



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594
Office of Marine Safety

Interview Summary - DCA23FM008

Interview of: BM3 [REDACTED] - Crewmember of RBM 45630
Date/Time: November 29, 2022, 1347 to 1428 CST (41 min)
Location: US Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Texas City conference room
Interviewed by: CWO [REDACTED] - USCG, Adam Tucker (by phone) - NTSB, [REDACTED]
- USCG, Lt. [REDACTED] - USCG
Attendees: [REDACTED] - USCG
Accident: November 25, 2022, flooding and subsequent sinking of the fishing vessel Captain Alex, about 11 miles south of Jamacia Beach, Texas (NTSB No. DCA23FM008).

This interview summary has been compiled based on NTSB investigator notes taken during the interview of BM3 [REDACTED]

- BM3 [REDACTED] said they got underway from the station knowing there was a shrimp boat taking on water off Jamacia Beach. They made about 35 knots on the way out.
- When they got to the reported position of the fishing vessel, they didn't find it there, so they started looking around for it and hailed it on channel 16. They heard back from the fishing vessel, but it was really broken. Sector had better comms with them.
- The helicopter spotted the Captain Alex after they shined a spotlight at them.
- The 45 pulled up to the Captain Alex, and their nets were up. Some crew came out on deck who spoke very broken English to which he only understood they needed a pump and to hurry.
- They came up with a plan to send the P6 pump over to the crew of the Captain Alex. They discussed sending someone over to the shrimp boat but initially they decided not to do so. There were instructions in multiple languages with the pump. They sent the pump over using a heaving line, a 60-foot, and a 30-foot line.
- The crew of the Captain Alex set up the pump, but they could not get it to pump water.
- They could see the Captain Alex rocking slower. The seas would push the vessel and it would slowly rock and slowly come back up. The seas were 2 to 3 feet with the occasional 4-footer.
- They came up with the plan that him and MK3 [REDACTED] would be put on the shrimp boat. They boarded the boat from its starboard quarter and from their

port bow. They didn't know if the pump was running or not when they went over.

- When they got on the boat they went toward the door to the pilothouse on the starboard side. From the door, there were stairs that went down into the engine room and BM3 [REDACTED] estimated there was about 4 feet of water in it. He noted the water was running in fast enough where they could hear it with everything else happening.
- They saw that the Captain Alex crew had the P6 pump rigged up correctly, but they did not prime it. He noted before starting the P6 pump, the instructions state it must be primed for it to take suction. The P6 is not supposed to run longer than 2 minutes without being primed.
- The MK3 started to prime the pump and pulled the primer off the pump. The rod came off the pump.
- One of the crew was down in the engine room and they had to pull him out. He was covered in oil.
- Once they knew the P6 pump was out, they passed this information on to the coxswain on the 45. The coxswain advised that it was probably time to get off the boat. They in turn told the crew they were going to get them off the boat.
- They packed up the P6 pump, and the Captain Alex crew went and gathered their things. They had the Captain Alex crew anchor the boat.
- BM3 [REDACTED] said they could not dislodge the suction hose from the engine room so they decided to leave behind since they could not enter the engine room. They packed the discharge hose in the pump canister and the coxswain told them "it is time to get off this boat". They moved everyone to the back deck and they put the Captain Alex crew onto the 45.
- BM3 [REDACTED] said that when he boarded the Captain Alex, it was higher out of the water than the 45. When they got off the Captain Alex, the 45 was higher out of the water than the Captain Alex. He estimated the difference was about 5 feet. While they were putting the Captain Alex crew on the 45, the lights on the Captain Alex started to flicker, which led him to believe the generator in the engine room was starting to go under water which elevated their sense of urgency to get off the boat.
- BM3 [REDACTED] and the MK3 were the last to leave the Captain Alex.
- The 45 pulled away from the Captain Alex and they started to assess its crew. Two of the guys were covered in oil. The captain was drenched head to toe in diesel. BM3 [REDACTED] said that in his mind, that is something that requires immediate care because they had no knowledge of what other nasty stuff was in the engine room and if the captain ingested any of the diesel.
- They got about 1000 yards away from the Captain Alex before they got underway to head back to the station. The captain dry heaved in the survivor's

compartment and in the head and another guy was sick, so they put him on the aft deck.

- At the station they got the Captain Alex crew off the boat and EMS was there waiting. The captain refused medical assistance from the back of the ambulance, so they cleaned the guys up and took a statement from them. They then brought Captain Alex crew to the Galveston Yacht basin and dropped them off at their cars.
- When asked if they discussed using the pump that was on board the helicopter, BM3 ██████ said they did but given the circumstances, there probably would have not been any time because they would have had to drop the pump to the 45, then send it across to the shrimp boat. He noted time was of the essence at the point they got off the Captain Alex. By the time they would have gotten the pump from the helicopter, transferred across, and set up, there would have been no power on board the Captain Alex. He also noted the rigging on the Captain Alex presented a risk to anyone on board if the boat were to roll over.
- When asked if there was any discussion on towing the Captain Alex to shallower water, BM3 ██████ said no because the boat was full of water, and it already was over 100 gross tons which is beyond the towing capacity of the 45.
- When asked from when he first boarded the Captain Alex to when he got off, how much water was on board, BM3 ██████ said there was about 4 feet in the engine room, BM3 ██████ said he didn't look back into the engine room when they were leaving the vessel.
- When asked when they departed the Captain Alex to return to base, BM3 ██████ said they departed just was after the lights went out on the vessel.
- When ask why they used cell phones to communicate instead of the boat's portable radios, BM3 ██████ said they were not going to enter the pilothouse of the shrimp boat which was where the radios were. He noted he carries a cell phone on his vest in a pouch, and he knew they would have cell phone coverage up to 13 miles offshore. They were also in shouting distance of the 45.
- When asked if he took any pictures with his cell phone, BM3 ██████ said yes, he took a picture looking into the engine room of the Captain Alex.
- When asked if he heard any alarms when he was on the Captain Alex, BM3 ██████ said he did not recall. The engine was running, and water could be heard running into the vessel which was "pretty prevalent". He could see the water moving in the engine room.
- When asked about the picture (figure 1) that was taken of the engine room with an individual with a lifejacket on, BM3 ██████ said that was his view looking into the engine room and the starboard engine could be seen in the picture. The doorway he was standing was more on the port side of the boat and the stairs were going down into the middle of the boat. He described the top of the picture would be in the direction of the bow. BM3 ██████ said he took the

picture from the door going into the pilothouse. The hand in the foreground of the picture is the MK3's hand and the black hose is the suction hose for the P6 pump.



Figure 1

- When asked what the person in the picture was doing, BM3 [REDACTED] said he did not know. He was on the stairs in the middle of the engine room. He said he looked down and saw the orange jacket down there. They told him that he needs to get out of there because he was covered in oil and whatever other hazardous stuff that was down there.
- BM3 [REDACTED] noted the crew never made them aware of the location of where the water was coming in.
- When asked, based on his past fishing vessel boarding experience if he noticed anything out of the ordinary on the Captain Alex, BM3 [REDACTED] said no. They had some catch on board when they arrived.
- When asked if anything was jettisoned from the boat, to lighten it, BM3 [REDACTED] said no the crew was mostly around with them when he was on board.
- When they figured out the P6 pump was not going to work, that is when they told the crew of the Captain Alex that it was time to get off the boat.
- When asked if any of the crew resisted when they said it was time to get off the Captain Alex, BM3 [REDACTED] said not at all. It felt like 30 seconds, and they had their bags ready and were ready to go; it was "pretty quick".

- When asked if weather was a factor when on scene with the Captain Alex, BM3 [REDACTED] said it was not. There was no precipitation or any visibility issues on scene.
- When asked if they went into the pilothouse of the Captain Alex, BM3 [REDACTED] said no, they went no further than the doorway that went into the engine room. They discussed with the coxswain that they would not enter the vessel.
- When asked of any conversation he heard from any of the Captain Alex crew, when in the survivor's compartment about what happened, BM3 [REDACTED] said he took station next to the coxswain as they headed back to base. He could only make out that there was a hole 3-4 inches somewhere in the bottom of the boat and the one guy was dry heaving.
- When putting the crew of the Captain Alex onto the 45, BM3 [REDACTED] noted the shrimp boat was lower than the 45.
- When asked about the time it would have taken for the helicopter to drop the pump on board to when it would have been set up, BM3 [REDACTED] said, realistically given the environment they were in, about 25 to 30 minutes. By that time, there would have been no electricity on the Captain Alex.
- When asked if there were Coast Guard guidelines to send Coast Guard personnel over with a dewatering pump, BM3 [REDACTED] said there were no guidelines for that. The P6 cans have instructions inside of them and BM3 [REDACTED] recalled sending pumps over to vessels multiple times without anyone from the Coast Guard going.
- When asked if the area they disembarked the Captain Alex from was the same area where they boarded, BM3 [REDACTED] said yes it was.

End of summary