

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

INCIDENT ABOARD *JOHN J. BOLAND* *

IN CEDARVILLE, MICHIGAN *

ON APRIL 21, 2023 *

Accident No.: DCA23FM029

* * * * *

Interview of: ARTHUR S. SQUIRE, JR., AB (Able Seaman)
Grand River Navigation

Lorain, Ohio

Tuesday,
April 25, 2023

APPEARANCES:

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

ADAM TUCKER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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Gallagher Sharp, LLP
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Grand River Navigation

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:06 p.m.)

1
2
3 LT. [REDACTED] It's 13:06, 25 April 2023. My name is
4 Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard out of Marine Safety
5 Unit Cleveland. This is an interview with Arthur Sentell Squire,
6 Jr., AB, reference number [REDACTED] regarding a material failure on
7 21 April 2023 for the *John J. Boland*.

8 Arthur, can you just state your name for the record?

9 MR. SQUIRE: Arthur Sentell Squire, Jr.

10 LT. [REDACTED] And you were holding the position of AB on
11 board, correct?

12 MR. SQUIRE: Yes, sir, AB.

13 LT. [REDACTED] Okay. In the room today we have -- going
14 around the table.

15 MS. BEAUBIEN: Sarah Beaubien, counsel for Grand River
16 Navigation.

17 MR. TUCKER: Adam Tucker, National Transportation Safety
18 Board.

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

INTERVIEW OF ARTHUR S. SQUIRE, JR.

20
21 BY LT. [REDACTED]

22 Q. Arthur, to start, can you tell us how long you've worked in
23 the marine industry, what your experience has been?

24 A. About 9 years.

25 Q. Okay, so --

1 A. I took off for about 8 months because I didn't -- the
2 vacation schedules with the other company I worked for wasn't --
3 it was horrible, so then I found out about Grand River and it's
4 got the four on and two off and so I came over here, but I work
5 for two companies (indiscernible) and this is the company I work
6 for.

7 Q. Got you.

8 A. So it's good experience, so far. (Indiscernible) learning
9 experience all the time even though we know our job, but we still
10 -- we're still learning it. You're not going up to the top being
11 a captain, you're still learning. So I've been sailing about 9
12 years, I sailed with Key Lakes for about 7, about 8 years. Yeah.
13 And I'm just still learning. I'm thinking about going and getting
14 my mate's license and I hope to be a captain one day. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay. So you've had -- you've held a merchant mariner
16 credential now for 9 years?

17 A. Oh, no, I had it -- I had it before, from 2010, I didn't get
18 -- I couldn't get a job --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- for years, because it wasn't easy to get a job back then
21 when I got my credentials.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So my buddy worked for Key Lakes and then he introduced me to
24 the company and got a job here, and then I was going to quit
25 sailing (indiscernible) and vacation, I had to be on a boat for

1 like 5, 4 or 5 months. I worked for seven and a half months
2 (indiscernible) vacation --

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. -- and I'm like, all right, there wasn't any, so I took off
5 for 8 months and then found out about Grand River and then came
6 here.

7 Q. Got you.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. And how long have you been employed with Grand River
10 Navigation?

11 A. Since October of last year.

12 Q. October of last year, okay. And then when did you get on
13 board the *John J. Boland*?

14 A. This year, March 20th is when I came.

15 Q. Okay. Can you explain to me kind of what your roles, what
16 your responsibilities are as an AB on board the *John J. Boland*?

17 A. Safety of the vessel, going around and doing safety checks,
18 wheeling the boat, running winches, getting the boat ready to
19 load, getting it ready to unload. Helping out with whatever.
20 Getting the lines together. Just pretty much doing whatever the
21 captain asks me to do.

22 Q. Okay. Talk to me about your involvement with the loading,
23 like what do you know about the loading process, what you do as an
24 AB?

25 A. During a load, usually just move the boom, get the system

1 ready. Like if the mate tells us to put water in, you put water
2 in, take water out with the load or unload, run the winches if
3 we're shifting.

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. If we're not in the boom shack, I'll put the lids on and just
6 helping out.

7 Q. Got you.

8 A. But the majority of time we're in the shack paying attention
9 to make sure if the mate tells us to put that water in and put a
10 boom out, bring the boom in. So we don't really -- we don't
11 really do much during the load because the mate's usually handling
12 that, but if we have to shift or we have to move the water around
13 or get the guys on the dock or --

14 Q. Now, when you talk about moving water around, are you talking
15 ballast water?

16 A. Yes, ballast water, yes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Ballast.

19 Q. So when you guys are on-loading cargo, you're generally in
20 the boom shack, is that --

21 A. The boom shack, yes, sir.

22 Q. And if any ballast water needs to be shifted around, the mate
23 is telling you to do that?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. Do you have any autonomy to do that on your own?

1 A. No, sir.

2 Q. Okay. How do they tell you to start shifting the -- so say
3 I'm a new AB and you're telling me or explaining to me how -- you
4 know, how that works.

5 A. How what works?

6 Q. How shifting ballast around works.

7 A. Oh, you just go on the board and the mate will tell you,
8 he'll call you, like some mates are experienced to know from which
9 hatch bearing with the cargo, to know hey, we're loading number 1,
10 so what we have, what water we got in number 1 and he'll say hey,
11 put 10 inches and 10 foot in 1 and split 10 in 2 and 1 starboard
12 and he's just going on the board and just -- he could tell from
13 the -- he could tell from the lights, when we got a light, what
14 lights, the trim lights, to know what we need to put in this one
15 and put in that one to keep the boat level with the cargo because,
16 you know, the cargo balances with the water.

17 Q. Right. Okay. So a couple things, so the inputs, is that a
18 digital input like on a computer that you're hitting?

19 A. Yes, yes, digital on a board, on a screen board. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Okay. And then you said there's lights involved in this for
21 -- what are those lights --

22 A. Yeah, the trim lights.

23 Q. Okay, the trim lights. So what are those telling you?

24 A. Those are telling you what -- like if you got double reds
25 telling you like you got too much cargo on this side, you put

1 water on this side. So if you got too much, you got -- like if
2 the loader's loading too much on the starboard side --

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. -- you have a double red on the starboard side, two red
5 lights. If he's loading too much on the inboard side, which is
6 the port side, at that time it will be two double reds. So you
7 always want to try to keep a white light to keep the boat level
8 with the cargo and the water.

9 Q. Okay. And what do each of those lights indicate?

10 A. Just too much cargo on the outboard side or too much on the
11 inboard side.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So you always want to move to a white light --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- the majority of the time.

16 Q. And the mates are able to see those --

17 A. Yeah, the mates are able see those lights --

18 Q. -- those lights?

19 A. -- up on the -- up on the deck, they're outside on the
20 bridge.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Got you. Okay. Anything else about the cargo operations
24 that you want to talk to me about, that you're responsible for,
25 that you do on a normal basis? Before we kind of start moving on.

1 A. Yeah, different cargo, like after they're loaded from
2 different cargo, we might be on call, we'll (indiscernible) for
3 rounds, soundings, but that's about it that we do with what -- you
4 know, what the mates usually will do.

5 Q. Got you, okay. So talk to me about your experience while you
6 guys were tied up in Cedarville, so from the time that you guys
7 moored up and for your watches, you know, what were you doing,
8 because you guys pulled in -- what day?

9 A. Friday.

10 Q. You guys pulled in Friday. Do you know what date that was?

11 A. I think it was the -- what's the date? I can't remember the
12 date, I don't --

13 Q. That's fine.

14 A. Yeah, because I'd have to look at my phone, but I don't --

15 Q. Yeah, keeping track of the dates get hard while you're under
16 way.

17 A. I don't usually keep track of dates out on the -- some days I
18 don't know if it's Tuesday or Wednesday.

19 LT. [REDACTED] It looks like Sarah might.

20 MS. BEAUBIEN: Friday was the 21st.

21 MR. SQUIRE: Yeah, yeah. So yeah, because sometimes I don't
22 -- because every day's just another day out on a boat, you know
23 what I mean? So --

24 LT. [REDACTED] Would it help if we pulled up a calendar for
25 you to remember what day you guys pulled up?

1 MR. SQUIRE: Friday was the 21st.

2 MS. BEAUBIEN: Friday was the 21st.

3 BY LT. [REDACTED]

4 Q. Okay. So what do you remember from pulling in to Cedarville?

5 A. I wasn't awake when we tied up. I was --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I was (indiscernible).

8 Q. What watch?

9 A. Eight to twelve.

10 Q. Okay, so you're on the 8:00 to 12:00 watch. Is that the
11 watch that you've been standing since you guys left, set out?

12 A. No, I was -- I was 4:00 to 8:00 when we were at -- when we
13 set out, I was 4:00 to 8:00 watch, but we had a guy that left the
14 company, or left, so I -- because I was the next seniority guy, so
15 I took the 4:00 to -- the 8:00 to 12:00 watch.

16 Q. Okay. When did you switch that watch to 8:00 to 12:00?

17 A. Geez, I can't remember that.

18 Q. Oh, okay. So, you know --

19 A. Yeah, it's been a couple -- two weeks now or three. I can't
20 remember the date that I switched.

21 Q. Okay, that's fine. So not recently?

22 A. No, not recently.

23 Q. Okay. So when you guys were moored up in Cedarville, when
24 did you, you know, first -- you know, have your first watch?

25 A. When I came out, when we were almost -- I had my -- actually,

1 I had my first watch that night, yeah, my 8:00 to 12:00 that night
2 and I knocked off at midnight when -- I knocked off at midnight
3 when he -- when Jacob got off, I was (indiscernible). I worked
4 until -- well, when we first got there that night, I worked my
5 first night watch and then I came off at 1:00.

6 Q. Okay.

7 MS. BEAUBIEN: So the night watch you're talking about, are
8 you talking about the day before?

9 MR. SQUIRE: Yeah.

10 MS. BEAUBIEN: The 20th?

11 MR. SQUIRE: Yes, the 20th, yes.

12 LT. [REDACTED] Got you.

13 MR. SQUIRE: Yeah.

14 LT. [REDACTED] Okay.

15 MR. SQUIRE: So yes, we did, we left Detroit the 20th and we
16 got -- we tied up and I worked my night watch and then I came on
17 in the morning (indiscernible).

18 BY LT. [REDACTED]

19 Q. Got you, okay. So that evening, that 8:00 to 12:00 watch,
20 who was on watch with you?

21 A. Rob, I think he's a third mate. Rob. I had the third mate,
22 I think Robert was here, I mean Rob Cardinal (ph.), because we got
23 our -- we got to move dirt. When did we get our third mate? I
24 think we got our new third mate in Cedarville, she came -- yeah,
25 we just got our new third mate at Cedarville.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So she came, so she was on watch and yeah, it was me and --
3 just me and the mate. And I can't remember if the deckhands were
4 out. I can't remember if the deck guys were out on my night
5 watch, but they might've been, they might've been out. I can't
6 remember that.

7 Q. Okay. Do you remember what you were doing that night or --

8 A. Yeah, I was in -- I was in -- my night watch I had was in the
9 shack.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Yeah. Shifting around. We didn't -- I can't remember if we
12 had any -- because we usually don't shift that much at that dock.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. So usually it only takes two or three shifts because the rake
15 can't go so far, so we -- when we get back into like -- you got to
16 move to 22, we got to shift, we got to put the boat, we got to put
17 a certain hatch at a certain part of the -- where the loading rig
18 can get to it.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. Right before it. So we don't usually shift every hatch at
21 that dock, it's like two or three shifts.

22 Q. Got you, okay. What do you remember about the weather that
23 night?

24 A. Cold.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Any rain, any snow, any wind?

3 A. I think it was a little -- it was a little -- there was a
4 little drizzle, but it was -- we did have wind in the morning when
5 I came out. There wasn't any -- there wasn't -- the wind wasn't
6 high at night, there wasn't no -- we didn't have any -- we didn't
7 have any -- too much wind that night, that I can remember.

8 Q. Okay. So for you, as an AB, are there any -- any policies,
9 any guidance that you're -- that you have to read or know of
10 before loading at a dock like Cedarville?

11 A. I just watch the mates --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- pay attention to them and do whatever they tell me. We
14 usually have -- we'll have like (indiscernible) with the mates or
15 guys, especially when we got the guys on board about what to watch
16 for, be careful on the dock and just -- sometimes my experience
17 kind of helps me out with, because I've been just about on all
18 these docks like --

19 Q. Got you.

20 A. How many times have you been there in Cedarville?

21 A. I can't remember. I've been working -- I've been sailing
22 since 2014 and I can't remember how many times I've been to
23 Cedarville.

24 Q. Half a dozen, a dozen? More?

25 A. More than 10, 12 times, yeah.

1 Q. Okay. So you're pretty familiar with the load process there,
2 then?

3 A. Yeah, pretty familiar with the loading, but the mates still
4 load the boat, I don't --

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. -- because for half of my career, like I was a deckhand, so I
7 wasn't up on the boom, I was out putting on clamps (ph.). That's
8 when I first started going to Cedarville.

9 Q. Got you. How do the mates know, you know, how to direct you
10 on what's -- do they have anything that helps guide them on --

11 A. Yeah, they got load plans.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. They got the little book with the load plans that they make,
14 that they know what to put here and to put there and how much
15 cargo they want to put in this hold.

16 Q. Got you.

17 A. You know, not to put too much risk in the middle of the boat,
18 like they know, like they stack it up on it, you know what I mean?

19 Q. Okay. Who creates that?

20 A. The first mate and the captain usually does the load plans.

21 Q. Okay. And is that unique every time?

22 A. Different docks and different -- yeah, different cargo,
23 because you might be taking different cargo, so --

24 Q. Right. And that --

25 A. -- it varies, yeah. And it varies for different docks and

1 different cargo, yeah.

2 Q. Are you aware of like what the process is for creating one of
3 those? Have you ever done that?

4 A. No, no, I had never done that. No.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. No.

7 Q. Was there anything unique or was there anything unique about
8 Cedarville that's different from, say, loading here in Lorain?

9 A. The dock is different.

10 Q. Were there like any, you know, warnings or anything that you
11 guys have to be aware of?

12 A. Always got to be aware at all the times out on deck, of
13 everything, you know, it's dangerous, you know. But loading and
14 unloading, it's typically the same all the times, you know, just
15 different docks, different tie-up procedures, different places to
16 put the cables on different docks.

17 Q. Got you. Okay. So the night of the 20th, that first watch
18 there in Cedarville, was there anything that was out of the norm
19 that evening? Anything strange going on?

20 A. No, sir.

21 Q. Okay. So you stand your watch, you're in the boom shack
22 taking direction from the mate that was on watch. Do you remember
23 who that was? Who's typically on the 8:00 to 12:00 watch with
24 you?

25 A. Robert. Rob Cardinal.

1 Q. Okay. And Rob was the one that --

2 A. He was there, he was there until we got our -- until we got
3 our new mate.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And then Jacob stood by for a little while with her and
6 then --

7 Q. Got you.

8 A. -- Trevor came out for a little while --

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. -- because at first they had just came, too, and he was
11 tired, so --

12 Q. Got you. So there was a crew change.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. So there was a couple hands to start, a couple mates that
15 were changing in and out during that time?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Okay. So then you said your 8:00 to 12:00 watch, you went to
18 bed.

19 A. To bed.

20 Q. When did you get up next?

21 A. I came on in the morning at 10:45. Yeah.

22 Q. What time did you wake up?

23 A. I wake up at -- I get up at 6:30, 6:45, every morning.

24 Q. Okay. So 6:30 you wake up, you go out on deck by --

25 A. No, I go to eat breakfast.

1 Q. Okay, so you had breakfast?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Are you doing anything else in between that 6:30 wake up and
4 going out on deck?

5 A. I just get myself together and watch the news.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. That's about it. You might be around a while on the deck.

8 Q. What was going on when you went out on deck?

9 A. We were loading and then we were starting, we were going to
10 shift. I can't remember how long we were loading for, but we were
11 loading and the mate usually tells us like -- I usually ask like
12 what we're doing next so I can have my wire set, do you know what
13 I mean? So we were -- the mate said we were going to shift and I
14 can't remember how far we were going to shift to, but we were
15 loading up forward, I think, and we had to shift.

16 And we got -- yeah, we got a guy on the dock and we started
17 -- because the mate was down there, the mate was down there
18 reading drafts and we got a guy on the dock and we started to try
19 to go, we started, we started, we started to try to go ahead at
20 that time, we couldn't get her moving and we -- the old man, the
21 time the old man came on the radio, I guess, and asked what was
22 going on. And then he asked me to move up my number 4 wire just
23 to get two 4 leads to get the boat going and we got it going.

24 Q. So just as a point of clarity, were you guys more to port
25 side 2 or starboard side 2?

1 A. Port side.

2 Q. Port side. And you were trying to get your shifting, your
3 number 4 line, to get a forward lead.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And you guys were --

6 A. Because the number 3 -- sorry, I didn't mean to cut you off,
7 but the number 3 was already forward --

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. -- and that's the pulling cable going ahead. So when we
10 needed more -- I needed more stability to pull across ahead, so I
11 assumed that if I could get my 4 out just to move ahead because it
12 was going out on that other spot, anyways, and we got two for
13 shifting, so I put my forward ahead, I put my forward up one to
14 have two 4 leads so once we shifted ahead it would be back of the
15 after lead.

16 Q. Got you. So you guys were trying to shift the boat forward?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. Was there anything out of the normal with that shift,
19 anything going on?

20 A. Not really, no, it was just getting us a little bit to get
21 going because the wind was blowing, the wind was pushing us up
22 against the dock.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So the rubbers, the tires or whatever they got down there,
25 it's harder when you're up against the creeper to creep the boat

1 because it's rubbing up against that wire. Sometimes we have to
2 slack the cables off --

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. -- just to get her going.

5 Q. Got you. What was the weather like that morning?

6 A. The wind was blowing cold.

7 Q. Which direction was it relative to the vessel? Was it
8 pushing you guys off the dock, pushing you on the dock?

9 A. It was pushing us -- yeah, it was pushing us on the dock.

10 Q. Pushing you on the dock?

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. Okay. So you got your forward line with the forward lead
13 along with the number 3, you guys start shifting the boat forward,
14 so I guess here's the dock, here's the boat, you guys are --

15 A. The boat's turning, this is the dock and the boat's turning
16 this way, the stern is forward.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. We started shifting right ahead.

19 Q. Okay. Then what?

20 A. We got her positioned and we started loading again.

21 Q. Okay. Any issues with that shift?

22 A. Not at that time, just a little bit to get her going because
23 she was up against the rubber tires, so that's when I put my 4 out
24 to get her going.

25 Q. Got you, okay. Then what happened? So you guys settled out,

1 you guys start taking -- taking on more load.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Then what?

4 A. We started taking on more, we started getting more cargo and
5 we just waited until we loaded the hatch --

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. -- and I don't know how long it took because different --
8 some are slow hatches, some have certain tonnage, but we loaded
9 and we started to shift again because this was our last shift
10 because we only had two, we only had two hatches to go at this
11 time, which was 19 and 17, I think, and we started to shift again
12 and that's the time we couldn't get -- we couldn't get it going at
13 all. So the old man's asking -- the old man came on the radio,
14 the old man's the captain and he --

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. -- says we can't get it going with the shifts, with the
17 cables, and he's going to get a thruster on line, so he got the
18 thruster going and he's trying to get us off and it was like it
19 wouldn't -- like if to get the boom going out a little bit more,
20 just to kind of give us a little rock because he's trying to pull
21 with the thrusters and we had the boom out a little bit, just to
22 get us to a little bit and we got off the dock that time and we
23 shifted and I think we started, we started to load again.

24 Q. Okay. So the captain ordered you to shift the boom off to
25 the starboard side?

1 A. Yeah, just to shift the boom off to the starboard side, yes,
2 sir.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. To move it, to swing it, swing it out.

5 Q. Okay. Is that something typical that you guys do when you're
6 kind of stuck like that?

7 A. I mean --

8 Q. Have you ever had to do that before?

9 A. No, I never -- no, we don't -- like, you know, we just move
10 like -- we get -- you can get -- you can get bottomed out like --
11 sometimes like some boats, all the time, you know, but usually you
12 just pull yourself off with the cables.

13 Q. Um-hum.

14 A. You know what I mean? But we were kind of -- we were down a
15 little bit and we took -- we were taking on more cargo, so I guess
16 it was kind of a little more stuck than usual. So we boomed out,
17 just the boom, get the boat to rock a little bit and that got us
18 off.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. The thrusters got us off and we were able to finish the load.

21 Q. Got you. About how long did it take for you guys to get off
22 that second time?

23 A. Geez. Yeah, probably a few minutes, like more than 20, about
24 28 minutes or so. We were trying to -- we were trying to get the
25 boom going over in there and trying to stow -- make sure we had to

1 watch the cables and we're just doing a lot of running around down
2 there.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And trying to listen to the old man and the first mate.

5 Q. Okay. Did you notice any sounds, any --

6 A. No.

7 Q. -- anything?

8 A. No, it was just regular (indiscernible) at the dock.

9 Q. Got you. Do you happen to know what type of -- what the
10 composition of the bottom is there?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Are there large stones or --

13 A. No, I have no idea.

14 Q. Okay, that's fair.

15 A. No, I have -- yeah.

16 Q. Sometimes the water can be pretty clear --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- when you start getting further north, so I'm just curious,
19 were you guys able to see anything that day?

20 A. No. Just have the lights going, the lights like, you know
21 what I mean? I mean, I know it was like if you go underwater and
22 you take the lights out of the water and it could be clear right
23 there, you know what I mean?

24 Q. Yeah, if the wind's kicking up --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- you know, it will start stirring stuff up. That's fine.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay, so you guys shifted the boom, you were able to free
4 yourselves and actually then shift the vessel forward. Did you
5 guys end up securing the boom?

6 A. Yeah, we didn't secure it, we brought it back in to the --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- to the -- we brought it back in, in the middle.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Centered it out.

11 Q. Okay. So you guys shifted forward, settled out, started
12 taking on the last little bit of cargo, then what?

13 A. So we started, we started taking on the last little bit of
14 cargo and then the other mate was still on the dock and we were --
15 I think we were trying to -- we were -- I think we were trying to
16 shift again a little bit, I can't remember, because I don't think
17 (indiscernible) towards the hatch, but I can't remember exactly,
18 but we had -- we started taking the rest of the cargo and we had
19 the old man, I guess whatever we had in there, we had to shutter
20 each -- we had the loader shut it down or whatever, because he was
21 like whatever the tonnage, whatever the mate was talking to him
22 about and the water that was -- it wasn't -- it wasn't looking
23 right. So he had -- he's like -- the loader shut her down, let's
24 see what's going on here together, so we --

25 Q. Do you know what wasn't looking right, that would've caused

1 the mate to secure the load?

2 A. The mate was trying to get the drafts and he couldn't get the
3 drafts down there because we were too much up against the dock, he
4 wanted it off a little bit, so the old man didn't want him to load
5 anymore because he couldn't get the drafts --

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. -- on the stern and up the middle and I guess he could for up
8 forward, but he couldn't get the middle drafts and the stern
9 drafts, so the old man wanted -- wanted the loader to stop so he
10 can try to figure it out to get the drafts before we kept on
11 loading cargo.

12 Q. Okay. With the mate being down on the pier, is that normal?

13 A. Yeah, when we're trimming the boat, yeah.

14 Q. Okay. So that's pretty standard for --

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. -- when you guys are in trim?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. And just for my own understanding, what does that mean
19 when you guys are trimming the boat?

20 A. Like putting the last little bit of cargo in whichever hold
21 it needs to go in, like trying to --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- trim the boat to bring it out to the right drafts so we
24 can get under way.

25 Q. Got you. Okay. So the mate that was on watch, the mate that

1 called, who was that?

2 A. It was Brian.

3 Q. Brian, okay.

4 A. The first mate, chief mate.

5 Q. Is the first mate usually the one that's out there for the
6 trim?

7 A. Ninety percent of the time, because he's -- because we have
8 to have -- sometimes you have to have -- you have to have two
9 mates out, which we had because Jenny was out and the chief mate
10 was out, yeah.

11 Q. Have you ever worked with Brian before?

12 A. No. That was my first time.

13 Q. Okay. How's your experience been with him so far?

14 A. It's working. It's good, good.

15 Q. Okay. So you guys secured the on-load, the first mate was
16 trying to get draft readings, wasn't able to do so, then what
17 happened?

18 A. That's when we started -- that's when he got -- he started to
19 thrust it off again so we could get off and get the drafts, so I
20 guess he went up forward and got the forward draft and he might've
21 got us off a little bit, just to get the draft, but I don't know
22 what was going on back there with the after draft because I guess
23 Brian said it wasn't looking right, like he couldn't get a reading
24 because I guess we were already on the bottom and from my
25 experience, like just knowing and thinking about it, that if we're

1 on the bottom and the cargo is going in, we're not moving and the
2 drafts, we can't get the drafts back there, you know, so that's --
3 that fixed the boom list, the list, the water, everything, and we
4 just put cargo and we ain't moving.

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. It ain't really going down or it ain't coming up or --

7 Q. Got you.

8 A. -- whatever.

9 Q. Was there anything else going on during this time, anything
10 again out of the norm?

11 A. No. After that, after we -- we were going -- the old man, he
12 shut down the loader again and we were getting -- we were getting
13 out of there and he got Brian back aboard and he got
14 (indiscernible) back aboard and the deckhand and we were doing --
15 we were getting ready to throw off --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- because we were trying to get her going and the old man --
18 we had the boom out, we had to put the boom out again to get it to
19 do another, to rock right there and going again, so we boomed all
20 the way out and I had to get out to about -- almost to about 19
21 (ph.) booms, not that -- not that far.

22 Q. As you guys were pulling away from the dock or --

23 A. No, we wasn't -- we wasn't moving yet, we wasn't pulling away
24 yet, we were trying to --

25 A. Oh, while you were still at the dock.

1 A. We were trying to get moving, yeah.

2 Q. Okay. Is that pretty typical that you guys secure loading
3 operations and then immediately get going?

4 A. Yeah, once we get everything secured, yeah, like it's in the
5 saddle, the hatches are on, the cables are in, you get going.

6 Q. Between the time that the load was secured and you guys
7 actually took in the lines, do you know about how much time that
8 was?

9 A. We took the lines in after -- once the old man gets
10 everything going, we usually throw off when he says it's okay to
11 throw off the lines. I don't remember how much time it takes.
12 But usually once they get the rig out of the way and the boom's in
13 the saddle and when the lids are on, when the old man says let the
14 cables go, we usually throw them off and then get going.

15 Q. Got you.

16 A. There's different variations because you might have one guy
17 on the dock and he has to get from forward and aft, but this time
18 they had two guys, they had -- because the dock threw off for us.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So they had two guys.

21 Q. Got you. So this time when you guys secured the load and
22 when you guys ended up getting under way, was that, you know, 4
23 hours later, an hour later, a minute later?

24 A. No. It might've been a hour or -- I can't remember exactly,
25 but it might've been an hour.

1 Q. Okay. So then what were you doing during that time, between
2 the securing of the load and getting under way, what were you
3 doing?

4 A. Whatever the old man told me to do at the time.

5 Q. Okay. Do you recall what that was?

6 A. Getting the boom out so we can get -- we can get -- we can
7 get her going and then once we got it, once we got it off, once we
8 got it moving, we put the boom back in the saddle.

9 Q. Got you. So after you got the saddle or the boom back in the
10 saddle, what were you doing then?

11 A. This is where we're taking off, we were going and we're
12 moving along and giving the old man distances --

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. -- coming off the dock and (indiscernible) say the distances.

15 Q. Got you. Where were you at when you were giving those
16 distances?

17 A. Right back where the after winch is.

18 Q. Okay. During that outbound transit and while you were giving
19 those distances, what kind of distances were you giving? Like
20 what objects were you giving?

21 A. How far off the dock, like if we're coming away 5 feet, 10
22 feet, 20 feet, 30 off the dock and closing.

23 Q. Okay. Got you. Anything out of the norm or did you notice
24 anything during that outbound transit?

25 A. When I put the boom back in the saddle, we had like a 22, 23

1 -- the list was going up, so -- but it was like it was even keel
2 when I started swinging it out and then as it was coming back in,
3 I told the old man, like hey, the list is going up, we got like an
4 8-inch list and then it's like no, it's like 10, 11, after we
5 bring the boom back in and putting it in the saddle.

6 And after that, when I got it back in the saddle, we had like
7 a 23-inch list and I told the old man and he's like -- so he was
8 like well, we got out of there with that list but they're going to
9 -- I know they're going to straighten it out, but we had to -- the
10 boom had to -- you know, it's moving so we had to put the boom out
11 to get us moving.

12 Q. Yeah. So which direction was that list going?

13 A. We were listing, we were listing over to the starboard.

14 Q. So as you guys were transiting out, which side was --

15 A. This one.

16 Q. So the port side was higher?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. And what was the max list that you saw?

19 A. Before I (indiscernible) I think I knocked off -- I knocked
20 off and it was like 23 when I got -- until I got -- when I left
21 the shack.

22 Q. During that time did you feel, hear, smell anything out of
23 the norm? Was there, you know, a trail of oil behind you guys as
24 you guys --

25 A. No, sir.

1 Q. -- were leaving the dock, anything like that?

2 A. No, sir. No, sir.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. No, sir.

5 Q. Okay, so do you know about what time you guys got under way
6 and secured those mooring stations?

7 A. I can't remember. No, I can't remember exactly, I don't
8 know. Like, there's lots going on and fooling around, I don't --

9 Q. Yeah.

10 A. I don't keep -- I don't look at the time, I'm just doing my
11 job, whatever the old man needs me for, or the mate.

12 Q. Got you. Okay. What did you do after you guys secured
13 mooring stations?

14 A. We got under way and I think I -- I stayed out -- I can't
15 remember, or I came out, the old man had me -- because we were
16 doing -- I can't remember if we were -- we got -- oh, what
17 happened was we got -- after we secured everything and we got
18 under way, I went to my room and the old man had -- somebody
19 knocked on my door and got me right out, like the old man needs
20 your help to get the workboat out and check the drafts, so I came
21 back out and I stood by with the guys, the old man and Trevor went
22 down to get the drafts. We got the workboat ready --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- and the old man and Trevor went down and checked the
25 drafts.

1 Q. Got you.

2 A. So we were out there with them trying to do that.

3 Q. Okay. So the captain got on the workboat with the second
4 mate, they went and checked the drafts.

5 A. We were stopped, though, we were stopped, we were --

6 Q. Okay. Did you guys have the anchor down for that?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Well, we had -- the mate was on the bridge, Brian was on the
10 bridge.

11 Q. Okay. Do you know whereabouts that was?

12 A. No, I don't recall where it was, I can't remember exactly.

13 Q. Okay. Anything else to go with that, that you remember, that
14 you were involved with, that you overheard?

15 A. No, we just got the drafts and we -- we got the guys back
16 aboard and knocked off.

17 Q. Do you know what those drafts were?

18 A. No, I don't remember the drafts.

19 Q. So then what was your responsibility for that, just help
20 watch the boat?

21 A. Help watch the boat and --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- stand by with the guys and walk with the guys, we're like
24 -- walk up, because they were going up and down taking the drafts,
25 so he wanted us to stand by with a life ring, just to be close to

1 the boat. We had a little rough seas.

2 Q. Got you. Okay. So presumably, the captain made it back on
3 board with the workboat. What did you do after you guys got them
4 back on board?

5 A. Secured everything and knocked off.

6 Q. So did you go to sleep or you were just hanging out in your
7 room?

8 A. Yeah, yeah, I took a nap.

9 Q. Okay. So you went and took a nap, got up from your nap, then
10 what?

11 A. I don't remember what I did after I got up. I probably ate
12 or showered because I usually take -- eat, take a shower and get
13 ready for work, but I probably got up and had dinner.

14 Q. Okay. Because at some point you guys ended up at anchor, do
15 you do anything while you guys -- while you're anchored?

16 A. Yeah, we were -- no, I didn't.

17 Q. Because that would've been your next watch, right?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. What was going on during your next watch?

20 A. I think we were already at anchor when I came out. I think
21 we were already at anchor when I came out. So we were -- I don't
22 remember if we were waiting on -- oh, that was the next morning.
23 Oh, we were waiting on the ABS and Nick (ph.) to come on board.
24 So we had the workboat, get the workboat and stuff ready again and
25 get ready to go pick them up in the nighttime, yeah, so we got

1 them. We had to get everything ready again and the life rings and
2 stuff, get everything ready to launch the workboat and get Nick
3 and the ABS. That night.

4 Q. And that was still on the -- April 21st?

5 A. To be honest, I don't remember the dates, it was nighttime
6 and I don't remember the dates, but it was nighttime when we got
7 the guys aboard because I told the old man I'll stay out because
8 it was past my watch --

9 Q. Got you.

10 A. -- and I said I'll stay out there until we get the guys
11 aboard, then I'm knocking off and he was like okay, cool, I
12 appreciate it. And I stayed out, got the guys aboard, knocked
13 off, and I came out in the morning and that's when we had to get
14 -- do the same thing over again, get the diver over.

15 Q. Got you. Yeah, I mean, let's go on a little bit further out
16 beyond kind of what we're looking at, because at that point we're
17 already kind of at the -- already taking on water, so that's all
18 kind of the post-response --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- to the casualty. Is there anything else that we haven't
21 talked about yet that would've occurred during the time frame that
22 we should know about or --

23 A. Not really, no.

24 Q. -- that you recall that stands out?

25 A. No.

1 LT. [REDACTED] Okay. I'll pass it over to Adam, then, to ask
2 you questions.

3 MR. TUCKER: Thanks, yeah.

4 BY MR. TUCKER:

5 Q. I'm sorry you have to talk about this.

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Just a couple follow-ups just to confirm I captured things
8 correctly. First and foremost, during any of your watches when at
9 port, when loading, were there any problems with ballast system or
10 any of the pumps, anything that would have hindered slowing a
11 discharge, a ballast dump or --

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Not that I can recall, but no, just we didn't know because
15 the mate would have us -- if anything's going on with the ballast,
16 the mate would have us to call down for the engine room, to call
17 down on the phone and let them know we got something going on with
18 the ballast pump.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. There was nothing wrong, that I can recall.

21 Q. So no problems, no slowdowns, nothing like that?

22 A. No, sir.

23 Q. Okay. You mentioned, at a certain point -- I just wanted to
24 make sure, so during the -- not the shift but the time getting off
25 the dock, that boom, you were boomed out almost 90 degrees, was

1 that to port or starboard?

2 A. That was to the starboard.

3 Q. Boomed out to starboard almost 90 degrees, okay. And that
4 was to correct the list, okay.

5 A. That was to get -- yeah, that was to get us going off the --
6 rock the boat a little bit to get us --

7 Q. Yeah, because you were -- you would've been port side
8 alongside, boom out to starboard.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. So it lifts up the port side, the port side.

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. Okay. Okay. Again, let's talk about the first 8:00 to 12:00
13 watch, the night 8:00 to 12:00 watch where you were loading cargo,
14 do you remember doing any de-ballast operations then and if so,
15 can you tell me what you remember?

16 A. No, I didn't -- no, because I -- because Jacob was kind of --
17 Jacob was doing most -- Jacob was doing most of that, the first
18 mate, he's usually back there doing it when we got the people on
19 board and coming, so Jacob was kind taking care of that because he
20 was there until like about 10 o'clock, so he was taking care of
21 all of that before he left.

22 Q. Okay. And so that was the night watch when Jacob was still
23 on board. How about the next morning, the 8:00 to 12:00 watch in
24 the morning, do you remember any -- if you were doing any
25 de-ballasting?

1 A. No, because all the water, all the water, all the water was
2 usually out. When we're at -- when we're at the end of the load,
3 most of the -- all the water was just about out, except for the
4 boom list tanks, we keep like 2 and 5, we save that for the boom
5 list so we can get -- when we get the boom in.

6 Q. And you called them the boom list tanks?

7 A. Yeah, 2 and 5, yeah.

8 Q. Two to five, so --

9 A. No, just number 2 and number 5.

10 Q. Number 2 and number 5, got it, okay. And number 2 and 5, so
11 there's number 2 port, 2 starboard --

12 A. And Starboard 5. Five starboard.

13 Q. Got it, okay. So I'm just going to ask you a couple of dumb
14 questions.

15 A. Yeah, no question is dumb.

16 Q. All right. Because you had mentioned you had been to
17 Cedarville quite a few times, in your experience, had you ever
18 recalled any past incident or accident or anything similar to what
19 happened this time?

20 A. No, sir.

21 Q. Okay. So that's your -- you witnessing. Had you heard
22 anything from other --

23 A. Yeah. When I got -- the mate said that he had talked with a
24 shipbuilding -- like they were having -- they were having problems
25 with boats going on the bottom right there, like the boat that was

1 just in before us.

2 Q. Yeah. And you say mate, we're talking --

3 A. The chief mate.

4 Q. Chief mate. And was that the --

5 A. That was Brian.

6 Q. Brian, okay.

7 A. Jacob was gone by that time.

8 Q. Did he say what boat that was or --

9 A. No, he didn't say what boat that was. No. He just said the
10 boat before us.

11 Q. Okay. And I'm curious, was -- when he said this, was this
12 after this whole event or --

13 A. No, that was like when he was -- when we were down on the
14 dock and we were trying to move, I can't remember exactly when,
15 the time (indiscernible).

16 Q. Okay. Let's see. I ask this question of everybody and I
17 think I know the answer, but have you taken any pictures or
18 anything, any video, anything like that?

19 A. No, no phones on watch.

20 Q. Okay. We talked about the boom over the starboard. I think
21 I'll put this out, he got off and that's when -- okay, a
22 clarification again, so you noticed -- you were in the boom shack
23 at the time there was an 8-degree -- 8-inch --

24 A. Inch.

25 Q. -- list and that was to starboard or port?

1 A. It was to starboard because we were listing, we were listing
2 over here, because I was bringing the boom back in. Yeah.

3 Q. All right. And then there was a 10-degree list --

4 A. It kept going up when I was bringing the boom back in, so
5 when I got the boom back in the saddle, it was at like 20, 23.

6 Q. Okay. And then it went up to 23 -- 23 inches --

7 A. Inches.

8 Q. -- to starboard, so green, yeah, green. Okay. Yeah, so it
9 was the port side was high. All right, I got that. The maximum
10 that you saw was 23. You know why we're here, of course, and so
11 sometimes there are things we forget to ask people, so is there
12 anything that I have forgotten or we have forgotten to ask you to
13 kind of help us put this whole puzzle together?

14 A. Not really. I think you guys covered it and I told you
15 everything I know from what I seen, what I was doing, so that's
16 pretty much about it. That's all I can think of.

17 MR. TUCKER: Yeah. And that's all we want, you know, is what
18 you see through your eyes, boots on the deck, as I say.

19 MR. SQUIRE: Yeah.

20 MR. TUCKER: That's really it. So I may have one or two
21 follow-ups on the back end, but that's it.

22 BY LT. [REDACTED]

23 Q. Okay. I just wanted to double back to the information that
24 was passed from the loader to the first mate. How did you
25 overhear, how did you come to know that --

1 A. The first mate, the first mate -- when we were trying to
2 boom, we were like "we're on the bottom," we were talking and he
3 was on the dock and we were talking, he was like oh, the loader
4 said he had this problem with the other boat that was before us
5 here.

6 Q. Okay. So that was the morning watch?

7 A. That was the morning when we were leaving.

8 Q. Got you. While you guys were in trim.

9 A. In trim.

10 Q. The first time that you guys touched bottom, that's when
11 the --

12 A. It was around -- it was around that time, I don't remember
13 exactly what time it was, but that was around that time when we
14 were --

15 Q. Got you, okay. Did you happen to overhear what the name of
16 the loader was?

17 A. No, I don't know the name. We don't usually get talking
18 about bosses (ph.).

19 Q. Yeah, that's fine.

20 A. Or shipbuilders.

21 Q. That's understandable. Okay. I just wanted to make sure I
22 understood that correctly.

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 LT. [REDACTED] That's all the questions that I had. Any
25 questions for you, Sarah or Brian?

1 MS. BEAUBIEN: Nothing from me.

2 MR. PETERSON: No.

3 LT. [REDACTED] Any finals?

4 MR. TUCKER: No finals right now. Yeah, thank you.

5 LT. [REDACTED] With that, for the last portion of the
6 conversation, I'm going to ask Brian to kindly leave, thank you.

7 MR. TUCKER: And Art, if you don't mind, I'm going to stand
8 up just because I've been sitting for a long, long time.

9 MR. SQUIRE: Oh, no problem. Yeah.

10 MR. TUCKER: I'll still be here, but I'll just -- I have to
11 stand.

12 MR. SQUIRE: No, no problem.

13 LT. [REDACTED] Brian says oh, thank gosh, I can walk around
14 now.

15 (Laughter.)

16 LT. [REDACTED] A giant hole in the door so I can watch him
17 over there.

18 MR. SQUIRE: Yeah, we got -- yeah. We got to fix that.

19 LT. [REDACTED] Nobody to hold him there.

20 MR. SQUIRE: We got to fix that.

21 BY LT. [REDACTED]

22 Q. So, part of the interview process for me is, again, I'm -- I
23 always want to make sure that I give you the opportunity any time
24 that there's -- you, as a mariner, the opportunity to speak with
25 me candidly without having higher management from the company

1 around.

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. So that way we can have a candid conversation. Since you've
4 been on board, since you've worked with Grand River Navigation
5 during this time period, have you had any concerns about your own
6 personal safety, safety of the vessel, safety of the crew?

7 A. No, sir.

8 Q. Have you ever overheard any concerns? The Coast Guard has
9 been doing a campaign to make sure the mariners understand that
10 they can report things like sexual harassment and assault --

11 A. Oh, yeah.

12 Q. -- to us.

13 A. Yeah, I've been around enough, I know, because if I --
14 because when you don't get -- if anything's going on on a boat,
15 you don't get -- you don't get a response and you don't get help
16 from the first mate or the captain or the office, you can go to
17 the Coast Guard yourself.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. So no, but since I've been with this company, it seems good.

20 Q. Okay. Your work experience with Captain Jeff, have you
21 worked with him for a while now?

22 A. I worked with him just about all last year, he was the first
23 mate, so he was -- he's a good guy.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. He's knowledgeable, he actually taught me more than I learned

1 with Key Lakes in that 9 years, 8 years that I've been with them,
2 he actually taught me more stuff on trying to be a mate. I'm
3 learning more than I learned at that time with Key Lakes because
4 like, over there they got wheelmen and watchmen, so the wheelman
5 don't -- I mean, the watchmen don't go in the pilothouse except
6 for at least 30 minutes to relieve the wheel. But here, you're
7 the wheelman watching it. So being up there with him and Jacob,
8 they've shown me a lot, teach me a lot (indiscernible) my license
9 to be a mate.

10 Q. Got you.

11 A. Because I started at the bottom, just like him.

12 Q. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, it's always -- it's always good to see
13 mariners working, working their way up. There's definitely
14 different paths. So if have you ever had any issues or concerns,
15 do you feel like you can go to Captain Jeff with any issues --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- that you might have?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Okay. Now, if you had any issues with Captain Jeff or any
20 issues with any of the other captains that come on board, is there
21 anybody on the shore staff for Grand River that you'd be able to
22 reach out to, to make sure that you have your safety concerns --

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. -- and things addressed?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Okay. Have you ever had any issues at all with the company?

2 A. No, sir.

3 LT. [REDACTED] Okay. Yeah, I mean, that's really kind of the
4 tail end of things. Is there anything at all that you want to ask
5 me, any questions at all that I can try to answer for you as far
6 as the investigation process, how the Coast Guard rules are
7 involved with this?

8 MR. SQUIRE: Just like whenever you go into a shipyard and
9 like how long is it usually going to take for them to fix it or --

10 LT. [REDACTED] As far as the repairs go, I mean, obviously,
11 I'm not involved with that. As far as your guys' departure, once
12 we're done with the interviews, the company, Grand River, is
13 working with both Sector Sault St. Marie, my office, and all the
14 other OCMI's in between and also with Duluth to make sure that
15 there's -- what we call concurrent clearance to allow the vessel
16 to transit to where Grand River wants to go to do the repairs. So
17 there's a lot of different hands that are involved with that
18 outside of just my own, so my role is to make sure that we get
19 through the interviews and evidence gathering before you guys head
20 out that way.

21 MR. SQUIRE: Yes, sir.

22 (Whereupon, at 2:04 p.m., the interview concluded.)
23
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 Arthur S. Squire, Jr.

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM02

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.

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the transcriber.

David A. Martini
Transcriber