

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CAPSIZING/SINKING OF THE *GOLDEN*
RAY IN THE BRUNSWICK RIVER,
GEORGIA, ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2019

*

Accident No.: DCA19FM048

*

*

*

* * * * *

Interview of: HERNANDO VENGUA
Bosun

Tuesday,
September 10, 2019

APPEARANCES:

DAVID FLAHERTY, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CARRIE BELL, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LEE WILLETT, Investigator
United States Coast Guard

LES LEDET, Investigator
United States Coast Guard

LT [REDACTED]
District 7 Legal
United States Coast Guard

TOM BREMER, Maritime Administrator
Republic of Marshall Islands

JAMES MOSELEY, JR.
(On behalf of *Golden Ray* and P&I Club)

COLIN McRAE, Attorney
Hunter Maclean
(On behalf of the slot charterers)

JOHN OSSICK, Attorney
(On behalf of the ship's officers)

STEPHANIE AMIOTTE McDONALD, Attorney
(On behalf of Mr. Sison)

RYAN GILSENAN, Attorney
(On behalf of Mr. Tennant, the pilot)

THRIA LIBERATOS
Interpreter

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Hernando Vengua:		
By Mr. Willett		5
By Ms. Bell		14
By Mr. McRae		16
By Mr. Willett		16

I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MR. FLAHERTY: This is David Flaherty. I'm with the National
3 Transportation Safety Board. This is for the investigation into
4 the Golden Ray marine casualty.

5 Sir, if you could please state your name and then spell your
6 last name, please?

7 MR. VENGUA: Yes. I am Hernando Vengua. Vengua is V-e-n-g-
8 u-a.

9 MR. FLAHERTY: Thank you very much, sir. Sir, is it okay if
10 we record this interview for the investigation?

11 MR. VENGUA: That's okay.

12 MR. FLAHERTY: If you could please introduce yourself.

13 MS. LIBIERATOS: Thria Libieratos, L-i-b-i-e-r-a-t-o-s. A
14 Filipino translator for Mr. Hernando.

15 MS. AMIOTTE McDONALD: Stephanie Amiotte McDonald, A-m-i-o-t-
16 t-e, McDonald, M-c-D-o-n-a-l-d. Attorney for Hernando.

17 MR. WILLETT: Lee Willett, investigator for the Coast Guard,
18 W-i-l-l-e-t-t.

19 MR. LEDET: Les Ledet, U.S. Coast Guard investigator, L-e-d-
20 e-t

21 MS. BELL: Carrie Bell, NTSB investigator.

22 LT [REDACTED] Lieutenant Peter [REDACTED], [REDACTED], U.S. Coast Guard,
23 District 7 Legal.

24 MR. McRAE: Colin McRae, M-c-R-a-e, attorney for the slot
25 charters of the vessel.

1 MR. BREMER: Tom Bremer, B-r-e-m as in Mike-e-r. Republic of
2 Marshall Islands, maritime administrator.

3 MR. OSSICK: John Ossick, O-s-s-i-c-k, attorney for the
4 officers.

5 MR. MOSELEY: Jim Moseley, Jr., for the vessel interest,
6 M-o-s-e-l-e-y.

7 MR. GILSENAN: Ryan Gilsenan, G-i-l-s-e-n-a-n, counsel for
8 the pilots.

9 LCDR [REDACTED] Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED], U.S. Coast
10 Guard, [REDACTED].

11 (Whereupon, THRIA LIBIERATOS, an interpreter, translated the
12 questions and answers for HERNANDO VENGUA as needed.)

13 INTERVIEW OF HERNANDO VENGUA

14 BY MR. WILLETT:

15 Q. Okay. So, sir, we're going to first get into your experience
16 before we get into the events that happened on the 8th. So first
17 thing we'd like to know, how long have you been sailing?

18 A. On this ship, sir?

19 Q. No, just for all ships.

20 A. So 20 years, sir.

21 Q. Three?

22 INTERPRETER: No, 30.

23 BY MR. WILLETT:

24 Q. Thirty years?

25 A. (In English) Twenty years.

1 Q. Twenty years, 20. Okay, okay. So how many Ro-Ros have you
2 been on?

3 A. Ro-Ros, sir, just (indiscernible). Because this was -- 3,4,5
4 -- five vessels, sir.

5 Q. Five Ro-Ros?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Okay. And what was your position on these five Ro-Ros?

8 A. On this, my position on the five Ro-Ros, sir, bosun, sir.

9 Q. So what does a bosun typically do in port?

10 A. In port, sir? Just assisting officer what he will
11 (indiscernible), sir.

12 Q. Which officer?

13 A. Any officer, sir.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. First, third. Third officer, (indiscernible).

16 Q. So what are some of the things you do to assist him?

17 A. Checking the lashing. Checking the lashing and sometimes
18 what the stevedores needed, I will find them what they need and I
19 will give it to them.

20 Q. The lashing, is that on the vessel and you give it to the
21 stevedores, or do they bring the lashing themselves?

22 A. No, sir. I will call them and they will be bringing
23 theirself.

24 Q. So the lashing belongs to the stevedores or to --

25 A. No, no.

1 Q. It's yours?

2 A. On the vessel, sir. It's on vessels. On the vessel.

3 INTERPRETER: On the vessel.

4 BY MR. WILLETT:

5 Q. Have you ever lashed before?

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. Never? Okay.

8 A. No.

9 Q. So during Brunswick, did you go and check any of the lashing?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. So what was your watch schedule?

12 A. Because I was a day man --

13 (Clarifies with interpreter)

14 Q. He worked during the day. Okay. He doesn't have a rotation.

15 Is that correct?

16 A. (Through interpreter) They start at 8, 8 a.m.

17 Q. And done at what time?

18 A. When the stevedore is finished, that the job is finished.

19 Q. So what time did he start to work when you guys got to

20 Brunswick on the 7th of September?

21 MS. AMIOTTE McDONALD: Are you asking him specifically?

22 MR. WILLETT: Yes, him. Yeah, what time did you start work.

23 MS. AMIOTTE McDONALD: Okay. He's asking specifically when

24 he started working that day.

25 INTERPRETER: He says he can't remember.

1 BY MR. WILLETT:

2 Q. Okay. What time did he get off that day?

3 A. (Through interpreter) 10:20 on that day.

4 Q. 10:20 at night?

5 A. 10:20 p.m.

6 Q. Okay. What decks were you working?

7 A. Deck 6 only.

8 Q. What decks were they loading in Brunswick?

9 INTERPRETER: This is the Brunswick port. How many decks or
10 which deck?

11 MR. WILLETT: Which decks?

12 MR. VENGUA: (Through interpreter) Deck 6 only. That's where
13 they only put the cars.

14 BY MR. WILLETT:

15 Q. Did they offload any cars in Brunswick?

16 A. (In English) Yes.

17 Q. They did? From which decks did they offload?

18 A. (Through interpreter) He can't remember.

19 Q. That's okay.

20 A. (In English) Deck 11 or 12.

21 Q. Who takes the lashing off?

22 A. Stevedores.

23 Q. They do? And where do they put them? They just put them in
24 a box or --

25 A. No just put it inside.

1 Q. And you come and pick them up?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And where do you put them?

4 A. On the inside, sir. Just hang.

5 Q. Hang?

6 A. Hanging there.

7 Q. Okay. So when you guys, when you're underway, what is a
8 typical day for you? What would you be doing during the day at
9 sea?

10 INTERPRETER: At sea?

11 MR. WILLETT: Yeah.

12 MR. VENGUA: (In English) Maintenance.

13 (Through interpreter) Sometimes painting, sometimes
14 maintenance. Checking the lashing.

15 BY MR. WILLETT:

16 Q. So you do that periodically? You --

17 A. (In English) Yes, sir.

18 Q. Okay. Have you ever been underway at sea and found some
19 lashings not secured?

20 A. No, sir.

21 Q. No?

22 INTERPRETER: What was the first part?

23 MR. WILLETT: Oh, at sea. I said underway. Sorry.

24 MS. AMIOTTE McDONALD: Have you ever been underway.

25 MR. VENGUA: (In English) Underway?

- 1 BY MR. WILLETT:
- 2 Q. Yeah. And found some lashing that was not secure?
- 3 A. (In English) No, sir.
- 4 Q. Never?
- 5 A. No.
- 6 Q. What would you do if you did find some?
- 7 A. Find something, we will put it a lashing, sir.
- 8 Q. And then do you report it?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Who would you report it to?
- 11 A. Chief officer, sir.
- 12 Q. Chief officer? Okay. So the maintenance on this boat,
- 13 you've been on a lot of other Ro-Ro ships. How would you compare
- 14 the condition of this ship to the other ships you have been on?
- 15 Is it better or worse?
- 16 A. Better.
- 17 Q. Better? How are you treated on the boat?
- 18 A. (Through interpreter) It's okay.
- 19 Q. It's okay?
- 20 A. (In English) They treat me like a brother or --
- 21 Q. Nice.
- 22 A. -- (indiscernible).
- 23 Q. That's good. Do you have your own state room?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. Were you in the state room when the vessel had a problem?

1 A. No, sir.

2 Q. Where --

3 A. No, I was on the mess hall.

4 Q. Mess hall. You were eating?

5 A. No. Just only getting a water, sir.

6 Q. Getting a water?

7 A. Yeah. And then I bring it back on the cabin.

8 Q. So where is the mess deck?

9 A. Mess hall?

10 Q. Yeah, the mess hall. Yeah.

11 A. On the starboard side near the lavi (ph.), sir. Near the --

12 Q. Near the stern?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Forward. Forward.

14 MR. VENGUA: The port side -- starboard side.

15 Sir, mess hall.

16 (Interpreter clarifies)

17 BY MR. WILLETT:

18 Q. He said starboard, but is it forward, center, aft?

19 A. (In English) On the right side, sir.

20 Q. Yes, right side. Is it --

21 MR. WILLETT: He said center? Okay, okay.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The right side center.

23 MR. FLAHERTY: Which deck? Or is it the forepeak's deck?

24 MR. WILLETT: It's probably --

25 BY MR. WILLETT:

1 Q. Is it the very top?

2 A. (In English) It's level from our room, sir.

3 Q. Okay, okay.

4 MR. FLAHERTY: So that's the accommodation deck?

5 MR. WILLETT: Accommodation deck.

6 MR. VENGUA: (In English) Accommodation.

7 BY MR. WILLETT:

8 Q. So you were getting water?

9 A. Sorry?

10 Q. You were getting some water? And what happened when you were
11 getting the water?

12 A. When I just barely pass -- it happen, sir, when listing, sir,
13 on the starboard side. Then after, try to escapes. Of course,
14 very fast. Happens very fast.

15 Q. Very fast?

16 A. Yeah. Of course.

17 (Through interpreter) So they opened the door. They were
18 trapped inside.

19 Q. How many were trapped?

20 A. (In English) Three person. Three persons.

21 Q. Who was with you?

22 A. Oiler and AB, sir.

23 Q. Okay. And how did you get out?

24 A. Just pulled the (indiscernible) so we can go out.

25 Q. Did you go in a helicopter or a boat?

1 A. Helicopter, sir.

2 Q. Okay. When the boat went over, did you hear -- before it
3 went over, did you hear an alarm, any alarms?

4 A. I can't remember, sir.

5 Q. Okay. Was it dark?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. No lights at all?

8 A. No lights, sir, at all.

9 INTERPRETER: Before it tilt?

10 MR. WILLETT: After.

11 MR. VENGUA: (Through interpreter) There is no lights.

12 BY MR. WILLETT:

13 Q. How long were you in the galley -- or the mess, mess hall?

14 After. After it tipped over, how long were you in the mess hall?

15 A. (In English) Five minutes. Five minutes.

16 INTERPRETER: More or less 5 minutes.

17 MR. WILLETT:

18 Q. And then you got out of the mess hall and you got, I guess,
19 up here on the --

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. -- accommodation, and a helicopter came. How long did that
22 take?

23 A. (In English) I don't remember, sir.

24 Q. Okay. That's fine. That's okay.

25 MR. WILLETT: I think that's all I got.

1 MR. LEDET: I have no questions.

2 BY MS. BELL:

3 Q. How long were you on this vessel? How long were you there?

4 MR. FLAHERTY: How long had he sailed?

5 BY MS. BELL:

6 Q. On this vessel.

7 A. On this vessel? I just only joining on August 28, ma'am,
8 2019.

9 INTERPRETER: He just started August 29th, 2019 [sic].

10 MR. WILLETT: Ten days.

11 MS. AMIOTTE McDONALD: No, he -- 28th, 2019.

12 MR. VENGUA: 2019. Because my second time here on the
13 vessel.

14 INTERPRETER: Sorry. So he said August 28th.

15 BY MS. BELL:

16 Q. This is your second contract with the vessel?

17 A. Yes, ma'am.

18 Q. And how long are those contracts?

19 A. Nine months, ma'am.

20 Q. Nine months each?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And when was your last contract? When did it end?

23 A. When it end, it's June 1.

24 Q. Of 2019?

25 A. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. Okay.

2 MR. FLAHERTY: When did that --

3 MR. WILLETT: No, it'd be 2020, wouldn't it? Oh, his last
4 one ended at June. Okay. I'm sorry.

5 MR. FLAHERTY: Yeah. When did it start, the last one? So
6 was it 9 months from June 1st?

7 MR. VENGUA: Sir --

8 MS. BELL: I was trying to avoid the math.

9 MS. AMIOTTE McDONALD: Yeah. I just want everybody to know,
10 you know, that he has an injury, and so he has been treated for
11 that. So I just try to keep this --

12 MR. WILLETT: Gotcha.

13 MS. AMIOTTE McDONALD: -- cohesive as we can here.

14 MS. BELL: Understood.

15 MS. AMIOTTE McDONALD: Okay.

16 MR. FLAHERTY: All right.

17 MS. BELL: I don't think -- I do have a question about the
18 cargo ops.

19 BY MS. BELL:

20 Q. So you have people that inspect that report to you, correct?

21 INTERPRETER: Who are the people?

22 BY MS. BELL:

23 Q. Who inspects the cargo and reports to you?

24 A. There is two OS, sir.

25 (Through interpreter) There is no people reporting to him.

1 Q. So the OSs inspect the lashings?

2 A. Yes. But they --

3 (Through interpreter) The report goes straight to the chief
4 officer, not to him.

5 Q. Okay. And can you just tell us how you were injured?

6 A. After they left the mess hall, they went to the lavi. He's
7 holding onto the railing, and it was slippery, the railing, so
8 then he slipped from there. And then he -- after he let go of the
9 railing, he just went straight down and then hit the wall.

10 MS. BELL: I think that's all the questions that I have for
11 you. Thank you.

12 MR. FLAHERTY: Okay. I don't have any questions.

13 MR. McRAE: I have one question.

14 BY MR. McRAE:

15 Q. I represent the slot charters. Were there any problems found
16 with any of the lashings?

17 A. (In English) No, were not.

18 MR. McRAE: Okay. Thank you.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions, sir.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, no questions.

21 MR. WILLETT I just have one more.

22 BY MR. WILLETT:

23 Q. After you fell, how did you get back up?

24 A. (Through interpreter) He forced himself to get up and reach a
25 port hold that's nearest to where he landed. So it was -- when he

1 fell, he was only by himself, so he really force himself to get
2 up, and then opened that port hole window by himself. Then he
3 went out of the window. After he opened the window, he stayed
4 there, and the helicopter came, but it took time.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very
6 much.

7 If nobody has anything else, we'll conclude this interview.
8 It's 1638 -- or 33. I'm sorry. Thank you.

9 (Whereupon, at 4:33 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

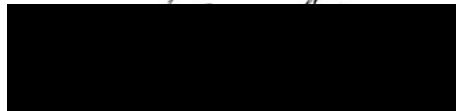
IN THE MATTER OF: CAPSIZING/SINKING OF THE *GOLDEN*
 RAY IN THE BRUNSWICK RIVER,
 GEORGIA, ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2019
 Interview of Hernando Vengua

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA19FM048

PLACE:

DATE: September 10, 2019

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 black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of Kay Maurer. There are some faint handwritten marks above the box.

Kay Maurer
Transcriber