

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, \*

\* Accident No.: DCA22FM036

ALASKA ON AUGUST 7, 2022 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: QUINN ALWARD, Deckhand  
*Challenger*

via telephone

Tuesday,  
August 16, 2022

APPEARANCES:

BART BURNAM, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

██████████ Investigating Officer  
US Coast Guard

██████████, Chief Petty Officer  
US Coast Guard

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I N T E R V I E W

(7:00 a.m.)

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2  
3 MR. BARNUM: All right, this is Bart Barnum. It's August  
4 16th, 2022. This morning we're speaking to Quinn Alward, who's a  
5 deckhand aboard the fishing vessel *Challenger* during the causality  
6 that occurred on 8/7/2022 at approximately 7:00 a.m. I would like  
7 to go around the room first and everyone introduce themselves.  
8 Quinn, if you could, just go ahead and state your name and spell  
9 your last name.

10 MR. ALWARD: My name is Quinn Alward, Q-U-I-N-N A-L-W-A-R-D.

11 MR. BARNUM: All right, thank you, sir. And also, on the  
12 line from the US Coast Guard.

13 MR. [REDACTED] It's Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and that's [REDACTED]  
14 [REDACTED]

15 MR. JARRETT: Chief Petty Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Last name

16 [REDACTED] And we are with Marine Safety Detachment Kodiak.

17 MR. BARNUM: Okay, great.

## INTERVIEW OF QUINN ALWARD

18  
19 BY MR. BARNUM:

20 Q. All right, Quinn, thanks again for talking to us. I'm just  
21 going to ask you again for the record, we have your permission to  
22 record this interview?

23 A. Yes, I give you my permission.

24 Q. All right, thank you. So, basically, I want to start with  
25 kind of your experience. How long have you been fishing? What

1 fisheries have you been involved in? What vessels? If you could  
2 kind of fill us in on that.

3 A. Well, I've been fishing on and off since I was six years old,  
4 and you know, I guess wasn't real deckhand then, but I fished with  
5 my father. I've been seining since then. I've been a full-time  
6 seining deckhand at age 17 in Kodiak, Alaska. I've been coming  
7 back every summer since. Every summer except one on *Challenger*.  
8 I did Kodiak Herring (ph.) one year, and I did long lines, I  
9 (indiscernible) to Homer, small trips. Mainly seining, mainly on  
10 the *Challenger*.

11 Q. Okay, and what is your title onboard? You said deckhand.

12 A. Skiff man Quinn.

13 Q. Okay, and what are your major responsibilities?

14 A. I drive and operate the skiff that (indiscernible) at the  
15 other end of our seine net, because I help the boat stay four  
16 inches while we haul it back and cooking, cleaning, you know, the  
17 usual.

18 Q. Okay. All right, now I just want you to go through the  
19 action sequence for us. I know we did hear from your father  
20 before but just in your words, I want to kind of hear, start at  
21 the -- maybe the night before, where you guys were coming from,  
22 where you anchored and kind of just take us through the whole  
23 sequence to how the boat got to Larsen Bay.

24 A. Yes, sir. So, the day before there was a pretty strong  
25 southwest blow that came up in the afternoon, so we fished until

1 we got our butts kicked and we decided to call it a day. We went  
2 in, delivered, anchored up and all finally got to sleep which was  
3 much needed. It was a pretty uneventful night. If anything, we  
4 were just happy to get some sleep, you know. At least, six hours  
5 at least.

6 Wake up the next morning, it's still blowing pretty good out  
7 there, so we're in no rush to get out. Maybe pull our anchor at  
8 5:00 a.m., of course that, you know, probably pull anchor at 5:00  
9 a.m., and I would imagine a two-hour run to Cape Uyak. We run out  
10 to Cape Uyak, the weather is still pretty nasty coming from the  
11 southwest, so we're tucked in a little bit, but nowhere  
12 uncomfortable. I wasn't uncomfortable, no one was there yet, our  
13 skipper wasn't -- he knows, you know, there are a few unmarked  
14 rocks. He knows where they are, that wasn't a concern really  
15 where we were. Probably 80 yards off the kelp line, outside of  
16 it, in the deep water, at least 30 feet of water probably under us  
17 when the incident occurred at 7:00 a.m.

18 The skipper was upstairs driving, fully aware of the  
19 situation and just happened to hit an unmarked rock in some 25 to  
20 30 feet to -- we stopped and started taking water. The crew  
21 immediately was awake. I was already awake standing up in the  
22 doorway when we hit the rock. One other crew member was awake in  
23 the galley, one was in his bunk. I look inside and I see her  
24 taking water so I run upstairs and I say, skipper -- just like we  
25 practiced for, I said, now we're taking water and I jumped up top

1 and I grabbed the deck (indiscernible) trash pump and headed  
2 downstairs. We started pumping water. Skipper goes downstairs  
3 and changes valves and starts pumping water, monitoring the  
4 situation. It's probably only been a couple minutes at the time,  
5 we're all on it, moving quick and we, you know, we soon realize  
6 we're taking more water than we can expel.

7         So, I get in the skiff, the smaller boat that I operate, and  
8 I got it all cut loose from the main boat. I had it ready to go  
9 and ready to take everybody else and they had time to run inside  
10 quickly and grab a phone and a wallet pretty much and got out  
11 fine, came out to the skiff, we said, hey we should probably get  
12 the net off. It was an absolute mess, so we took the net off,  
13 another seiner hauled the net back for us, got it out of the  
14 water.

15         We hooked our boat up to another boat and started towing it  
16 from Cape Uyak area towards Larsen Bay. And it was then about a  
17 16-hour run, or 14 I don't know, worst (indiscernible) of my life,  
18 and we arrived in Larsen Bay that evening. About midnight or 1:30  
19 a.m. we dropped anchor and that's the day, the incident.

20 Q. Sure, good. Thank you for that great detail. I appreciate  
21 it. So, you said you were awake when the vessel hit the rock, you  
22 were in the doorway. Did you --

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Did you -- where did you see the water coming in?

25 A. Through the bow, through the four peaks, just the front bow

1 compartment where the -- yeah.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And we opened up the other hatch, no water coming from  
4 anywhere else. Coming from just the bow compartment.

5 Q. Okay, and did it come into the -- where you were -- where the  
6 crew was sleeping?

7 A. Not by -- well, the one crew member was in his bunk. The  
8 second we hit the rock he was out taking (indiscernible) on his  
9 feet, boots on, acting accordingly, so by the time we were all --  
10 it took two minutes to get up from the bunks I'd say.

11 Q. Mm-hmm.

12 A. And by then it started flowing over the floor and into  
13 further back into the engine room and started --

14 Q. Right

15 A. -- through the four peaks, up and over the cabin floor.

16 Q. Okay, so how long do you think it was before -- how long did  
17 it take you to get the trash pump and get that thing hooked up and  
18 running?

19 A. I time it -- it's a blur, I wish I could tell you better, but  
20 to my best judgement it was five minutes from impact to we were in  
21 the skiff and the cabin was going under, probably about five  
22 minutes. I had the trash pump down within two minutes, you know,  
23 we were quick.

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. We, yeah, we were quick. We were ready.



1 Q. Right.

2 A. Not --

3 Q. You said you practiced --

4 (Crosstalk)

5 Q. -- for it before. Is there something -- do you have drills?

6 A. We talk over drills in Homer, and we try to be prepared.

7 We've all taken the AMC course, so.

8 Q. Okay. Excellent.

9 A. Yeah, we try to be mindful of these situations.

10 Q. Yeah. What do you feel like could have prevented this from  
11 happening?

12 A. NOAH could update their marine charts.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. That's the only thing I could think of. We were not anywhere  
15 at (indiscernible) we're not; you know, I don't blame the skipper  
16 one bit. We were deep water.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. It's not even on the chart.

19 Q. Yeah. Do you -- is this a route that you had taken before on  
20 the vessel?

21 A. We've been right around there before. Obviously not exactly  
22 right there or we probably have just at high water. It was low  
23 tide, so, it was --

24 Q. Have you ever seen that rock before?

25 A. (Indiscernible) No, never have.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But at a very low tide apparently it can be seen, and it's  
3 not marked. We -- apparently, that's what I've heard since then.

4 Q. Right. So, obviously since then you've probably hearing a  
5 lot about it. I mean how well known is this rock within the  
6 fishing community here?

7 A. Yeah, I don't know.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. I had -- I know we hit a rock and I know it wasn't on a chart  
10 and I know we did all we could. And we responded and I was proud  
11 of all of us. We did exactly what we needed to and we are all  
12 safe.

13 Q. Got it. No, no. It -- don't get me wrong, I agree with very  
14 much so. It sounds like it happened very quickly.

15 A. Yes, it happened very quickly.

16 Q. All right. Quinn, do you operate -- do you navigate the  
17 vessel as well as -- I know you said your duties there are helping  
18 with the skiff but are you --

19 A. I occasionally when we're travelling for a long period, we'll  
20 all take turns operating the vessel. We all know how to operate  
21 the vessel.

22 Q. Yeah.

23 A. We watch, but haven't had to a lot, we have not been  
24 traveling pretty much this year so.

25 Q. Okay, and --

1 A. The skipper does a lot of the driving.

2 Q. When you're up there navigating what are you using to  
3 navigate, is there --

4 A. NovaTech charts on a computer, and you know NOAH chart,  
5 NovaTech program.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. And that's -- I don't know, same thing as every other boat  
8 out here. Com-nav systems, com-nav auto pilots and navigation  
9 charts.

10 Q. Okay. Do you know when the last time the charts or that  
11 system was updated?

12 A. No, I do not.

13 Q. Okay, all right.

14 MR. BARNUM: I'm going to pass it off to Lieutenant [REDACTED]  
15 with the Coast Guard for a couple questions. So, thank you.

16 MR. ALWARD: All right, thank you sir.

17 BY MR. [REDACTED]

18 Q. Hey Quinn, this is [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

19 A. Hey.

20 Q. Thank you for your time today. Do you have any reason to  
21 believe that drugs or alcohol had anything to do with this case?

22 A. I do not, sir. I, in fact, I have reason to believe there  
23 was no drugs or alcohol involved in this case. So, no, is my  
24 answer.

25 Q. Yeah, yeah. And then when was the last time you did a drill?

1 I mean you said you talked one over in Homer once?

2 A. At the beginning of the season, we -- I don't know, in the  
3 harbor, so a month and a half, two months, I don't know how long  
4 we've been out here.

5 Q. That was talking it over or did you guys actually get hands  
6 on, start pumps, and all that kind of stuff?

7 A. We start the pump, we get the pump down, we start it and talk  
8 it over, we don't get in the water or anything, but we did get the  
9 pump down and running.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Also, for that.

12 Q. When's the last time you guys went through the AMC course?

13 A. The two other deckhands onboard did it this year and I  
14 haven't done it for at least six probably was the last time but,  
15 I, you know, we go over it all every year with the crew anyway,  
16 so.

17 Q. Okay. Okay. Sounds good.

18 MR. [REDACTED] That's kind of all I have for you, Quinn.  
19 Bart, I appreciate you covering a lot of it.

20 MR. BARNUM: Oh no, Quinn thank you. Is there anything you  
21 have for us? I know it --

22 MR. ALWARD: No, I think that we did this as -- no one wants  
23 to hit a rock, no one wants to lose their boat, but we did it by  
24 the books and I'm proud of how we responded. That's all I have to  
25 say.

1 MR. BARNUM: No, I appreciate that, and I appreciate your  
2 time. I'm going to stop the recording.

3 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)  
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CERTIFICATE

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


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                                  *CHALLENGER* NEAR SHELIKOF STRAIT,  
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                                  Interview of Quinn 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