

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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GROUNDING AND CAPSIZING OF F/V  
*CHALLENGER* NEAR SHELIKOF STRAIT,  
ALASKA ON AUGUST 7, 2022

Accident No.: DCA22FM036

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Interview of: MATTHEW ALWARD, Captain  
*Challenger*

via telephone

Tuesday,  
August 16, 2022

APPEARANCES:

BART BURNAM, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ Investigating Officer  
US Coast Guard

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I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. BARNUM: This is Bart Barnum with the NTSB. Today is  
3 August 16th, 2022. We're interviewing Mr. Captain Matthew Alward  
4 of the fishing vessel *Challenger*, who's involved in a vessel  
5 casualty back on the 7th of August. His vessel collided with a  
6 rock in the Shelikof.

7 So, sir, do you -- again, object to this interview being  
8 recorded?

9 MR. ALWARD: No, I don't.

10 MR. BARNUM: Thank you. And could you please state your name  
11 and just spell your last name for me?

12 MR. ALWARD: Matthew Julian Alward. A-L-W-A-R-D.

13 MR. BARNUM: All right, thank you Captain.

14 And also on the line from the US Coast Guard?

15 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] that's [REDACTED] with the  
16 United States Coast Guard, investigating officer lieutenant of the  
17 MSD Kodiak. And as well, I also have [REDACTED] [REDACTED] this evening.

18 MR. [REDACTED] That's [REDACTED] [REDACTED] last name [REDACTED],  
19 chief petty officer, US Coast Guard.

20 MR. BARNUM: All right, thank you gentleman.

INTERVIEW OF MATTHEW ALWARD

21 BY MR. BARNUM:

22 Q. All right, like I stated before we started the interview,  
23 Captain, I know very little about this accident. We were notified  
24 just a couple days ago. I think after you -- on Friday we were

1 notified, so you were already in the process of towing your  
2 vessel, if I'm correct. But so, I basically just want you to, if  
3 you could, talk me through the casualty and how it happened. I  
4 don't even know what time it occurred. So, if you, you know, if  
5 you could start on, you know, were you fishing or were you  
6 transiting? And kind of just walk us through on a line in much as  
7 much detail as you can because that will help us out. You know,  
8 where you're coming through and then take us through the casualty  
9 and also the response and how you got the vessel into Larsen Bay?

10 A. Like you said, the 7th, it was around 7 in the morning or so,  
11 we were traveling out to where we were going to fish for the day  
12 which was only not even a mile away I don't think, from where we  
13 were. I think a lot less. So, we were traveling at about 6  
14 knots, I was in about 25, 30 feet of water and there was -- there  
15 is some rocks that are marked on the chart which were still ahead  
16 of me and still pretty far inside of me (ph.) and then we hit a  
17 rock.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So --

20 Q. Where were you coming from, Captain?

21 A. We had been anchored up by Harvester Island. We were just  
22 heading out in the morning to start our fishing day.

23 Q. Okay. I'm looking the chart right now. I'm from -- I'm a  
24 Mainer, I'm from Maine. I've never fished out there, Captain. I  
25 don't -- could you basically, you know, a little more detail

1 because like I said we want to pinpoint where this rock was.

2 A. Just to the -- so we were anchored up to the north there's --  
3 I don't know if you see Uyak, and there's Rocky Point, and then  
4 there's Uyak Bay and right at the -- outside of Uyak Bay on the  
5 outside is Harvester Island.

6 Q. Okay. I see you now, all right. And you --

7 A. But -- and that's just -- that's Anchorage when there's --  
8 there was no weather outside. The south -- the weather was  
9 southwest.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So, we were anchored up to Harvester there. So, we traveled  
12 from Harvester out for at least a couple -- two hours or so, two  
13 and a half hours. And we're just getting ready to go fishing. I  
14 just got my kid up, he's my skiff man, get the skiff warmed up and  
15 ready to go so we were just almost to where we were would start  
16 fishing.

17 Q. Okay. Do you have AIS onboard, Captain?

18 A. Do I have AIS?

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. I have just receiving ability, not transmitting.

21 Q. Okay. So, here's the crux, obviously, you don't have GPS  
22 coordinates of that rock on your vessel because you capsized.

23 Now, one of your responding vessels, has anybody marked it? I  
24 mean, has anybody visually spotted and -- is that something that  
25 you could provide us with? The coordinates?

1 A. I had -- a buddy of mine was out there the next day, and he  
2 marked it on his plotter and he lost the mark and he said he was  
3 -- I said -- he said he got it kind of close. And I asked him if  
4 he could try to get it as accurate as possible for you guys.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And that's -- I've not heard back from him yet. You know,  
7 that's my boat to communicate with him on (indiscernible).

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. But I'm trying to get the actual precise coordinates for you  
10 guys.

11 Q. Okay. That would help immensely. I appreciate that. So,  
12 you were -- you headed there --

13 A. What I put down in the Coast Guard report was my best guess  
14 as to where it was so it's not --

15 Q. Right. Got it. Yeah.

16 A. And by the time the EPIRB floated and popped off, that would  
17 not be where we hit, either.

18 Q. Okay. Understood. Okay. You said the weather was  
19 southwest. What were the seas like?

20 A. So that's (indiscernible) and were hugging the shoreline  
21 because I was in the lee, the cape. It was probably 3, 4 foot  
22 seas, maybe.

23 Q. Okay. You said you were -- you're hugging the shore in the  
24 lee. About how far offshore were you?

25 A. I was out, like a way outside the kelp line in like, 25, 30

1 feet of water. I'm not sure exactly how far in yards but -- not  
2 tight, but --

3 Q. Yeah. I mean, a half mile?

4 A. Not like a straight line from Rocky Point to Cape Uyak, so I  
5 was, you know, a couple hundred -- 2- to 300 yards probably off  
6 the shore.

7 Q. Okay. All right. Have you been -- have you fished there  
8 much before? Are you familiar with the area?

9 A. Yeah. Yeah, I knew there was a rock somewhere, but it was --  
10 turned out it was a lot further out than I remembered where it  
11 was.

12 Q. Sure. Now, how --

13 A. But I am very familiar with the area.

14 Q. You are? How long have you been fishing there?

15 A. This would be my 15th year. It's one of the many spots on  
16 map from there.

17 Q. Right, sure.

18 A. Or at the time during the fishing season.

19 Q. What species are you fishing right now? What's fishery?

20 A. Salmon.

21 Q. Okay. A particular species?

22 A. Just salmon.

23 Q. Yeah, I didn't know if it was like pink salmon, or like, what  
24 -- don't they break it down further?

25 A. You got me -- we catch them all, so.



1 Q. Okay. Okay.

2 A. The permit's for salmon, so --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. So, we get all the salmon we catch.

5 Q. Okay. You said you knew there was a rock there. How -- is  
6 that just --

7 A. I didn't know there was a rock -- I didn't remember it was --  
8 obviously, where it was. I knew there was an unmarked rock  
9 somewhere in the vicinity.

10 Q. Right. And how did you know that? Had you seen it before,  
11 or?

12 A. I had seen it -- you can only see it on a really low minus  
13 tide. I had seen it before. I'm usually not -- that's not right  
14 -- that's not right where we're usually fishing, so I'm not like  
15 right in that area much at all. So, I've seen it from afar, not  
16 up close.

17 Q. Okay. How -- what was the tide at 0700 in the morning? I  
18 take it was a low tide? Was it like a --

19 A. It was a low tide, and I can't remember, honestly, I can't  
20 remember if it was 30 (indiscernible) towards the bottom we're  
21 still heavy, but, it was on the low end of the low tide.

22 Q. All right. Okay. All right, well, why don't you take me  
23 through. I know it's uncomfortable to think about, but why don't  
24 you take me through like, you know, when you hit the rock, kind of  
25 what happened next. I know -- I read your report to the Coast

1 Guard I would just like to hear it in your own words, you know, I  
2 said -- you said it was about five to ten minutes?

3 A. The guys think it was only four minutes before abandoned ship  
4 and then maybe ten minutes after that before it actually capsized.

5 Yeah, so, we hit. So, as I was like, walking to go out the  
6 wheelhouse door to go check one of my guys was already jumping on  
7 top of the wheelhouse to (indiscernible) on the trash pump. So, I  
8 knew we were taking on water, so I ran downstairs, and it was it  
9 was pretty decent flooding coming in through the floor peaks.  
10 Floor -- which is where -- there's a crash bulkhead up there but  
11 it is -- it was just a plywood floor with a plywood hatch in it,  
12 it's not a watertight hatch.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- there, which is something I'll never not have again.

15 Q. Mm-hmm.

16 A. So, then I ran -- while they were getting the trash pump  
17 going, I ran downstairs, I have an emergency valve on a three inch  
18 hydraulic pump and I have an emergency valve in on a two inch  
19 electric pump that could pump straight out of the engine room.  
20 So, I switched the valves to get both of those pump running in  
21 case the water made it to the engine room because it was not there  
22 yet. It was still coming up out of the floor peak at that point.  
23 And then starting to go over the floor into the -- we call it the  
24 sonar bilge, the next kind of bilge station for the engine room.

25 And then I ran back upstairs and back up off the rock

1 (indiscernible) and didn't want to be pounding on a rock. And  
2 then I started moving towards the beach and as soon as I started  
3 moving -- I knew some more water would come in when we started  
4 moving but a whole lot -- it went from like coming in good to  
5 coming in like a geyser they said downstairs, and the bow started  
6 dropping quick, and I told the guys to grab what they could and  
7 then my kid was getting the skiff untied and we actually had one  
8 of our hydraulic winch lines on the -- holding the bow of the  
9 skiff.

10 So, before the engines died we were able to get that line  
11 loose and off the skiff, we didn't have to cut any lines to get  
12 the skiff loose. And I'd already actually turned the two pumps on  
13 in the engine room so we had a two inch Honda trash pump going, a  
14 three inch Kaiser pump and a 2 inch slo vacs (ph.) all pumping  
15 out. And -- so the guys ran downstairs and grabbed -- two of them  
16 grabbed one bag each I think, and then got in the skiff. And I  
17 grabbed my phone and wallet, backpack, actually stepped out of the  
18 wheelhouse, stepped on the rail onto the skiff in my slippers and  
19 was still dry.

20 And then at that point I actually have a video that I could  
21 send you guys. The boat is sinking for a little bit, and which is  
22 when my kid said we should try to save the nets, so it's excellent  
23 thinking, so then we grabbed the end of the towline on the net and  
24 started pulling the net off the deck as fast as we could with the  
25 skiff. And about that point two other fishing vessels got there

1 and one of them grabbed ahold of my skiff so we could pull harder  
2 and got the net cleared from the boat before it rolled and then  
3 that vessel retreats and that -- someone kind of helped us with  
4 that.

5       And then at that point with the net free and clear, and the  
6 boat was still floating kind of upside down, stern up. And then  
7 we got onboard the other vessel that was there and decided it was  
8 -- looked pretty stable and we should see if we could hook up to  
9 it and tow it. It was either going to go onto the rocks on the  
10 shore out there or currents would take it out into the Shelikof;  
11 so either way it would be a hazard and if possible, to save it, we  
12 should. And then we -- so The Stzczar was the first vessel,  
13 fishing vessel Stzczar assisted, and he towed us for probably a  
14 couple hours and got us past Wolf Patch Reef which is just past  
15 Rocky Point on your chart there. And at that point we got around  
16 the corner and the seas were coming down, the weather was also  
17 coming down. And then he handed us off to the Sea Heron, took us  
18 the rest of the day to Larsen Bay.

19 Q.   Okay. Thank you. Sea Heron, you said the first one was --  
20 the assisting vessel was the Stzczar? What did -- could you spell  
21 that?

22 A.   Yeah. S-T-Z-C-Z-A-R.

23 Q.   Okay. Gotcha. Thank you for that. A couple follow-ups.  
24 You said the crash bulkhead it wasn't watertight. It wasn't a  
25 watertight collision bulkhead. Was there any watertight bulkheads

- 1 onboard?
- 2 A. Well, the bulkhead was watertight. The floor was not.
- 3 Q. The floor, thank you. Okay. So, it flooded that space and
- 4 then what is the floor I guess --
- 5 A. It flooded up and over the floor into the rest of the --
- 6 Q. Gotcha.
- 7 A. -- areas of the boat.
- 8 Q. Okay. So, what is directly above that? Was it a chain lock
- 9 or something?
- 10 A. No, it's a bunks.
- 11 Q. Bunks.
- 12 A. Two. The four peaks and there's four bunks up there.
- 13 Q. Okay. Captain, what was the draft -- what was your draft
- 14 during the accident?
- 15 A. About four and a half feet.
- 16 Q. Okay. Sir, you are the owner of the vessel, am I correct?
- 17 A. Yeah.
- 18 Q. Okay. Have you --
- 19 A. Yeah.
- 20 Q. -- had a -- when was the last condition evaluation survey did
- 21 you have completed? Like, for your insurance?
- 22 A. The spring.
- 23 Q. The spring, oh.
- 24 A. The spring. We just got done doing a bunch of work on it.
- 25 Q. Oh, sorry. Do you -- who did that? Do you think we could

1 get a copy of that condition evaluation report?

2 A. Yes. I'll go find it. It's Edgewater Marine Surveyors.

3 Q. Okay. All right. What is the history of the vessel? You --  
4 how long have you owned it? Or when did you buy it -- what did --

5 A. I've owned it since 2008 -- winter of 2007.

6 Q. Okay. Was there any -- I'm looking at the report, but I just  
7 want to verify there wasn't any injuries of you and your crew?

8 A. No, not at all.

9 Q. Okay, and you had been anchored the night before. What time  
10 did you anchor? Was the crew able to get some rest?

11 A. Yeah. We were anchored probably around, I can't remember, 9  
12 p.m. or 10 p.m. or something.

13 Q. Okay, and were they done work at that point, or did you post  
14 wheel watches? How does that usually work? Or how did it work  
15 with respect to anchor watch? Did everybody go to bed or was  
16 there someone on the bridge?

17 A. Everyone was to bed. I sleep upstairs, so.

18 Q. Okay. Just curious, do you have -- is there like a -- do you  
19 have a watch circle alarm or anchor alarm if you drag anchor?

20 A. Yeah, I set -- I'll set an anchor alarm and a depth alarm.

21 Q. Okay. Good, all right. All right, what's next for the  
22 vessel sir? It's in Larsen Bay, what is your plan now?

23 A. Well right now we're waiting -- the guys that I see over  
24 there getting pumped for -- they just start pumping out because  
25 the tides are going out here and get it patched on the bow so we

1 can float this next high tide. We pull it further up the beach  
2 and set it down on big air bags and then we roll it up the beach a  
3 little further so it's a little above high tide line and then what  
4 (indiscernible) that we have to do.

5 Q. Okay, and who is going to --

6 A. And it's going to get --

7 Q. -- look at that?

8 A. It's going to get patched. It just depends on if the  
9 insurance company wants to patch it and tow it or if we sell it  
10 and lease it here and I patch it and tow it.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I know how.

13 Q. Okay. Who is your insurance company?

14 A. NorthStar Insurance is my company.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Which was bought out by Gallagher so I'm not sure what they  
17 call themselves now.

18 Q. All right. Yeah, that's all the questions I have right now.  
19 I'm going to look through my notes. I'm going to have a couple  
20 follow-ups, I'm sure. But I think basically I think the Coast  
21 Guard will have some questions for you, but we're really -- as far  
22 as I'm concerned, we're really interested in -- on marking that  
23 rock. Especially if, you know, it's been a known issue in the  
24 past and obviously a huge issue now. So, if your buddy can give  
25 us his coordinates or if we can send you a chart and you mark on

1 it that would work as well. But, let me see if the --

2 A. Great. I would just be guessing, so. I think  
3 (indiscernible) believe.

4 Q. How are you --  
5 (Crosstalk)

6 A. -- actually get --

7 Q. How are you navigating when you -- what do you use to  
8 navigate? Do you have some sort of paper charts? Or what do you  
9 use for electronics?

10 A. NovaTech 10.0 Professional.

11 Q. Okay. Is that -- do you have -- is that -- can you access  
12 that? Is there like an online viewer? I know some have that. Or  
13 is it just on the unit on itself on the bridge?

14 A. It's on a computer on the bridge.

15 Q. Right. Right. Okay.

16 MR. BARNUM: All right, lieutenant [REDACTED] do you have any  
17 questions for Captain Alward?

18 MR. [REDACTED] Yes.

19 BY MR. [REDACTED]

20 Q. On the NovaTech 10.0 when is the last time that you updated  
21 those charts?

22 A. Well the charts haven't changed so -- I think I got it two  
23 years ago.

24 Q. Three years, okay?

25 A. Three or four years ago, but the chart out here has not



1 changed in a decade so that wouldn't have done anything.

2 Q. Yes, if there's a way you can pinpoint that rock. I mean  
3 I'll do everything I can. I work with Waterways Management that  
4 way we can get some information out about it to again just kind of  
5 prevent this from happening again if that's the win we get out of  
6 this, that's the win get out of this, you know? Yeah. So, I am  
7 trying to visualize your crash bulkhead so I'm sorry for the  
8 redundant questions here. But does the crash bulkhead -- I mean,  
9 I'm used to it seeing -- seeing it go from the keel all the way up  
10 to the top of the compartment. Is like a partial and that's why  
11 it was flooding over? How does that look?

12 A. Yeah. So, I guess you haven't been on a 48-foot Zinger.

13 Q. No, I haven't.

14 A. So, the bow -- the bow -- so the bunks are down in the bow,  
15 so there's the cabin step down from the deck of the boat to the  
16 cabin floor. And from the cabin floor it was probably a triangle  
17 space, it's a few feet by two-foot triangle, kind of -- it's the  
18 floor space down in the four peaks, and then the bunks on each  
19 side on the bow, so, that space below that floor down there is the  
20 void which has the (indiscernible) the original -- actually it was  
21 just a plywood triangle hatch that sat in there. And then I had a  
22 bow thruster down in there too, so there was a bow thruster too  
23 for that, so.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. So, it wasn't a normal, like a big boat where the bulkhead

1 actually goes floor to ceiling. The bulkhead came up to just the  
2 cabin floor.

3 Q. Okay, no I can visualize that.

4 A. Had I had a sealed hatch in there I'm sure we would have  
5 saved the boat.

6 Q. I mean there's damage past -- I see you have some damage it  
7 looks like from the diver's survey, past that bulkhead, but the  
8 water was all coming in from the floor peak.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. And that's up over the floor. The diver's report, do you  
11 have a physical copy of that, that you could provide us? Or is  
12 this just verbal?

13 A. It's not -- he's still working. It's not done yet.

14 Q. Okay, understood. Understood.

15 A. He still has to do his whole report for the surveyors  
16 (indiscernible). We're still in the process of towing the --  
17 around day six.

18 Q. Yeah. Yeah, no I got that picture this morning. Thank you  
19 for sending that. At least it's in the -- at least it's up right  
20 now. I mean --

21 A. Yeah.

22 MR. [REDACTED] That's all I have for the time being. I mean,  
23 I think a lot of the questions that I had that I was even making  
24 notes of you covered, Bart, so.

25 MR. BARNUM: Okay. Yeah, no we appreciate your time,

1 (indiscernible).

2 BY MR. BARNUM:

3 Q. When was this ship built, the boat built?

4 A. 1989.

5 Q. Okay, and who was the previous owner?

6 A. I bought it from Paysen Wittuck (ph.).

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. In 2007. He'd owned it for I think only two years. He  
9 bought it from Gus Mishock (ph.), and Gus had bought it from  
10 Dwight Simpson who was basically the original owner because the  
11 guy who had it built died of a heart attack two weeks before the  
12 boat was -- and the next guy ended up marrying his wife on the  
13 boat.

14 Q. There you go, okay. That's some bad luck. So, I guess real  
15 quickly if you could give me like -- I've never been on this type  
16 of Seiner, either. Was it a twin screw or a single screw or what  
17 did you have for an engine and propeller and steering?

18 A. Yes, it was twin screw. I just put new engines in last year.  
19 It was 425 horse diesels on 30-inch props and when I actually had  
20 -- I have articulating rudders, so it steers really well.

21 Q. Okay. What types of engines were those?

22 A. John Deeres, 60/90s.

23 Q. Okay. All right. Other than getting -- know how to mark  
24 this rock map, is there anything else that you think you could  
25 have done to help prevent this, you know, you -- not cruise so

1 close to shore, or anything that comes to mind to help, could have  
2 helped prevent this? I know you mentioned that collision  
3 bulkhead. Anything else?

4 A. Well, I mean, if I was about ten further away from shore, I  
5 would have gone right by it but (indiscernible).

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. It was about 25 to 30 feet deep in the water (indiscernible)  
8 but I thought I had -- I thought I was pretty well prepared for --  
9 both my sides with pumping capabilities, but when there's a hole  
10 that big it doesn't matter how much pumping capability you have.

11 Q. Right. Is there a fleet of boats out there, or? How many --  
12 where are you from -- you're from Homer. Right? So, you come  
13 down, when did you come down?

14 A. Yes. I started fishing June 9th.

15 Q. Okay, and there's a bunch of you anchored up there?

16 A. There was two guys anchored around right where I was  
17 anchored. I'm not sure how many other guys were anchored in the  
18 grater Harvester area. But the fleet's almost 200 boats.

19 Q. Right. I'm just curious, obviously you weren't following  
20 somebody that morning. Were you in the lead? Was someone  
21 following you? Had you seen people going that close before?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Yeah, you had?

24 A. No, I mean I have seen people cruise off the coastline,  
25 that's where the fish travel.

1 Q. Yeah, okay.

2 A. And that morning there was a boat a ways behind me and a  
3 couple guys had gone out earlier were already out there.

4 Q. Okay. If it wasn't blowing, would you have been hugging the  
5 coast -- you probably would have been further out?

6 A. Yeah, I might have been still hugging the coast looking for  
7 fish. Might have been a little further out.

8 Q. Okay. How much longer was the season open for, or is the  
9 season open for?

10 A. That will be open until probably October. It depends on what  
11 the fish do.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Most guys will be done by like September. A few guys will  
14 keep fishing.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. Your life raft, you said it auto deployed as well as your  
17 EPIRB, did you guys consider watching the lifeboat or, a life  
18 raft, or is the -- your skiff that -- your first option?

19 A. No, the skiff is immensely more safe than a life raft.

20 Q. Okay. All right. All right, so just timeline of --

21 A. I wasn't concerned with EPIRB or survival suits or life rafts  
22 because there was 200 boats right there and we were getting in the  
23 skiff.

24 Q. Yeah, okay. But you had survival suits onboard, then?

25 A. Yes. It is currently sitting in a (indiscernible) of fresh

1 water.

2 Q. Okay. And where is the life raft now? Is that --

3 A. It's here at the gary (ph.).

4 Q. Okay. So, I know we've been going for a long time here but  
5 real quickly I wanted to run through the timeline one more time so  
6 I have it right. You said it -- at 7 a.m. is about what time you  
7 struck the rock?

8 A. Yeah, yeah.

9 Q. Okay, what time did you leave the anchor, heave anchor that  
10 morning?

11 A. It was around 5 a.m.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. It might have been a little after 7 a.m., actually. I didn't  
14 get up until like 5:10 a.m. or something.

15 Q. Okay, so it was about four minutes after you struck it until  
16 you guys abandoned ship and then another -- how long before the  
17 vessel capsized?

18 A. Maybe ten minutes, tops. I don't know. I was a little --

19 Q. Sure, sure. Understood. And how soon did the Stzczar  
20 arrive? Or was that the first vessel that -- to arrive?

21 A. The Stzczar and the Sea Grace both arrived at the same time,  
22 basically.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And they actually had -- I think they might have sent their  
25 skiffs ahead because their skiffs are faster, but there wasn't

1 really much those skiffs could do because we were all safe. And  
2 then this Sea Grace grabbed ahold of my skiff as we were trying to  
3 pull the net off deck because once you get a bunch of the net in  
4 the water it's a lot of drag so you can't really move it too fast.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So, he got ahold of our bow line and our skiff, and he helped  
7 us pull the rest of the net off before (indiscernible).

8 Q. Captain, were you able to get a mayday off? Or, how did they  
9 know you were in distress?

10 A. I was actually talking to one of them on the radio when I  
11 struck the rock.

12 Q. Okay. VHF channel, what channel were you on?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. Actually, it was (indiscernible).

16 Q. I'm sorry, what was it on?

17 A. It was on a two-meter radio.

18 Q. Okay. Yeah, gotcha. So, the -- you guys evacuated, the Sea  
19 Grace, so they arrived approximately 20 minutes, or how soon after  
20 you abandoned?

21 A. Less than -- definitely less than ten.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Maybe five.

24 Q. All right.

25 MR. BARNUM: Okay. That's all the questions I have right

1 now, sir. I think we'll follow up with some of those document  
2 requests and obviously once things calm down a little bit -- but  
3 Lieutenant, do you have any more questions for the captain?

4 MR. [REDACTED] I do just have one more question.

5 BY MR. [REDACTED]

6 Q. Going back to talking about the build of the boat. Since  
7 you've owned it, or since it's built that you know of, was there  
8 any major renovations done to the vessel or is it still as it --

9 A. Not like life (indiscernible) before I bought it, but I moved  
10 bulkheads through the fish hold a long time ago, maybe 2010 or  
11 2011.

12 Q. And did you move them back, forward, I mean what did that? I  
13 mean obviously I'm assuming you grew your fish holds? Is that a  
14 correct assumption?

15 A. Yeah, it was -- originally it had a main tank and then two  
16 side saddle tanks in the rear, so I put in a full bulkhead across,  
17 so I have a main tank and then I have Sunday hold we call it, a  
18 secondary fish hold so the -- unless the fishing was good the boat  
19 was not fully tanked. So, I only had my main fish hold full of  
20 water.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And then the bulk -- the (indiscernible) bulkhead was moved  
23 back about 18 inches when we did that. We took out old fiberglass  
24 tanks and put in aluminum tanks.

25 Q. Did you have the stability of the vessel evaluated by a



1 surveyor after these modifications?

2 A. No, but I roll huge bags of fish over my rails and the boat  
3 doesn't roll over, so I know it's stable. There's another Seiner  
4 out there that ever had a stability report that (indiscernible).

5 Q. Okay. All right. I'm good with questions for Matt, and  
6 again I appreciate your time this morning, Matt.

7 MR. BARNUM: Okay, great, thank you. This is Bart Barnum  
8 with NTSB. It's approximately -- let's see, what time is there?  
9 10:07 a.m. Alaska Time, 2:07 p.m. Eastern Standard. The interview  
10 is concluded.

11 (Whereupon, at 10:07 a.m., the interview was concluded.)  
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CERTIFICATE

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


IN THE MATTER OF:            GROUNDING AND CAPSIZING OF F/V  
  *CHALLENGER* NEAR SHELIKOF STRAIT,  
  ALASKA ON AUGUST 7, 2022  
  Interview of Matthew Alward

ACCIDENT NO.:                DCA22FM036

PLACE:                        via telephone

DATE:                         August 16, 2022

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.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brittany Hay  
Transcriber