after so that was 2330 I believe I took the watch so.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So from your time awaking up at
23 0600 to you going on watch on 2330 what sort of rest
24 periods were you able to get and/or sleep during that time
25 period?

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

1 [REDACTED] No sleep, just a little bit on the
2 boat deck when we launched the RHIB, just hangout for maybe
3 30 minutes say. I don't remember any time during the
4 flight orders though. We were pretty much busy the whole
5 time.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So 2330 you go on watch. The
7 other trainees and there is a number of trainees in that
8 watch section that gets on at 2200. Were they working
9 with, alongside the entire day?

10 [REDACTED] I'm trying to remember. They weren't on
11 the, pretty much yes. If they weren't on the flight deck
12 team then they will be manning the boat deck just in case
13 for in the event of an emergency so.

14 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So they had responsibilities
15 during the flight ops responsibilities during boat ops as
16 well?

17 [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So 2330 you go on the bridge. Who
19 is that you relieved?

20 [REDACTED] Um, YN3 [REDACTED].

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And how does that relief process
22 work? Is it just hey, glad you're here, it's all yours?

23 [REDACTED] No. We just talk about any upcoming
24 evolutions maybe water sling checks, you know, who's on
25 watch, people got relieved. I like to know who the Officer

1 of the Deck is or maybe they got relieved or didn't get
2 relieved yet. Just calling this a standard, you know
3 little talk through on what's happened and down to the
4 walk.

5 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And right after I said that
6 question I wanted to clarify that, I don't assume that you
7 go up and say, Hey give a high five and walk off the watch.
8 I want to leave that as open as I can to say, how's it
9 work? So I definitely not assuming that everyone just
10 shakes hands and moves on. What are your duties as the
11 Boatswain Mate of the Watch up on the bridge?

12 [REDACTED] Um, I'm pretty much in charge of my watch
13 team on the helm/Lee helm, any lookouts and aft lookout,
14 just assisting them if they are having a hard time with
15 course changes or speed changes, verifying everyone's on
16 time and everybody's where they need to be and just assist
17 the OD in anything, maybe a message of run night orders for
18 someone, one of the night watches.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So we mentioned before and we
20 talked to other folks that said there are a number of
21 trainees on your section. This was something new for that,
22 for your watch section to have this many trainees at the
23 same time?

24 [REDACTED] So we just got a big influx of new
25 prospective gains, new sailors, so all of them were

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10

1 obviously not qualified. Some of them came while we were
2 in Sasebo before we pulled in. They are all pretty new and
3 still learning. I am one of the senior, well the Senior
4 Boatswain Mate of Watch so I did, when they wrote the watch
5 they really did put a lot in my section just to help out
6 with falls and knowledge.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Was that something you had a hand
8 in? Were you able to say, "Yeah I would be glad to take em
9 on" or is that or were you told "We're going to put these
10 folks in your watch?"

11 [REDACTED] I had talked about it previous with
12 Boatswain [REDACTED] just about shuffling people around so
13 they get different perspectives on just knowledge wise,
14 because everyone has something to bring to the table you
15 know, no matter how small it is. So, I told them to put
16 obviously put the people in my section. I didn't say how
17 many there were who exactly.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So it wasn't a complete surprise
19 and it was something you were, was it something you were
20 comfortable with?

21 [REDACTED] I was comfortable with it.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And so when you say training and
23 management of these lookouts, what sort of things are you
24 providing to these new crew members?

25 [REDACTED]: Um, helping them drive the ship properly

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1 depending on situations, commands, look-out training, how
2 to report man over-boards, how to report contacts, some
3 basic seamanship and basic watch standing things you may
4 face while you are up there by yourself. It was Helm/Lee
5 Helm and lookout and eventually Boatswain Mate of the
6 Watch.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: What are the responsibilities of
8 the, and I understand Helmsman and Lee Helmsman sort of a
9 combined position on the Fitzgerald. What were the
10 responsibilities aside from helm command and throttle
11 commands?

12 [REDACTED]: Where there, so yes, it's pretty much a
13 combination. Usually one person can manage it unless we
14 are in a special evolution, then one for each, one person
15 on the helm and one person on Lee helm. But that is only
16 their responsibility there and they don't do anything else,
17 they don't leave that area, that spot.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So no one says, you know, there is
19 a point out there, keep an eye on that, it's just you are
20 waiting for that command?

21 [REDACTED]: If you are on that, if you've taken over
22 that watch then yeah, you would stay there.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And so the other part of this
24 section is the aft lookout who is normally on the fantail.

25 [REDACTED]: Correct.

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12

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And mostly focused on aft vessels
2 approaching from behind.

3 [REDACTED] Right, anything in sight or you know
4 hearing that, I tell to report just in case anything got
5 missed, so.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay, so you don't tell them just
7 to look straight back, its look to the sides as well and if
8 there is anything to report in any directions.

9 [REDACTED] Right. So primarily it's for just
10 stern of the ship for anything coming behind us which may
11 pop-up but obviously being just being back there you are
12 going to look around you know to the left and to the right
13 sides. So if you were to see something, go ahead and
14 report it.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] If you see something, say
16 something?

17 [REDACTED] Correct. Report everything.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So, on the bridge team who is
19 responsible then for looking forward and checking the
20 sides?

21 [REDACTED]: Um, look-outs are, the whole bridge watch
22 team, the Officer of the Deck, also Conn and Junior Officer
23 of the Deck that's our job navigating the ship and keeping
24 it safe. So primarily look-outs and definitely the conning
25 officer.

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1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And so during this night, this
2 watch, the only lookout would have been the one on the aft
3 and then OOD, JOOD and Conn doing their roving around the
4 bridge?

5 [REDACTED] Correct. Yes, sir because the UIs that I
6 had on the bridge, I was pretty much giving training on the
7 helm/lee helm so we have so we didn't have qualified
8 designated person as port or starboard lookout.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] When would you use a
10 port/starboard lookout?

11 [REDACTED] Under, as far as like regular underway
12 watch?

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] : Certainly.

14 [REDACTED] : That would be every day, 24, 24 hours a
15 day. On our ship because we are undermanned, you know, our
16 ship they allowed us just to have a helm, Lee helm,
17 Boatswain mate watch. And then if we had, if we had enough
18 people qualified we would have a roving lookout, you know,
19 and they with the ultimate goal having all stations manned.
20 Port and starboard lookout, helm and aft lookout Boatswain
21 head watch.

22 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] : And when you say they allowed
23 that, who "they" be in this scenario?

24 [REDACTED] Um, our chain of command, senior watch
25 officer.

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] They set up the plan, they say who
2 is doing what watch sections and on the watch section, if
3 the positions just weren't filled out.

4 [REDACTED] We just don't have enough bodies,
5 qualified bodies to have a port and starboard lookout.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Do you know when the last time you
7 did have enough bodies for a full lookout?

8 [REDACTED]: I do not, sir. I can't say.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: At any point since you've been
10 there, since 2015, do you remember having enough bodies for
11 a full lookout.

12 [REDACTED]: I do remember.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So it has happened in the past?

14 [REDACTED]: Yes, sir.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] All right, so we are up on the
16 bridge, we are giving training to the UI, the under-
17 instruction personnel, switching them out on the helm,
18 giving them time and experience, on-the-job training.
19 Explain what is going on around the vessel? How is traffic
20 looking, weather, the conditions of the night?

21 [REDACTED]: Um, weather was fine. It wasn't very bad
22 seas from what I remember. There was traffic, other ships
23 in the area and we were, I could see the lights from shore
24 so I knew we weren't, you know, very far from land. And it
25 was just a normal. We had a normal underway watch that I

1 stood many times before.

2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] So again, like the question I
3 asked before, nothing unusual, no mechanical failures that
4 you are aware of? Everything is optimal.

5 [REDACTED] Yeah, it was. I don't remember anything
6 standing out until, you know, till the collision happened.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: How about the, the what's going on
8 with the officers on the bridge? Anything unusual of them,
9 are they making a lot of radio contacts.

10 [REDACTED]: What I remember, I don't remember them
11 talking too much about contacts or I don't remember them
12 talking about going over bridge to bridge or anything. I
13 remember the Officer of the Deck, I remember her roving, I
14 remember her looking at navigation and I remember the Conn
15 being just roving as well on the bridge wings and
16 throughout the pilothouse. I don't remember any talk about
17 contacts too much.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And you are giving training. I
19 can understand that you're focused on that task. Do you
20 recall much on the JOOD, what actions were taking place
21 there?

22 [REDACTED] Um, she was there to assist with the
23 Officer of the Deck so, I can't give 100 percent answer on
24 what exactly what she was doing but you know, anything
25 navigation and contact while she would be there with

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

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1 Officer of the Deck and Conn working together.

2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Um, hum. How about communications
3 down to CIC? Was that something frequently that you've
4 heard or that anybody on the bridge could have heard?

5 [REDACTED] Usually yes. On this watch I don't
6 remember that though. I can't remember, put it that way.

7 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So then you got on watch at 2330,
8 night goes on, it is getting close to 1300 and you know
9 that --

10 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Zero one-hundred.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Zero one-hundred, thank you. I've
12 done that a couple of times now. So it is getting close to
13 0100 and understand that maybe we're on our last watch
14 standers at the helm. Do you know who took the helm at
15 that time?

16 [REDACTED]: The last person was Seaman [REDACTED].

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so she's got the helm. I
18 believe several of the other watch standers really didn't
19 need them up on the bridge anymore, might have let them go
20 back to their bunks maybe?

21 [REDACTED]: Yes, at 0125, I let two people go. I told
22 them to go down, you know, go to sleep. So I had [REDACTED] on
23 the helm and another UI up there as well cause we were
24 going to smoke after, after we got relieved, so she just
25 stayed up there.

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1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Was there any of the reliefs from
2 the 0200 watch come aboard at that time?

3 [REDACTED] So, the oncoming watch? Were they up
4 there? Um, honestly, I can't remember. I know my
5 relieving Boatswain Mate of Watch came up there, I'm just
6 not sure if he was up there, you know, before 0130 or not.
7 I'm not sure.

8 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Was your relief there at the time
9 of the collision?

10 [REDACTED]: I'm not sure. I can't remember.

11 MR. [REDACTED]: Who is your relief supposed to be?

12 [REDACTED] BM2 [REDACTED]

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So, 0125, you let a couple of
14 people go. The watch relief is coming up at 0130 and I will
15 let you tell the story of things that happen.

16 [REDACTED]: Yep, so it was, I let them go and it was
17 just again still normal, normal watch. And then I didn't
18 know where, I believe [REDACTED] OD, she started walking toward
19 starboard side and she just yelled, you know, she was
20 scared. She said, "Oh shit, I'm so fucked, I'm so fucked"
21 and I could hear in her voice something was wrong, I just
22 didn't know what she was talking about and she said she,
23 you know gave the order all ahead full for 25 knots, and
24 right after that, all ahead flank. I was pretty much
25 standing at Lee Helm so I just started taking action and

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

18

1 then she said "Hard left rudder" so I just took, I just
2 grabbed the wheel, I put it over and then we got hit. And
3 from there everybody just flew to, you know, flew about
4 house, flew on the deck for a few seconds. And then from
5 there I remember I just stayed down a little bit, you know,
6 just in case we got hit again, you know I didn't want to
7 hit my head or something. But I got up, I helped someone
8 up, I think it was [REDACTED]. You know I was asking if
9 everybody was okay and I started, I got back, me and her
10 went back on the helm and just standing by, just you know
11 in case we needed to do anything else as far as driving the
12 ship of change the speed. They ended up having us come
13 down in speed, the OOD and the JOOD. I believe we ended up
14 coming down to five knots or three knots and we stayed
15 there for a good amount of time. I don't remember coming
16 up in speed or anything after that.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] From the time that the OOD is
18 getting scared and noticing that there is a problem to the
19 time of the collision, approximately what period of time
20 would you say that would be?

21 [REDACTED]: Maybe 15 seconds maybe, a little short
22 time.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay, so in that 15 seconds, no
24 time to get on a radio and hail the other vessel or were
25 there any actions to hail the other vessel on the radio,

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1 make sound signals, collision alarm, things of that nature?

2 [REDACTED] I, um. No, no we didn't do that. I didn't
3 sound the collision alarm until after you know, we got hit
4 and I had no idea the ship was that, you know, right there,
5 that close.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did you see the vessel before the
7 collision?

8 [REDACTED] I did not.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Did you see the vessel after the
10 collision?

11 [REDACTED] Um, I don't. I saw a vessel. After I got
12 up I looked starboard side to try to see what happened,
13 what hit us. I remember seeing a ship off in the distance
14 but that ship was lit-up like it would be a carnival ship
15 so I don't, I can't tell you that, you know, that the ship
16 that we hit cause it was really lit up.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Okay.

18 [REDACTED] And it was really far off in the distance
19 maybe I don't even know what distance, maybe a couple of
20 miles.

21 LCDR [REDACTED]: Can you clarify carnival?

22 [REDACTED] It was lit up like a big, like a party
23 ship would be, a Caribbean cruise liner, something like
24 that.

25 LCDR [REDACTED] Thank you.

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1 [REDACTED]: The ship that I saw.

2 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] After the collision, again, we had
3 been a flank speed prior to, was - were the engines still
4 operating at flank speed?

5 [REDACTED]: When we hit, then we were coming up in
6 speed. I don't believe we reached all the way. It was just
7 too soon, it takes a little bit to come up. I don't know
8 if they fully got up to flank.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And how long did you stay on the
10 helm following the collision?

11 [REDACTED] Uh, maybe 30, a good 30 minutes. It's
12 hard to say. I don't remember exactly how long it was.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: I know we already said that there
14 were no sound signals, radios prior to. Do you recall any
15 communications from the CIC calling up?

16 [REDACTED] I don't remember. While I was on watch I
17 don't think there was any, no.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Do you know if the communications
19 to and from the CIC were working earlier in the watch?

20 [REDACTED] From what I heard, this is after the
21 collision from you know, various people standing watch and
22 CIC that we had the contact on radar and then you know for
23 some reason, somehow we lost it so it went off. So I
24 believe they were tracking it at some point.

25 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] This is a question I had in the

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1 back of my head and haven't asked anyone earlier yet and it
2 might be something better to talk to my liaison officer at
3 another time but regarding the Fitzgerald's radar
4 signature. Does the design of the ship have any effect on
5 how other ships see it on the radar screen? Do you know of
6 any instruction on how other vessels might see your vessel?

7 [REDACTED] Um, I know that I am not a technician by
8 any means on that. I know there is ways we can do that to
9 make our ship smaller or even look more like a fishing
10 vessel. Ah, I can't tell you that's what we had done or we
11 were doing. I don't believe so.

12 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And then, would you know if your
13 vessels AIS transponder would have been on if you had been
14 signaling your location through AIS?

15 [REDACTED] I can't 100 percent tell you that it was
16 on but that is normal procedure to have AIS on.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Can you define "on" just a little bit
18 more? On in transiting, on in receive, or you're unsure,
19 no orders?

20 [REDACTED] I'm a little unsure.

21 LCDR [REDACTED]: That's fine. Thank you. I think
22 I'll, Mr. [REDACTED] asks a few questions as I look at my
23 notes here.

24 MR. [REDACTED]: Okay, so before the incident your
25 first indication of the issue was the OD basically saying,

1 "Oh crap?"

2 [REDACTED] Yes.

3 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. Now in relation to the helm where
4 were you standing?

5 [REDACTED] On the right side of it, right in front of
6 the throttles.

7 MR. [REDACTED] Now you don't monitor the contacts or
8 anything like that, that the radar makes the.

9 [REDACTED] No, nothing.

10 MR. [REDACTED] And at no time did you walk over and, I
11 don't know, casually take a look to see if there was
12 anything out there?

13 [REDACTED] I do.

14 MR. [REDACTED] Now, during that watch, did you just
15 happen to look at it at any time or were you dealing with
16 your UI?

17 [REDACTED] I was bouncing back and forth but I was
18 extremely tired so I wanted to rove back and forth from the
19 port to starboard bridge just to stay focused. So I did
20 rove back and forth but as far as monitoring contacts on
21 screen or given any reports, that's not my, that's not my
22 job to do.

23 MR. [REDACTED] To the best of your knowledge how many
24 people were actually on the bridge during the watch?

25 [REDACTED] With my guys, some cycling through, I can

1 count maybe eight at any point.

2 MR. [REDACTED] Were there any other qualified helmsmen
3 on the watch?

4 [REDACTED] Yes.

5 MR. [REDACTED] And who would they be?

6 [REDACTED] Seaman [REDACTED] and I believe my other one
7 was Seaman [REDACTED].

8 MR. [REDACTED]: Thank you.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Who normally writes the night orders?

10 [REDACTED] Usually I do.

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: And on this particular watch who wrote
12 the night orders?

13 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] did.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] Did you read the night orders?

15 [REDACTED] I did. I am almost sure I did.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] Anything remarkable in the night
17 orders that you recall standing out as a direction for your
18 watch?

19 [REDACTED] Not that I remember. I just, I believe
20 one of the COs was, you know, as always, just keep an eye
21 out for contacts and communication chart. But I can't tell
22 you exactly what was in there.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] In other words just looking for how
24 you interpreted them and what you can recall.

25 [REDACTED] It was pretty cut and dry the night

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

24

1 orders.

2 LCDR [REDACTED] Nothing surprising, the usual kind of
3 night orders on patrol. During the watch was the commanding
4 officer, executive officer or any department heads up to
5 visit the bridge?

6 [REDACTED] Um, I don't remember seeing them.

7 LCDR [REDACTED] At any point in time did you, do you
8 visit any of the equipment on the bridge, radar, VMS
9 screen, I know it's not necessarily in your area but for
10 situational awareness, make a round, go outside, take a
11 look at the horizon?

12 [REDACTED] Outside, I definitely do that many times,
13 port and starboard, sir.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] Port and starboard.

15 [REDACTED] Yes.

16 LCDR [REDACTED] Observation to the horizon? Anything
17 you can remark over on the horizon? Was it particularly
18 dark weather outside?

19 [REDACTED] The weather, it didn't seem bad, it seemed
20 fine. And I remember seeing, being able to see the shore
21 from you know, lights, the houses or buildings. Maybe some
22 contacts in the distance but.

23 LCDR [REDACTED]: Do you have a way that you correlate
24 contacts based upon observations you see on the horizon so
25 like I see a green light bearing 010 relative, go and you

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1 try to look at the radar to correlate to see if a radar
2 contact is there or no?

3 [REDACTED] No, I don't do that. No.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Um, how is the watch? Was the
5 watch particularly quiet, noisy, break-in on watch?

6 [REDACTED] Um, it wasn't loud. It was a normal
7 watch, just some chatter. I mean, me and my guy were
8 talking just about the day that happened and trying to, you
9 know, get through the watch that we were on you know and
10 ah, and that's it. I remember Officer of the Deck and the
11 watch team officers, I remember them talking, I don't
12 remember exactly what they were talking about but I was
13 pretty much behind the helm and with my guys most of the
14 time, so.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Was there much interaction between
16 your watches and the OOD of that watch team?

17 [REDACTED] Um, I really can't remember. I don't
18 think it was a lot though. I don't think it was a lot.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] How was morale onboard, were people
20 excited to be underway, not looking forward to it,
21 complaints, anything?

22 [REDACTED] Um...

23 LCDR [REDACTED] Don't play poker! (Laughter)

24 [REDACTED]: (Also laughing). Well we had just got done
25 doing three months and came back for a week and then right

1 back out so I don't think the morale is bad, I just don't
2 think, I don't think there was anybody really excited to go
3 back out to sea again. But I wouldn't say the morale is
4 bad just maybe needing a break, and getting some rest.

5 LCDR [REDACTED]: You feel that in-port period you had
6 prior to getting underway was sufficient for crew rest and
7 getting ready for your next patrol?

8 [REDACTED] I don't. No.

9 LCDR [REDACTED]: No?

10 [REDACTED] No.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] How would you rate people first day,
12 I know first day underway people are still getting
13 reacclimated even though they were just at sea a week
14 prior, getting reacclimated being at sea, shift routine,
15 were they lethargic, tired? I know it was a long day but.

16 [REDACTED] I can't talk for the rest of the crew
17 cause I really didn't see too much of them that day.
18 Deckhands did an awesome job. Guys did an awesome job all
19 day. We were tired but nothing bad happened so, we were
20 happy about that and we did everything we needed to do and
21 got our Cert for the night DLQs and NVGs. But as far as
22 other crew members I could only speculate on them and how
23 they were feeling, so.

24 LCDR [REDACTED]: For nighttime fly operations you have
25 an HGO stationed aft?

1 [REDACTED]: It is on the kind of on the flight deck.

2 LCDR [REDACTED]: That HGO tower that is there? Okay.

3 And do you happen to recall who the HGO was that evening?

4 [REDACTED] Um, I want to say it was our new DISBOFF,
5 I forgot her name but Disbursing Officer.

6 LCDR [REDACTED]: Disbursing Officer?

7 [REDACTED] I believe she was in there. I believe,
8 believe Ensign [REDACTED] was in there. I believe the ATG guy
9 was also in there.

10 LCDR [REDACTED]: And for everyone's edification HGO
11 Helicopter control. I believe that is all the questions
12 that I have for you.

13 CAPT [REDACTED] Hey Bos.

14 [REDACTED] How you doing, sir?

15 CAPT [REDACTED] Where you from?

16 [REDACTED].

17 CAPT [REDACTED] What part?

18 [REDACTED], down south.

19 CAPT [REDACTED]: So, you've been on board a couple of
20 years, how many times have you done that particular transit
21 where you head south or north and you've got the Izu
22 Peninsula on one side and you got Oshima Island on the
23 other. How many times do you figure you've done that?

24 [REDACTED] A lot of times, a lot of times.

25 CAPT [REDACTED] Thirty, forty, something like that?

Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

1 [REDACTED] A lot.

2 CAPT [REDACTED] Okay. So looking back to what it was
3 like that night, you did flat out. You did boat ops,
4 you're secured, you're up by [inaudible-00:48:09] right
5 when you started transiting south?

6 [REDACTED]: Right.

7 CAPT [REDACTED] On a scale of 1-10, one being zero and 10
8 being the worse traffic you've ever seen in your life, you
9 know, what was the traffic kind of when you started the
10 transit and then how did it change as you transited south
11 and ended with the collision?

12 [REDACTED] Um, I'd say maybe a five. Honestly, I
13 don't remember. I don't remember a crazy, hectic, heavy
14 traffic in the area at that time.

15 CAPT [REDACTED] Okay. Just kind of a steady drumbeat of?

16 [REDACTED] Yeah, it was kinda, I would say normal
17 traffic, but I don't think there was, you know, very many
18 contacts around us to be super, super up-in-arm and you
19 know, maybe needing some extra, you know, an extra CON or
20 extra, or anyone extra.

21 CAPT [REDACTED] So it sounds like kinda average for your
22 experiences, right?

23 [REDACTED] Correct.

24 CAPT [REDACTED]: Nothing in that part of the water?

25 [REDACTED]: Yes, sir.

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1 CAPT [REDACTED]: So historically, does the Captain or the
2 XO been on the bridge for that transit? Cause they weren't
3 there, they weren't there that night, right? They went
4 below after boat ops?

5 [REDACTED]: Right.

6 CAPT [REDACTED] And then nobody saw them again up on the
7 bridge until the collision occurred. So the question is
8 based on your experience with all of the different transits
9 you've done in that same area, would the XO and CO not
10 being on the bridge for the transit normal or was that the
11 change in their pattern?

12 [REDACTED]: Um, I would say just it would depend on
13 the contact around us and how the Officer of the Deck is
14 maybe experience wise. But I can't say if he was, the CO
15 or the XO was up there every single time or not there.

16 CAPT [REDACTED]: Okay.

17 [REDACTED]: I think it depends on each time.

18 CAPT [REDACTED]: We talked a little bit about AAS. Do you
19 know what AAS equipment is installed in the bridge and
20 where it is?

21 [REDACTED] I just know the [REDACTED]
22 up by the windows.

23 CAPT [REDACTED]: Right, by [REDACTED]?

24 [REDACTED] Right.

25 CAPT [REDACTED]: Okay.

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

30

1 [REDACTED]: Up forward.

2 CAPT [REDACTED]: Um, did you see a [REDACTED] that night? Are
3 you familiar with the AAS [REDACTED]?

4 [REDACTED]: I did not see a [REDACTED].

5 CAPT [REDACTED]: Um, how busy were the three officers
6 doing contact management? You said back at the bridge you
7 see a lot and hear a lot of things, right. So how, what is
8 your sense as to how busy they were, however they were
9 working to keep up with the traffic?

10 [REDACTED]: Um, it didn't look like they were. From
11 what I remember it didn't look like they were extremely
12 busy.

13 CAPT [REDACTED]: Okay. Do you recall if they made any
14 calls to the CO to report contacts?

15 [REDACTED]: I don't know that.

16 CAPT [REDACTED]: And I think somebody may have already
17 asked the question, but I'll ask it again, you know, the
18 COM at the bridge, I assume they have gotten that 15
19 amplified, centerline, right?

20 [REDACTED]: Yes.

21 CAPT [REDACTED]: Okay. Can you hear back where you are?

22 [REDACTED]: Yes, I can.

23 CAPT [REDACTED]: Okay. What was the array of chatter
24 between the bridge and CIC? Were they communicating
25 frequently, was it infrequently, not at all?

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1 [REDACTED] Honestly sir, that night it's really hard
2 to remember that. I can't tell you how often they were
3 talking obviously.

4 CAPT [REDACTED] Okay. Well I've got to my last question.
5 I'll save it for the end.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Regarding your contact here aft
7 lookout, were there many communications to or from that
8 those individuals?

9 [REDACTED] : No.

10 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] : Were there any contacts to or from
11 those individuals?

12 [REDACTED] : I am not sure, sir, I don't remember that.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] : If they were to contact the bridge,
14 would it be the helmsman that answers that call or how that
15 communicated to the bridge personnel?

16 [REDACTED] : So it would, they would make a contact on
17 the phone above us and just rock her up and pass it on to
18 the COM or officer of the deck. And they would, they might
19 be able to hear it anyway but we would still relay it to
20 them.

21 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] : So no known issues with that
22 communication chain, when the watched switch out you heard
23 them?

24 [REDACTED] When the aft-lookout got relieved?

25 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Um, hum,

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

32

1 [REDACTED] Yes and I was doing just a COM check on
2 who actually went back there.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] And was there a positive contact
4 with the aft lookout?

5 [REDACTED]: There was.

6 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] In your opinion who was the most
7 experienced OOD onboard?

8 [REDACTED] Um, I think FCO is.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED] Flight Control officer?

10 [REDACTED] Yes, sir. He's pretty experienced.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Do you want to ask

12 CAPT [REDACTED]: No I do not. Thank you.

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Mr. [REDACTED]?

14 CAPT [REDACTED]: I've actually got two more questions for
15 you Bos. So at about 0100 the deck log records you guys
16 are doing 200 at 20 knots. You keep your dial at 20 knots
17 because you wanted ahead then right? And then at 0100
18 there is a course change of 10 degrees to port and 200 to
19 190. That occurred at 0100. Do you recall that course
20 change and what, and why that course change was ordered?

21 [REDACTED] I can't remember, sir. I remember 20
22 knots. I do remember 20 knots. I don't remember why
23 exactly we would change course at that time.

24 LCDR [REDACTED]: Just a quick followup on that. Do you
25 know why the 20 knots, was that in accordance with the

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1 night orders or?

2 [REDACTED] Um, I believe the night orders said to we
3 usually like to run four hours ahead.

4 CAPT [REDACTED] That then being the motivation for the?

5 [REDACTED] I'm pretty sure it, I'm not 100 percent
6 sure but I remember, I think I remember reading stay at 20
7 knots until you are 4 hours ahead.

8 CAPT [REDACTED] Okay, Bos you saw some pretty rough
9 stuff that night after the collision, a terrible event and
10 I am sure you saw some shipmates and crews of shipmates
11 that did some pretty amazing stuff.

12 [REDACTED]: Yes, sir.

13 CAPT [REDACTED] If, so were someone to ask you, "Hey, who
14 deserves special mention or accommodation or you know
15 recognition for kind of going above and beyond and
16 responding to the causalities" who comes to mind?

17 [REDACTED]: I would say many people. I would say the
18 XO, took great command of the ship when the Captain was in
19 complete shock.

20 CAPT [REDACTED]: Who is the XO?

21 [REDACTED]: Commander Bennet (phonetic) GMC [REDACTED]
22 did a great job. He came up to the powerhouse after the
23 collision and was, kind of calmed everybody down and really
24 helped the Captain out, calming him down. I wasn't
25 involved very much in the damage control part but from what

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Audio transcription - [REDACTED] Interview

34

1 I hear Chief [REDACTED].

2 CAPT [REDACTED]: DCC [REDACTED]?

3 [REDACTED]: Yes, sir. And I was in the powerhouse so,
4 but every person I talked to that was down in berthing said
5 FC1 [REDACTED] helped out a lot of people from stories that I've
6 heard.

7 CAPT [REDACTED]: You not the first person that's said
8 that. Okay thank you Bos.

9 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So we thank you again for your
10 time today of all this information you've provided to us.
11 It certainly is helping out our investigation. I want to
12 give this opportunity to you to open the floor in case
13 there is any questions you have for us or if there is
14 anything that came to mind that maybe we didn't ask about
15 that you certainly would like for us to know.

16 [REDACTED]: I don't think I have anything.

17 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Thank you.

18 [REDACTED]: Yes, sir.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So that is going to wrap up our
20 interview for today. As we go through our notes if there
21 is something else that comes up that we may want a
22 response, we may reach out to you again for additional
23 information. And likewise if you have something that does
24 come to mind later, "Oh I wish I really asked them" this or
25 if you have a question, feel free to reach out to us as

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1 well and we will try to answer those questions for you.

2 [REDACTED]: Yes, sir.

3 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Thank you so much for your time.

4 CAPT [REDACTED]: Coast Guard is going to depart and we are
5 going to have a few more questions for you.

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