

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

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INCIDENT ABOARD *JOHN J. BOLAND* \*

IN CEDARVILLE, MICHIGAN \*

Accident No.: DCA23FM029

ON APRIL 21, 2023 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: KEIRON GRIFFON, OS Special  
*John J. Boland*

Lorain, Ohio

Monday,  
April 24, 2023

## APPEARANCES:

LT. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigating Officer  
Marine Safety Unit Cleveland  
U.S. Coast Guard

ADAM TUCKER, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

LT. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
U.S. Coast Guard

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I N T E R V I E W

(4:00 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 LT. [REDACTED] This is a recording of an interview with  
4 Keiron -- Mr. Griffon, can you state your name for me please?

5 MR. GRIFFON: Keiron Griffon.

6 LT. [REDACTED] My name is Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the  
7 Coast Guard. Today's date is 24 April 2023. It is currently 1600  
8 hours. In the room, we'll go around the room, starting with  
9 Sarah.

10 MS. BEAUBIEN: Sarah Beaubien, for Grand River.

11 LT. [REDACTED] Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard.

12 MR. TUCKER: My name is Adam Tucker with the National  
13 Transportation Safety Board.

14 MR. PETERSON: Brian Peterson, Grand River Navigation.

## INTERVIEW OF KEIRON GRIFFON

15  
16 BY LT. [REDACTED]

17 Q. So, Mr. Griffon, again, can you state the position that you  
18 hold on board and talk to us about your experience working with  
19 Grand River Navigation, how long you've worked for the company and  
20 then we'll roll into the -- your role on 21 April for the damages  
21 to the *John J. Boland*.

22 A. So, okay. I'm an OS but as of right now, I'm an OS Special.  
23 So I'm doing AB work and my OS job. I've been with Grand River  
24 since August of last year, 2022. The company, so far, is treating  
25 me very good, you know. I like it, you know. I like the crew I'm

1 working with. I like the boat. I like the company, you know.  
2 It's the best company I've ever been working for since I been  
3 sailing. So.

4 Q. Gotcha. How long you been sailing for?

5 A. I've been sailing for 3 years now.

6 Q. Okay. And you started working for Grand River last year.

7 A. Last year, yeah.

8 Q. Who were you working for before?

9 A. I was working for *American Spirit*. I was on the dock first  
10 for American Steamship. Then I was working for SIU, across seas  
11 when I first started with a company called Seacor (ph.) but I  
12 wasn't a deckhand. I was in a galley. I was in the galley when I  
13 first started washing dishes, you know, a SA (ph.), you know. So  
14 when I got to the *Spirit*, I switched over and came to deck. So  
15 then I worked on tugs near Jacksonville called Signet Maritime. I  
16 used to Jacksonville, Puerto Rico runs.

17 Q. Okay. So you got a little bit of experience up here on the  
18 Great Lakes then.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. So about 2 years worth?

21 A. Yeah, 2 years worth of working Lakes work.

22 Q. Okay. So, going to the day of April 21st, when did you wake  
23 up? What -- just kind of walk me through the sequence of your  
24 day.

25 A. Okay. So April 21st, you know, I'm on AB watch right now.

1 So, you know, I worked 12 to 4. So I get called out -- well, I  
2 have to be out by 1145. So we do changeover. So I came out 1145.  
3 So when I came out, when I first came out, you know, the mate that  
4 was on watch, the second mate, he went, Keiron, can you hand me  
5 your radio because my radio is going dead? I'm okay. So, he told  
6 me, you know, while I gets the radio, just clamp -- I mean put the  
7 lids on the clamp for me. I got you so. The first mate was not  
8 on the dock. So, you know, I don't know what he was doing, but he  
9 told me to drop the ladder. He came on board, and I secured the  
10 ladder. So after I secured the ladder, I was standing back aft.  
11 We let off the wires and we left. So that's all I know, you know.  
12 When we were leaving though, I seen we had a list. So I know we  
13 had a list, you know. The boat was like -- one side was down and  
14 one side was up.

15 Q. So as far as the loading process for the vessel, were you  
16 involved with loading at all?

17 A. I were not there at all when it was loaded. I don't know  
18 what's going on. When I came out, it was already done loading.

19 Q. Okay. So when you came out on deck, as far as like your  
20 tasking at that point, what were you coming out on deck to do? Is  
21 just kind of like as directed? Were you going to go --

22 A. Actually, when I was supposed to come up, if we was still  
23 loading and I been on the boom shack --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- with the boom, you know, swing it out and putting water in

1 the boat, but when I came up, everything was already done. So --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- when I came up, I just put the lids on and I clamped, and  
4 then the first mate told me to drop the ladder. I dropped the  
5 ladder, he came aboard, I brought it up, secure it. So I stood  
6 around after we left and I clear anchors -- secured anchors.

7 Q. Okay. Now, when you talk about lids, what does that mean?

8 A. The lids that go on the hatches.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Securing --

11 Q. For the cargo or --

12 A. Yeah. For the cargo, yes, sir.

13 Q. I just wanted to make sure. Okay.

14 BY LT. [REDACTED]

15 Q. I just have a couple of questions.

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. You're a special trained OS. Is that correct?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 Q. Is your role on the vessel AB if you're not the OS or AB or  
20 how do you know which kind of roles you're to do?

21 A. So again, as OS, I'm OS. I'm on the deck, tying the boat up,  
22 (indiscernible), clamping and unclamping, taking the lids off. As  
23 OS special, I'm the AB, somebody like for AB. So when I'm OS  
24 special, I wheeling (ph.), I'm doing -- sitting in the boom shack,  
25 putting the water in, I'm swinging the boom out, doing like -- I

1 listen to the dock boss telling me, boom in, boom out, and I'm --  
2 see, I'm really -- I'm in control of the system when I'm OS  
3 special. So I'm really listening to what the mate's telling me to  
4 do -- what to do.

5 Q. And how do you know which kind of roles you're going do?  
6 (Indiscernible).

7 A. No. See, when I'm OS -- I'm OS special because like we had  
8 the AB go on for his vacation. So they been signing me up. They  
9 trained me last year for being the OS special, and the Coast Guard  
10 signed off and said it was okay. So ever since then, I've been  
11 doing AB work because I'm trying to get my AB ticket anyway. So  
12 they've just been showing me what I need to be doing when I get my  
13 AB schooling. So when I get AB, I can just go right into the  
14 rotation on here.

15 Q. Is it fair to say (indiscernible) AB duties --

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. -- regular OS duties?

18 A. So when the AB come back from rotation, you know, his  
19 rotation, I will go home but when I go home, we have  
20 (indiscernible) and we have ABs. So we have all the ABs and OSes  
21 back.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Really I stayed because so I could get the rotation started.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. So people have plans already. So I just stayed extra for



1 them to go home and I just stayed. I just stayed on a couple  
2 weeks extra for them to go home.

3 Q. Okay. Thank you.

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 BY LT. [REDACTED]

6 Q. So after you guys got everybody on board, started making way,  
7 outbound from the dock, which dock were you guys at? Do you know?

8 A. I don't know the name. I know that it's a stone dock.

9 Q. Okay. Yeah, that's fine. After you guys kind of secured  
10 from the getting underway evolution, what did you do after that?

11 A. Okay. So we have a list. So we start pumping water to get  
12 the boat back level. So we got to like a certain point, we  
13 stopped. The captain like, okay, want to launch the workboat. We  
14 launched the workboat and checked our drafts to make sure  
15 everything was -- everything was right.

16 Q. Were you involved with that?

17 A. I was involved with launching the workboat for them.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. But I didn't get in the workboat. The captain and the mate  
20 got in the workboat.

21 Q. Gotcha. Okay. Is that normal for you guys to end up with a  
22 list departing from an onload or an offload?

23 A. No, that never happened before. Never, since I've been on  
24 there, and I've been on there almost a year. So we never had that  
25 problem. So.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But we had, we had a crew change. See, the regular mates  
3 that we have on here, they're really kind of do like a good job  
4 with that. So --

5 Q. Gotcha.

6 A. -- we got mates on there that never been on this boat. So I  
7 guess --

8 Q. So you guys recently had a crew change.

9 A. A crew change, yeah.

10 Q. When was that?

11 A. We had a crew change the day we got to the dock. So we had a  
12 new first mate and third mate on here that same, that same day.

13 Q. On the 21st.

14 A. On the 21st, yep.

15 Q. So the mates that were departing had nothing to do with the  
16 load, onload.

17 A. No.

18 Q. New mates came on board, and then you guys started loading?

19 A. Yep, pretty much.

20 Q. Have you worked with the mates that are on board that did do  
21 the loading before?

22 A. I never work with them. I've been with this same crew since  
23 I've been on here --

24 Q. Gotcha.

25 A. -- the whole year.

1 Q. Now, in general, the process for unloading, because that's  
2 what you guys were doing, correct?

3 A. Unloading, yep.

4 Q. What -- so the ABs are the ones that are in charge of  
5 deciding like how the unload goes. How does that process work?

6 A. The process --

7 Q. Talk me through it from your standpoint as the OS?

8 A. So the process works, the mates is over it. But, you know,  
9 the mates are out there on the deck with us watching the product  
10 go into the hold. They tell us to either load the boat inboard,  
11 outboard or middle, and the ABs are the ones that watching the  
12 water level and, you know, tell them even keel, port -- we got a  
13 portside. Then you got the starboard side list. So it all  
14 depends and the mates tell us to push it or how much more like  
15 feet, like if I want 25 feet in tank 1.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. I want 25 feet in tank 2. So pretty much we going off of  
18 what they telling us to do. So they tell us to swing the boom  
19 over like to the white light, to the green light. Like the green  
20 light's portside. The red light is starboard side. So we're  
21 going on what they're telling us to do pretty much.

22 Q. Gotcha. And you're just kind of pushing in buttons. Where's  
23 that control station at for you?

24 A. The control station is out there in the boom shack.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Right outside of the door we sit. Every day we got control  
2 of the boom. We got control of the tunnel.

3 Q. And where's the mate at while they're giving you those  
4 directions?

5 A. On the deck.

6 Q. Out on deck.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. So it's over a radio.

9 A. Over a radio.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. And then sometime they come back there and check in with us,  
12 too. So.

13 Q. Gotcha. And is it just one mate that's out there running  
14 the -- that's watching the onload and giving those calls?

15 A. Pretty much. The mate, the AB in the boom shack, and we have  
16 two OSes out there with them.

17 Q. Gotcha.

18 A. So the mates do their -- they do 4, and all three mates come  
19 during the onload like, first mate be out there 4 hours. She be  
20 off. Second mate come out and third mate come out.

21 Q. Okay. So I think I've got a pretty good understanding of how  
22 that operation should go.

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. Anything else for the loading operation?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Okay. Do you kind of -- so you guys departed. The captain  
2 came over the radio, started talking about needing to put people  
3 on a workboat to go get draft readings.

4 A. Before he came on the radio, we had a list when we left. So  
5 he was trying to get that, you know, figured out before like he  
6 came like to like putting on the workboat and getting draft  
7 because really when we was at the dock, it was kind of hard for us  
8 to read the drafts anyways.

9 Q. Okay. Do you know what the draft readings were your did you  
10 have any --

11 A. They have a radio. So I don't know.

12 Q. Okay. So folks went over on the workboat, got draft  
13 readings. Did you assist with bringing the people back on board?

14 A. Yep.

15 Q. Okay. What did you guys do after that?

16 A. It was pretty much like back to normal --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- after that.

19 Q. So you guys ended up ballasting. Like you guys were able to  
20 correct the list?

21 A. Yeah, we correct, we correct the list. We was about  
22 (indiscernible). So it was back level. So after that, we secured  
23 the boat and knocked (ph.) off.

24 Q. Okay. So you were -- at about what time did you stop working  
25 that day?

1 A. 3:45, then my other person came back and came and relieved  
2 me.

3 Q. So 1545?

4 A. Yeah, pretty much, yep. Because when we were doing the  
5 drafts and things like, you know, I'm all new to this being the

6 AB. So you got a be a certain like draft to go through the  
7 rivers. So that what captain was trying to get it like to the  
8 certain amount, so he could go to the river.

9 BY LT. [REDACTED]

10 Q. I have a couple more questions. It's kind of background.  
11 Since you've been on board (indiscernible), how many times have  
12 you done the same operation --

13 LT. [REDACTED] Where was it?

14 LT. [REDACTED] They were in Cedarville.

15 BY LT. [REDACTED]

16 Q. Cedarville. How many times have you done any sort loading,  
17 offloading --

18 A. We do this -- it's really the same set up every time, but  
19 just different cargo.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Different dock, no shifting dock. We might be up against,  
22 you know. It's the same set up however we, however we do it,  
23 every load, every dock. It's just different load, different load  
24 plan, you know.

25 Q. So since you've on board, how many times have you been out

1 there?

2 A. Been out where? Out there on the dock?

3 Q. Yep.

4 A. I be out there every time. Every time we're making dock, I'm  
5 out there.

6 Q. So overall, would you say you've gone out there about 10  
7 times, 5 times, 20 times?

8 A. You talking about a day or like --

9 Q. No. How many different transits or operations have you done  
10 at Cedarville?

11 A. Oh, at Cedarville. Since I've been on there, I did four. I  
12 did four.

13 Q. Four times.

14 A. Yeah, at Cedarville.

15 Q. Was there anything unusual or different this time around?

16 A. No, the difference was we just had different mates.

17 Q. Okay. How were the environmental conditions? Can you  
18 describe them a little bit? What was happening outside?

19 A. I know that day we went it was kind of windy. So, you know,  
20 it was hard for us to get up towards the dock. They had people on  
21 the dock when we was backing in to catch to our lines for us. So  
22 after they catch the lines, you know, we kept against them. We  
23 put our ladder down. We adjusted it how the captain wanted it for  
24 us how it to be, I know that. But it's usually always like that,  
25 there's like this long push, you know, you got do turns. It's a

1 (indiscernible) dock, you know. You slide up forward, work our  
2 way back, work our way back and forth in trimming, and that's how  
3 it be. And it depends on like how the weather is, you know, they  
4 load it, like load like a little slower, a little fast. So I know  
5 that. So.

6 Q. So is it fair to say just paraphrasing that the conditions  
7 were pretty typical for the operations that you've seen at  
8 Cedarville?

9 A. Not really. I've been there while it was snowing before,  
10 like while it's windy. It was kind of all right this time to be  
11 there.

12 BY LT. [REDACTED]

13 Q. So the weather in general was decent for loading?

14 A. Yeah, it was pretty much decent as far as, yeah.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Because I feel like it was bad, you know, the captain was  
17 calling it, like he wouldn't have did it. You know, whether for  
18 us to swing, did a lot of shifting.

19 Q. What would an example of bad weather be, just kind of in  
20 general?

21 A. Bad weather is being like the wind is blowing, the captain  
22 don't feel safe for us to lift the boom up. So we couldn't even  
23 load, you know, couldn't start loading. Probably could start  
24 loading forward but -- and work way back, you know, until the wind  
25 or something die down, but it was pretty good weather that day.



1 Q. Gotcha. Okay.

2 LT. [REDACTED] Sorry, that was all I wanted to amplify on, on  
3 that.

4 BY LT. [REDACTED]

5 Q. Did you (indiscernible) anybody facility-side or anybody else  
6 other than the chief mate?

7 A. The mates really keep up with the load, the load dock.  
8 That's not my job, you know. I'm just there to assist and, you  
9 know, they tell me to put my lids on or shovel up whatever that  
10 came off the rig on the dock, be on the deck, put it in the hold.  
11 That's about it. That's my role, when we're at the dock, you  
12 know. When it's time for the shifting, when go and do the cable  
13 shift, come back on board, put lids on in front.

14 Q. I might ask you something that you may have already answered  
15 or partially answered. It's just we're clarifying, making sure we  
16 get everything correct.

17 A. Yes, ma'am. Okay.

18 Q. Thank you.

19 LT. [REDACTED] I'm just thinking. Sorry. That's my thinking  
20 face.

21 MR. GRIFFON: All right.

22 LT. [REDACTED] Do you have any questions?

23 MR. TUCKER: A couple follow ups, nothing major.

24 LT. [REDACTED] Yeah, why don't you go a while.

25 BY MR. TUCKER:

1 Q. Thanks. Again, my name is Adam, and just a couple of follow  
2 ups. So you say you're the 12 to 4 watch.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Okay. I know nothing about this port or anything like that.  
5 So, the time previous when you were on your 12 to 4 watch, that  
6 would have been midnight to 4 in the morning, where were you and  
7 was the ship alongside? Was the -- were you at sea? Were you --

8 A. My first tour of watch, my first 12 to 4 was making the dock,  
9 but I did an extra 2 so I could help tie up the boat. Then my  
10 second, my second watch from midnight to 4 in the morning was at  
11 the dock. By that time, it was loaded then, so we was up against,  
12 up against the dock.

13 Q. Okay. I want to make sure I capture that right. So your  
14 previous noon to 4 watch, so that's going to be the 20th, that's  
15 when the ship arrived, and that's when you were tying up?

16 A. Yeah, pretty much.

17 Q. All right. So noon to 4. And then the midnight to 4, now  
18 we're talking April 21st.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. That's when you were alongside, and that's when you were  
21 loading.

22 A. Yep.

23 Q. Okay. And so during that midnight to 4 watch, had anything  
24 out of the ordinary happen?

25 A. No, everything went normal.

1 Q. Okay. I'm glad I asked that question because I wanted to  
2 clarify it. And going back to when you were tying the ship up,  
3 and again, I'm not familiar with the ship at all. I only learned  
4 coming out today that you guys use wires here?

5 A. Yeah, wires, yeah.

6 Q. So do you remember how the mooring went that day? Were you  
7 forward? Were you aft? Midship?

8 A. I was forward.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I was forward.

11 Q. So how many lines did you have forward?

12 A. We had the bow line, number 1, number 2, and then I went  
13 midship to help to put midship out, and then 3 and 4.

14 Q. So when you say number 1, number 2, they're on the bow?

15 A. Yeah, bow wire for (indiscernible).

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And then we -- well, we had the wire. I put number 1 out  
18 first.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. Then we put number 2 out to bring us in.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. We got up close to the dock, and do the heaving line. The  
23 mate threw the heaving line to me. I caught it and put the bow  
24 line on top of number 1.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Because it was kind of windy that day. So we don't want to  
2 blow off the dock, you know. While we're mooring, if we blow off  
3 the dock while the load rig in there, that be a bad situation,  
4 too.

5 Q. Okay. So that was going to be my next question. So you  
6 moored up, and the ship is tight against the dock?

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. But do you remember if there were fenders or tires at the  
9 dock or --

10 A. They got tires on the dock.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. They're like buoys with tires on it.

13 Q. And any problems previous? I know you said you had been  
14 there like four times. Any problems tying up there? Any  
15 challenges? Anything --

16 A. No. The only problem we really have there is like the belt  
17 will break down or the stone get frozen because it's so cold.

18 LT. [REDACTED] Yeah, you're pretty far north at that point.

19 MR. TUCKER: Yeah, right.

20 BY MR. TUCKER:

21 Q. Well, that was going to be more of a curiosity question but I  
22 understood from weather when you were talking about the weather.  
23 Are there any other weather restrictions? I know you said the  
24 boom, the wind can affect it.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Again, forgive me, I work on a lot of different type of  
2 vessels, but do you have to shut down because of rain or anything  
3 like that or snow or because it's rock I guess?

4 A. It's like the only time we really shut down is like if we  
5 have bad wind because you don't want the boom up in the air --

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. -- but snow or rain, we still work. We still go. Cold, we  
8 still go but, you know, the only thing we have problems with, any  
9 load rig with the stone if it was wet, so if it's cold, it froze  
10 -- it freeze.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. So, you know, we have to wait on them to get it, you know,  
13 unloose for us, on the belt, you know, we load it and they got to  
14 shovel it up to get it back on.

15 Q. Got it.

16 A. Where I am, that's all we really waiting on is the dock, you  
17 know. Because our boat tied up, we got our lids open, we got our  
18 gates closed, we're ready to load.

19 Q. Okay. And during that midnight to 4 watch, I know you said  
20 everything was quiet and normal.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Did you do any shift or did you have to shift at that dock at  
23 all or --

24 A. We have to shift, but I didn't do no shift that night because  
25 when I came out, they already did shift before I came out. So.

1 Q. Okay. Just clarification. We talked about wire number 1,  
2 wire number 2. They're on the bow. And then 3 and 4, they're  
3 on --

4 A. Right there. As soon as you walk out this door, right there.

5 Q. Okay. So they're aft?

6 A. Aft, yeah.

7 Q. Okay. All right. Were the winches all working and  
8 everything like that?

9 A. Everything works.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Midship, 1, 2, 3, 4, stern. The stern wire and the bow wire,  
12 all the wires work.

13 Q. Okay. And, just for that dock, were you -- did you have any  
14 instruction or did you overhear anything like we're to low to this  
15 draft mark --

16 A. When I came up, when I came up my next watch before.

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. I didn't have my radio because the second mate radio went  
19 dead. So he asked me to give him my radio because, you know,  
20 really I'm always -- they need it more than me. So that's what  
21 happened. I didn't have a radio. I was clamping at that time --  
22 in that time, too. So.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. But then I went back aft to relieve my -- first I had to  
25 relieve what he had. I think he ended up staying out until we

1 left. So I dropped the line for the first mate, and he came back  
2 aboard.

3 Q. Okay. And that was another question I had regarding mates.  
4 You mentioned multiple different mates. So I again.

5 A. We got a first mate.

6 Q. First mate.

7 A. Second mate.

8 Q. Second mate and third mate.

9 A. Third mate. The first mate, their watch is 4 to 8.

10 Q. Yep.

11 A. And then --

12 Q. 12 to 4.

13 A. -- 12 to 4, second mate. And third mate --

14 Q. 8 to 12.

15 A. -- 8 to 12, yep.

16 Q. Okay. And how many ABs or ABs and/or Oses are on watch for  
17 that vessel? That was the other question I had.

18 A. We have one AB with the first mate, one AB for the second  
19 mate, that's where I am with the second mate. Then we got another  
20 AB for the third mate.

21 Q. Okay. And in that sense, it's just two guys --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- watching.

24 A. Yeah, we have an OS, two Oses like it all depend like the  
25 second mate might have one OS, you know. But then might working 8

1 hours and then I get relieved by the next OS.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And then after that OS, the boatswain will come out. So it's  
4 really three people. We got rotation on the deck.

5 Q. Okay. And you said you have a boatswain as well?

6 A. Yeah, boatswain, yep. He's an AB but he's a boatswain. The  
7 ABs are wheelmen. So wheelmen be in the boom shack.

8 Q. Okay. So the boatswain is the AB.

9 A. Yeah, but he over, he over the OS. He over the deck. Like  
10 he over the whole deck like.

11 Q. Okay. So traditional boatswain.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Yeah. Okay. Was there anybody -- so during that watch, your  
14 noon to 4 watch, was there anybody else? You mentioned the first  
15 mate. You mentioned the second mate.

16 A. 12 to 4, it was me, second mate and one OS out there.

17 Q. Okay. Do you know where the other OS was?

18 A. The OS was off. We're all doing rotation. So.

19 Q. Okay. Let's go back to a couple clarifications. So you  
20 mentioned the list. What do you remember about the list? Was it  
21 port, starboard?

22 A. Even keel, even keel when I was out there 12 to 4.

23 Q. Okay. But you said when you left the dock, you had a list.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Did I understand that correctly?



1 A. Yeah, we had a list when we left the dock. Yeah, we had  
2 list.

3 Q. Okay. What direction list was that?

4 A. Well, we had a port list when we left the dock.

5 Q. Okay. And that was -- so you let go of the lines.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And everything was fine.

8 A. No, everything wasn't fine.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. When we was at the dock -- okay. So when we was tied up, we  
11 had a port list already.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. So -- but like we was trying to like -- we had a port list.  
14 So it was heavier on the port. So the dock like we was on like --  
15 was kind of like -- our list was like -- the port list was like  
16 this and the starboard side was up. So we kind of was stuck kind  
17 of. It was like -- it was kind of crowded at the bottom kind of  
18 like -- it was kind of heavy like. We loaded -- they loaded it --  
19 the first mate kind of loaded us heavy on the portside. That's  
20 why we had a port list.

21 Q. Okay. Just a clarification. You were portside alongside or  
22 starboard side alongside.

23 A. It was portside.

24 Q. Portside alongside. Okay. So now I'm getting a better  
25 picture. So your portside alongside, and you have a port list

1 while the ship was alongside still on port.

2 A. Alongside, yeah, on the dock.

3 Q. On the dock.

4 A. So we was up against it, but we had a list.

5 Q. Yeah. Do you -- this is always hard, but was it a big list  
6 or a small list? I mean I always measure lists in degrees.

7 A. I mean I don't -- I didn't have a radio. So I don't know  
8 what. I just know we had a list because, you know, the boat was  
9 lying.

10 Q. Yeah, you could feel it.

11 A. Yeah, you could feel it. So it kind of was kind of bad.

12 Q. Okay. Was that a cause of concern for you or was it just  
13 overloading and that's it?

14 A. I mean we done had lists before. So I mean it was nothing.

15 Q. Say again, sir.

16 A. I mean we done had lists out here before but, you know, we  
17 shut down and get the water back right and go back to loading.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Like I was saying, like the first mate got relieved and it's  
20 different, you know. You know, the first mate we always have, we  
21 have a good first mate. He always -- he know his job. So, you  
22 know, we don't have that problem when he out here.

23 Q. Okay. I think I'm just going back to traditional seafaring,  
24 but the first mate, that is the person responsible for the loading  
25 the ship, right?

1 A. Pretty much.

2 Q. Or to make sure the ship was loaded?

3 A. Pretty much, yep.

4 Q. Okay. All right. So you got up, you told before, 11:45.  
5 You came out. The second mate was on watch. Okay. I got that.  
6 And, his radio was dead. You gave the second mate your radio.  
7 You went to clamp down the hatches.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. The first mate was on the dock. Do you know why he was on  
10 the dock? Did you say that?

11 A. I didn't have a radio, but most likely the first mate be on  
12 there to check the trim on the drafts, after we do trim and all  
13 that.

14 Q. Okay. So you dropped the ladder. Got there. You had the  
15 list before you left.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. Let's see. All right. So, this is where I'm just trying to  
18 catch up. So you get ready for departure, and I understand you  
19 have to let go the lines.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. So, take me back there and just tell me what you remember and  
22 retrace your steps.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. From letting go of the lines. How do you let go of the  
25 lines? You got off the dock and --

1 A. We didn't let go this time. So the dock boss, you know, I  
2 guess they have some crew -- they had a crew out there that day.  
3 So we just dropped our line, you know, slacken them. They threw  
4 them off for us. We brought them in. (Indiscernible) back on  
5 deck and we departure after that. So -- but we had a list. So I  
6 stood by. I stood back, I stood back aft, fed the wires in. I  
7 stood around to the captain told me to go clear anchors, you know,  
8 secure the anchors.

9 Q. Okay. And you said secure the anchors or --

10 A. Yeah, secure the anchors.

11 Q. Okay. And when you secured the anchors, did the vessel have  
12 a list then or --

13 A. It had a list then, yep.

14 Q. Okay. So you got off watch around like 3:45.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Probably came back, got something to eat.

17 A. No, I didn't like -- before I even got off watch, you know,  
18 we had that list. So the captain was really trying to figure out  
19 like what we had to -- like what we had to do to get like that  
20 list back to like -- get the boat back steady. So after I secured  
21 the anchors, that was about 1 o'clock, I went up the wheelhouse,  
22 you know, I went up there. The captain was like, you know, guys,  
23 we got to, we got to get this list took care of. So see our  
24 boatswain and OS was in the rig. So they couldn't work no more  
25 because, you know, they did their hours. So we have me, Matt and

1 Art back out, and we got the workboat set up for the captain and  
2 second mate. And he got the boat to completely stop, launched the  
3 workboat. They went down, and they checked the drafts.

4 Q. And that was captain and the first or second mate?

5 A. Second mate.

6 Q. Okay. So they went down and checked the drafts.

7 A. Yep.

8 Q. Out of curiosity, who was in the wheelhouse then?

9 A. The first mate was up in the wheelhouse.

10 Q. First mate. Okay. All right. During your time on watch,  
11 and again your 12 to 4 watch, you talked about you felt the list.  
12 You noticed the list. Anything else out of the ordinary? Any  
13 smells, sounds?

14 A. No.

15 Q. No. Okay. Let's see what else I have for you? You let go  
16 of the lines. I'm assuming you had a radio when you let go of the  
17 lines?

18 A. After that -- yeah, after that, my mate gave me my radio  
19 back.

20 Q. Okay. You mentioned rest and the boatswain and the OS had  
21 already worked their 8 hours. So are they -- are you -- are they  
22 not allowed to work overtime? Is 8 hours it? Is it capped off at  
23 8 hours?

24 A. No, it wasn't the 8 hours. We do 8 hours on watches. I  
25 think they worked like -- the bar minimum like 12 hours. You

1 know, you can't work 15 hours. If you work 15 hours, you in the  
2 red.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. So.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I don't know what time. I know they worked, they worked on  
7 the load. So they split their time. So I don't know how much  
8 time because if they came back out, they would have been in the  
9 red.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. They needed their rest.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And the AB, we just did an extra 2 that day. So.

14 Q. Understood. Back to the weather for that day. I understood  
15 you said it was a little windy? Anything else? Rain, cold,  
16 anything?

17 A. No. It was a little chilly out there but it wasn't cold,  
18 cold.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. They load the boat. We had no problem. They didn't shut  
21 down for frozen stone or nothing. So it just --

22 Q. Okay. And I was going to ask you. On either of your  
23 watches, when you were at the dock, any ballast operations or do  
24 you get involved in that or --

25 A. Pretty much. I just pump that water. I put the waters in

1 the tank whenever they tell me to do. I do whatever the mate  
2 tells me to do. So.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Well, most likely if we have like ballast, the engine room  
5 take over that. I don't have no control over that. So.

6 Q. So during both watches that you were working, did you do any  
7 pumping of water or --

8 A. I put water in. I put the water in because as we load I have  
9 to put the water in. See, as we loading --

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. -- we take the water out. Then when we unloading, we put  
12 water back in. So when we was loading, I was taking the water out  
13 and putting it back in.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. 0.3, 0, like getting the boat level.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. When I was out there at my watch that night, we didn't have  
18 no problems with the list or nothing. We were even keel the whole  
19 time like.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. It was in the white light, you know. The load was to the  
22 white light.

23 Q. Say again.

24 A. The load was low to the white light.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Because we have lights up there so they can tell like green  
2 on portside and red on the starboard side, you know.

3 Q. Okay. So do you remember specifically what you -- what tanks  
4 you unloaded that night?

5 A. I don't remember, you know, but I remember I was putting  
6 water in, water into, you know, I do whatever the mate tell me to  
7 do.

8 Q. Right. Do you remember what tank you put water into?

9 A. No, I don't remember.

10 Q. Okay. Just curiosity, do you get a hose and put water into  
11 it? How do you put water in those tanks?

12 A. Oh, it's a system. We punch a number in and they do it  
13 manually like, because our tanks down there in the tunnel like,  
14 the bottom tank of the tanks and all that. So we punch the number  
15 in, and it goes out by itself. We don't use no water hose or  
16 nothing. We just use the buttons.

17 Q. So it's automated.

18 A. Automated. Pretty much, yeah, automated.

19 Q. Okay. All right. And you do only what the mate tells you to  
20 do?

21 A. Pretty much, yep, in the boom -- I sit in the boom shack.

22 Q. I said a couple of follow ups. That's more than a couple of  
23 I apologize. Hang in there. You mentioned crew change, and just  
24 clarifying it. So you said the day you arrived, so you tied up  
25 the ship. You helped tie up the ship on the 20th from your noon



1 to 4 watch?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. So is that when the new crewmembers came on and the old  
4 crewmembers left?

5 A. No. When I came back out from my midnight to 4 in the  
6 morning, yeah, the first mate and third mate.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. But they was telling me, you know, we have a crew change. I  
9 know that. Every time we have a crew change, they put it on the  
10 board. So I don't know what time they were logged on or got here.

11 Q. Okay. It was sometime after that midnight watch?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. And so your --

14 A. I mean it was before. I don't know. Because when I got off  
15 12 to 4, I take a shower and I go to sleep. So I don't know  
16 what's going on.

17 Q. Yeah. But your mate, the second mate --

18 A. I was working with him already.

19 Q. He was not new.

20 A. He wasn't new.

21 Q. He was working with you.

22 A. He was already on here.

23 Q. Gotcha. Okay. I'm glad I asked that clarification. Let's  
24 see. Do you remember how the ship was moored? Like if you were  
25 to draw -- I have a diagram, a birds eye view of the ship. Do you

1 remember how it was moored with the wires? If you had to draw a  
2 picture of --

3 A. Yeah, I can do for you.

4 Q. Yeah. If it's possible. This is just for me to visualize  
5 it.

6 A. This is the bow right here. So 1 and 2. I had 1 go out.  
7 That was the bit. I brang (ph.) out number 2. I got number 2 out  
8 right here. The third bit. After that, I put our bow line on top  
9 of number 1 because we had to turn. There's another bit, right.  
10 So we had to turn number 1. So we had to turn right there. I did  
11 it wrong. But the turn went right there, and we tighten up. Then  
12 we had our number 4 all way on the corner by the gate. And then  
13 we had number 3, and another bit like behind number 2 and then we  
14 had to turn them, and number 3 and we have our midship on top of  
15 number 2.

16 Q. Okay. Could I ask you to tell me again what numbers or write  
17 down what numbers are --

18 A. That's number 2 and number 1, 2, 3 and 4. Then midship is  
19 number 5, and then we got the bow and the stern wire. But we had  
20 a stern wire out.

21 Q. Okay. That answers a lot of questions. And did --

22 A. Back there. So the dock be right there. The dock would be  
23 right here.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. The loader would be right here.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. We had the port to tie up that day. So this is portside.

3 Q. And I know you were loading. So any problems as far as draft  
4 increases? I guess some of the lines go slack.

5 A. No, we was up tight the whole time. We was on the dock none,  
6 the time I was out there. So.

7 Q. Okay. And do you -- are they self-tensioning winches or do  
8 you have to go up and tension them?

9 A. You put in neutral and they tighten and loosen them however  
10 they want one.

11 Q. Okay. So there were no problems coming off the dock?

12 A. No, we had no problem coming off the dock.

13 Q. Okay. And during your watch, the noon to 4, when you noticed  
14 the list, was there any problems then coming off the dock or  
15 anything like that?

16 A. No, we had no problem.

17 Q. Okay. And he wires were all good?

18 A. Yep.

19 MR. TUCKER: Okay. Do you have any?

20 LT. [REDACTED] No, I think I'm good.

21 LT. [REDACTED] I just have a couple of questions.

22 BY LT. [REDACTED]

23 Q. Do you have a safety management system?

24 A. Say what again?

25 Q. Safety management system?

1 A. What you mean by that? Like we have toolbox meetings. I  
2 know that. Like everybody get in a bunch and we have a toolbox.  
3 And they tell us like -- like if we tie up and we have safety  
4 meetings.

5 Q. I'm talking more about written procedures on how to do  
6 things?

7 A. Yeah, pretty much, yeah.

8 Q. Is there like a loading procedure or anything like that?

9 A. We got a loading book. That's for the mates. I don't deal  
10 with that. So.

11 Q. Okay. So there's nothing in that safety management system  
12 that you would need to be familiar with?

13 A. Yeah, I mean when I'm out there raising (ph.). Like if I'm  
14 out there and they be raising cargo, I have a harness on, like we  
15 have a lot of safety -- we have a hardhat on, I have my work --  
16 the dock -- when I'm on the dock, I have to have a work vest on.  
17 I have to have some -- like some docks have like a lime shirt on  
18 because it be dark so they can see us. We have safety stuff on  
19 there.

20 Q. Okay.

21 LT. [REDACTED] All right. Do either you from Grand River  
22 Navigation have any questions that you would like to ask?

23 MS. BEAUBIEN: I don't.

24 MR. PETERSON: I don't have any questions.

25 LT. [REDACTED] Adam?

1 MR. TUCKER: I do have one question.

2 LT. [REDACTED] When you're ready.

3 BY MR. TUCKER:

4 Q. Is there anything that I or we have not asked you that you  
5 might feel necessary to tell us or kind of help us put this puzzle  
6 together as to what happened?

7 A. I mean I've told you everything I know.

8 LT. [REDACTED] Just real quick, the reps from Grand River, do  
9 you guys mind walking down the hall real quick, just so we can ask  
10 some other general questions that may involve work, safety, other  
11 things that --

12 MS. BEAUBIEN: I don't have any objection with Brian leaving.  
13 Do you have a problem with me being here?

14 LT. [REDACTED] No, that should be fine.

15 BY LT. [REDACTED]

16 Q. So generally I like to ask questions at the end about your  
17 comfortability and your trust for the upper management, both on  
18 board the vessel as well as with Grand River Navigation as a  
19 company. At any point, are there ever any issues of -- if you had  
20 a safety concern with like the list, would you be able to say  
21 something and feel like you're being heard?

22 A. I never had a problem. Whatever position you is with this  
23 company, if you don't feel comfortable doing something, you can  
24 always say I don't feel comfortable doing this kind of thing, we  
25 should stop and stop the operation, like any position on here.

1 Q. Gotcha. Do you feel like the captain has your safety as the  
2 top priority --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- or has your safety in his best interest?

5 A. Yeah, the captain. Captain Jeff, he's a good dude. I worked  
6 with him last year as my first mate. So he's a good dude. Like  
7 he never put nobody in harms way out here on this boat.

8 Q. Okay. Is there anything at all that occurred while you guys  
9 were moored in Cedarville that you didn't feel comfortable talking  
10 to us about while there was representation from Grand River here  
11 at the table?

12 A. Everything I told, I said that what happened. I don't lie.  
13 I tell you everything that I seen with my own eyes and what I had  
14 to do that day.

15 Q. Okay. Yeah, again like I said, I like asking kind of these  
16 more, you know, open questions about just general safety kind of  
17 at the end just to make sure that there's an open communication.  
18 You as a credential mariner, have access to us as the Coast Guard  
19 if there's ever any issues with safety, if you have any concerns  
20 about how things are being operated on board, if you felt, you  
21 know, the bottom line of the company's profits, you know,  
22 outweighed your own safety, that if you ever felt that, that you  
23 can come to us and have that conversation.

24 A. I'm still here. So I been there a year almost. So they  
25 treat me well. I don't got nothing bad to say about them.



1 Q. Yeah. We're not looking for you to say anything bad, but  
2 just more or less just want to make sure that we give you the  
3 opportunity.

4 A. Yeah, they good. To good to me. So.

5 Q. Okay. Sounds good. And then, yeah, anything else that you  
6 feel that we need to know or should be aware of?

7 A. Same thing. I know and that's what I remember.

8 Q. All right. Well, I definitely appreciate your time. I know  
9 the folks here at the table definitely appreciate your time and  
10 your insights.

11 LT. [REDACTED] Any last alibis before we secure the secure the  
12 recorder?

13 LT. [REDACTED] I (indiscernible)?

14 MR. GRIFFON: No.

15 LT. [REDACTED] Okay. All right. So to close, it is currently  
16 1650. My name is again Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] This was an  
17 interview with Keiron Felton Griffon, merchant mariner credential  
18 reference number of [REDACTED]. Is everything on your merchant  
19 mariner credential up to date and current?

20 MR. GRIFFON: Yes, sir.

21 LT. [REDACTED] Very well. Thank you very much.

22 LT. [REDACTED] Thank you.

23 (Whereupon, at 4:50 p.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:           INCIDENT ABOARD *JOHN J. BOLAND*  
                                  IN CEDARVILLE, MICHIGAN  
                                  ON APRIL 21, 2023  
                                  Interview of Keiron Griffon

ACCIDENT NO.:               DCA23FM029

PLACE:                       Lorain, Ohio

DATE:                        April 25, 2023

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.

  
K  
Transcriber