

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SINKING OF THE SEACOR MARINE

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LB *ROBERT* NEAR LAKE CHARLES,

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Accident No.: DCA23FM007

LOUISIANA, ON NOVEMBER 20, 2022

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Interview of: TYLER CLARK, Assistant Engineer
Lift Boat *Robert*

via telephone

Wednesday,
November 30, 2022

APPEARANCES:

BART BARNUM, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CHARLES ARNOLD, Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

██████████ ██████████ Chief Warrant Officer
United States Coast Guard

MICHAEL CENEC, Designated Person Ashore
Seacor Marine

PETER TOMPKINS, ESQ., Outside Counsel
Seacor Marine

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:00 a.m.)

MR. ARNOLD: Today is Wednesday, November 30th at 11:00. My name is Charles Arnold, I'm a marine investigator with the Coast Guard. Looking into the incident that occurred on or around November 20th with the lift boat *Robert*.

We're talking to Mr. Tyler Clark today. Our investigation is to determine potential causes or causal factors into the incident and provide recommendations.

We also have Mr. Bart.

MR. BARNUM: Good morning, Mr. Clark. This is Bart Barnum with NTSB, office of marine safety. How are you this morning?

MR. CLARK: I'm doing pretty good, how about yourself?

MR. BARNUM: Doing well, thanks. Continuing around the room.

MR. TOMPKINS: Yeah. So, Tyler, this is Peter Tompkins. I'm the outside counsel for Seacor Marine.

MR. CENEC: And, good morning, Tyler. Seacor Marine, DPA.

MR. CLARK: Good morning.

CWO [REDACTED] Good morning, Mr. Clark. This is Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED] Houma investigations.

MR. TOMPKINS: And that's the room.

MR. ARNOLD: All right. Can you hear everybody pretty well?

MR. CLARK: Yes, sir. I can hear everyone.

MR. ARNOLD: We understand you're a passenger. So, we're going to start out with just a couple of background questions.

1 INTERVIEW OF TYLER CLARK

2 BY MR. ARNOLD:

3 Q. What is your background? I'm sorry, what's your current
4 position on the *Robert*?

5 A. The assistant engineer.

6 Q. What's your background and qualifications?

7 A. I've been working for Seacor for almost nine years. That's
8 strictly lift boats.9 Q. Has all that time been on the *Robert*?10 A. Majority of the time. I was also on the lift boat *Caitlin*
11 and the lift boat *Paul* for probably two years of that time, total.

12 Q. What's that second lift boat?

13 A. Lift boat *Paul*.14 Q. *Paul*. What kind of license do you hold?

15 A. I hold a DDE Unlimited, and an Assistant Unlimited.

16 Q. And your job description on the *Robert*, what is it that you
17 do?18 A. For the night engineer, it's mostly maintenance. And then,
19 if problems that arise, we make repairs.

20 Q. Did you say night engineer?

21 A. Yes, sir. I work the 1800 to 6:00 a.m.

22 Q. The previous nine years from Seacor, where'd you work before
23 that?24 A. I was a -- I worked at for Krispy Kreme was my first job, and
25 then I worked for the police department in Montgomery, Alabama.

1 Q. So, you've got a total of nine years on the water?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Okay. So, when this incident occurred around November 18th,
4 or around the 20th, between the 20th and the 18th, when y'all left
5 the location, how long had you been on the vessel?

6 A. So, two weeks into our hitch.

7 Q. Two weeks.

8 A. Just over. The Wednesday before would've been two weeks, if
9 I'm correct.

10 Q. Did you come out with -- who did you come out on board with?

11 A. Burnell and Corey, Captain and the Chief Mate.

12 Q. And did you also, were you also on the previous hitch with
13 them that spudded the -- or that jacked down the lift boat?

14 A. Yes, sir. Yes. That's my normal crew with that Captain.

15 Q. So, when you get on location, and I'm talking about the last
16 time you were on there, you said approximately two weeks before on
17 Wednesday. What do you do when you get on location?

18 A. So, my job is whether we're pre-loading at night or during
19 the day, I either am responsible for taking on a pre-load, making
20 sure our engines are in correct configuration for jacking, and
21 then, if I'm on when pre-load is completed, I'm in charge of
22 helping the pre-load.

23 Q. Did you have to worry about any of that on this last hitch
24 starting on the Wednesday, two weeks before?

25 A. For this hitch, we actually moved the vessel quite a lot.

1 So, I did do quite a bit of taking on the pre-load and also
2 dumping. On this last location I don't exactly remember, but it
3 should be -- like in a rough log, where I was the one that took it
4 on, or the chief engineer was.

5 Q. When you say move, you mean move the location or moving up
6 and down?

7 A. For location. When we got onboard this time, we moved to a
8 few locations.

9 Q. Okay. So, we'll start out with, you know, when y'all started
10 jacking down, I guess it was in early October? Did you -- go
11 ahead, you were saying something?

12 A. I was just trying to remember the --

13 Q. Did you come across any issues when you got on location?

14 A. No, sir. I know they were monitoring a can hole off the port
15 side, and, but, as far as I understand, it was within our policy
16 and guidelines. We were 25 feet away from it. And that was the
17 only concern that the crew had, to my knowledge. But, no problems
18 with any of the mechanical side of anything from my point of view.

19 Q. Now, your job, you said, is to do the pre-load checks. Is
20 that by memory? Is that by checklist? Procedure?

21 A. Yes. We have a policy in our operations manual that cover,
22 just things to look over. But, for my job, I give fuel and
23 potable soundings to the Captain, then he gives me a reading, a
24 sounding. And then I fill the tanks to that sounding.

25 Q. Were there any issues with the jacking up in early October

1 when y'all initially got out to South Marsh 137?

2 A. No, sir.

3 Q. Any equipment issues on the *Robert* as far as being able to
4 move water or move that load list you're talking about?

5 A. No, sir. The hitch before we replaced a pump. But that was
6 a pre-load pump used on this location and it worked as intended.

7 Q. How long did you stay after you jacked down before you
8 switched, left to come home?

9 A. We left at, you talking about when the crew evacuated?

10 Q. No. The first hitch, after the October jack down. When you
11 first got on South Marsh 137.

12 A. That, I don't have the recollection of the date.

13 Q. Okay. And you got back on November 2nd, or that Wednesday
14 two weeks before. What happened when you got on location? Any
15 concerns, any issues?

16 A. No, sir. Just the -- was going smooth. We jacked down a few
17 times for weather, just getting lower to the water so the movement
18 of the vessel wasn't as bad. But there was no issues.

19 Q. Between that time, on the engineer department, do you
20 remember getting the notice that, hey, we need to start prepping
21 for evacuation?

22 A. Yes, sir. Got that at right around 1800 on that Thursday
23 before departing Friday morning. Correct.

24 Q. What do you do at that point?

25 A. We went through and secured all of the unnecessary electrical

1 components. We closed all the seawater in valves and anything
2 that could, if anything were to happen where water would come in,
3 we tried to secure. We had all the jacking systems, we isolated
4 at the jack house, so if they did get water in them, there would
5 be no -- it wouldn't affect the rest of the vessel.

6 Then we worked on the, we secured the power to all the
7 electrical things, so that they were all secure.

8 And the rest of it was, right before we left, we turned off
9 the hot water, the final water to the vessel just in case it leaks
10 or anything like that.

11 Q. Did you leave anything on? Or was the decision made to leave
12 anything on while y'all were gone?

13 A. Yes, sir. The company consulted the engineer, so we ended up
14 securing the -- we secured the emergency power so -- if the egen,
15 put that in manual. And we ended up leaving the starboard ship's
16 service running.

17 Q. Any reason for the starboard? Is there a starboard and port?
18 Any particular reason for one or the other?

19 A. It was determined that it was on the -- it was going to be
20 the least affected side because of the ventilation on the port
21 side is lower so if something were to happen, we secured the
22 ventilation on port side. So we left the starboard side to the
23 -- you know, leeward side.

24 Q. So, being -- is this your first time in your career on the
25 water having to evacuate a vessel?

1 A. Yes, sir. We've been in the position where we were going to
2 evacuate, and then, it never ended up materializing. So, we've
3 done this preparation before, but I've never been onboard when the
4 vessel's been evacuated.

5 Q. Was that on the *Robert* that this previous event happened, or
6 was it on another, *Caitlin* or *Paul*?

7 A. It was on the *Robert*. Our normal procedure is if we have a
8 weather window, we jack down and go to safe harbor. Whereas, this
9 time, the weather was so bad that there was no chance of that.

10 Q. After everybody got off on the first hitch, did you do any
11 secondary duties as far as, you know, landing operator, or
12 anything like that for the helicopters as they come in?

13 A. No.

14 Q. When you're working on your hitch -- I call it a hitch, but
15 you say shift -- from night shift from 1800 to 0600, are you
16 mainly below deck, or are you on deck? Where are you positioned?

17 A. It's pretty much a mix. I do rounds below deck and also on
18 deck. And then, depending on the maintenance for the night, it
19 where the jacking systems, it really all depends on the
20 maintenance.

21 Q. On scheduled maintenance or what needs to be fixed, right?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Were you aware of any alarms? Any listing alarms, any
24 general alarms, anything that went off in the last hitch while you
25 were there, as the weather was approaching? Any concerns?

1 A. No, sir. When we were at that height, when the vessel did
2 get moving in the seas, we have a tilt alarm at 1.5 and 2.5. And
3 then we also have a RR-- we have a jacking sys alarm and then that
4 went off a few times, but that was the indicator for us to jack
5 down, get a little bit lower to the water so the vessel wasn't
6 rocking as much.

7 MR. ARNOLD: I don't have any further questions at this time.
8 Mr. Bart?

9 MR. BARNUM: Yeah. Thank you.

10 BY MR. BARNUM:

11 Q. Mr. Clark, appreciate that. This is Bart Barnum with the
12 NTSB. Can you just follow on that last question, the last answer
13 you gave us about the alarms. What type of alarm was that as far
14 as having to jack down?

15 A. -- alarm?

16 Q. No. In having to jack down you said you received some sort
17 of alarm from the rocking?

18 A. Oh. The -- only when the tilt alarm goes off, it's we
19 already know the weather's bad so it's prepping. The vessel has
20 to have a little bit of a lean to drain, as far as like the water
21 on deck and stuff like that. So when the boat gets pushed around
22 a lot, it triggers that false alarm, for tilt alarm. But that
23 let's the wheelhouse know that the weather's picking up. And
24 normally after the tilt alarms goes off, they normally request for
25 engines and I turn engines on so we go into jack down.

1 Q. Okay. So, I had, I just misheard you. The tilt alarm.

2 Thank you for that.

3 You mentioned that when, when Charles was asking you about
4 any issues at this location, you said they were monitoring a can
5 hole off to the port side. Do you know how they were doing that?
6 How were they monitoring it?

7 A. Well, when we got to location, they used Frugo. And then,
8 you always -- they always monitor for settling. If that leg was
9 the leg was the leg that settled, that would be a cause for
10 concern. But, as far as I know, that leg never settled, so that
11 was the monitoring factor.

12 Q. Okay. Understood. Was there any other additional scans done
13 while on location?

14 A. I know they do a final scan once they're set up. But, that
15 was -- would've been last hitch your on --

16 Q. Okay. So that wasn't part of their monitoring then, an
17 additional scan.

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay. Have you been back onboard the vessel since the
20 casualty?

21 A. No, sir. I was scheduled to go out with the crew, but we
22 crew changed right before, so it was the other crew.

23 Q. Have you talked to anybody that's been onboard?

24 A. I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

25 Q. Have you talked to anybody that has been onboard since the

1 casualty?

2 A. No, sir.

3 Q. What is your understanding as to what happened to the *Robert*
4 then?

5 A. I don't know any facts, so it would all be speculation on my
6 part.

7 Q. Okay. Who told you what happened then?

8 A. No. No one told me what happened, I was just, I would
9 assume, I've seen pictures of the vessel leaning on Facebook and
10 then we discussed those at a few meetings, about the recovery of
11 the vessel. But I don't know if it just slid off into a can hole,
12 or, I don't have any details like that. All of what I would
13 assume happened.

14 Q. Okay. So you saw some pictures and then you had some
15 meetings. I was just curious who notified you there was an issue.

16 A. Yes, sir. Because I was -- we were at the, once evacuating,
17 we went to the *Keith Cowan* behind the office, and that was where
18 we stayed until our crew change was up.

19 Q. Okay. Good. Thank you. That's all the questions I have for
20 you sir. Thank you.

21 BY MR. ARNOLD:

22 Q. All right. Mr. Clark, with your experience that you have on
23 the *Robert*, do you have any ideas of what you think may have
24 happened? This is an unusual interview because nobody was on
25 location when the incident occurred. But, do you have an idea of

1 what may have happened? Or, do you know?

2 A. I mean, I would assume that the wave height was significantly
3 higher than forecasted and I think if they got pushed by a wave,
4 that amount of force would've caused it to slide off in a hole.
5 But, that's all speculation.

6 Q. Do you have -- being what you just went through with the
7 evacuation and getting off and the preparations, is there anything
8 that you would've changed in that process?

9 A. No, sir. I think the correct people were contacted, because
10 as far as Brian -- he gave us some great advice on what engines to
11 run, and that ended up working out for us.

12 Q. Do you have any recommendations or anything for Seacor or the
13 Coast Guard that maybe you think could prevent something like this
14 happening again?

15 A. No, sir.

16 Q. Right.

17 BY MR. BARNUM:

18 Q. Just one final one from me, Bart Barnum here. I missed in my
19 notes here. When you were talking to Mr. Arnold earlier, did you
20 say that you had evacuated a lift boat before?

21 A. No, sir. I've been in the process with jacking down and
22 going in location, but I've never been evacuated via helicopter.
23 We've always, we've been to the point where they've gotten third
24 party crew off, but when it comes down to the core crew, I've
25 never ended up evacuating.

1 Q. And that particular instance where they evacuated the non-
2 essentials and you stayed onboard, did you liberate and leave?
3 Or, did you stay on location?

4 A. The weather actually ended up calming down the last few times
5 it's happened when I was onboard, and we ended up staying onboard
6 and just monitoring and --

7 Q. And for what kind of lift boat do in that situation? I mean,
8 it's in position, you're riding out the storm, presumably jacking
9 up and down, what else? Is there anything you can do onboard?

10 A. No, sir. Not really. Just monitoring wave height and we
11 just try to stay above the wave with the least amount of air gap
12 possible so that the vessel's not moving all over.

13 Q. Understood. Thank you. That's all the questions I have.

14 MR. ARNOLD: Mr. Clark, thank you very much. Appreciate your
15 time. We're going to go ahead and end the interview right now.
16 And appreciate not only the time, but changing your schedule for
17 us to accommodate us. It's 11:23 and that's all the questions of
18 the time we need from you for today.

19 (Whereupon, at 11:23 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: SINKING OF THE SEACOR MARINE
 LB *ROBERT* NEAR LAKE CHARLES,
 LOUISIANA, ON NOVEMBER 20, 2022
 Interview of Tyler Clark

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM007

PLACE: via telephone

DATE: November 30, 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.



Angela Allen
Transcriber