

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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LIFT BOAT *KRISTIN FAYE* OVERTURNING * Accident No.: DCA19FM050
SEPTEMBER 8, 2019 *

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Interview of: CHRISTOPHER PORTER
Captain, *Kristin Faye*

Via Telephone

Wednesday,
October 16, 2019

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL KARR, Senior Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CWO [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
United States Coast Guard

LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
United States Coast Guard

DALE MITCHELL, Owner
Mitchell Lift Boats, LLC

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. KARR: All right, I've started our recording device. And this is Mike Karr of the National Transportation Safety Board and we're going to conduct an interview of Mr. Chris Porter.

So, [REDACTED] would you have everyone including yourself introduce themselves?

CWO [REDACTED] Yes. So this is Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. I'm an investigator at Sector New Orleans.

LTJG [REDACTED] All right. Hi, my name is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] LTJG, [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. I'm also an investigator at Sector New Orleans.

MR. MITCHELL: My name is Dale Mitchell, D-A-L-E, M-I-T-C-H-E-L-L. I'm the owner and operator of Mitchell Lift Boats.

MR. PORTER: My name is Christopher Porter, C-H-R-I-S-T-O-P-H-E-R, P-O-R-T-E-R. I was the captain on the *Kristin Faye*.

MR. KARR: All right, that's everyone.

INTERVIEW OF CHRISTOPHER PORTER

BY MR. KARR:

Q. Captain Porter, just to get us started out, could you give us a history of your experience in the maritime field?

A. I've been working in the maritime field since '03. I acquired my captain's license in '09, and I was running a boat for Mitchell Lift Boats for about 8 years and just got rehired back on last year.

1 Q. All right, thanks. And then could you, you know, describe
2 the voyage, start out by telling us, you know, where were you when
3 you got the vessel underway, what you were going to do. I just
4 want to let you talk and tell the story.

5 A. All right. Well, we were working in Main Pass 64 Field in
6 Venice. We were jacked up at one platform the morning of the
7 incident and we had some work to do there, and then we offloaded
8 all the equipment and headed back to the Main Platform at 64.

9 When we got to the Main Platform, I moved up. I had been
10 there prior the week before and we had a survey done and we had
11 jacking, safe jacking charts and the whole nine yards, and there
12 was nothing on the bottom or anything showing a hazard. That was
13 a week prior.

14 In this week I had to move up a little bit closer because the
15 week prior I wasn't close enough for a walkway to go out, so I
16 just moved up a little bit closer. I was in the exact same
17 position as I was the week prior. So I jacked the boat out of the
18 water, about 6 foot out of the water, and let her sit for an hour
19 for a preload to make sure she didn't move. And it never moved,
20 it never bubbled, it never even started to move.

21 So then after that, I proceeded to jack up to my destination
22 position to put my walkway out, and again I let it set for another
23 hour and it never moved. So I decided let's pick the crane up,
24 let's take a look and make sure I'm going to clear the platform
25 and all this because we had a lot of work we were going to be

1 doing; we were going to be picking vessels up and so on and so on.
2 Well, as soon as I picked the crane up and started turning the
3 crane to make sure it was going to clear the platform, I felt the
4 boat falling. And when I say falling, it was going.

5 I immediately jumped off the crane, ran upstairs, and started
6 jacking the two legs up -- the starboard leg and the aft leg, I
7 was trying to bring those down and I was trying to go up with the
8 port leg, but it never stopped; it just kept going. And next
9 thing I know, I'm in the water.

10 Q. And then describe what happened after you guys were in the
11 water.

12 A. The two deck -- the two men I had on boat were in front with
13 me, and they were watching to make sure we were going to clear
14 everything, so they were still on the front deck. I tried
15 everything to get the legs to try to equalize out; they wouldn't
16 do anything. Once we got to that point, the platform picked the
17 two men up off the deck with a basket. I could not get to the
18 front, but I had my life jacket, so I proceeded to get in the
19 water and swim to the supply vessel that was in the water about 50
20 to 100 yards away, where they picked me up and brought me to the
21 platform.

22 Q. All right. And then what did you guys do after that or what
23 did you do after that?

24 A. I had already made phone calls to the owner and he had
25 already gotten on the phone with Coast Guard and everybody. He

1 was making -- he was taking care of everything while we were
2 trying to get up on the platform, and all we could do after that
3 was watch it go over. There was really nothing much we could do
4 after that.

5 I gave a statement to the platform, a written statement to
6 everybody. They needed statements, so we all made written
7 statements. And that pretty much was the end of it right there.

8 Q. All right. Well, let me ask -- thanks for that overview and
9 description of the story. So now let me ask some questions, and
10 I'll start out sort of at the beginning.

11 So when you left land, what port did you leave?

12 A. We left out of Venice, out of the EPS dock in Venice. We had
13 sailed from there to go to Main Pass 64.

14 Q. Did you have any cargo on board?

15 A. The only thing we had on board at the time was a rack of
16 grating. That was the only cargo we had on board.

17 Q. And say that again.

18 MR. MITCHELL: We need to clarify that story. This is Dale
19 Mitchell. The vessel had been in the field for 37 days prior to
20 this incident, so we had sailed a long time prior.

21 MR. PORTER: Yeah.

22 MR. MITCHELL: The liftboats don't go in and out of port.
23 Once they get on location, they stay out. So he had been out
24 there for a long time. So port was not an issue because we hadn't
25 been there for 30-some-odd days.

1 BY MR. KARR:

2 Q. All right. Well, was there -- when you -- well, tell me
3 about what was -- describe the work that was going to be done to
4 the platform where you were?

5 A. Okay. The week prior to that, that I described earlier, we
6 had taken a vessel off. It was about a 17,000 pound vessel that
7 we had taken off of the platform and put it on a boat, and they
8 sent it in to have it repaired. Well, we were going back to put
9 the vessel back up, is what we were -- was our destination. But
10 we had -- nobody was on board and everybody was coming the next
11 morning to do all the work and the vessel was coming, and so on
12 and so on. So we were just getting ready to put the vessel back
13 on the platform. That was the goal in that move right there.

14 Q. And do you know what that vessel was used for, what it
15 contained?

16 A. I sure don't.

17 Q. All right. Anybody there know?

18 A. I don't believe so, no.

19 Q. All right, thanks. All right, I'm still online; I'm just
20 looking at my questions.

21 A. That's fine.

22 BY CWO [REDACTED]

23 Q. So this is [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard. So, Chris, so when
24 you say you dropped, so previously you were at this same platform,
25 Block 64, about 5 days prior, I believe?

1 A. If even that. Yeah, I believe it was 5 days.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Okay. And you picked up a vessel from the platform?

5 A. That's correct. We removed a vessel off the platform.

6 Q. So is it -- and I'm not familiar with the platforms. Do
7 these platforms typically have a vessel, is it stored in the
8 platform itself?

9 A. Yeah, it's welded to the platform. But they had a leak in it
10 so they had to remove it to have it repaired.

11 Q. Okay, okay. Is it like a rescue boat?

12 A. No.

13 MR. MITCHELL: No, the platform supply boat. The vessel was
14 a tank.

15 MR. PORTER: It's a tank.

16 CWO [REDACTED] Oh, oh, a tank?

17 MR. PORTER: Yes.

18 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. Not a boat boat?

19 MR. PORTER: No, no, no.

20 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. So, okay. So you're looking at a -- like
21 a pressure tank?

22 MR. PORTER: Like a big water tank.

23 CWO [REDACTED] Like a pressurized tank or something like that?

24 MR. PORTER: Correct, correct.

25 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

1 MR. MITCHELL: A pressure vessel.

2 CWO [REDACTED] A pressure vessel.

3 MR. PORTER: Right.

4 BY CWO [REDACTED]

5 Q. Okay, okay. So you were picking up a tank or a pressure
6 vessel --

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. -- that needed repaired from the platform? And that was 4
9 days prior?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. Okay. And you put it on your liftboat?

12 A. Yes, we put it on the boat.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And then from there we took it off the boat and put it on a
15 supply vessel that took it in.

16 Q. Got it, okay. So you -- you're basically the -- your boat
17 was the middleman to bring the tank, the pressure vessel to an
18 offshore boat to take to shore to get repaired?

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. Okay. And then when you came back 5 days later, the day of
21 the incident, were you returning this tank back to the platform?

22 A. That was -- they were supposed to be bringing the tank back
23 out to us, for us to put it back on the platform.

24 Q. So you were -- the *Kristin* was setting up and making
25 preparations for the air pressure vessel to come to you so that

1 you could lift it up to the platform and put it on the platform?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. Okay. That makes more sense.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. You said vessel. I was thinking, you know, a boat or
8 something, so --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. All right. So we're talking a pressure vessel?

11 A. That's correct. A tank.

12 Q. Do you happen to know what that tank was used for?

13 A. I have no idea.

14 CWO [REDACTED] Okay, okay. That's fine. Okay.

15 MR. KARR: All right. This is Mike Karr.

16 BY MR. KARR:

17 Q. Captain, were there any preload tanks on your liftboat?

18 A. No, sir. That boat is a 105 and doesn't have preload tanks.

19 Q. All right. And was the jacking equipment the same for all
20 three legs?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And at what speed did that jacking equipment operate?

23 A. Oh, not very fast.

24 Q. Not very fast, okay. I mean, any estimate?

25 MR. MITCHELL: About 6 foot a minute.

1 MR. PORTER: About 6 foot a minute.

2 BY MR. KARR:

3 Q. And was there -- did your vessel have a safety management
4 system?

5 A. Yes, it does.

6 Q. Is that safety management system something the company did on
7 its own or was there -- is there a regulatory requirement?

8 MR. MITCHELL: Well, have an operations manual.

9 MR. PORTER: We have an operations manual.

10 MR. KARR: And I looked at an operations manual. It looks
11 like it was dated from 1997. Is there a more recent version?

12 MR. PORTER: Stand by. He has it.

13 MR. MITCHELL: Our operations manual was redone in 2005. I
14 provided [REDACTED] a copy of it. This is Dale Mitchell. I'm sorry.
15 August of 2006, this was the new operations manual for this boat
16 was developed.

17 CWO [REDACTED] This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Dale, this is the one you
18 provided me?

19 MR. MITCHELL: I provided you the disc which mainly had
20 drawings on it.

21 CWO [REDACTED] Right. Okay. So -- okay.

22 MR. MITCHELL: There will be various sections in there
23 pertaining to, say, jacking operations, jacking up, jacking down.

24 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah. Okay. Just looking at this, Mike, it
25 looks similar to what we were looking at earlier, although I'm

1 looking up now what we have doesn't have -- I'm reading the
2 hardcopy version here in the office. There's stuff on jacking up
3 location, jacking up to preload level. I don't recall seeing this
4 in the digital version that I have, so -- I'm seeing stuff in here
5 regarding abnormal lift.

6 So I don't think, Dale, I don't think this is the version I
7 have, so -- which is fine. I know you didn't have much -- the
8 operations manual was on the *Kristin*.

9 MR. MITCHELL: That was just my copy.

10 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah, yeah, okay. Yeah, I don't -- yeah, I
11 don't think this -- yeah, I didn't see this in the disc version,
12 so -- okay. Okay. Yeah, so, I mean, it looks like -- it looks
13 pretty similar, Mike, to the version we have, but it looks like
14 there might be a few other things in here that we didn't have.

15 BY MR. KARR:

16 Q. All right. Well, Captain, let me start by saying, you know,
17 describe how you access the seabed for determining that you can
18 put down the legs and jack up?

19 A. Well, we have safe jacking charts they give us, and like I
20 said, the week prior we had a bottom survey down by Furgo. So it
21 pretty much was -- we looked at the bottom before we ever jacked
22 up.

23 Q. All right. So that was a week ago. When you came back, what
24 was your -- you know, run me through your own self -- the process
25 that you put yourself through as far as making a decision that

1 it's okay to put the legs down again a week later?

2 A. We tag on the bottom when we move up, and we moved up slow
3 and soft. And when I preloaded and jacked up, that's where you
4 usually start feeling what your bottom's doing, whether it's
5 moving or not. And it was hard at the time; it never moved.

6 I mean, as far as seeing, I can't see what's on the bottom,
7 so, you know. But nothing -- no work had been done there prior to
8 me going back to this position, so it was pretty much, it was okay
9 to jack then because I had just been in the exact same spot prior
10 to that.

11 Q. All right. Had any -- that week before had anyone checked
12 the seabeds for obstructions or the bottom content or the slope?

13 A. Yes. Furgo Chance had done what's called a bottom survey.
14 They put a radar down there and they surveyed the whole bottom to
15 make sure there's nothing in the way and the bottom is not --
16 doesn't have any can holes or anything to that effect.

17 Q. All right.

18 A. That was the week prior.

19 MR. KARR: And, Mr. Mitchell, in that information I got from
20 Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED] was a picture of the -- it looks
21 like, you know, a bottom survey. Was that what Furgo did?

22 MR. MITCHELL: Yes, Furgo Chance did that.

23 MR. KARR: All right.

24 MR. MITCHELL: Pipelines, locations, any existing can holes,
25 bottom impressions left by another vessel or rig or anything like

1 that, that is what you were looking at.

2 MR. KARR: Do you recall if, you know, was there any can
3 holes in that photo?

4 MR. MITCHELL: No, it didn't show any type of rig holes, can
5 holes, anything of that sort; it showed all the pipelines and
6 their locations, which is important. We can't jack up on a
7 pipeline. But other than that, there was no, there was no areas
8 of concern on the bottom that we saw from that.

9 BY MR. KARR:

10 Q. All right. When you were jacked up, when the -- when you
11 started to overturn, were the legs at the -- can you describe the
12 height of the legs? Were they all at the same height?

13 A. Yes, they were pretty much all at the same height.

14 Q. And what was your air gap at the time?

15 A. I'm going to say about 20, 25 foot.

16 Q. And is that where you needed to be to do the work you wanted
17 to do?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. You know, Captain, there appears to be an inherent risk for
20 being a liftboat operator, like you never know when you might go
21 over. Can you give me your thoughts on that? I mean, when you --
22 you know, can you describe how you -- how confident are you when
23 you put the legs down that you're going to remain upright?

24 A. I'm fairly confident. I've never had anything like this
25 happen before. Usually it doesn't happen very often, but it does

1 happen. I just didn't like the idea it happened to me; however,
2 but it did happen.

3 Q. All right. Had you done any -- do you ever drill for
4 something like this?

5 CWO [REDACTED] Like an emergency drill or --

6 MR. PORTER: Some we do. Yeah, we do man overboard drills
7 and stuff like that, but nothing for a boat overturning, no.

8 MR. KARR: No drills for -- okay. So, all right.

9 MR. PORTER: That situation, it happened so fast there
10 wouldn't have been time to do anything anyway, as fast as it went
11 down.

12 BY CWO [REDACTED]

13 Q. This is [REDACTED] Captain, so have you ever experienced
14 a lift, active -- you know, in previous lifting, jacking up
15 operations or just working conditions, have you ever, you know,
16 had settling occur to where you had to take maneuvers or actions
17 to level out the vessel?

18 A. Usually when we're doing our preload we -- sometimes we have
19 to -- sometimes when you're jacking it, it's muddy in some spots
20 and not in others, and the leg goes down further than the others
21 but you try to keep it level at all times; you're watching it.

22 Q. And so did this occur during preloads?

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. And so during these -- if there's an adjustment that needs to
25 be made, you're in the wheelhouse, I assume?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. Okay. And you have the controls. How is it configured as
3 far as the controls per each leg, like how does that work?

4 A. You have -- on this boat you had four switches, you have one
5 that works all three legs and you had one that works each leg
6 individually.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And they're little toggle switches.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And every time you have to adjust, the hour starts over. The
11 preload's an hour, and then after it's all settled and inspected,
12 if it was to move any at all, then the hour starts again until
13 there's no movement at all.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. So you're constantly -- you know, if you've got to adjust,
16 then if you hit it and start the engine back up and adjust, that
17 hour starts over again. You have to wait until hour until it's
18 done.

19 Q. So is it common for the legs to be at -- because obviously
20 the bottom floor is different elevations --

21 A. Right.

22 Q. -- and levels.

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. Or are there any other factors why a leg would be higher or
25 lower than any other leg besides --

1 A. Right. You get the weight of the crane; the weight of the
2 crane puts a lot of pressure on that leg. You've got the cab
3 sitting on one leg, so that puts a lot of pressure on the back
4 leg.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So you've got your -- just variables that allow it to push
7 down further and harder, and that's usually what -- the whole
8 point of a preload is to make sure that this boat's not going to
9 move when you go to do something.

10 Q. Right. Okay. Okay.

11 A. So that is the point of preload.

12 MR. KARR: All right. It's Mike Karr again. And this is
13 sort of a hypothetical. Well, no, it is a hypothetical. I think
14 the MODUs actually require a soil analysis and core samples. Have
15 you -- is that what occurs when a jack-up oil rig -- you know,
16 something much larger than a liftboat uses the bottom or puts
17 their legs down?

18 MR. PORTER: I do not know of it myself.

19 MR. KARR: All right, okay. Okay, get me a second here.

20 All right. So the eventual salvage of the vessel, I
21 understand the vessel's being considered a total constructive
22 loss; is that correct?

23 MR. MITCHELL: Yes.

24 MR. KARR: If salvaging had occurred more quickly, would it
25 have been -- would the vessel have been saved?

1 MR. MITCHELL: I mean, that's an assumption, but, I mean, if
2 we have had equipment nearby to catch it before it went all the
3 way submerged, then I think, yes, we could have probably saved it.
4 The vessel has been salvaged and is afloat at a scrapyard. I got
5 some pictures of it yesterday. It's totally destroyed.

6 MR. KARR: Yeah, the Coast Guard shared those pictures with
7 me. No, I was just wondering. I know the vessel sunk. So if it
8 had not have sunk, you might have still been able to use it, but
9 like you said, that would've had to have been done really, really
10 fast.

11 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. When we went over to the port side, we
12 didn't have time to close any watertight enclosures and it started
13 down flooding. So it took, what, about 5 hours?

14 MR. PORTER: About 5 hours to flip.

15 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, it -- yeah, once it hit the water --
16 Chris called me at 10 o'clock. I got to the location about 3:30.
17 And by the time I got there at 3:30, all we had was a small part
18 of the starboard bow sticking out of the water. It had totally
19 sunk.

20 MR. KARR: Right.

21 BY MR. KARR:

22 Q. And how deep was the water there?

23 A. About 35 foot.

24 Q. Did anybody go down -- did any divers go down or any cameras
25 go down to take a look and see what happened?

1 A. I'm not sure.

2 MR. PORTER: Mr. Mitchell, did any divers go down with
3 cameras or anything to take a look?

4 MR. MITCHELL: I don't think there was any cameras involved.
5 I mean, the first divers that went down would have been working
6 for Laredo Construction, the salvager, and that would have been
7 probably, I guess, 10 days after the sinking before they actually
8 got set up on location. Maybe less. I'm not quite sure.

9 MR. KARR: Did the -- Mr. Mitchell, did the divers -- did you
10 hear anything about what the divers saw with regard to what might
11 have caused the leg to go through?

12 MR. MITCHELL: No.

13 MR. KARR: Okay.

14 MR. MITCHELL: Well, I did get a report from them that that
15 port leg had a tremendous amount of penetration, 40-some-odd feet.
16 It just went completely down into the mud. They had a hard time
17 even finding it because the vessel had embedded itself in the mud
18 on the port side. So they had to do a lot of jetting to even get
19 down to it to latch onto it.

20 MR. KARR: So you're telling me the hull of the vessel was
21 actually in the mud?

22 MR. MITCHELL: So once it sunk, it sunk like on its side. So
23 when we got to the boat, the boat was, you know, straight up and
24 down, port down, starboard up. Okay?

25 MR. KARR: Gotcha.

1 MR. MITCHELL: Water depth there didn't exceed the width of
2 the hull, okay, so that's what stopped it. That's why it was
3 still sticking out of the water. And then over time, with sea
4 conditions and currents and whatever, because it got rough after
5 the sinking for a while, and the boat just kind of wiggled its way
6 down into the mud. So by the time the salvagers got there, the
7 report I got was like half of the cabin was at the mud line but it
8 was still standing port down, starboard straight up.

9 MR. KARR: Do you know if they took any pictures? Of course,
10 that -- my guess is the weather -- the water's not very clear down
11 there.

12 MR. PORTER: Did they get -- he's asking did you get
13 pictures?

14 MR. MITCHELL: No, no.

15 MR. PORTER: No.

16 MR. MITCHELL: The visibility is pretty much nil.

17 MR. PORTER: Yeah. It's yuck.

18 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, the water's not, not terrible clear in
19 that area.

20 MR. KARR: All right. And can you just -- Captain or Mr. --
21 well, let's go to the Captain first. I mean, Mr. Mitchell you can
22 add.

23 BY MR. KARR:

24 Q. So the legs started to go when you started to use the crane.

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Can you tell me how crane movement shifted weights which may
2 have affected what happened?

3 A. Correct. That boom weighs about 28,000 pounds, and it was
4 standing straight up. So when I started to turn the crane, it
5 must have shifted the weight enough for it to fall, to go through
6 whatever it went through. And it was really fast. By the time I
7 got to the wheelhouse, I was running sideways trying to get up to
8 the wheelhouse.

9 Q. All right. I guess, I'm going to have to go to my old
10 trigonometry books to assess how that -- how the weight shifts
11 when you take it from -- did you move it from horizontal all the
12 way to vertical?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. Oh, okay.

15 A. From horizontal to directly vertical, as far boomed up as it
16 would go, because I had to clear the platform.

17 MR. MITCHELL: Wait, from vertical to horizontal.

18 MR. PORTER: From horizontal to vertical.

19 MR. MITCHELL: Oh, okay.

20 MR. PORTER: Yeah, I picked the -- I boomed it completely up.
21 And then it did fine. It didn't move till I thought it turned.
22 When I thought it turned, to make sure I was going to clear,
23 that's when I felt the boat falling.

24 BY MR. KARR:

25 Q. Well, now when you started -- now when you turned -- so it

1 was horizontal, you took it to vertical, and then you turned it?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Hmm. I wouldn't think that would have any impact on the
4 downward force, just rotating it. I would have thought that the
5 whole weight would've -- once you took it up to vertical, now
6 you've got all that weight pushing straight down.

7 A. Right. Well, that's probably what started the process, and
8 it was just, it just -- I didn't feel it until it -- it didn't
9 start dropping really until I started turning, and that's when I
10 jumped off the crane.

11 Q. All right. And then the crane, you were getting set up to
12 take the -- to use the crane to take the pressure vessel and move
13 it to the platform. And what level of the platform were you going
14 to -- where was the pressure vessel on the platform, what level?

15 A. The pressure vessel was on the middle level of the platform.
16 It has three levels, and it was on the middle level of the
17 platform underneath the living quarters.

18 Q. All righty. And the last -- let me just make -- before I ask
19 you the last question, let me make sure that's my last question.

20 Now what was the height -- when you did your preload, what
21 height -- what was your air gap at that point?

22 A. Roughly 6 feet.

23 Q. All righty. All right, last question. Well, you know, it's
24 hypothetical. Do you have any idea what caused it? You know, the
25 sea bottom washed away, the legs settled quickly, there was an

1 edge -- you know, maybe you were on the edge of a hole that -- the
2 edge of a can hole that collapsed. Any estimates in your
3 experience?

4 A. In my experience, I couldn't even tell you. It could be a
5 number of factors that done it. You know, it could have broke
6 through a hole or just -- or a can hole, but there was no sign of
7 a can hole. I'm really not sure what happened. It just -- it
8 happened.

9 MR. KARR: All right. Okay. That's all the questions I
10 have. And I appreciate it. I've enjoyed this -- it's been more
11 of a conversation than it has been an interview, so I appreciate
12 the information you provided.

13 MR. PORTER: You're more than welcome.

14 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah, Mike, this is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I've got a
15 couple other little questions.

16 MR. KARR: Yep, your turn.

17 BY CWO [REDACTED]

18 Q. So, Captain, so just to clarify, when the boom went from
19 horizontal, horizontal to vertical, and you say you turned it
20 while it was still in the vertical position?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. And then when you turned it, did you boom it out toward the
23 platform or did it stay vertical the whole time?

24 A. It stayed vertical the whole time.

25 Q. So just the turning of the vertical boom added enough weight

1 or pressure to --

2 A. I'm not sure if it was that, or with it being boomed up
3 started the process of it falling.

4 Q. How long had it been in that vertical position?

5 A. I had just got it up in the vertical position.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And I had just started to turn it, and that's when I felt the
8 boat falling.

9 Q. Okay. So it may not have been necessarily the turning of the
10 boom --

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. -- it was just the vertical position of the boom?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. So you felt nothing when it was horizontal?

15 A. No, it never moved. I checked my level to make sure nothing
16 was moving. Never had to adjust.

17 Q. So this crane was on the port side?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. And as it was -- did it boom out past the bow of -- when it's
20 in the horizontal position, does it go past the bow or does it
21 stay --

22 A. No.

23 Q. No.

24 A. It's a fixed boom. It's --

25 Q. All right.

1 A. No, yeah. No, that one's a tele-boom, it's a telescopic
2 boom.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. But it was still standing. It wasn't scoped out or anything.
5 I had scoped in. I was just trying to get it up to, you know,
6 make sure I was going to clear the platform.

7 Q. Gotcha. So were you -- were the controls for this crane in
8 the wheelhouse or was it on deck?

9 A. What do you mean?

10 Q. So how did you boom the crane?

11 A. Oh, it's on the crane itself.

12 Q. It's on the crane itself?

13 A. It's on the crane itself.

14 Q. Okay. Okay. So is that the one that had a seat in it?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. So you were at the, you were at the seat?

17 A. I was in the seat.

18 Q. Okay, okay. And then so at that point, that means nobody's
19 in the wheelhouse at that point?

20 A. Nobody's in the wheelhouse at that point.

21 Q. Okay. So when you went -- when you felt it -- you were
22 sitting in the seat of the crane, you felt it shifting to port or
23 going down?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What did you do going -- I mean, I assume -- well, you tell

1 me what you did.

2 A. I jumped off the crane and ran to the wheelhouse.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. It's that lucky -- I didn't think I could run that fast.

5 Q. Right. So at that point, that's when you started to try and
6 raise the port leg and --

7 A. I was trying to put the port leg down, put more leg in the
8 hole.

9 Q. Oh, okay.

10 A. And I was trying to bring these up to level down the other
11 side to keep the boat level.

12 Q. Gotcha, okay.

13 A. Nothing worked. It was just going way too fast. Like I
14 said, I was running sideways when I went -- got up to the
15 wheelhouse.

16 Q. Wow. Okay. Now at any point did you hear any kind of tilt
17 alarm? Is the vessel outfitted with a tilt alarm?

18 A. Yes, it has a tilt alarm in the wheelhouse.

19 Q. Okay. Did you hear that while you were on the crane?

20 A. Not with it running you probably can't, no.

21 Q. Okay. Is there anywhere else that the tilt alarm would be
22 like a remote location that you could hear the alarm as well?

23 A. I don't remember, does that one have the tilt alarm down in
24 the galley?

25 MR. MITCHELL: No.

1 MR. PORTER: No? It was just in the wheelhouse.

2 BY CWO [REDACTED]

3 Q. Just in the wheelhouse?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. So, okay. All right. So in -- I guess I would consider this
6 an emergency procedure, right, if -- you know, you started
7 lifting.

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Is this something you train for when something like this
10 occurs, or is this something that you learn through experience
11 that you just know?

12 A. I would have to say it's more experience than training. You
13 don't really train too much for a boat dropping.

14 Q. Right. Is there -- do you know of any kind of procedures or
15 policies or anything, whether company or anything else, that would
16 -- that you have read over to say this is what to do if this
17 occurs?

18 A. Not that I'm read.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I don't think there's too much of a precedent on it, because
21 usually when they go down, they go down.

22 Q. Right, right.

23 A. You don't want that to happen. That's definitely not what
24 you want to happen.

25 Q. Of course. Yeah, that's for sure. Also just to go back a

1 little bit, do you remember exactly what time you showed up at the
2 platform at Block 64?

3 A. I'd say at around 8:30.

4 Q. And just going over --

5 A. I'd say more 8 than 8:30.

6 Q. Closer to 8?

7 A. Yeah, because by the time I got back on the platform it was a
8 quarter till 11.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. And we had let it set for 2 hours. So that was -- 8, 9, 10
11 -- yeah, about 8 o'clock we got there.

12 Q. Okay. So you showed up about 8 o'clock. Do you base your
13 location off exact coordinates or kind of a feel of what's needed?

14 A. It's an eye --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- eyeball where you need for to do the work.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah. Like I say, the survey has shown that the whole area
19 where I was jacking was clear.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. To where we could jack in the whole area.

22 Q. So with that -- and I don't know the answer to this. So if
23 you were there 4 or 5 days prior, okay. Was it the port leg -- so
24 when you're there 4 or 5 days prior, was the vessel positioned
25 similar to where it was this time?

1 A. It was in, it was in the exact same position, only 10 feet
2 further back.

3 Q. So normally, and I don't know the answer to this question,
4 but what -- once the can and the pad hit the bottom surface, do
5 you know how far below the surface it typically can go?

6 A. No. It depends on your mud line. And typically, like when
7 you come back -- if you come back in the same position, typically
8 your vessel will fall back in its pink, in the pad hole where it
9 was. It pretty much puts you right back where you was. But I had
10 moved up a little bit to put a walkway out, because the last time
11 I couldn't put a walkway, and we were jacked up all the way to the
12 yellow the week before.

13 Q. Oh, wow.

14 A. We were even higher up, because were at the second level.

15 Q. Gotcha.

16 A. But this time we didn't need to be that high. We were to the
17 lower level, which is about another 20 feet lower.

18 Q. Okay. So and this is just a theory and maybe you --

19 (Interference on line.)

20 MR. KARR: Hey, [REDACTED]

21 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah, I'm sorry. Yep, I think -- okay. I think
22 we're good now. That was somebody got on the other line. So,
23 we're good.

24 BY CWO [REDACTED]

25 Q. So just on a theory, I guess, since you moved up, do you know

1 about how many feet you may have moved from just to get that
2 catwalk over?

3 A. Roughly 10 foot.

4 Q. Okay. So roughly 10 foot. So is it conceivable that, you
5 know, maybe the pad, the second time, was on the edge of the
6 previous can hole that was made 5 days prior?

7 A. It is conceivable.

8 Q. And it (indiscernible) was down?

9 A. Well, in the 5 days prior, it didn't go anywhere. So it's
10 conceivable that I was still in that same pad area, but I just
11 moved forward, which it'll move in the mud on the bottom.

12 Q. Okay, okay.

13 A. And it's conceivable -- you know, it's just like the bottom
14 gave out. I really don't know what happened. But I was 10 feet
15 further back, so maybe I was right on the edge of it the week
16 before.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. And it just didn't -- I wasn't far enough over it. I mean,
19 I'm just -- I don't know.

20 Q. Yeah. No, I mean -- look, I get it. It's not --

21 A. That's (indiscernible), too.

22 Q. The unknowns are unknown for a reason.

23 A. Absolutely.

24 Q. And it's -- you know, 30 feet below. Now normally what is
25 the -- is it common to have bottom surveys conducted after --

1 prior to every jacking up procedure, or just -- what is the
2 frequency of these bottom surveys?

3 A. That depends mostly on the company.

4 Q. On the company?

5 A. Companies you're working for. They wanted a bottom survey
6 done because they wanted to see about getting another jack-up on
7 the other side, a bigger one, where all the pipelines were, which
8 the survey guy flat told me it's not going to happen.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Because I couldn't get in there with my little boat and they
11 wanted to get a big 200 out there.

12 Q. Gotcha.

13 A. And it's like that's not going to happen. So he surveyed the
14 whole, the whole platform.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. But he did mine first to make sure there was nothing there.

17 Q. But this was 5 days prior to?

18 A. Right, this was prior to the incident.

19 Q. And so Chevron, is that who paid for the bottom survey?

20 A. No, it was Sonari (ph.).

21 Q. Oh, Sonari. So, I guess -- I guess my question is, every
22 time you go out to a platform, has it previously been bottom
23 surveyed just prior to arrival?

24 A. Not necessarily.

25 Q. Not necessarily.

1 A. Not necessarily, no.

2 Q. Now, are they looking more for submerged pipelines or
3 abnormalities in the sea floor, like, all of that?

4 A. They're looking for any -- they're looking for everything.
5 They're looking for any kind of trash, anything that might be on
6 the bottom, any can holes or previous pad holes.

7 Q. So you can see that?

8 A. You can see all this in the sonar, yes.

9 Q. So, and again, I don't know, but if a survey was -- a bottom
10 survey was conducted prior to this, before the incident occurred,
11 like that morning, would it have maybe seen a can hole that may or
12 may not have been there?

13 A. Doubtful.

14 Q. Doubtful. Okay.

15 A. It'd show probably my pad holes, but I doubt seriously it
16 would have showed any can hole. It would have showed up in the
17 prior.

18 Q. Okay. What's the difference between a pad hole and a can
19 hole?

20 A. A can hole is for your rigs. When your rigs come out there,
21 they make what's called a can hole.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But a pad hole is -- I have pads on the boat, so that's --

24 Q. The pads are the rectangular --

25 A. Yeah, they're rectangular pads.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. So they make impressions.

3 Q. Right.

4 A. What we call pad holes.

5 Q. Gotcha. Oh, and then, as the bottom covers up the pad,

6 there's a can hole, that's the legs?

7 A. Well --

8 Q. Is that the can hole?

9 A. The can hole is more from the rigs. When they -- when

10 they're out there and they do their preload, because they -- like

11 2 days, I think it is, they got to preload and they fill it up and

12 they jack it up and they -- big can hole, big legs. And when they

13 pull, that's when they pull the mud out, and that's what we call a

14 can hole.

15 Q. Gotcha. Okay. Okay. And just so I'm -- I just want to kind

16 of -- so how come this rig isn't loaded with preload tanks? Is

17 that -- is it just because of the age of the vessel?

18 A. The size of it.

19 Q. The size, okay.

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. So it's a size requirement?

22 A. I believe so.

23 Q. Typically?

24 A. I believe so. Bigger the boat, the more preload you have to

25 do.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Some boats have preload things where they have to fill the
3 tanks up and they've got to wait 12 to 24 hours before they can
4 jack up to make sure it doesn't fail.

5 Q. Okay. But these are larger vessels?

6 A. Yeah, that's with big, large vessels that -- you know, you
7 could take -- put my boat on the deck of it, they're so large.

8 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. All right.

9 Okay. [REDACTED] do you have any questions?

10 LTJG [REDACTED] I think I'm good. Mike?

11 MR. KARR: All right. I've got a couple follow-up questions.

12 BY MR. KARR:

13 Q. When the boat fell, can you estimate how long it took until
14 -- you know, can you estimate the rate of fall or, you know, maybe
15 -- was it 30 seconds, a minute, until the port side was in the
16 water?

17 A. I'd say it was around 45 seconds.

18 Q. All right. And --

19 A. By the time I got to the wheelhouse, it was gone.

20 Q. Thank you. Do you know any -- was there any indication the
21 jacking equipment was not working?

22 A. No. My jacking equipment was working perfectly, as far as I
23 know.

24 Q. Now, as far as you know, what do you base that on?

25 A. By the jacking ability of the boat that I had been jacking --

1 you know, that morning, I had jacked down from another location
2 and moved over and jacked up, preloaded, and everything was
3 working fine.

4 Q. All right. And the leg, the port leg did not move? The port
5 leg was still in the -- you know, was at the same level when it --
6 you know, when it started to overturn, the port leg didn't shift
7 inside the hull?

8 A. No, no. Not that I know of.

9 Q. All right. Does the vessel have AIS?

10 A. Yes, it does.

11 Q. And were you using it at the time?

12 A. Yes, I was.

13 Q. All right. And I think you discussed this, but I was having
14 trouble following it. At what height were the legs when you went
15 over, compared to the week before?

16 A. The week before I was jacked up all the way to the yellow,
17 which is a yellow cap on the leg, but this time I was jacked down
18 about 25, 30 feet lower because I was at a lower level.

19 Q. Oh, so it -- you were working at a lower level, so that's why
20 you were lower?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. All right. And do you have any way to know or -- you know,
23 I'll ask this question. When you jack up, do you know about how
24 deep the pads go?

25 A. Not really. It's hard to determine. I mean, if the mud's

1 real soft, it can go pretty deep until you hit a solid surface.

2 As far as how much, how deep, there's really no telling.

3 Q. All right.

4 A. We know when we start pulling on it though, if it's stuck,
5 it's stuck. If they got mud on top of them, we've got to sit
6 there and pull for a little while till they come loose.

7 MR. KARR: Gotcha. Understood.

8 BY CWO [REDACTED]

9 Q. This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] again. And I guess, so if we have -- if
10 these legs are 100-foot long?

11 A. 105.

12 Q. 105. And if we're in 20 to 25 foot -- or 25 feet of water
13 and, I guess, from the water's edge to the -- where the boat was
14 lifted, do you know what -- approximately how high up that was?

15 A. That was approximately 25 -- 20, 25 feet out of the water.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. From the hull to the water.

18 Q. So it would be safe to assume, roughly, that the ocean floor
19 to where the vessel was, was about 50 feet?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Between 40 and 50 feet?

22 A. Yeah, somewhere around there would be a safe guesstimate.

23 Q. And then how much above where the vessel was, how much leg
24 was remaining out there approximately?

25 A. Twenty-five, 30 feet, give or take.

1 Q. Okay. So with that math, you're looking at 75 to 80 foot of
2 leg from the ocean floor to the top. So you can kind of roughly
3 guess that maybe the pad went in approximate depth below the
4 surface 20 to 25 feet, you know, from the ocean -- from the top of
5 the ocean surface to wherever it stopped? And I'm just doing the
6 math in my head, but, I mean --

7 A. Yeah, that's -- to figure that one out you'd have to, you
8 know, measure out the leg and all this. I mean, just looking at
9 it --

10 Q. Right, right. No, I understand.

11 A. -- it's an optical illusion to begin with.

12 Q. I know it's all approximate, but --

13 A. Right.

14 Q. -- these are all --

15 A. I mean, you can look at the pictures I have on here and get
16 an idea of how far.

17 Q. True.

18 A. Because I did take pictures of it.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. But all the legs are pretty much the same length. They were
21 all pretty much the same level. It wasn't like one was further,
22 like the port leg was further down than the starboard. It wasn't
23 like that. They were pretty much level.

24 Q. In this incident specifically, once you hit bottom, you felt
25 like it was secure?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. Because you waited an hour?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. You lifted up initially to 6 foot and then to working height,
5 waited an hour on each one and --

6 A. Never moved.

7 Q. -- nothing shifted, no tilt alarm?

8 A. No tilt alarm. The bubbles didn't move. I watched my
9 bubbles on my level, they never moved.

10 Q. Oh, so there's -- okay.

11 A. I have levels on there.

12 Q. Yep.

13 A. I have levels here and levels over here.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. These are for the back and forward, and these are for the
16 port and starboard.

17 Q. Yep. Okay.

18 A. And they never moved.

19 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

20 BY MR. KARR:

21 Q. All right. Captain, it's Mike Karr. Do you routinely
22 estimate how deep your legs are into the mud?

23 A. I couldn't even start to guesstimate actually. He was just
24 trying to do the figures in his head and we were still coming up
25 -- I guess, maybe 15, 20 feet, if even.

1 Q. Well, I was just -- I am going to do the math, because I
2 think that is interesting because it does look like the legs were,
3 you know, quite a few feet below the surface, as [REDACTED] said, about
4 at least 15. But we can do the math by looking at your
5 photographs. And --

6 A. Yeah, 30, 35 feet.

7 Q. Pardon me?

8 A. Water depth was 30 to 35 feet.

9 Q. Roger that, Roger that. All right. Here's the last thing
10 I'll ask is -- you know, we've asked you a bunch of questions. Is
11 there anything -- any other information that you think we should
12 have that will assist us in our investigation?

13 A. None that I can come up with.

14 Q. All right. Here's something that occurred to me as I'm
15 listening to your story. And so there's a preload procedure, but
16 it does sound like the preload procedure should now include any
17 changes in the crane, you know, for instance, when the crane goes
18 vertical. Has your company considered doing that?

19 A. We usually -- once we start working with the crane, we
20 usually check the levels to make sure the boat's not moving
21 because that is kind of a lot of weight. So usually when I'm
22 working with the crane, I'll stop, go check my levels, make sure
23 everything's still level. If not, I'll straighten it out and
24 we'll leave it alone for another hour until it does stop moving.

25 Q. Ah, so that -- so you were going to do. So you would have

1 left the crane up like that for another hour?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Ah, okay. Now, is that covered in that revised operations
4 manual?

5 CWO [REDACTED] I'm looking. No, I don't see anything with the
6 crane specifically. No.

7 BY MR. KARR:

8 Q. All right. Well, then if it's not in there specifically, now
9 it comes to what is usually done. So, Captain, is that what you
10 normally do each time you --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Pardon?

13 A. I usually do that.

14 Q. All right.

15 A. It's a safety thing in my head.

16 Q. And then what do you do -- so once you put the crane up --
17 well, let me ask you this. For that previous hour when you jacked
18 up out of the water, what do you do for that hour when you went
19 from 6 feet to 25 feet?

20 A. Nothing really. You know, getting paperwork ready for the
21 job and stuff like that. You know, just really kill time for an
22 hour.

23 MR. KARR: All right. Okay. I have no more questions.

24 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah, this is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I don't have
25 further questions at this point either, so --

1 MR. KARR: All right. Well, I'll just share with
2 Mr. Mitchell and with the Captain, you know, just from the
3 scenario -- you went through the procedures, and when you got to
4 that crane test or the crane preload test, it didn't pass the
5 test. And it's too bad we don't have anything that could prevent
6 what happened, and it's too bad we don't have anything that could
7 prevent that from actual catastrophic failure like what just --
8 what we saw happen here.

9 MR. PORTER: Yeah. No, there's nothing you can do in a
10 situation like that.

11 CWO [REDACTED] I mean, and -- I'm sorry, this is [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
12 again. He brings up a good point and, you know, the whole point
13 of this is to -- what can we do to prevent something like this
14 happening again in the future.

15 You guys are way more experienced than I'll ever be regarding
16 these liftboats. So, you know, it sounds like as the crane went
17 vertical, that was kind of the tipping point, literally and
18 figuratively, of the liftboat overturning. So can you guys think
19 of anything that maybe could've, in that scenario where the
20 vertical -- the crane goes vertical, is there like some sort of
21 safeguard or preventative measure that could have been done?

22 MR. MITCHELL: I had a conversation with the principals of
23 Sonari, the owners and whatnot, and I've been doing this a long
24 time and that Main Pass Area, that whole stretch up the east side
25 of the Mississippi River has been traditionally not a very good

1 area for liftboats.

2 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

3 MR. MITCHELL: There's a lot of silt deposits in that area
4 because the river dumps freely. Can holes exist; they silt over
5 so quickly that you don't know they're there. There's a lot of
6 mud ledges and shelves and typically horrendous bottom conditions
7 there.

8 CWO [REDACTED] Right.

9 MR. MITCHELL: What I told -- they asked me the same question
10 you just asked about what can we do to prevent this from
11 happening, and this is what I told them. Now, this excluded me
12 from doing work over there anymore, but I told them that the best
13 way to prevent this from happening is don't ever hire a liftboat
14 to work in that field that does not have full preload capability.
15 Because if you wanted to punch through or sink, you want it to do
16 when you're only a foot out of the water.

17 CWO [REDACTED] Right.

18 MR. MITCHELL: You don't want it to happen when you're 25
19 foot out of the --

20 CWO [REDACTED] Right, right.

21 MR. PORTER: Right.

22 MR. MITCHELL: So that would be -- you know, if you want to
23 prevent it, not necessarily would prevent them all --

24 CWO [REDACTED] Right.

25 MR. MITCHELL: -- but it would catch situations like this.

1 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

2 MR. MITCHELL: Because they can simulate a full loaded
3 condition, actually an overload condition, by pumping a tremendous
4 amount of water in this thing and just get it to sink, punch, do
5 whatever it's going to do.

6 CWO [REDACTED] Right, right.

7 MR. MITCHELL: And then if you're only a foot out of the
8 water, buoyancy takes over, you don't have this catastrophe.

9 CWO [REDACTED] Right.

10 MR. MITCHELL: So that was my suggestion to them, because
11 typically, over the last 25 years, there have been a lot of
12 incidents in Main Pass.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

14 MR. MITCHELL: A lot.

15 CWO [REDACTED] And --

16 MR. MITCHELL: It's probably the top two worst areas to work
17 a liftboat in the entire Gulf of Mexico.

18 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

19 MR. MITCHELL: That area and Matagorda are the worst areas to
20 work. You've got to be extremely careful because the bottom is so
21 unpredictable.

22 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. And this is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Do you think
23 the bottom is because of -- did high water have a lot to do with
24 it, does that have anything to do with the bottom out there where
25 the platforms are at? You know, you have a deluge of just water

1 and probably ever-changing environmental conditions, especially
2 due to high water from the river, does that have anything to do
3 with maybe the bottom survey out there, in your experience, or --

4 MR. MITCHELL: Well, like I said, you know, because there's
5 so much sediment deposited there because of the river flow.

6 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah.

7 MR. MITCHELL: On the east side, the river kind of just flows
8 freely into the Gulf. There's so many outlets on the west side
9 it's all levied off and the river really can't go there. But if
10 you get a can hole in that area that may have happened 6 months
11 ago, it can be filled up, and all the side cam sonar is doing is
12 taking a picture of the surface of the bottom.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Right.

14 MR. MITCHELL: It can't tell you what's below that.

15 CWO [REDACTED] Above surface, yeah, correct.

16 MR. MITCHELL: So it's kind of misleading. It's not -- you
17 know, you think you've got it, but you really don't know because
18 it's constantly changing. There's a lot of current there, there's
19 a lot of sediment there. A lot of conditions there are typically
20 very, very soft, a lot of penetration, really not a lot of hard
21 shelves in that whole area.

22 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. Awesome.

23 MR. KARR: This is Mike Karr. Mr. Mitchell, do you have
24 larger vessels that have the preload capability?

25 MR. MITCHELL: Not in my company, no. But in my prior jobs,

1 we've worked with big boats and, you know, we've had that. We've
2 all -- Chris has worked on them himself.

3 MR. KARR: Well, what you just said there, wouldn't that put
4 you out of business if only big boats could do it?

5 MR. MITCHELL: Well, it can put me out of business in that
6 area and, to be honest with you, I'm not going back over there.
7 He can pay me triple, I'm not going back over there.

8 MR. KARR: Okay. And did you make that decision based on
9 what just happened?

10 MR. MITCHELL: Based on what's happened and my prior
11 experience. In my 30 years in this business, I've salvaged 5
12 boats in that area. It's just not in a good place to be.

13 MR. KARR: All right. And do you know -- well, the company
14 that hired you, are they looking to save money by hiring smaller
15 boats and they don't want to pay for the bigger boats?

16 MR. MITCHELL: No, I don't think that's the case at all. The
17 water depth and the platform configuration pretty much, a 105 is
18 perfect for work in that area; you really don't need anything
19 bigger. The only thing that would make them do that is this
20 particular incident, where actually getting a much bigger boat
21 than what you need, but that bigger boat provides you the
22 opportunity to preload and try to catch these.

23 And to be honest with you, talking to them, I think that's
24 the way they're going to go in the future. Because, I mean, they
25 don't want this to happen as much as we don't. So, you know, they

1 were diligent. I got a whole volume of bottom surveys that they
2 took pictures and spent all this money to go out there and do all
3 this and it didn't prevent it, you know. So there's really no
4 other technology that they can use to give them 100 percent
5 assurance that this won't happen again.

6 MR. KARR: All right. Do we know the person? Who's your
7 contact over there with that company or, [REDACTED] do you have it?

8 CWO [REDACTED] I have a name, Beau Martin, I believe, but I
9 don't know if that's who.

10 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, I talked to several guys. I don't have
11 their names handy with me.

12 MR. KARR: We'll start with Beau Martin, you know, that will
13 be -- I'd like to give them a call and just see if they're going
14 to change their operations.

15 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

16 MR. KARR: All right.

17 MR. MITCHELL: Will Carrier was my point of contact. Sonari
18 uses a boat broker to hire their boats. Will works for a company
19 called Gulf Offshore Logistics, and Will is kind of their
20 transportation guy. And then I had several conversations with
21 actually Sonari, you know, after it happened. But they did not
22 hire me directly; it was through a broker.

23 MR. KARR: And Gulf Offshore Logistics is the boat broker and
24 who was your point of contact there?

25 MR. MITCHELL: Correct. I would start there. His name is

1 William Carrier. He's very knowledgeable and he can point you in
2 the right direction if not answer your questions.

3 MR. KARR: All right. Good enough.

4 CWO [REDACTED] This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Hey, Mike, I'll get that
5 phone number for Will Carrier so we'll have that to maybe contact
6 him at a later time.

7 MR. KARR: All right. Okay. Let me -- I will end this
8 interview -- unless there's any other questions, I'm going to end
9 the recording.

10 CWO [REDACTED] I think we're good, Mike.

11 MR. KARR: All right. So on the East Coast it is now 11:42.
12 I'm going to cease recording. Thanks everyone.

13 CWO [REDACTED] Thank you.

14 (Off the record at 11:42 a.m.)

15 MR. KARR: All right, this is Mike Karr, we're continuing the
16 recording. We're obtaining information about the deckhands. Go
17 ahead, continue the conversation.

18 BY CWO [REDACTED]

19 Q. Okay. This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] So what role did the deckhand,
20 Corey Myers, play on the vessel?

21 A. He was the deckhand. He was the worker.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And he was out on the deck watching me lift the crane up.
24 Everybody was having eyes on the crane to make sure that we were
25 going to clear the platform.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And he just got on there the week prior. He got on when we
3 came off in that same location. He had got on there that day that
4 we left.

5 Q. Okay. So his main role is, he was kind of like your eyes as
6 you were lifting the crane, I guess?

7 A. Yeah, he was watching just -- you know, watching to make sure
8 I was clear and seeing things I can't see when I'm turning.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. See the side over here that I can't see because the crane's
11 in the way of it.

12 Q. Right, right.

13 A. Watching, making sure nothing was going to hit.

14 Q. Okay.

15 MR. KARR: Do you know how much -- this is Mike Karr -- do
16 you know how much experience he had in the maritime industry?

17 MR. PORTER: Not much. He'd been offshore and worked for
18 different places but not as a boat hand. He worked welding. He's
19 worked drilling. You know, he's done all kinds of stuff to that
20 effect, but he's never worked on a liftboat as a hand.

21 MR. KARR: Gotcha, all right. Thanks.

22 BY CWO [REDACTED]

23 Q. And, I guess, you had one other crew member, the cook. Does
24 he have any roles on as well?

25 A. No, no. He was out there on the deck. Thank God he was on

1 the deck.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. Not in the galley because he'd have been in trouble.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. When that thing fell, everything fell to the port and the
6 door opens to the starboard. So luckily they were -- everybody
7 was outside and nobody got hurt, that was the main thing in my
8 eyes.

9 Q. Of course. And, again, this is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The deckhand,
10 I know he's new to the vessel and not much liftboat operation
11 experience, but do you teach him or does he know how to work the
12 controls on the legs or the cranes themselves, or is that all on
13 you?

14 A. He's just getting started.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I'm teaching him.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. As a matter of fact, I think he's going to crane school this
19 week.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. So he can't run a crane.

22 Q. Right.

23 A. But -- he's got to have his card before he can run it.

24 Q. Okay. So you're the captain, the engineer, the operator?

25 A. Everything.

1 Q. You're all in one?

2 A. I'm all in one.

3 Q. With not a whole lot of physical help, I guess, or
4 knowledgeable at this point?

5 A. Knowledgeable help, yeah.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. Physical help he's got, but knowledgeable, he doesn't really
8 know a lot about it.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. He's learning.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. I've got to teach him.

13 Q. You've got start somewhere, right?

14 A. You've got to start somewhere, exactly.

15 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

16 MR. KARR: The cook, how long had he been on the boat?

17 MR. PORTER: He had just been on there 2 weeks.

18 MR. MITCHELL: This is Dale Mitchell. He was one employed by
19 me. He's a contract cook. He had been on our vessel for how
20 long, Chris?

21 MR. PORTER: He had just got on there the week prior.

22 MR. MITCHELL: Right.

23 MR. PORTER: He had been on there about, I guess, 2 weeks.

24 MR. MITCHELL: And just in talking to him, he had a
25 tremendous amount of maritime experience, cruise ships, liftboats,

1 drilling rigs. He had been around quite a while.

2 MR. KARR: And how does -- now I'm getting into the Coast
3 Guard side of it. What was the required manning based on the
4 Coast Guard certificate of inspection?

5 MR. MITCHELL: One captain, two deckhands. So the cook
6 actually counted. My deckhands on this, they're not required to
7 present any license, just ordinary deckhands.

8 MR. KARR: All right. And how about -- there was something
9 about -- well, does everybody stay aboard the boat at night?

10 MR. MITCHELL: Yes.

11 MR. PORTER: We stay on the boat at all times.

12 MR. KARR: All right. Let me see something. Let me look at
13 the certificate.

14 "Provided a 24-hour security watch of the vessel is
15 maintained as specified by the operating manual." What does that
16 mean?

17 MR. PORTER: Somebody on the boat 24 hours.

18 MR. MITCHELL: If you read COIs on our vessel, they're going
19 to say if operation -- I don't have the exact wording -- if
20 operation does not exceed any more than 12 hours in a 24-hour
21 period, manning may be reduced to X. If you look at our manning
22 on the first page of our COI, it's going to call for one master,
23 one mate, AB/OS or something like that, and it's going to call for
24 additional manning. And then there's a clause in there, if you
25 don't operate any more than 12 hours in a 24-hour day, manning may

1 be reduced to X.

2 I don't know if this one has that, but typically they do. So
3 if you look on the second page, manning may be reduced to the
4 following, provided a 24-hour security watch of the vessel is
5 maintained as specified by the operations manual, one master, two
6 deckhands.

7 MR. KARR: Yeah. I'll just point this out. You know, we
8 just had the *Conception* fire out west, where they were supposed to
9 have a -- you know, was supposed to be up and about while other
10 people were asleep. So since we're seeing on the security watch
11 -- I'm going to assume the captain, the deckhand, and the cook
12 were asleep at night and no one was up. But, you know, I'm
13 thinking that maybe the Coast Guard expected somebody to be up --
14 you know, expects someone to be up, based on this.

15 BY CWO [REDACTED]

16 Q. Yeah. So this is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I get what he's saying.
17 These three always awake -- so you've been out, the vessel was out
18 for 37 straight days. So is somebody always awake?

19 A. No.

20 Q. No?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. So what does a security watch mean as opposed to
23 somebody not being -- like, you know what I'm saying, like, so 24-
24 hour security watch, I assume somebody would be awake 24 hours, at
25 least one person? No? Is that --

1 MR. MITCHELL: (Indiscernible)

2 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. No, no, I get it. I'm just --

3 MR. MITCHELL: There was some additional verbiage in there.
4 Some of the COIs, some of them have it, some of them don't, where
5 it goes on to say watch -- if you're on a manned platform, then
6 that counts as your security watch.

7 CWO [REDACTED] Oh, okay.

8 MR. KARR: Yeah, I see that on the certificate. So if
9 there's someone awake on the platform at all times, that would
10 cover it.

11 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. That makes total sense.

12 MR. MITCHELL: Right.

13 MR. KARR: All right. I have no more questions.

14 CWO [REDACTED] Yep, I am good as well.

15 MR. KARR: So we will not interview the deckhands?

16 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah. If you're okay with that, and I don't see
17 us gathering any more pertinent information from him, I think
18 we're good. I'm good with that as long as you are.

19 MR. KARR: I am too.

20 CWO [REDACTED] Okay. Wonderful.

21 MR. KARR: All right. And I will cease recording. The
22 recording, it's now 11:50 East Coast time.

23 (Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

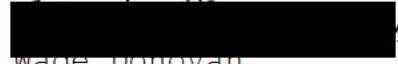
IN THE MATTER OF: LIFT BOAT KRISTIN FAYE OVERTURNING
 SEPTEMBER 8, 2019
 Interview of Christopher Porter

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA19FM050

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: October 16, 2019

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


Wade Donovan
Transcriber