

# CUI

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

# CUI

1 UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

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

5  
6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Commander, how are you?

7 COMMANDER BABBIT: Sir, I'm doing all right, doing all  
8 right.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: All right XO, I'm Captain [REDACTED] I'm  
10 the Navy's rep to the Coast Guard investigation on behalf  
11 of the NTSB.

12 COMMANDER BABBIT: Yes, sir.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: The purpose of this investigation is  
14 to find out how the collision happened.

15 COMMANDER BABBIT: Yes, sir.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So with that, I will turn it over to  
17 the Captain.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. So good afternoon, Commander  
19 Babbitt.

20 COMMANDER BABBIT: Good afternoon, sir.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I am Captain [REDACTED] I am the  
22 Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Activities Far East. Uh  
23 my team and I are investigating uh the circumstances around  
24 the casualty that happened last Saturday morning. Um,  
25 under the Authority of Title 46, U.S. Code 6301 and Title

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1 46 CFR Part 4 an investigation is being conducted into the  
2 circumstances of the collision between the USS Fitzgerald  
3 and ACX Crystal.

4 COMMANDER BABBIT: Yes.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, the investigation is intended to  
6 determine the cause of the casualty to the extent possible  
7 and to obtain information for purposes of preventing  
8 similar casualties in the future.

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: To assist with the accuracy of our  
11 investigation we will be recording today's transcript as  
12 you see in front of you.

13 COMMANDER BABBIT: Mm-hmm.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, could I get the spelling of your  
15 first and last names, sir, for recording please?

16 COMMANDER BABBITT: It's Sean, S-E-A-N Babbitt, B-A-B-  
17 B-I-T-T.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, thank you. I would just like to  
19 introduce my team. I've got uh Lieutenant [REDACTED]  
20 He is my Senior Investigator at Activities Far East, uh  
21 Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] He is uh subject  
22 matter expert, um Deck Watch Officer and prior of CO of  
23 Coast Guard Cutter. I've got Mr. [REDACTED] from our  
24 Coast Guard National Center of Expertise. Of course,  
25 you've met Captain uh [REDACTED] uh subject matter expert.

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1 Mr. [REDACTED] also from our National Center of Expertise  
2 and Commander --

3 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: [REDACTED].

4 CAPTAIN BOONE: [REDACTED] from our U.S. Navy Safety  
5 Invest-Invest-Inspections Board --

6 COMMANDER [REDACTED]: Investigation.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: -- got it! Okay, with that um, we are  
8 going to kickoff. Okay XO why don't you start by um  
9 talking about the day, Friday --

10 COMMANDER BABBITT: Absolutely

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: -- leading up to the incident that  
12 happened that night. Just tell us about your day.

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: So we uh had, liberty expired  
14 0600 on Friday, cause it was an underway day. Underway at  
15 11:30. I would say uh it was a good underway and uh um all  
16 lines cleared, 11:30 before heading out towards ammo  
17 anchorage. Went out to A-12 ammo anchorage so we could  
18 swap out a few missiles before heading out on, heading out  
19 on mission and then also some of the other tasking we had.  
20 So we got underway right on time, headed up to ammo  
21 anchorage, anchored, uh anchored very well. Uh had a  
22 slight delay with bringing the barges out and uh some of  
23 the gas management stuff that we have in our launcher, so a  
24 little bit of a delay there, probably an hour or longer  
25 than what we expected. Uh, so once we got all of our

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1 ammunition onboard it was probably 1630 or so when we  
2 weighed anchor uh to start heading down south to our next  
3 assigned tasking, which was to do evening and then  
4 nighttime DLQs with HSC-12 to finish off our MOB-A  
5 Certification that we had started many months, many months  
6 before.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

8 COMMANDER BABBITT: So got underway, uh traffic  
9 separation scheme, no problem. Uh headed down doing time,  
10 speed, distance. We had -- after getting outside we had to  
11 pick up to about 25 knots to be able to make it down into  
12 Sagami Wan on time and be ready for DLQs. Uh, so did that  
13 safely, uh good contact, picture management. The Captain  
14 and I were up on the bridge uh for most of the day anyway,  
15 but especially during that time as we were headed down  
16 south. Got into Sagami Wan right about 1800 uh to be able  
17 to set Flight Quarters, we set Flight Quarters and uh  
18 started doing DLQs about 1830. It was 1830 or so uh cause  
19 the uh sunset was 1845. Wanted to get some DLQs in before  
20 we lost daytime, before we got into nighttime. About 1845  
21 we started our nighttime DLQs for certification, uh went  
22 until probably about 2100. It was about 2100 that we did  
23 nighttime DLQs and then once we were done with that we set  
24 uh, set Boat Operations, went over towards, went over

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1 towards uh -- I forgot the name of the island -- I forget  
2 the, forget the name of the island, uh and --

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: We do, we do have a chart in the  
4 office, we can prod.

5 COMMANDER BABBITT: Okay, okay. So went over to  
6 Jogashima, it's Jogashima Island is where we went to.  
7 Jogashima right there at the Jogashima light and where we  
8 dropped off our ATG inspectors. One of our shipmates who  
9 had been onboard for the DLQs, he was getting ready to  
10 transfer, so we kept him on board for DLQs and then he you  
11 know we transferred him off the ship right there. Um, that  
12 was about 2130 or so. When we put the boat in the water, I  
13 sent them to Jogashima, uh turned around and it was about  
14 2230 or so before we um once we recovered the boat and uh  
15 then set the watch, set the watch for starting to head uh  
16 head south. Um, so it was a full day, a very full day from  
17 6 o'clock in the morning until we recovered the boat  
18 probably 2230 close to 2300 if, if I recall right. Um, I  
19 stayed up on the bridge until about 2330 uh before I headed  
20 down below to uh to turn in for the, for the night.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So XO, uh you mentioned this was a  
22 full day.

23 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Was this kind of uh schedule normal  
25 for the Fitzgerald?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: I, I would say yes. Um, I've  
2 been, I've been onboard the Fitzgerald for about three  
3 months. So, I got onboard in Guam where we headed down the  
4 South China Sea, did some operations in the South China Sea  
5 up into the Sea of Japan. So I had not done a whole lot in  
6 this area prior to. Not a whole lot of the training cycle  
7 before that but normal I would say yes because two days  
8 before that each day I had 'em, I had the crew in at 0600  
9 to do, to do um MOB-E firefighting training uh and then had  
10 full days after that. So I would say that uh yes it would  
11 be pretty normal to, uh for us to have events up back-to-  
12 back to get uh things done before heading down south; while  
13 we had the services.

14           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Gotcha. Let me ask, what's your  
15 assessment of that plan?

16           COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, I felt that it was safe uh and  
17 the reason I felt it was safe is because we had been in  
18 port for eight days before that. Uh, we had, we were not  
19 keeping people late at night while we were in port. While  
20 we started at 0600 people were done by usually 1400-1500,  
21 so there was plenty of time of rest in between.

22           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So you were deck working leading up to  
23 that Friday.

24           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir. We sure were. Yeah, so  
25 I, I felt like it was, I felt like it was safe because we

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1 had enough rest going into it. Uh we had built our watch  
2 bill to have a lot of strong people on deck, a lot of  
3 strong people down in, down in Combat and made sure that  
4 the right people were with our -- well we thought were the  
5 right people together.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: So and also with the Captain and I  
8 up on the, up on the bridge during all of these back-to-  
9 back evolutions it felt like we were, like we were pretty  
10 safe. I did not feel like the crew was getting tired at  
11 that point. I didn't think we had been underway long  
12 enough to really have a, have a hazard that way.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I understand. So um, so there was,  
14 there was a Nav Brief uh the day before I do believe.

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: The day before.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: On a Thursday.

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: There sure was.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Any, any uh larger briefings,  
19 discussions about the day? I am just looking for planning,  
20 discussion, agreements about uh, the, the uh, the plan for  
21 the day and we will get the Nav brief in just a second.

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: But uh any discussions between you and  
24 the CO and department heads about uh the plan for the day?



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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, so specifically sitting down  
2 and saying this is what the plan for the day is, I would  
3 say no. Uh, we had talked about the plan during our  
4 Wednesday uh department head meeting but to specifically  
5 sit down and say at this time I am going to have these  
6 people up on deck doing Helicopter Operations, and this  
7 time doing Boat Operations we did not, we did not talk  
8 through that, that I can recall.

9           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Would you say that it's uh fairly  
10 routine then, this kind of getting underway, Sea and  
11 Anchor, helo ops, ammo unload?

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: I would say no for the amount of  
13 things that we did right in a row. I would say getting  
14 underway and going to ammo anchorage I think that would be  
15 fairly routine but get underway, ammo anchorage, helo ops,  
16 boat opts and then head south to get ready to do uh  
17 engineering assessment the next day is not.

18          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Fairly aggressive then?

19          COMMANDER BABBITT: Is fairly aggressive.

20          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

21          COMMANDER BABBITT: An aggressive plan.

22          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, um so let's narrow in on the Nav  
23 Brief. Uh Nav brief conducted Thursday?

24          COMMANDER BABBITT: Nav brief conducted Thursday at  
25 1400.

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1           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Were -- um were you there for the Nav  
2 brief?

3           COMMANDER BABBITT: I was.

4           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What was your assessment of the Nav  
5 brief um and -- what was your assessment of the Nav brief?

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: I thought it was a good Nav  
7 brief. Uh, I thought we did a really good job of talking  
8 through the, especially the anchorage part of the Nav brief  
9 because of the currents and the winds that we were  
10 expecting to, expecting to see -- we had some uh had some  
11 probably 10 to 15 knots predicted wind but almost a not a  
12 current that we talked through. Um, where we were sitting  
13 pier side in the hole, the winds and currents weren't all  
14 that uh, weren't going to affect us all that much but once  
15 we got out into ~~an~~ anchorage area we really talked  
16 through that portion of it, and uh, um so I-I thought that  
17 we did a good job of that. Also, we also talked about some  
18 of the hazards, which we have been in port for only a short  
19 amount of time, you need to pay attention, keep your, keep  
20 your mind on the job that you're doing and not on "Gosh I  
21 wish I was in port."

22           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

23           COMMANDER BABBITT: "I needed to get this done but I  
24 didn't get this done" so we talked through, um we talked  
25 through some of those hazards I think.

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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

2 COMMANDER BABBITT: As far as the mechanics of the  
3 brief I think it was a pretty standard brief from what we  
4 normally do but the anchorage portion of it, I thought that  
5 we did a really good job of talking through.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And um did you talk through the  
7 voluntarily, the voluntary the traffic safety traffic  
8 separation schemes?

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh we did, we talked through the  
10 radio calls, uh who is making the radio calls uh into uh  
11 Tokyo Martis, when their supposed to be made before heading  
12 (inaudible - 00:11:21) um and uh speed restrictions as  
13 we're getting through there, through there, anticipated  
14 traffic, um in both inbound and outbound.

15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, the Nav brief is it, um, the,  
16 the content of it. Is it within VMS, this brief VMS, or is  
17 there a separate product that's --

18 COMMANDER BABBITT: So it's a separate product. We  
19 build it on PowerPoint but we use VMS screen captures and  
20 we build, we build all of our visual aids on top of it like  
21 the bearings and the ranges for our radar ranges our  
22 visual, uh visual bearings.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do we have a copy of that?

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: We do not.

25 LCDR [REDACTED]: The Nav brief?

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1           CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : Yeah.

2           LCDR [REDACTED] : Yes sir.

3           CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : Okay, good.

4           CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : If I could just add a comment too?

5           CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : Yeah, please.

6           CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : The, the Captain asked about the

7 voluntary schemes. So what you just described was the

8 compulsory schemes right?

9           COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

10          CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : Uh, are you aware of any voluntary

11 schemes?

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: We did not talk through any

13 voluntary schemes.

14          CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : Okay.

15          COMMANDER BABBITT: We did not.

16          CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : Are you, are you personally aware of

17 where they are?

18          COMMANDER BABBITT: No we did not. I was not aware of

19 the of the voluntary schemes.

20          CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : Okay.

21          CAPTAIN [REDACTED] : Uh Commander, were there any concerns

22 with the Nav brief, any uh hazards, um that you identified

23 or were discussed in the Nav brief?

24          COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, so the uh concern always of

25 getting underway and getting into the, the mandatory

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1 traffic separation schemes, and the amount of traffic is,  
2 is always a concern. Um and then in light of the Antietam  
3 accident, the anchorage was uh it was very much a concern  
4 which is why I think we spent so much time talking about  
5 currents and set and drift and being able to uh -- so but  
6 specific hazards that we had talked through that I was  
7 concerned of, I think it would have been the traffic  
8 density that you have in the traffic separation scheme.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Mm-hmm.

10 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, but we didn't really talk  
11 through the outside traffic separation.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Were there any uh concerns expressed  
13 by those that were at the Nav brief about the transit that  
14 day?

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: Not that I can recall.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, as a matter of practice, um, are  
17 items discussed at the Nav brief that, that would be  
18 opportunities to improve from the last Nav brief?

19 COMMANDER BABBITT: Absolutely.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: As in like this is a lesson from the  
21 last Nav Brief, we need to do this one a little better next  
22 time, is that a routine part of the Nav Brief?

23 COMMANDER BABBITT: We do it absolutely every single  
24 time.

25 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Great.

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: So it's, it's the last, the last  
2 slide before Nav requests to continue with the evolution.

3           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Got it. And how many, um, officers  
4 involved in actually getting the Nav Brief?

5           COMMANDER BABBITT: So we have, to stand up in front  
6 and talk to people?

7           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Yes.

8           COMMANDER BABBITT: So we've got the Navigator, the  
9 Conning Officer will brief the track, the Officer of the  
10 Deck will brief the, uh, will brief the casualty, casualty  
11 controls, the Chief Engineer or the Plant Control Officer,  
12 I think it was the Chief Engineer this time anyway, will  
13 brief the Engineering Casualty control uh for restrictive  
14 maneuvering doctrine. Um, the First Lieutenant will brief  
15 the lines in the anchoring evolution. Force Protection  
16 Officer will brief the force protection slides, the force  
17 protection portion of it.

18          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I see and do the members who are  
19 participating in giving the brief did they express any  
20 concerns, uh areas to be aware of during the brief? Is  
21 that part of the brief and did they in this situation.

22          COMMANDER BABBITT: I don't recall anybody  
23 specifically saying I've got a concern with what we're  
24 doing during the brief. Is it something I've seen in the  
25 past? Uh, yes, especially the Navigator is very good about

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1 saying, "This is what I am looking at and this is what I am  
2 worried about coming in here."

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So um, so included in that would be  
4 any assessment, any restrictions in the equipment, any  
5 limitations in the equipment, if you've had any engineering  
6 --

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yep.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: That would the time to go that?

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: In this case um, again, there was no  
11 particular concerns expressed by the briefers in this case?

12 COMMANDER BABBITT: So as far as casualties, equipment  
13 casualties go out on the port bridge wing we have a, our  
14 rudder angle indicator was OOC so that was briefed as being  
15 OOC and the SPA-25G down in CIC, the joystick is OOC making  
16 the repeater OOC. So, uh we talked especially through the  
17 router angle order and indicator as being, as being a  
18 particular problem and put a piece of paper over it so we  
19 would not be distracted by the bad, the bad picture given.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And, in this case there are other  
21 means of determining rudder angle other than the faulty?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, we would get it verbally from  
23 the control console and from our, our Helm Safety Officer  
24 would repeat it.

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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay and what was your assessment of  
2 the equipment um, on the bridge, the status of, its working  
3 order, um and well your assessment of the equipment that  
4 the bridge seaman was using that day?

5 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh, with the exception of the  
6 rudder angle indicator I think that the bridge equipment  
7 was in good shape. Um, I did not have any particular  
8 concerns with any of the other equipment especially not the  
9 radar equipment or any of the gyros or anything like that.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, great. Um, I was going to turn  
11 the bridge team itself. Was there any questions about the  
12 Nav Brief on the day of?

13 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Ask our colleagues.

14 LCDR [REDACTED]: So with the Nav Brief, I believe there  
15 was a section that talked about generally accepted risks,  
16 you had a -- do you happen to recall how that was scored  
17 out, I don't think it necessarily indicated on the Nav  
18 brief.

19 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Generally accepted risks.

20 LCDR [REDACTED]: Uh, you had a, uh --

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Are you talking about ORM?

22 LCDR [REDACTED]: ORM.

23 COMMANDER BABBITT: ORM, yes I think that we mitigated  
24 from a rack of three to a rack of four.

25 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: It's usually in the back.



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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yeah it's usually one of the last  
2 slides that we do. We, we do a pretty decent job of  
3 identifying, well at least I think a decent job of  
4 identifying uh the controls that we have and the risks that  
5 we have identified. Yes, we, overall I think we went to an  
6 overall rack of four after we briefed our mitigations.

7           LCDR [REDACTED]: And that overall rack of four is based  
8 on a scale of one to?

9           COMMANDER BABBITT: It is one to five.

10          LCDR [REDACTED]: One to five?

11          COMMANDER BABBITT: One being critical. Five being  
12 negligible and so you got the hazards of the severity on  
13 the left-hand side and the probability on the top.

14          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Did um, did crew rest happen to come  
15 up during the Nav Brief, does it have a category in the  
16 ORM?

17          COMMANDER BABBITT: Not specifically in the ORM, but  
18 one of the mitigations in that, I don't remember which  
19 category we briefed it in. It was well-rested, well-rested  
20 deck team. I think if you look down either in the yellow  
21 band or the green band in the comments section.

22          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

23          COMMANDER BABBITT: See if I can point it out.

24          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Sure.

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yeah, we did not brief um crew  
2 rest during this evolution but in this controls is where we  
3 would brief it in if we had been underway for a certain  
4 amount, or a long enough time as being a control because we  
5 generally brief qualified personnel safety officers on  
6 station but risk of collision, if we've been out to sea and  
7 then coming inbound we will brief as a, we will brief with  
8 due regard to our crew rest. Who has been on watch, if you  
9 have anybody that has been on watch previous?

10           LCDR [REDACTED]: In terms of the track line brief, the  
11 track line brief being ended at the entrance buoy to Tokyo  
12 Wan, is that correct?

13           COMMANDER BABBITT: That would be to the best of my  
14 recollection it did, yes.

15           LCDR [REDACTED]: And has there been other briefings  
16 that would include the transit outbound and anticipated  
17 track lines all the way out to sea?

18           COMMANDER BABBITT: So between me and the Navigator,  
19 yes. So I would, I went up and I recommended approval for  
20 our entire transit on the way down to, just outside of  
21 Subic Bay. So that was briefed between me and the  
22 Navigator and then the Navigator would have briefed the  
23 Captain after that.

24           LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So just again to clarify this NAV  
25 Brief was to the entrance to the Tokyo Wan?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Right, before we went over into  
2 Sagami Wan for our Flight Operations.

3           LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay, so there was no all hands,  
4 Nav Brief, similar to what you had for getting to open  
5 ocean.

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: No.

7           LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Past the peninsula?

8           COMMANDER BABBITT: No. Correct, correct statement.

9           LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Thank you.

10          LCDR [REDACTED]: Have you had any area FAM and is, is  
11 this your first time to Seventh Fleet?

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: This is my first time in Seventh  
13 Fleet, yes. First time being stationed in Seventh Fleet.  
14 I've been in Seventh Fleet on multiple deployments before  
15 this but yes, it was a mostly unfamiliar ground for me as  
16 far as consistent operations here.

17          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Uh, Commander is the complexity of the  
18 evolution included in um, your ORM process?

19          COMMANDER BABBITT: So, I. Cumulative complexity?

20          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, so just in general, so if you are  
21 briefing out an operation, is the complexity of the  
22 operation included in the risk management decision making?  
23 Again a particularly complex evolution with multiple  
24 operations going on at the same time that would be on the

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1 higher end. If you are just doing one mode, you know, just  
2 a RHIB you know on and off that would be fairly simple.

3       COMMANDER BABBITT: Right. I would say that, I would  
4 say that it wouldn't be a specific category that we would  
5 say this is a high complex or low complex evolution. Um, I  
6 don't think that there is a specific point that we would  
7 say that this is the level of complexity for it. I think  
8 that during the discussion of each stage is where we get  
9 into the complexity of the event.

10       CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Uh Bit-by-bit so piece-by-piece.

11       COMMANDER BABBITT: Piece-by-piece.

12       CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right. So I think um most everybody  
13 would agree, you've mentioned it, it was a long day.

14       COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

15       CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, how were mitigating actions  
16 managed? So you mentioned there was an import period, you  
17 were letting folks off early in the afternoon to get rest  
18 for the next underway period.

19       COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

20       CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Any other risk mitigations for crew  
21 rest, rest/work balance, any other mitigation?

22       COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh, I think during the watch bill  
23 construction we did some, uh we did some risk mitigation in  
24 watch bill construction. We knew going into it that the  
25 deck crew, the guys are going to be doing Flight Ops, doing

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1 Boat Ops and they had done the Sea and Anchor detail as  
2 well before that, anchoring as well were going to be worked  
3 very, very hard but I think that the -- so the discussion  
4 that we had had was you know, who was on deck, driving the  
5 ship at the time and so we knew, we felt we knew who was  
6 going to be worked really hard as compared to who was not  
7 and so I think that we identified those people, you know,  
8 prior to. So in the watch bill construction I think that's  
9 where we identified that.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay and uh we've asked about the  
11 watch bill construction.

12 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Watch bill was passed for approval  
14 when?

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: So we started working on that  
16 watch bill probably four or five days before that. We did  
17 six different revisions to it. So, I wish I could pull out  
18 the folder, but I think it's behind crumpled steel inside  
19 the CSO's desk.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I think we might have it.

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: Do you have it? That would be  
22 great if you did.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I believe so.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: We have the final watch bill.

25 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So, needless to say several revisions?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Several revisions.

2           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And it was revised based on what?

3           COMMANDER BABBITT: It was revised based on how  
4 comfortable we were with the watch standers, what the  
5 construction was between the Officer of the Deck and the  
6 CIC Watch Officer so if we felt that they worked well  
7 together or if we felt that they were, uh it wasn't an A-  
8 Team watch bill that we were putting up on the deck but we  
9 moved people around to have more experience up on deck.

10          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

11          COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh, so that's really what we were  
12 looking at more than anything was the construction on what  
13 the teams looked like for experience and for, for backup  
14 really.

15          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, so regarding the revisions, were  
16 they any OODs or OOD/CIC watch stander combinations that  
17 you had concerns about?

18          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes. Yep, so we originally had  
19 Ensign [REDACTED] [phonetic] up on deck and decided to put  
20 him down on the, down as a CIC Watch Officer because we  
21 didn't feel that he had enough experience, and we were  
22 planning on switching him back up to the bridge seven days  
23 later once we got down to the South China Sea. Um, for the  
24 life of me, I've been thinking about it. I don't remember  
25 who it was that we switched him out with, uh it was, I am

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1 fairly certain that Lieutenant [REDACTED], we had  
2 originally had down as a CIC watch officer and then brought  
3 her up to the bridge because she had more experience.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So the watch standers that had duty,  
5 um that night, for the midwatch in particular.

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yep.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, when did they uh get notification  
8 that they would be standing watch?

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: Oh they, the assigned watch bill  
10 was probably two days before that.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Understand. And uh your  
12 particular assessment of the experience of the watch team  
13 you had that night?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, um, so my particular  
15 assessment of the Officer of the Deck, Junior Officer of  
16 the Deck. I felt the Junior Officer of the Deck was fairly  
17 weak, Lieutenant [REDACTED]. Uh, we had a very new Conning  
18 Officer. I thought that the Officer of the Deck was uh a  
19 little bit below average uh but she had experience coming  
20 in and out. She was an experienced Japan sailor, uh so my  
21 assessment, my assessment of the watch station was um the  
22 Officer of the Deck was okay. The rest of her team was  
23 kind of weak but the, the CIC watch standers I thought were  
24 very good. We had our best Surface watch stander which is  
25 [REDACTED] in there and we thought that [REDACTED] would

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1 be able to provide adequate backup for that, for that watch  
2 section.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And you mentioned that JOOD was weak.  
4 Can you provide, provide information about that?

5 COMMANDER BABBITT: So she is a, she is a third tour  
6 division officer and her personality isn't one where she is  
7 going to jump straight in to say, "I see something wrong, I  
8 am going to do something about it." She had not, she was  
9 about at the end of our tour here, but she has not  
10 qualified as an Officer of the Deck, so I didn't, we didn't  
11 feel like, and I didn't feel like her skillset was good  
12 enough to be able to be an Officer of the Deck yet.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay and a little more expansion of  
14 your assessment of the JOOD?

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Below average?

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: Below average. To be 100 percent  
18 honest with you, I didn't trust her.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Why is that?

20 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh because I'd, because when she  
21 had been down in CIC as a watch stander several times, feet  
22 up on the, feet up on the tables, um she had been counseled  
23 on it. Um, wasn't real comfortable with her up on deck.  
24 You know thinking, thinking back over this many, many, many  
25 times you know, one of the greatest failings that I've had



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1 is that I didn't say anything, but I didn't. I did not  
2 feel that she was a good watch stander.

3 LCDR [REDACTED]: Just, just for the record.

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

5 LCDR [REDACTED]: What is the name of the OOD you're  
6 talking about?

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh, Lieutenant JG [REDACTED].

8 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So um, you provide an example of the  
10 feet up on the desk.

11 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What do you think that was indicative  
13 of?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh, I think that she was very  
15 confident in her skill set.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Would you say overconfident then?

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir, I would.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And were you aware of any issues that  
19 she had with her fellow JO's on board?

20 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, not particularly.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: No, I didn't know of any conflicts  
23 that she had had with anybody. I know that she was  
24 fairly close to the Training Officer, but other than

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1 that I hadn't seen anything that she had any  
2 conflicts.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And um, who's, who's your best OOD?

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: The Navigator.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: The Navigator?

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: Mm-hmm.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And um had he come up in any  
8 conversations about this particular watch that night?

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: I don't think so.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: In the revisions? Okay.

11 COMMANDER BABBITT: No, sir.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And um, how about your experience,  
13 your assessment of the rest of the bridge crew?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh, I thought the rest of the  
15 bridge crew was, was just fine. I mean the Quartermaster  
16 of the Watch was a First Class Petty Officer and he does a  
17 good job. Um, the Conning Officer, he was brand new. I  
18 shouldn't say brand new, he has been with us for, he was  
19 with us for a couple of months before going off to school  
20 and then coming back, very little experience. Didn't have  
21 much to worry about him thinking back to whomever was in  
22 the Helmsman or the Helmsman, I didn't have any particular  
23 worry about any of the Helmsmen.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I see. So you'd mentioned that again  
25 the composition of the bridge crew and there was some

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1 deliberation and revisions on who was assigned on that  
2 night.

3           COMMANDER BABBITT:  Yep.

4           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]:  Is that something that you are aware  
5 of when you're putting together the bridge crew teams,  
6 matching um, talent, experience to make the team and have  
7 you any observations of other teams maybe adjustments in  
8 other teams where you have seen things that just didn't  
9 work well?

10           COMMANDER BABBITT:  So we've done that down in CIC if  
11 we, you know, seeing if a mostly CIC Watch Officer/TAO  
12 interaction, um we've made adjustments there but mostly it  
13 is up on the bridge that we have, we've deliberated over  
14 the watch team and between the bridge and CIC and who is  
15 backing up whom.  That's who we really looked at.

16           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]:  I see.  And had you noticed any um,  
17 did you have any concerns, so we talked about individuals,  
18 did you have any concerns about this particular bridge team  
19 composition as in their relationship with one another,  
20 their ability to communicate, uh that type of thing?

21           COMMANDER BABBITT:  Not particularly.

22           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]:  Okay.

23           COMMANDER BABBITT:  No, not particularly.

24           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]:  Okay.  Um, how often does the CO get  
25 called, um, when you're navigating in a, in a situation

1 like this? What's your, what's your impressions of how  
2 often that call, how often he gets called and uh if he does  
3 get called when he should?

4       COMMANDER BABBITT: So if we're underway I'll, just as  
5 a matter of talking to the Captain in the morning, I'll ask  
6 him how much sleep he got. And you know typically they'll  
7 say between him, between Commander Benson and Commander  
8 [REDACTED], they'll say, "Oh I got a few hours of sleep  
9 consecutive" but um the impression that I got from him --  
10 from both of them is that they got calls on a fairly  
11 regular basis to give them contact reports.

12       CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I see. Uh, did you see any impediment  
13 to any of the bridge watch standers giving the CO call if  
14 they needed to?

15       COMMANDER BABBITT: I didn't see any impediment to  
16 doing that. I think the uh, maybe the volume of traffic if  
17 they felt like they were calling them too often, you know,  
18 that's the only impediment which is completely backwards  
19 from what it should be, but.

20       CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I see.

21       COMMANDER BABBITT: But no, I didn't see any  
22 impediment that would've suggested that he would not get a  
23 call if needed be.

24       CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Were there any, uh, adjustments ever  
25 made to standing orders based on traffic and risk?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: So there was, was an adjustment  
2 in the night orders that the Captain gave to [REDACTED],  
3 instead of 500 yards left or right of track to avoid  
4 shipping he gave her 1,000 yards to, uh because well he  
5 trusted her.

6           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

7           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So just to be clear, that amendment in  
8 the night orders, that 1,000 yards cross-track latitude was  
9 for the expressed purpose of allowing the OD to maneuver.

10          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

11          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: To manage contacts?

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: Correct.

13          LCDR [REDACTED]: That might result in CO not being  
14 called when otherwise he would normally be called?

15          COMMANDER BABBITT: Could be. Yes, sir. If she  
16 stayed on the exact same PIM track and he allowed her to  
17 maneuver for shipping.

18          LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay.

19          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um how about reports made to the  
20 Captain. Do you know the, um, if there has been any  
21 discussion about um if a report needs to be full and  
22 complete prior to being passed to the Captain, if it is  
23 okay for it to be passed partial and then the rest to be  
24 determined later? Do you have a feel for how that gets  
25 made?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: I think that the, uh, the general  
2 feeling up on the bridge is uh, when you make a contact  
3 report, you make a full contact report. Cause, especially  
4 Commander [REDACTED], would grouse to me about incomplete contact  
5 reports, and so I think there is an expectation up on the  
6 bridge to -- when you're gonna to call you're gonna call  
7 with a complete contact report.

8           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And were you aware of the, uh,  
9 practice of only the OOD calling the Captain?

10          COMMANDER BABBITT: Mm-hmm I was.

11          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: That was the standard? I understand.

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: Standard, right because the  
13 contact reports that would be given by Junior Office of the  
14 Deck would not be complete or sometimes not legible as in  
15 he would not get the clear picture of what's actually going  
16 on with the contact. Just experience.

17          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I understand. Um, so are you familiar  
18 with how duties are normally split-up among, um, bridge  
19 teams in a particular this bridge team?

20          COMMANDER BABBITT: As in?

21          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: As in like the OOD tells the CONN, "I  
22 want you to focus on this, JOOD I want you to focus on  
23 this?" I recognize that every bridge team has their own  
24 little way of doing things, um are you familiar with how  
25 typically it happens on the Fitzgerald?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: So for this particular bridge  
2 team, I don't know exactly what, how the Officer of the  
3 Deck split up the, split up the responsibilities. I will  
4 tell you that we do talk about bridge resource management.  
5 The Officer of the Deck, "You need to stand back and you  
6 need to keep a big picture, tell people what to do." I  
7 think people, especially Officers of the Deck will get  
8 tunnel visioned into, "I gotta do the radio, I gotta do the  
9 contact report, I gotta do the radar" because they have the  
10 experience in doing it. But for this particular watch  
11 section I don't know how she split up the duties. But  
12 typically from what I've seen a Junior Officer of the Deck  
13 would be told to, uh to guard radio circuits and then also,  
14 and also guard the, guard the radar for contact pictures  
15 and the Conning Officer will check bridge wings before  
16 making turns after being told where to go.

17           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. And have you personally  
18 observed, um, various watch teams onboard Fitzgerald, ah,  
19 doing their standing watch on the bridge?

20           COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure, certainly have.

21           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And, uh so, um, from your past  
22 experience in being afloat how would you assess that  
23 Fitzgerald does it compared with other vessels you have  
24 been on?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh, I think that we, we did more  
2 things in a standard way here such as, you know it is a  
3 very small thing, but the Conning Officer will announce,  
4 "CONN is the center line, or CONN is on the port bridge-  
5 wing, CONN is on the starboard bring-wing," ah whereas  
6 other ships I've been on haven't done things like, I have  
7 not said that. So, I think there is some, a little more  
8 formality that we had done that we do onboard Fitzgerald,  
9 um it is just a very small, very small instance. I think  
10 that, that we have gotten better over my time, it hasn't  
11 been too much time, but I think we have gotten better over  
12 my time of acting more professional, requiring people to  
13 pay more attention to their their um watch station. I  
14 think there is a time especially when you are up in the Sea  
15 of Japan doing a knot and a half for weeks on end where  
16 people stand around the ARPA and shoot the shit way too  
17 much, too often.

18           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

19           COMMANDER BABBITT: But I think we've gotten better  
20 about that. Um, as compared to other ships I think that we  
21 are above average then what I had on the cruiser, above  
22 average what I had on the destroyer before that and then  
23 probably about the same as on the frigate.

24           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So I understand that, um, AIS on the  
25 Fitzgerald was not integrated into the VMS or ARPA.



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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: It's not.

2           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So why wasn't, why wasn't it, why  
3 isn't it, um integrated into VMS and ARPA on the  
4 Fitzgerald?

5           COMMANDER BABBITT: Sir, I don't know. I, I've never  
6 asked the question. The AIS readout is looking at the  
7 ARPA, so right up here, it's very close. If you're looking  
8 at a radar, radar picture you reach up and you look at the  
9 AIS up above it but I never asked why.

10          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So, I uh understand that the AIS  
11 laptop was in CIC.

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: Mm-hmm.

13          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um and on other vessels it's up on the  
14 bridge.

15          COMMANDER BABBITT: Okay.

16          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Was there any uh, thought,  
17 consideration of putting it up on the bridge, had it been  
18 up on the bridge before?

19          COMMANDER BABBITT: It hasn't been up on the bridge  
20 since I've been here. It has been in CIC.

21          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And what are your thoughts on that?

22          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I, I think it is good to have it down  
23 in CIC because it provides backup. And well, should  
24 provide backup. And I felt like the bridge watch, the  
25 bridge watch teams were proficient in using the AIS readout

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1 on the, that was mounted up there, and so I thought that  
2 the AIS laptop in CIC was just good for backup.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Um, had there been any climate  
4 assessments onboard the Fitzgerald during your time or are  
5 you aware of any available to you when you got there?

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: So when I, yes, when we did a  
7 command climate survey it was briefed -- it was briefed  
8 right when I showed up, um and we were getting ready to  
9 initiate the command climate survey for the post-change  
10 command, command climate survey.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. That's required by?

12 COMMANDER BABBITT: That's required by instruction.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: So 90 days post, no later than 90  
15 days post change of command to do a command climate survey,  
16 DEOCS Survey.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: We do the same thing actually.

18 COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So I imagine the questions are  
20 similar.

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: Probably pretty close.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Any concerns from your review of  
23 previous command climate surveys?

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, let me think. The concerns  
25 that, that I had read were Op Tempo, the Command Master

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1 Chief got beat up pretty good in the last one too. There  
2 were a lot of comments about --

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Personal?

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: Personal.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: About the man, that is the same  
6 Command Master Chief that is on board now?

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: It is. It is, it was more  
8 personal, personality driven, didn't feel like, didn't feel  
9 like, sailors being taken care of.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What's your thoughts about that?

11 COMMANDER BABBITT: I think that is completely wrong.  
12 I think that he does a, I think that he does a great job of  
13 keeping the sailors first and foremost in his mind, and he  
14 also does a good job of telling me as well as the CO what  
15 his view are. So, I did not agree with that.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Where do you think that criticism  
17 comes from?

18 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, I think came out of the  
19 Chief's Mess. There were specific comments in there that  
20 were made by identified Chief Petty Officers. I think that  
21 is where it comes from. I couldn't tell you the genesis of  
22 it. No idea. Um, I am trying to think of what other, what  
23 other problems that we had and there was, you know, the  
24 Senior Watch Officer, previous Senior Watch Officer got  
25 beat up pretty good in the DEOCS Survey. Um, she was not

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1 well, well-received, well-liked. But as far as trends go I  
2 am trying to think of any type, any type of trends that  
3 would lead to complacent behavior or anything like that and  
4 I can't, I can't recall anything like that in the DEOCS  
5 Survey that would indicate anything more than the Command  
6 Master Chief "is not taking care of us."

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Gotcha. Had you planned, based on the  
8 previous, you know, this is a survey done before you got  
9 onboard.

10 COMMANDER BABBITT: Correct.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Had you planned any follow-up actions  
12 based on anything that was in the DEOCS Survey?

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: I had not.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: No, I had not.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So new command, you know.

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right. New command.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Although XO would [inaudible-00:43:45]  
19 the CO.

20 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right, it was a new command and we  
21 were planning on doing another DEOCS Survey right  
22 afterward, so we had gotten the results, and I had been  
23 onboard two months, and then we were going to do another  
24 one after that.

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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: When was the last one done, I'm sorry,  
2 approximately?

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: So, I got onboard March 3rd so the  
4 results probably came in in February, so that means they  
5 probably did them in December of 2016.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. So likely a lot of the same  
7 issues existed.

8 COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure. I would think so.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: When you got onboard than it was  
10 before.

11 COMMANDER BABBITT: I would think so.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Any discussion with the CO about any  
13 command climate issues or any plans?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, with the current CO I would  
15 say no. With Commander Benson I'd say no. Um, thinking  
16 back to the conversations with Commander [REDACTED] I should say  
17 that I can't recall coming up with a plan of action for  
18 correcting some things in the DEOCS Survey. I can't  
19 recall

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, thank you. Let me get back on  
21 the AIS. So we understand that AIS was not transmitting  
22 but you were receiving.

23 COMMANDER BABBITT: Correct.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, was any consideration given for  
25 the Fitzgerald, we understand it's a Navy practice not to

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1 transmit. Any consideration for turning on the AIS to  
2 transmit when you're in heavy traffic areas.

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: We did not talk about it. There  
4 was no consideration that I recall.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do the Captain's standing orders  
6 address that?

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, not to the best of my  
8 knowledge. Thinking back to that section I do not think  
9 that Captain's standing orders call for transmitting AIS in  
10 heavy traffic. I think it considers it think it says  
11 consider but I do not recall it saying transmit AIS in  
12 heavy traffic situations.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. And you didn't transmit at all  
14 including in the VTSS.

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: Ah, no.

16 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Have you ever debriefed in the Nav  
18 Brief or other any near misses or close calls?

19 COMMANDER BABBITT: Oh, yes. We had, we had a near  
20 miss pulling into Sasebo for the change of command weekend  
21 and that was the uh the night, the night before, we had a  
22 near miss and we debriefed that at Sea and Anchor, at the  
23 Sea and Anchor debrief the next morning.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And uh, who called the brief?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: So we do a debrief after every Sea  
2 and Anchor.

3           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, got it.

4           COMMANDER BABBITT: And so that, so it happened the  
5 night before. We had already briefed the Sea and Anchor  
6 detail so we went into Sea and Anchor detail, pulled into  
7 port in Sasebo and then debriefed it on the port bridge  
8 wing.

9           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: In this particular incident could you  
10 talk about it a little bit?

11          COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure. It was, we were in the  
12 Tsushima Strait and I was not present for it, it was  
13 probably about midnight as well, I say as well, but it was  
14 probably about midnight, one o'clock in the morning. It  
15 was a heavy traffic situation. The Combat Systems Officer  
16 was on watch down in CIC. Uh, between him and the OOD were  
17 not feeling comfortable, so they had Commander [REDACTED] come up  
18 and he helped sort out the contact picture, a lot of costal  
19 track, a lot of large traffic going in and out of Tsushima.  
20 Commander [REDACTED] was heading down to his, back down to his  
21 cabin, and he had called and asked for the and he directed  
22 the TAO to come up to the bridge. As the TAO came up to  
23 the bridge, and again, I was not here for it. As the TAO  
24 came up to the bridge, um they, the ship had maneuvered to  
25 open a CPA, a very close CPA, and as it opened another ship

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1 showed up from behind the original one and they went all  
2 back full and uh to avoid the situation. Um, but the TAO  
3 was on the bridge for that. He helped direct the actions  
4 for it. That was debriefed as a heavy traffic, if you need  
5 help, you've got to call, call down to CIC there, the TAO  
6 will help you with this.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: As in the lesson learned, what is get  
8 the TAO up on the bridge.

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right. Right, more experience.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Any other lessons learned from that?

11 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: That you can remember?

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: Not that I can remember.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: In your reconstruction and debriefing,  
15 debriefing of that event was AIS a discussion point and do  
16 you recall whether either or both of those ships were  
17 recognized to be transmitting on AIS?

18 COMMANDER BABBITT: I can't recall that we discussed  
19 AIS during debrief.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: These were large --

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: These were large.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: --vessels that would otherwise by  
23 national standards be required to transmit?

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: Absolutely, oh sure, over 300 tons  
25 absolutely.



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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

2 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, did you and the CO ever discuss  
4 any concerns with the schedule, the watch bill or manning?

5 COMMANDER BABBITT: Manning in particular? Um, we had  
6 several discussions on our manning and we're manned well  
7 below the fleet standard.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: In terms of number of personnel?

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: Number of personnel, NECs required  
10 mostly down in, mostly in Combat for Air Intercept  
11 Controllers, Gunner's Mates. We do not have a  
12 Quartermaster, Quartermaster Chief. We are undermanned for  
13 Quartermasters.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do you know what your Fit Fill is off  
15 the top of your head?

16 COMMANDER BABBITT: Fit Fill is supposed to be 95 and  
17 90, I'm sorry 92 and 95.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Mm-hmm.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So Fit Fill is? Can you explain that,  
20 Fit Fill?

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: So Fill, the number of bodies we  
22 have on board. Fit the number of bodies that are meeting  
23 the right NEC requirement for the ship, ship is supposed to  
24 have.

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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right. Understand. And do you track  
2 by metrics ah, qualifications, you know competency levels  
3 for particular bill assignments? I'd say overall so  
4 qualifications to fill say the TAO uh if you've got a body  
5 there in TAO, if they're fully qualified and met all the  
6 competency requirements.

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: So we do a board process for the  
8 TAOs, the people that we track their, um track their --  
9 should I say competency on paper would be our Air Intercept  
10 Controllers and out ASTACs but we do not, we do not keep  
11 the wheel books on you've done this number of hours of  
12 watching you've done, this number of Flight Quarters and  
13 this number of Sea and Anchor details. We do not keep, do  
14 not keep that.

15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I see.

16 COMMANDER BABBITT: Not as practice.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So Fit Fill um issues, any concerns  
18 expressed um above the Captain's level um, essentially  
19 between the command and I'm guessing COMDESRON?

20 COMMANDER BABBITT: Absolutely.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Regarding this Fit Fill issue?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: Absolutely. It is a constant,  
23 there's a constant conversation between me, N1 um about,  
24 about who it is that we are prioritizing for getting  
25 onboard. We've been without a Quartermaster Chief for over

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1 a year. We just have, the inventory must not be there to  
2 be able to get somebody onboard for it.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And what has been their answer?

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: So their answer is they help us  
5 using Billet-Based Distribution and using the tools that we  
6 have, so we send our top priorities to the DESRON. The  
7 DESRON will help us either reshape it or, or send up to the  
8 TYCOM our requirements to be advertised, billets advertised  
9 in the Billet-Based Distribution and then that goes from  
10 the TYCOM over to Fleet Forces Command for re-racking the  
11 stacking and then actually uploading in and advertising  
12 those billets for coming over here. That has been a  
13 conversation as well as conversation of getting people to  
14 come out here to Seventh Fleet and we have a problem with  
15 E5s to E7s. Um there's nothing that I can say as a metric  
16 that says they don't want to come out here and they will  
17 opt out, but we get the feeling that people will opt out of  
18 coming out here using the medical, using medical reasons,  
19 cause we will get a TG meaning a tentative gain, becomes a  
20 prospective gain until they do not qualify medically,  
21 family does not qualify medically, and they then billet  
22 goes away and goes back into the re-advertisement, so it is  
23 a big deal that we have out here.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So, so what was your Fit Fill going  
25 into the (inaudible - 00:53:02)?

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: So, I want to say it was a 91 and  
2 88.

3           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: 91 fill, 88 fit.

4           COMMANDER BABBITT: I want to say it is right around  
5 there. I had 54, 54 billets that were unfilled. Now I did  
6 have some excess, uh people that were considered in excess,  
7 but I had 54 billets that were unfilled the last time I did  
8 a rack and stack of uh required NECs.

9           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So we've heard some comments about  
10 this is Seventh Fleet. Are you familiar with that  
11 sentiment?

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: Absolutely.

13          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Like this is what it is here out in  
14 Seventh Fleet. I think you uh just alluded to it. Could  
15 you describe what that is when people are saying, "This is  
16 Seventh Fleet?"

17          COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, so we say, "This is Seventh  
18 Fleet" we don't have a training cycle. We are always on  
19 mission, that's what "This is the Seventh Fleet" is. We  
20 are always on mission. So we get underway and we go, we go  
21 into BMD Ops in the Sea of Japan whether we are BMD  
22 certified or not BMD certified because there is a  
23 requirement to, there is a requirement to be able to fill  
24 the mission and so we, in Seventh Fleet, I think that we  
25 take pride in the fact that we are mission ready. So

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1 that's, that's the "This is Seventh Fleet" mantra, like we  
2 are underway and we are ready to go.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So considering um that kind of demands  
4 on you and the Fit Fill issues.

5 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, and the um, reluctance of folks to  
7 want to come here to fill the billets, what is your  
8 assessment in terms of risk um, as to the operation of the  
9 Fitzgerald?

10 COMMANDER BABBITT: As to this operation?

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I'd say operation in general?

12 COMMANDER BABBITT: In general?

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Yep.

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, I'd say that, I'd say that  
15 there is a moderate risk for doing somethings that we're  
16 asked to do based on the number of people that we, the  
17 number of people that -- and having the right NECs and  
18 having the right people sitting in the right place. I  
19 think there's a, there's a moderate risk. You know, I've,  
20 I've said to other people, you look at some of the Op tempo  
21 that we have out here for USS Stethem in particular.  
22 They're going to be underway for 15 of 18 months. This is  
23 a Rack Code of 2, will happen in time, just based on being  
24 underway and doing job.

25 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What does that mean, Rack Code of 2?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: So risk assessment.

2           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Oh, I see. Serious?

3           COMMANDER BABBITT: Serious. Rack, overall Rack Code-

4 of 2.

5           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: One, one is critical, is that high-

6 risk critical or is that just criticality of the mission?

7           COMMANDER BABBITT: Criticality, criticality of the

8 casualty.

9           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Oh, I see, so you're ranked as. So

10 likely to occur and catastrophic gets you a 1?

11          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes.

12          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Rack Code of 2 is may occur,

13 catastrophic or probably occur, critical, likely to occur

14 marginal.

15          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yep.

16          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

17          COMMANDER BABBITT: So it's, it's anecdotal, I mean.

18          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I understand. So you are typically

19 operating in this realm.

20          COMMANDER BABBITT: I would say that we do quite a bit

21 of that.

22          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. So let me talk about one more

23 thing then I will turn it over to my colleagues.

24          COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, about rest and work. So long day,  
2 we talked about it.

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: If, if you could um construct an  
5 adequate work/rest time for this particular day. Let's  
6 talk about maybe the OOD that would eventually have the  
7 midwatch that day.

8 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um how would, how would you construct  
10 it. Like what do you think if quarters is at 6:00, right?

11 COMMANDER BABBITT: Mm-hmm,

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Liberty expired --

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: Liberty expired at 6:00.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I'm sorry and your OOD is going to be  
15 on watch at 10:00, 10:00 to 2:00.

16 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, what would be your, how would you  
18 construct a good work/rest for that type of work schedule?

19 COMMANDER BABBITT: You know, I'm, after I go back  
20 thinking of the times when we've been underway for a while  
21 and I mean this is a, we weren't doing anything -- we, we  
22 were in port before this. Would I, would I, uh until then  
23 require rest times for the OOD. Looking back on it I would  
24 say yes, but I don't know that I would of.

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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Well I guess I'm looking at, if you,  
2 if you had full control over the schedule, obviously you  
3 had a very challenging day.

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: For someone with liberty expiring at  
6 0600.

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yep.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And with watch at 1000.

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What do you think would be a good  
11 balance of work and rest? It's a balance of course.

12 COMMANDER BABBITT: It's a balance.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What do you think would be a good, um  
14 balance of work and rest for that particular schedule?

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: Well I think that the, during the  
16 afternoon watch time, the midwatch people should not be,  
17 should not be tasked during that time. I mean if I could  
18 have it a perfect way, I would say that the midwatch people  
19 should not be tasked during the afternoon watch and it's a  
20 good five hours' worth.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And ah, in this particular case, were  
22 there any guidance or restrictions placed on those who  
23 would later stand the midwatch or anybody else for that  
24 reason?



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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: No. I did not direct Captain, to  
2 the best of my knowledge, did not direct and say, "You go  
3 and sleep right now."

4           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So it's really left to the individual  
5 to make sure they are ready for the watch?

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

7           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

8           LCDR BEAUDOIN: So in the night orders you had  
9 mentioned ah, some guidance to Lieutenant [REDACTED]?

10          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes.

11          LCDR [REDACTED]: Including 20 knot speed of advance?

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes.

13          LCDR [REDACTED]: To get ahead of PIM?

14          COMMANDER BABBITT: Correct.

15          LCDR [REDACTED]: You feel that that statement as  
16 written in the night orders applied undue pressure to  
17 maintain 20 knots?

18          COMMANDER BABBITT: I don't think so. I don't think  
19 it, I don't think it did because that is something that we  
20 regularly do. That is something that we, as a regular  
21 basis, if we are going to do, we know we're are going to be  
22 doing engineering drills the next day, we will say, "Want  
23 to get four hours ahead of PIM." So I don't think that put  
24 any undue pressure on her to continue doing 20 knots  
25 despite traffic, uh despite traffic density. I don't think

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1 that it did because previous to that underway times, it's  
2 something we do on a normal basis. Now, yeah I don't think  
3 that it created any undue pressure.

4 LCDR [REDACTED]: I'm sorry, I had a couple of just a  
5 background --

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

7 LCDR [REDACTED]: -- questions that we didn't ask you.

8 COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

9 LCDR [REDACTED]: May I get your age please?

10 COMMANDER BABBITT: [REDACTED].

11 LCDR [REDACTED]: And how long have you been in the  
12 Navy?

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: Ah, [REDACTED] years, [REDACTED] in October.

14 LCDR [REDACTED]: And your commissioning source?

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: OCS.

16 LCDR [REDACTED]: Thank you. Sorry about that.

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: Mm-hmm,

18 LCDR [REDACTED]: I pass to you Captain if you've got  
19 something.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How many transits have you personally  
21 done either inbound or outbound on the PIM track that was  
22 plotted that night?

23 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh, so this would be my first  
24 outbound transit and my first inbound transit was 10 days  
25 before that.

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1           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. What time of day did the  
2 inbound transit occur?

3           COMMANDER BABBITT: It was, so that was late  
4 afternoon, early evening. We were pier side by about 1800.

5           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, so you would have been  
6 transiting the collision area, and so by the way I'm an  
7 FDNF guy, I just actually CO and XO, so I'm familiar with  
8 what this all looks like.

9           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

10          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Let's say, what time would it have  
11 been when you were passing at the midpoint between Izu  
12 Peninsula and Yoshima?

13          COMMANDER BABBITT: So here, we were doing 27 knots  
14 making 29 with the current behind us when we were coming  
15 inbound, so this was probably, this was probably about  
16 1700.

17          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

18          COMMANDER BABBITT: 1800 or so.

19          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Sun starting to go down?

20          COMMANDER BABBITT: It was still pretty bright out.

21          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, were you on the bridge?

22          COMMANDER BABBITT: I was on the bridge.

23          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, uh how far back the PIM line had  
24 you come up to the bridge?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: So we had, so we came into port  
2 because we went cold, dark, and quiet the night before.

3           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Yeah, number three switchboard.

4           COMMANDER BABBITT: Number three switchboard.

5           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Fire.

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: Right. Had three switchboard  
7 fire, went cold, dark and quiet and so we picked up speed  
8 and so we were doing our navigation brief, navigation brief  
9 about we were probably around here when we finished up our  
10 navigation brief, so I probably got up to the bridge  
11 somewhere around here and then was up here for I would say  
12 for the rest of -- I got up to the bridge probably about  
13 here, cause I remember seeing the island off the starboard  
14 side as we were heading out.

15           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Did you come up with the  
16 Captain? Were you both on the bridge or did he join you  
17 later?

18           COMMANDER BABBITT: He joined me later.

19           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Had the Captain been on the  
20 bridge at all before or when he came up after Nav Brief and  
21 after you were on the bridge was that the first time he had  
22 come up.

23           COMMANDER BABBITT: I don't recall. I don't know,  
24 sir. I know that I came up, I came up to, I came up prior  
25 to the Nav Brief to recommend approval for the, for the

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1 inbound transit. I don't know when the Captain came up. I  
2 don't recall.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, how would you characterize based  
4 on your observation, I know you've only been onboard about  
5 three months.

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: Mm-hmm.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How would you characterize the  
8 relationship and the coordination in general between the  
9 bridge and CIC on Surface Contact Management?

10 COMMANDER BABBITT: Work in progress. I think that it  
11 was I think it was poor but getting better.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: I think that --

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What's the, what's your assessment of  
15 the reason for it being poor?

16 COMMANDER BABBITT: I don't think that the, I don't  
17 think that CIC was aggressive in pushing up MoBoard  
18 solutions and recommendations and I don't think that the  
19 bridge was aggressive in asking for backup.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So, push-pull, failure on both sides?

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir. So what we had been  
22 doing over the last two months in the night orders is  
23 directing interaction. JOOD will call the, you will call  
24 the Surface Watch Stander, you will do MoBoards and then  
25 you will report to me in the morning on which MoBoards you

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1 did and you will show them to me. So we had been doing  
2 directive interaction between CIC and the bridge to try to  
3 improve that relationship.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Was that directed by the CO or you?

5 COMMANDER BABBITT: By me and the CO.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: As owner of the process.

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: So in the night orders top  
10 section, I write mine, the Captain writes his portion of it  
11 and pretty consistently we would talk about the  
12 relationship between CIC and bridge and backing each other  
13 up and doing what works solutions together and talking to  
14 each other about recommendations because we saw that as an  
15 area of improvement that needed to be made.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So recognizing the performance, um  
17 you've made some, some areas for improvement.

18 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Through that forced interaction. Any  
20 other um, any other actions by you or the CO to mitigate  
21 that risk or control that risk that you identified?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: Ah so we, one thing we did was we  
23 took away the chat operation from the TAO so he's not  
24 sitting there looking at chat the entire time that made the  
25 --

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1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Is that chat between CIC and the  
2 bridge.

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: No chat, off-ship chat.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Oh, okay.

5 COMMANDER BABBITT: So talking to Alpha Zula, talking  
6 to all the other entities that are asking for information  
7 from us.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I see.

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: Took that away from him or her and  
10 had CIC Watch Officers monitoring chat along with other CIC  
11 watch standers.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Mm-hmm.

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: To do that to try to put their  
14 focus up on the large screen displays instead of on the  
15 chat box that was right there.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How was that discovered by the way?

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, it was the Senior Watch  
18 Officer came to me and he said, "I'd like to do this" and I  
19 said, "I think that is a fantastic idea." Let's do this.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Yeah.

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: And so we, we took a keyboard away  
22 from them and ah, to get him more focused on what's going  
23 on.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: That's good. That's a good behavior.  
25 Um, any, any other interventions or issues brought up like

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1 that from anybody not only the Senior Watch Stander? They  
2 noticed, "Hey we can do that better" and they brought it to  
3 your attention?

4       COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, I think there was some, the  
5 CIC watch standers recognize that they needed improvement  
6 in their MoBoard working for contact, contact management in  
7 general, and I think that they were working on that  
8 internally. But other specific I can't say that either I  
9 directed or it was brought to me other than the chat and  
10 the contact management, the interaction between the bridge  
11 and CIC.

12       CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do you feel if there was an issue like  
13 the chat or anything else that, that would be brought to  
14 your attention?

15       COMMANDER BABBITT: I do. I do. I feel like it would  
16 sir.

17       CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And can you think of any other  
18 interventions like that that you or the CO had to make  
19 based on observed behavior or performance?

20       COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, I'll tell ya, you know you ask  
21 that question, I'm thinking now to the Aft Lookout, I had  
22 to do an intervention to get the Aft Lookout to stop  
23 migrating into the field control pack and put him back Aft  
24 and next back Aft while looking out. I think there was  
25 some complacency in that probably because it got cold,



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1 people started to come in so I, I had an intervention. I  
2 made sure that they were standing back Aft. Did rounds to  
3 make sure they were standing back aft and then also talked  
4 to the watch standers to tell them why I it was I felt that  
5 it was important cause they're the last line of defense for  
6 people falling overboard and then looking out for contacts.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Did the Aft Lookout have the right  
8 gear.

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir. Smoke float, life-ring,  
10 binoculars, uh headset, headset for talking to the bridge -  
11 -

12 LCDR [REDACTED]: How about foul weather gear. The  
13 concern was they were cold and wet. Were they warm and  
14 dry?

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: So they would have a foul weather  
16 jacket on but the pumpkin suits would -- I never felt it  
17 was too cold for a pumpkin suit and there was not one that  
18 was on station ready to go if they wanted one. If they  
19 wanted to jump in one right away.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So getting back to the bridge CIC  
21 poor, then you started working on it. I am going to assume  
22 that was already, that dynamic was already in place when  
23 you showed up three months ago?

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: I think so.

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1 LCDR [REDACTED]: It had just started when you crossed  
2 the brow.

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: I can't imagine that it would.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: You've got qualified OODs. You got  
5 qualified TAOs. You got qualified SWCCs.

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Captain standing orders are clear.

8 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So why was that, what's your  
10 assessment of why that dynamic existed in the first place?  
11 What was the cause behind?

12 COMMANDER BABBITT: I think the, (pause) I would say  
13 some of the Officers of the Deck felt like that they would,  
14 they had a better idea what was going on and they didn't  
15 trust what was coming up from CIC, cause CIC would call up  
16 with a, with a contact report or with a MoBoard solution  
17 and it would be completely different from what the bridge  
18 had, so I think that there may have been a lack of trust  
19 between the two in proficiency.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Mm-hmm. Is there a lot of cross-  
21 pollination -- I'll use the word cross pollination between  
22 the bridge and CIC in terms of social or professional type  
23 of interaction or is it two different worlds that folks are  
24 working in?

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: So I would say the cross-  
2 pollination comes from how we switch out bridge watch  
3 standers and down into CIC so we do have a lot of the same  
4 people that will stand regular bridge watches, that also  
5 stand down in combat. We try to, I wouldn't say it is an  
6 even up on the bridge to compared to CIC, but we switched  
7 up people pretty regularly to get them experience in both  
8 places.

9           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So you mentioned Lieutenant [REDACTED]  
10 actually was down in CIC, yeah she's an OOD.

11          COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

12          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So, considering all the, events of  
13 that day, our discussion of the bridge team, the Nav Brief,  
14 training, the Fit Fill issues is there anything that you  
15 would do differently? Let's start on Thursday through the  
16 Friday. Anything you would have done differently knowing  
17 what you know now?

18          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yeah. Um, I think if we could  
19 have avoided doing Helicopter Operations and then the Small  
20 Boat Operations after during the anchoring I think that I  
21 would have eliminated that. But we were driven by, we  
22 wanted to finish off the nighttime certification because we  
23 could not fly helicopters at night, so we had to go do that  
24 while we had services available. Um, but if I could have

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1 waived something off I think that I would have waived that  
2 off because it happened so late.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do you have the ability to waive that  
4 off.

5 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh we could of. We could have  
6 said we're not doing this. I, think that um, I don't think  
7 that it would have been met with finger pointing and people  
8 being upset at us if we said we don't think that it is safe  
9 but we.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Is that to the N3 that that feedback  
11 goes to if you decided that we just can't pull off an  
12 operation that was required of you?

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: It would start off with the N3 but  
14 it would be a conversation between the Captain and the  
15 Commodore I guarantee you.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And have you been involved in any of  
17 those discussions where you have waived off a mission or a  
18 part of the mission before?

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, I can't say that I have based on  
20 safety, I have based on casualty.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right. You were dark and quiet as you  
22 said. Can't do it.

23 COMMANDER BABBITT: Can't do it. We have to enter  
24 port. So we were cold, dark, and quiet. We were going to  
25 do our, our MOB-E engineering 1.3 Bravo assessment and so

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1 we went cold, dark, and quiet. We said we don't think that  
2 this is safe to continue with engineering evolution so we  
3 were going to put the throttle forward and go back into  
4 port and try to fix ourselves.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And how do you think that was, would  
6 be perceived if your decision to say wave off, helo ops in  
7 this case, how do you think it would have been received at  
8 COMDESERON?

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: I think it would have been seen as  
10 a missed opportunity.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: As in a negative? Like you got...

12 COMMANDER BABBITT: I don't think so. I don't think  
13 that is the case, especially if we said we don't think it  
14 is safe to do it at this time. I don't think it would have  
15 been seen as a negative. But I think it would have been  
16 seen as a missed opportunity because we have so few  
17 opportunities to have all the assets in the right place at  
18 the right time.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Mm-hmm. So, it's, would you call it  
20 ship driven, a ship driven priority or a COMDESERON priority  
21 for that particular operation the helo ops?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: Well I think it is both. Not  
23 being able to land helicopters at night it's a problem. It  
24 is something that we knew that we had to get fixed so I  
25 think it was a priority for both of us.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So, the purpose of the Flight Ops was  
2 twofold, one was to complete your Aviation Certification.

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: Correct.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Without which you cannot conduct  
5 Flight Operations?

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: Conduct night Flight Operations.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And the other one was also serve all?

8 COMMANDER BABBITT: For HCT-12.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: HCT-12, correct?

10 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So, you were satisfying your training  
12 requirement with the helicopter squadron and you were  
13 satisfying a certification requirement for Fitzgerald?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir. Now they were not  
15 coming out to, there was not negotiated that they would be  
16 doing a certification requirement in particular. It wasn't  
17 a serve all, it was, they're coming out to do our nighttime  
18 certification, can we get there early so they can get some  
19 daytime bounces to do some pilot quality.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So it wasn't a fleet driven?

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: It was not fleet driven.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: It was arranged that, at the unit  
23 level.

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

25 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I have a few more.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN BOONE: Okay, please go ahead.

2 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, on the night in question did you  
3 get any calls?

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: No, sir. I didn't get calls.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Are you aware if the Captain got any  
6 calls?

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: Not as far as I know.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: No, he didn't get any calls.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So uh, let's talk about some people  
11 again. So we talked about SWO, about ASWO, Admin 0 --

12 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: First Lieutenant, you've kinda given  
14 us your sense.

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yep.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Talk to us about the OPS, the TAO.

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yeah. I thought that she, I think  
18 that she was weak but getting better. She is a very, very  
19 introverted person, and we have had a hard time breaking  
20 her out of the shell to be more aggressive with her  
21 viewpoints and um, and she is just a very introverted  
22 person.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: XO when you say "we" is that a  
24 conversation you were having with the CO about your TAO.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir. She has been, the  
2 conversation I've had with Commander [REDACTED], that Commander  
3 [REDACTED] and I both had along with Commander Benson over this,  
4 we recognized that she was a very introverted person, that  
5 she has a hard time talking, making herself be seen and  
6 known and stating her opinions and so that's something  
7 we've been working with her on to get better at. So I  
8 felt, I felt that she was a, the weakest of the TAOs just  
9 because she is not as aggressive as some of the others in  
10 saying "this is what needs to happen, this is what needs to  
11 happen now."

12           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How about the CSO, at his capacity as  
13 a Senior Watch Officer?

14           COMMANDER BABBITT: I thought he was very good.

15           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Any concerns about ah, maybe  
16 perception of his relationship with you or the Captain  
17 causing a problem with other more junior personnel in the  
18 ship --

19           COMMANDER BABBITT: I can see this. I can see that  
20 happening because Lieutenant [REDACTED] is older, he is, he is  
21 [REDACTED] years old. He also served with Commander Benson  
22 before, so I think I can see a perceived problem of he gets  
23 preferential treatment because of a previous relationship  
24 that he had with Commander Benson.



Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Is that a perception or is that an  
2 observation on your part?

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: I think it is a perception. I  
4 think that he is, ah, he is very good coming and talking on  
5 a person-to-person level about problems that he thinks is  
6 a, that would be a problem as compared to the other  
7 department heads. He is very comfortable coming in and  
8 sitting in my stateroom and saying, "This is what my  
9 challenges are this is how I am going to do it" as compared  
10 to others. So I think that could be perceived as, as  
11 having a closer relationship to the CO and the XO than  
12 others might have.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Do you have any sense for  
14 whether in the watch build design process that, that  
15 perception of a familiar relationship with you and the  
16 captain or [REDACTED] approach to the Senior Watch Officer  
17 role would cause folks to not, not voice concerns over  
18 watch build construction?

19 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, I don't think so.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Or have you seen any evidence of that?

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: I haven't seen any evidence of it  
22 but I think, I don't know that people, I don't know that  
23 officers or watch standers are going to voice a whole lot  
24 of opposition to what comes up because of the amount to  
25 time that the Senior Watch Officer and the Captain and

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 myself spend on the construction. I think what they feel  
2 can be seen as this is their product and this is how we  
3 want, how they want us to be.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Are department heads given the  
5 opportunity to redraft watch bills to provide their comment  
6 or other senior personnel like you know, Department OS,  
7 CPOs, top side?

8 COMMANDER BABBITT: So they provide watch bill inputs  
9 to the Senior Enlisted Watch Bill Coordinator.

10 LCDR [REDACTED]: Right.

11 COMMANDER BABBITT: And then from there it goes up to  
12 the Senior Watch Officer and I don't get the sense that  
13 it's pushed back down as this is what the XO's chops are so  
14 do you want to take another look at it before coming back  
15 up. I think once it hits the Senior Watch Officer level  
16 and then starts into the XO, CO, Senior Watch Officer loop  
17 it stays in the XO, CO corner.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So as a matter of policy once the  
19 three of you have what you think is a good, sort of final  
20 draft that doesn't get chopped, it doesn't get shot around  
21 saying, "Hey you're the Captain, sign this, you've got 24  
22 hours to give us feedback." There's not a feedback loop  
23 once it gets into the black box which is you, Senior Watch  
24 Officer, and Captain?

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir. I think it stays right  
2 there until it's posted.

3           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

4           CAPTAIN BOONE: Is that fairly normal among your  
5 experience.

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: I think so, yeah.

7           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How much interaction do you and the  
8 Captain have with the bridge and CIC just in general when  
9 at sea?

10          COMMANDER BABBITT: I would say pretty regular  
11 interaction.

12          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So, if you were to kind of map out the  
13 day in the life of the Captain and his battlefield  
14 circulation what would that look like? How often, when.

15          COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, I would say that he takes time  
16 at least once a watch during the daytime, say after  
17 midnight, 22 to after 2200, 2300 he wouldn't go up there  
18 for each one of the watches but every watch during the day  
19 I think that he makes contact with the bridge watch, bridge  
20 as well as CIC and back to CCS, all the controlling  
21 stations major ones but um, I don't know. I don't know how  
22 much he gets up in the middle of the night and goes and has  
23 contact with.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: You don't recall ever talking about,  
2 "Hey XO, you know I went up and I surprised them at 0200,  
3 here's what I found?"

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: No.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: That kind of conversation never came  
6 up?

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: No, I know that we have had  
8 conversations during the day but he has either gone up  
9 there or I have gone up there and observed behaviors that  
10 we didn't like such as sit up there in my chair for an hour  
11 and not hear any type of training going on but a whole lot  
12 of bullshitting going on in the background.

13 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How about your, what's your battle  
14 rhythm?

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: So, I usually make a round. I make  
16 a round in the morning between, up to the bridge and down  
17 to CIC and then in late afternoon I will do the same thing  
18 and then in the evenings I will make a round to all  
19 controlling stations, sit in CCS for a little while, go and  
20 talk to the, talk to CCS and then go up to the bridge and  
21 observe up on the bridge on a daily basis.

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How about between taps and reveille?

23 COMMANDER BABBITT: I have not gotten up in the middle  
24 of the night between taps and reveille to go, to go and do  
25 spot checks on the bridge.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Um, just to get sense of your,  
2 sort of your proficiency, prior to reporting in January,  
3 February of this year.

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: [REDACTED]

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] Okay. What as your, when  
6 did you last serve on a Gray Hull?

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: So I was the XO PCU for a year or  
8 so before that and then I was at, I was at CSG-15, um for  
9 about 3-1/2 years before that, War College for a year  
10 before that and then I was on Cape St. George my Department  
11 Head ride. So as far as being ship's crew it would have  
12 been November of 2010 was the last time I was a part of a  
13 crew.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay so about seven years.

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: About seven years.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Um, any other human factors  
17 that come to mind that might have influenced the way these  
18 watch teams interacted?

19 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, I think that a human factor  
20 that came into play particularly at this time is it was  
21 near watch turnover and I think some complacency may have  
22 been setting in, this is, it's just, my feeling. I was not  
23 up there. I don't know, but I think the people were coming  
24 to the end of their watch and starting to think about watch  
25 turnover and um may have lost sight of other things that

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 are going on around them. So I think that would be a human  
2 factor of preparing for watch turnover, preparing for maybe  
3 hitting the pit and being done with the watch.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Any interpersonal relationship issues  
5 between particularly the three officers on the bridge, in-  
6 between the bridge officers and the officers in CIC, the  
7 TAO and the SWO in particular?

8 COMMANDER BABBITT: Not that I am aware of. None that  
9 I'm aware of.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Are you aware that the ASW had stopped  
11 taking meals in the wardroom and she was eating on the mess  
12 decks?

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: I was not. I had not, no. I did  
14 not know that.

15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: XO, the concerns that you had with  
16 Lieutenant [REDACTED] were these expressed to the CO.

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: Clearly not. No that is by, that  
18 is the biggest failing that I feel that I had for this  
19 whole situation is that I did not speak up and tell him  
20 that I did not trust her up on the bridge.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Was that for this particular evolution  
22 or this has been, you've had this?

23 COMMANDER BABBITT: I've had this feeling.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: This opinion for a while?

25 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: When did you develop that doubt?

2 COMMANDER BABBITT: Probably a month before. I thought  
3 that she was lax up on the bridge.

4 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Any other assessments of her  
5 personality, demeanor, competence?

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: She was kind of arrogant. She was  
7 a very good ASW. She was very good at finding submarines  
8 and directing the ship to find submarines. She was very  
9 good at that. And I think that she was the borderline  
10 arrogant on some of the other watch stations that she was  
11 standing.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So you copy, you didn't address your  
13 concerns to the CO?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: No.

15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Did you address your concerns to  
16 anybody else or did you ever take it up with her directly?

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: I did not. I did not take it take  
18 it up with her directly. With her department head, I had  
19 talked with her department head before about his concerns  
20 and in particular the feet up on the desk down in Combat  
21 and some of the bad behavior down there. But no, I had not  
22 specifically addressed my distrust of her to anybody else.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I'm sorry, who is her department head?

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: Lieutenant [REDACTED], (phonetic) the  
25 Weapons Officer.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Weapons' Officer?

2 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And, so I'm sorry. You did have a  
4 conversation with the Weapon's Officer about behavior?

5 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

6 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What was his reaction?

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: So his reaction is, so he brought  
8 it up to me that he wanted to do a formal counseling on her  
9 based on her, based on her attitude and her performance  
10 down in CIC and so that is where the conversation came  
11 from.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And did that formal counseling take  
13 place?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: I did not physically see the  
15 formal counseling so I cannot sir if it was actually done  
16 or not.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: But the discussion was yes, that's a  
18 good idea?

19 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And that his coming to you and that  
21 conversation is when you said basically, "Hey I've noticed  
22 this stuff as well" and then you guys had a mutual  
23 discussion?

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.



Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Were you aware of the actual rest  
2 taken by the watch team prior to taking watch that night?  
3 We talked a little bit about um, the plan.

4           COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

5           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: The operations.

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yep.

7           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What might be a good work/rest balance?

8           COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

9           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Were you aware of the actual rest  
10 taken by the watch team?

11          COMMANDER BABBITT: No, I have no idea if they slept  
12 or not.

13          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

14          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Prior to leaving the bridge, after the  
15 ship turned south, speaking the transit.

16          COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

17          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Did you have a personal, did you make  
18 a personal assessment or did you have a personal  
19 appreciation of the traffic that the Fitz is going to have  
20 to negotiate?

21          COMMANDER BABBITT: So when I left, when I left the  
22 bridge we were inside Sagami Wan, probably right around  
23 here or so and there was not much traffic inside Sagami Wan  
24 as we started to head south. So no I did not make a  
25 personal assessment of --

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Down PIM?

2 COMMANDER BABBITT: Down PIM traffic, I did not.

3 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Did you and the Captain discuss  
4 whether or not one of you or both of you were going to stay  
5 on the bridge or was the plan just to lay below.

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: The plan was just to lay below,  
7 sir. We did not -- we did not talk about who would stay on  
8 the bridge.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Based on your understanding of the  
10 habit of the ship, is this a situation where, under normal  
11 circumstances, the XO or the CO would or would not be in  
12 the pilot house during transiting or a reason like that?

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: Not to the best of my knowledge  
14 that would be a regular occurrence. We did not do that as  
15 we were going through the Tsushima Strait which would have  
16 been a similar traffic density from what we'd seen going  
17 through Sagami.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Was here anything on the schedule the  
19 following morning that, was the CO or you concerned about  
20 maybe getting plenty of rest that night cause there was  
21 something big coming up the next day?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir we were starting our MOB-  
23 E 1.3 Charlie the next morning bright and early.

24 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: That's an engineering drill?

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: That is an engineering drill for,  
2 it is our final ATG blessing that you can go on to.

3           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So what time were you going to get up  
4 that morning?

5           COMMANDER BABBITT: I had the, I think it was 0530 I  
6 think I put down for my wake-up call.

7           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, so half an hour before reveille?

8           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

9           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So how about the Captain? When was he  
10 planning on getting up?

11          COMMANDER BABBITT: I think that he, he usually puts  
12 his down between five and five fifteen.

13          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So not a, not an early wakeup for him?

14          COMMANDER BABBITT: Not earlier than what I remember  
15 his normal. I don't see his night orders after he gets  
16 done with them until the next morning because I had not  
17 gotten up in the middle of the night, and I had not sought  
18 out his night orders. So I don't know if he put what time  
19 he put his down.

20          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Uh, it looks like 5:55.

21          COMMANDER BABBITT: Okay.

22          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So what time do the night orders  
23 normally finally get to the bridge, approved by the  
24 Captain? Who delivers em?

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: So the Boatswain Mate of the Watch  
2 will come down to the Captain's cabin and pick them up and  
3 it is usually around 1930 - 2000.

4           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: On that particular night, when where  
5 they delivered to the bridge?

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: It was later because we were  
7 doing, we were doing other things. I would say that the  
8 night orders were delivered probably around anywhere  
9 between 2000 and 2100.

10          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So they were there, they were read by  
11 the 22 excuse me the 17 to 22 watch and they were on hand  
12 for the turnover for the midwatch?

13          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

14          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Um, is there a, is there a  
15 what's the process for, so the Captain finishes his night  
16 orders. What is the process for the delivery for the night  
17 orders to the OOD?

18          COMMANDER BABBITT: So the Captain will call up to the  
19 bridge and have the Boatswain Mate of the Watch come down  
20 and pick up the night orders to deliver to the bridge.

21          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Boatswain Mate picks em up, takes em,  
22 hands them to the OOD?

23          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

24          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Done.

25          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So if yet he has any questions or  
2 requests clarifications and coming on the OOD to call the  
3 Captain?

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

5 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Captain, Captain doesn't go up and  
6 kind of walk em through it and make sure they understand?

7 COMMANDER BABBITT: So in this particular night, he  
8 specifically said to her, "I put in my night orders. I'm  
9 giving you 1,000 yards either side of tracks." So I do  
10 know that he specifically talked to her about that section  
11 of the night orders.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Because he made a PIM on night change  
13 right?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

15 LCDR [REDACTED]: Okay. Okay.

16 COMMANDER BABBITT: That was the last conversation I  
17 remember him having as I was laying below.

18 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So considering your assessment of the  
19 OOD that night what do you think about that flexibility  
20 given by the CO for the 1000 yards?

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Did you know that in real time?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: I heard him say it.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: I did. I heard him say it. I  
25 didn't think anything particular of it to be honest with

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1 you. I didn't think that was an out-of-bounds um.  
2 Commander Benson had been with her a lot longer than I had.  
3 He trusted her, and I trust Commander Benson's judgement  
4 and so if he felt that he could give her a thousand yards I  
5 was, I wasn't questioning. I wasn't questioning that in  
6 particular.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do you know if that type of  
8 flexibility is typically granted or just for a particular  
9 OODs.

10 COMMANDER BABBITT: Just for particular OODs.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: It's just based on trust and  
12 performance?

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Comfort?

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How's your relationship with the  
17 Captain?

18 COMMANDER BABBITT: Very good.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Leading up to that?

20 COMMANDER BABBITT: Very good.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Had you guys served together before?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: We did not.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Did you know each other before?

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh-uh.

25 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So your relationship started?

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: When I got my orders.

2           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: When you were in port?

3           COMMANDER BABBITT: And started talking to him then  
4 yes, sir.

5           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: When you got on board was there any  
6 particular concerns that the CO mentioned to you, some  
7 things we have to work on this team, you know that kind of  
8 conversation?

9           COMMANDER BABBITT: For Commander [REDACTED]

10          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Well when the new CO got onboard  
11 Commander Benson right?

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yeah, Commander Benson.

13          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So when you joined the ship, he is  
14 already there. He fleeted up.

15          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yep.

16          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Any particular issues he introduced  
17 you to when you got there that you should be concerned  
18 about as a the command team?

19          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, I think there was some, there  
20 was level of, how do I characterize it? It's not  
21 complacency but it is a level of -- so before Commander  
22 Benson came back, Commander [REDACTED] had made a mention that we  
23 are going to start, we would start granting normal leave  
24 during underway periods which of course that everybody  
25 threw down their leave chits, and we had ten percent of the

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 ship that asked for leave during underway periods. We were  
2 able to -- and that was kind of the attitude of the ship.  
3 You know we do this all the time in Seventh Fleet we got to  
4 be able to give people rest and recovery time so this is  
5 the time that we are going to look at, we wanted to look at  
6 doing that.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: This was Commander [REDACTED] initiative at  
8 the end of his command tour?

9 COMMANDER BABBITT: At the end of his command tour.  
10 So, we were able to talk to Commander [REDACTED] and say, let's  
11 hold off on signing these leave chits until Commander  
12 Benson comes in because that's Commander Benson's dime that  
13 he's--

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Going to have to own it.

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: Gonna have to own it.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: I only say that because I think it  
18 goes into an attitude of on board the ship of "We were  
19 doing this all the time, we get no breaks" and so this is  
20 just what we do. So it's not complacency but it's  
21 something else, and I don't know the word to describe it.  
22 Um, so when Commander Benson came onboard and I had been  
23 having a long conversation with him while he was, via e-  
24 mail while he was off the ship about concerns with this.  
25 Commander Benson put a stop to it. The ship will call it



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1 bloody Tuesday. Where he called every single person in  
2 that had put a leave chit in or had approved leave, looked  
3 him square in the eye and said, "It is either denied or  
4 your leave is cancelled because I need you here." So that  
5 is a, that is something that he in particular and we tried  
6 to fix of an attitude of, "I'm not really needed here."

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I can just take a leave.

8 COMMANDER BABBITT: I can take leave, I am not really  
9 needed.

10 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: When the vessel is underway.

11 COMMANDER BABBITT: Right, when the vessel is  
12 underway. I'm not really needed. Other people can cover  
13 my watch. Which is, we had to explain to people that it is  
14 not just your watch that you're here for, you do damage  
15 control, you do many, many, many other things on board ship  
16 and I don't think there was a level of appreciation for it  
17 for the crew leading up to that, leading up to that point  
18 until he looked them square in the eye and said "I need you  
19 here."

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: What did you think about that  
21 decision?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: I was 100 percent for it, 100  
23 percent. We had had many conversations on e-mails with me  
24 saying this is what is coming and this is why I don't think  
25 that. I used, my example that I kept saying to him and

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1 this was talking me back as well. This is me saying, I  
2 told you to do this. I took the Stark incident as a, as a  
3 pressure point. Stark got hit, 37 people died. People  
4 needed to be onboard to be able to combat that, that  
5 casualty. Everybody is important onboard that ship. You  
6 know if you're going to take battle damage, if we're going  
7 to sit up in the Sea of Japan and we've got people that  
8 might launch missiles at us, I want every single person  
9 there that is going to be able to, to do their job on the  
10 ship.

11 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And the decisions that Commander [REDACTED]  
12 had made the change, the allowance to allow that to occur,  
13 is that?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: So he had mentioned it and I think  
15 it spun out of control.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Oh and you got a bunch of leave chits?

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: Boy, did I get a bunch of leave  
18 chits.

19 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Based on the promise that this might  
20 happen?

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: Correct and so --

22 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And then when Commander Benson came  
23 back, it was?

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Right. All of the leave chits sat  
2 in my hold box until Commander Benson came so he could say  
3 "this is --

4           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So essentially he didn't change any  
5 policies, he was just upholding the old policy?

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

7           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Right.

8           COMMANDER BABBITT: It goes into the attitude of "I'm  
9 not needed" and yes marks on every single one saying yeah  
10 they can cover the watch section, we don't need this  
11 person.

12          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Oh you mean at the intermediate  
13 levels?

14          COMMANDER BABBITT: Oh, yeah.

15          COMMANDER BABBITT: Before they got to your desk, it  
16 was approved, approved, approved.

17          COMMANDER BABBITT: Absolutely across the board.

18          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And so it got to the Command level and  
19 had to make a stand.

20          COMMANDER BABBITT: Right. Yes, sir.

21          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And how do you think when that stand  
22 was made, how do you think that was received by the crew?

23          COMMANDER BABBITT: Um I think that about half of the  
24 people that got their leave disapproved were rather upset  
25 and others were -- understood.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 LCDR [REDACTED]: Were you aware of on the bridge the  
2 lookout situation?

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: So, you know I was thinking about  
4 that today as I was sitting up on the bridge. The last  
5 time I remember having deck hands or somebody who is not an  
6 officer of the deck or part of the bridge watch team and  
7 say as a lookout this window was an incident in JG. I  
8 didn't think anything other, anything was out of the  
9 ordinary not having the, not having specific lookouts but  
10 having the bridge watch team acting as lookouts. So it did  
11 not register in my head that there was something amiss when  
12 we did not have on the watch both a port and starboard  
13 lookout.

14 LCDR [REDACTED]: Do you know why those positions went  
15 away?

16 COMMANDER BABBITT: Because it was felt that the  
17 bridge watch team were trained, competent lookouts.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Um, Commander, just a couple of  
19 questions that I put up on my margins here. Regarding the  
20 number of UIs which got put into a single section together,  
21 was that something that got worked out between yourself, CO  
22 and the Watch Standing Officer.

23 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yep, that was part of the watch  
24 revision process on what UIs went with whom.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And do you feel that everyone was  
2 aware that that group would be on the midwatch during this  
3 underway period?

4 COMMANDER BABBITT: I don't think so. I don't think  
5 that, I don't think that we did particular math to say that  
6 this part of the bridge watch team was going to be, in this  
7 high-density situation right here. Commander Benson very  
8 well may have but I did not do the mental math to say that  
9 Lieutenant JG [REDACTED] was going to be on the bridge during  
10 this time as we're heading south.

11 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: What would you say, so again for  
12 the midwatch period, you know, certainly advised to get  
13 rest, get some sleep beforehand?

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: Mm-hmm.

15 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: What would you feel is the optimal  
16 rest, like how much sleep should they get before they stand  
17 that midwatch?

18 COMMANDER BABBITT: I would, so this is an ongoing  
19 conversation something that we were attempting to put into  
20 effect later on during this underway which was circadian  
21 rhythm to be able to stand deck watches the time that, every  
22 time, same time every day, be able to sleep at the same  
23 time every day and be able to work that in there. I, in  
24 particular think that you need between five and six hours  
25 of consecutive sleep, this is me personally to be

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1 continually effective on a day-to-day basis. I think you  
2 need continual sleep to be able to do that, between five  
3 and six hours for me is what is what's right. And so that  
4 is what we were going towards was the circadian rhythm to  
5 be able to give people, this is your time that you eat,  
6 this is the time you sleep, this is the time you stand  
7 watch. We just weren't there yet.

8 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Full support, any pushback, anybody  
9 yes, no?

10 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh no, there is support. There is  
11 support. There was conversation between me and the Senior  
12 Watch Officer and the Captain during the revision, last  
13 revision and I specifically remembering conversation where  
14 I said, "This underway is a I think a good time to start  
15 implementing circadian rhythm."

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Mm-hmm.

17 COMMANDER BABBITT: Because we had qualified people,  
18 enough qualified people to start doing that, you know. We  
19 had enough, four sections in combat, four sections in the  
20 bridge, four sections in back in CCS and so were at the  
21 point where I thought we could implement something like  
22 that.

23 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. Again and this was just a  
24 thought I had. Based on your times that you've been to the  
25 CIC, you've seen what they have, you've looked at the large

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1 screen display and said how many contacts they have in a  
2 traffic area like this whether it is Tsushima, whether it  
3 is Tokyo, wherever you may be where there is this number of  
4 vessels, how many contacts do you feel should be on that  
5 screen at a minimum?

6 COMMANDER BABBITT: Oh, my goodness. Um.

7 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Let me maybe refine that a little bit.  
8 So the Captain's standing orders, what's his requirement  
9 for CIC maintaining surface track of surface vessels,  
10 what's the range? What's the threshold within which  
11 they've got to track everything?

12 COMMANDER BABBITT: Twenty thousand yards. Say  
13 maintain within 20,000 yards, I'm sorry, I'm not recalling  
14 it.

15 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So it's 20 miles.

16 COMMANDER BABBITT: Okay.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So let's say CIC is just working to  
18 maintain a surface picture of 20 miles. As transiting  
19 through this area, closing towards uh Tokyo Wan, how many  
20 contacts would you expect to see in that 20-mile bubble at  
21 any given time?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: Twenty plus. Twenty plus inside  
23 there not counting small fishing contacts.

24 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And my last question here for CPA  
25 reporting --

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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Mm-hmm.

2           LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: -- to the CO. Do you recall any  
3 changes made whether night orders, standing orders, no  
4 changes?

5           COMMANDER BABBITT: Nope no changes, 6000 yards each  
6 side. Inside 6,000 yards by 10,000 yards.

7           LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: And that's not ever modified?

8           COMMANDER BABBITT: That's not ever modified. To the  
9 best of my knowledge it is never modified. I don't  
10 remember reading in any night orders.

11          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So the flexibility is the ability to  
12 make to open up CPA within a thousand yards. If there is  
13 any flexibility given it is there.

14          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

15          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Any other places in standing orders,  
16 night orders?

17          COMMANDER BABBITT: No, sir.

18          LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Okay. So that's even if the CPA  
19 said the vessel is going behind us, if it is within 6,000  
20 there's a call?

21          COMMANDER BABBITT: There's a call.

22          LCDR [REDACTED]: And through the watch standers up on  
23 the bridge do you feel that there is an equal balance  
24 between electronic means as well as traditional methods in  
25 order of maintaining situational awareness?



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1           COMMANDER BABBITT: No, I think that there is an over  
2 -reliance on using APRA for CPAs. I think they, you know,  
3 we talk about the ARPA huddle, breaking up the ARPA huddle.  
4 I think there's over-reliance on that.

5           MR. [REDACTED]: I've got one question.

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

7           MR. [REDACTED]: We asked you about the JOOD, OOD,  
8 TAO, uh I'm trying to think there if there was a third one.

9           COMMANDER BABBITT: Surface personnel?

10          MR. [REDACTED]: All right. With that overall  
11 scenario, your assessment is people. And the watch  
12 schedule was made.

13          COMMANDER BABBITT: Several days before.

14          MR. [REDACTED]: Several days before and you  
15 rehashed it and you rehashed it again. With your overall  
16 assessments of these people why were they lumped into the  
17 same watch schedule?

18          COMMANDER BABBITT: Because I felt that, because we  
19 felt that the Surface watch stander could backup the, the  
20 um bridge watch stander well so I felt that, I felt that  
21 the Surface watch stander was strong and did a good job of  
22 being able to keep the picture.

23          MR. [REDACTED]: So you felt that one person in a  
24 room with no windows.

25          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 MR. [REDACTED]: Could offset multiple weaknesses  
2 on the bridge?

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, I think that, I don't think  
4 that's what I said. I think what I felt was that he was  
5 able to provide backup from a radar standpoint. I didn't  
6 say radar standpoint, but that is, I think that he could  
7 provide backup for if you have good communications like CIC  
8 and the bridge.

9 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So just a couple of more questions for  
10 you Sean.

11 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So this is XO stuff, right.

13 COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

14 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So you said you didn't trust [REDACTED].

15 COMMANDER BABBITT: Correct.

16 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Uh, and you thought about but you  
17 didn't bring it up to the Captain's attention. Why is  
18 that?

19 COMMANDER BABBITT: Correct.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Why is that?

21 COMMANDER BABBITT: Um, because I felt, because the  
22 Captain had said that he trusts her.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Specifically?

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: He did.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: How did, how did that come up? What  
2 conversation did he said "I trust her?"

3 COMMANDER BABBITT: Uh the conversation was, gosh I'm  
4 trying to think of the specific conversation we had. We  
5 had a conversation beforehand, well beforehand about her  
6 performance down in CIC where I said I trusted her as an  
7 ASW. I want to say it was in one of the revisions where  
8 all three of us were sitting down there and we were talking  
9 about the, talking about her going up on the bridge instead  
10 of being down in CIC. I don't remember specifically when I  
11 said.

12 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: When was that by the way, she  
13 transitioned from the CIC to bridge.

14 COMMANDER BABBITT: So she had been in CIC the  
15 underway beforehand, not the entire underway beforehand but  
16 she had been in CIC on the underway beforehand but she had  
17 been a decently regular rotation in between the bridge and  
18 CIC. You know, so the conversation was during our watch  
19 bill conversations.

20 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: This particular watch bill.

21 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So prior to this underway?

22 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

23 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay so you don't trust her, he does.

24 COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

25 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: You're the XO.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Right.

2           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Why didn't you bring it up to him?

3           COMMANDER BABBITT: Because I didn't provide support  
4 and backup, I just didn't. I think back and I don't know  
5 why I didn't. I think that I trusted the Captain's  
6 judgement too, more than my judgement on her performance.  
7 You know, I thought that maybe there is an error of what I  
8 was seeing compared to what he was seeing.

9           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And I will ask it again just to  
10 confirm it. You feel like you have an unimpeded positive,  
11 two way, full duplex --

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure do.

13          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: relationship with the Commanding  
14 Officer.

15          COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure do, absolutely.

16          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Um and then sort of by  
17 extension, you know, if you didn't trust her, and having  
18 enough knowledge of the expected traffic density here, did  
19 it ever, did it occur to you to either volunteer to stay on  
20 the bridge or to suggest to the Captain, "Hey you know  
21 maybe one of us should stay up here?"

22          COMMANDER BABBITT: No sir.

23          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: It's been a long day you know, [REDACTED]  
24 needs some backup you know. That ever come up?

**Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt**

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: It did not come up, and I would  
2 say that I was tired at that point and I probably wasn't  
3 thinking enough about what was going to happen next. I was  
4 thinking more of what are were we going to do at 0600 when  
5 we start the engineering drills and not getting from  
6 midnight 2330 until 0600.

7           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: When did your day start by the way?

8           COMMANDER BABBITT: So I got up at I think my alarm  
9 went off at four that morning.

10          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: XO, you said you were tired, do you  
11 think that the rest of the watch standers also felt that  
12 way?

13          COMMANDER BABBITT: I wouldn't be surprised and  
14 wouldn't be surprised. She had been on watch for, that  
15 watch team had been on watch for an hour or so before we  
16 all laid below.

17          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Do you mean by having to express the  
18 fact that they were tired?

19          COMMANDER BABBITT: Not to me.

20          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay.

21          COMMANDER BABBITT: No, I think we were more focused  
22 on the, how tired the deck hands were because they had been  
23 yanking lines and landing helicopters and doing that all  
24 day long, the same guys in service.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: All right. So, the bridge crew  
2 presumably had some opportunity to rest?

3           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes.

4           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Whether they took it or not we don't  
5 know but they had opportunity?

6           COMMANDER BABBITT: Right. I think the, you know  
7 thinking about the composition of the watch team and going  
8 over in my head the person that I would have been more,  
9 most worried about is being tired would be the Conning  
10 Officer, the First Lieutenant.

11          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: First Lieutenant again is?

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: He's the guy that's in charge of  
13 the deck. So it's his guys. He would have been up on the  
14 focsle or the crane.

15          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: The CONN?

16          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yep, I'm sorry. He was the CONN  
17 during the watch in question.

18          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, in your time onboard, has anybody  
19 been relieved of watch responsibility because there was a  
20 recognition that they were fatigued because they asked for  
21 it and volunteered it or somebody like you, or the Captain  
22 or the Senior Watch Officer or Senior Member said, "Hey,  
23 you look really tired, how you doing" and at the end of the  
24 conversation, you're like "You know what, we're going to  
25 get you a relief cause you're too tired?"

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           COMMANDER BABBITT: Not that I can recall sir.

2           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay. Ah, okay, so this is the  
3 question I ask everybody. So we've have had this two hour  
4 conversation about this event.

5           COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

6           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Um, so how did it happen? How did  
7 the USS Fitzgerald and water vessel Crystal come to occupy  
8 the exact same spot in the ocean?

9           COMMANDER BABBITT: I think it was a combination of  
10 inattentiveness at the end of the watch and that lead to  
11 not paying attention.

12          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: And that's speculation on your part?

13          COMMANDER BABBITT: Speculation on my part yes, sir,  
14 100 percent. I was awakened with my feet on the deck after  
15 I got bounced off the bulkhead, that's how I knew what was  
16 happening.

17          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay so you and your crew endured a  
18 hell of an event.

19          COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

20          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Ah, major collision, flooding, seven  
21 killed, had to fight to save the ship, fight to get her  
22 back into Yokosuka, and I know for a fact that you as XO  
23 were all over the place, frankly had to assume command.

24          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Because the CO was incapacitated. Um,  
2 and you probably saw either first hand or heard second hand  
3 about some real heroics on the part of members of the crew?

4           COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

5           CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So if you've got individual names or  
6 groups of names of people you thought went above and beyond  
7 the call, were particularly courageous, put themselves in  
8 particular risk, or were particularly critical to  
9 minimizing damage to the ship, minimizing further death and  
10 injury to the crew and fighting to get the ship in port,  
11 we'd like to know who those names are.

12          COMMANDER BABBITT: Okay.

13          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: So that we can help make sure they are  
14 recognized.

15          COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure. Um, the Damage Control  
16 Assistant, Chief [REDACTED], not [REDACTED], I'm sorry.  
17 [REDACTED] was phenomenal along with DCC [REDACTED]. Um,  
18 ET3 soon to be ET2 once he gets his MAP, on Monday, uh  
19 [REDACTED]. He was part of flooding boundaries and then went to  
20 flight quarters and back to fighting flooding, him in  
21 particular he was all over the place, and he was also one  
22 of the people that Captain Benson said "I need you here"  
23 and he was one that took that to heart. Um, my gosh SCG-1  
24 [REDACTED] was pulling people out of, pulling people out of  
25 berthing 2 as the fire main was pouring down on his head



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1 and then water was coming up through, coming, rising higher  
2 and higher. Then even, even Seaman Chief [REDACTED] was  
3 down there helping people getting out of berthing 2. She  
4 was down in the forward CPO, female berthing yanking and  
5 helping people that couldn't see anything, "Come to my  
6 voice" type of event. Um repair 5 locker leader Lieutenant  
7 JG [REDACTED], [REDACTED] she was on radios all day long you  
8 know, just as much as, just as much as [REDACTED]  
9 was. I had Senior Chief [REDACTED] down on deck, Gunner's Mate,  
10 down on deck he was helping direct traffic with the, with  
11 brining lines up, keeping people calm, rigging for tow, the  
12 deck guys when I told them to rig for tow at 2 o'clock in  
13 the morning doing the detachable link, everything in the  
14 dark, yanking lines up on deck and then doing the same  
15 thing back Aft on the flight deck and then taking it all  
16 back down to Flight Quarters and then bring it all up and  
17 take it all back down to Flight Quarters again. Gosh,  
18 there were just so many people that were in the, down  
19 there, and they we repair lockers that just gave it  
20 everything that they could. Gunner's Mate Chief [REDACTED]  
21 helping people coming out of, coming up on the focsle when  
22 we finally got the guys out of sonar control, yanking em up  
23 on deck, those two in particular along with QM1 [REDACTED] were  
24 the ones that beat down the door to get the Captain out of  
25 his cabin, axes, mauls and kettle bells, anything heavy

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1 that they could find they used beat that door. Chief, the  
2 Fire Control Man, chief [REDACTED], he grabbed the Captain's  
3 arm to yank him from the outside the skin of the ship back  
4 into the inside and pulled him up on deck. Ensign [REDACTED]  
5 that stayed with the Captain to keep him calm as he was  
6 saying that shock was setting in. NC1 [REDACTED] that was  
7 providing first aid and first aid and comfort to Commander  
8 Benson as he was laying up on deck going into shock. Um, I  
9 would say those people in particular. People were  
10 providing, he was the, he was, Commander Benson was  
11 probably the most injured and the one that I was the most  
12 fearful of seeing him up there and the people that provided  
13 first aid and pulled him out in the first place was rather  
14 heroic. I know you've seen the, seen his stateroom, you  
15 know and to climb over that to get him outside the skin of  
16 the ship to back inside was pretty phenomenal.

17 CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: Okay, thanks.

18 LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: So Commander we certainly  
19 appreciate all the information you have given us here today  
20 and assisting us in our interviews. Uh, we just want to  
21 give you a moment in case you had any questions for us or  
22 if there is anything on your mind which didn't come up  
23 through your questions that you want to ensure that we are  
24 aware of.

25 COMMANDER BABBITT: No, I think we were thorough.

Audio transcription - Commander Sean Babbitt

1           LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: If anything does come up later,  
2 please feel free to reach out to us.

3           COMMANDER BABBITT: Sure.

4           LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: We'd be glad to get that  
5 information and we don't have very many interviews left,  
6 but if you could keep this information that was discussed  
7 from our interview to yourself that will help us to make  
8 sure that our interviews don't get crossed up.

9           COMMANDER BABBITT: Absolutely.

10          LIEUTENANT [REDACTED]: Thank you XO.

11          COMMANDER BABBITT: Yes, sir.

12          CAPTAIN [REDACTED]: I'll walk you out, sir.

13

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