

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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

Accident No.: DCA19FM048

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Interview of: SEO SUNGHYUN
Third Engineer

Wednesday,
September 11, 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

LCDR [REDACTED], Investigator
United States Coast Guard

[REDACTED]
DISTRICT 7 Legal
United States Coast Guard

TOM BREMER, Maritime Administrator
Republic of the Marshall Islands

SHEA MOSER, Attorney
(On behalf of vessel owners)

COLIN McRAE, Attorney
(On behalf of slot charterers)

RYAN GILSENAN, Attorney
(On behalf of the Brunswick Pilots)

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

STEPHANIE AMIOTTE McDONALD, Attorney
(On behalf of ship's crew)

CHO KIM, Interpreter

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I N T E R V I E W

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2 MR. FLAHERTY: All right. Let's -- I'll begin. This is
3 David Flaherty with the NTSB. This is for the interview for the
4 investigation into the Golden Ray marine casualty. Today is 11
5 September 2019.

6 Sir, if you could please state your name?

7 MR. SEO: My name is Seo and Sunghyun, Sunghyun Seo.

8 MR. FLAHERTY: And could you please spell your last name?

9 MR. SEO: Last name is S-e-o. S-e-o.

10 MR. FLAHERTY: All right. Sir, do I have your permission to
11 record this interview for the investigation?

12 MR. SEO: Yeah.

13 MR. FLAHERTY: Thank you.

14 MS. KIM: Cho Kim, K-i-m last name, interpreter.

15 MR. FLAHERTY: Thank you.

16 MS. AMIOTTE MCDONALD: Stephanie Amiotte McDonald, A-m-i-o-t-
17 t-e M-c-D-o-n-a-l-d, attorney for the third engineer.

18 LCDR [REDACTED]: Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED], United
19 States Coast Guard, [REDACTED].

20 MR. WILLETT: Lee Willett, investigator, U.S. Coast Guard,
21 W-i-l-l-e-t-t.

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

24 MS. BELL Carrie Bell, NTSB investigator, B-e-l-l.

25 LT [REDACTED]: Lieutenant [REDACTED], [REDACTED] U.S. Coast Guard,

1 District 7 legal.

2 MR. McRAE: Colin McRae, attorney for the Slot Charters, the
3 vessel, M-c-R-a-e.

4 MR. BREMER: Tom Bremer, B-r-e-m-e-r, Republic of the
5 Marshall Islands, Maritime Administrator.

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

8 MR. MOSER: Shea Moser, M-o-s-e-r, attorney for vessel
9 owners.

10 MR. GILSENAN: Ryan Gilsenan, counsel for pilots,
11 G-i-l-s-e-n-a-n.

12 (Whereupon, CHO KIM, an interpreter, translated the questions
13 and answers for SEO SUNGHYUN as required.)

14 INTERVIEW OF SEO SUNGHYUN

15 BY MR. WILLET:

16 Q. Okay. Sir, before we talk about the incident, we'd just like
17 to get some background. How long have you been sailing?

18 A. For almost 9 months.

19 Q. Nine months?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. On this vessel?

22 A. No. This vessel is 3 months.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Did you recently graduate from maritime academy?

1 A. Yeah, it's the first time since graduated.

2 Q. Okay. Describe your normal duties during the day?

3 A. Eight a.m. start to work and noon, noon to eat the lunch and
4 5:00 p.m. is stop -- finish the work and go to the common. I have
5 less (indiscernible). Just checking the machine.

6 Q. Okay. Do you take soundings?

7 A. Huh?

8 Q. Soundings? Do you take levels? No.

9 A. No. The administrative work.

10 Q. Okay. And that's normally in the engine control room?

11 A. Yes, it's in the engine room that he does administrative
12 work.

13 Q. So the administrative work you check, like, hours and
14 maintenance?

15 A. Yes.

16 INTERPRETER: Yes, he does.

17 BY MR. WILLETT:

18 Q. Okay. Do you ever oversee maintenance of equipment?

19 A. No, he doesn't oversee anything. He just receive the
20 instruction.

21 Q. Okay. Okay. Where were you when you departed Brunswick?
22 Where physically on the vessel on the way out?

23 A. Engine room, the bottom of engine room.

24 Q. The engine control room or --

25 A. No, engine room.

1 Q. The very bottom?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. And were you there when you prepared to sail, fired up
4 the main engines, the generators, bow thruster?

5 A. (No audible response.)

6 Q. Yes? On that Saturday on the 8th, the day of the
7 departure --

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. -- were you in the engine room?

10 A. Yeah, I --

11 Q. Did you notice during the loading or unloading at Brunswick
12 the vessel shift at all? No?

13 A. No.

14 Q. So that Saturday you got up at 8:00 and worked in the engine
15 room until 5:00?

16 A. No.

17 Q. No?

18 A. Yeah. There was a -- because the departure so there was time
19 was not exactly same normal hours.

20 Q. Okay. So what time did you go on watch prior to departure?

21 A. It's midnight.

22 Q. Midnight?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay. So you were in the engine room at midnight and what
25 were you doing when the vessel left the dock?

1 A. Just patrol the engine room.

2 Q. Walking around?

3 A. Patrol, yeah.

4 Q. What were you looking at or just looking for oil or --

5 A. Just looking, yes.

6 Q. Making sure there's no leaking or fires?

7 A. Yeah, no leaking and fire.

8 Q. Okay. When did you realize there was a problem?

9 A. When he -- when they realized that there -- the ship was just
10 leaning.

11 Q. Was the machinery all running prior to the --

12 A. Yeah. They -- all the thing was operating, all that.

13 Q. When did the machinery stop?

14 A. Almost the --

15 Q. It ran until it got to here?

16 A. Yeah.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Could you -- how many degrees is here?

18 INTERPRETER: He say he doesn't know exactly.

19 BY MR. WILLETT:

20 Q. Okay. Where were you physically? Were you near the main
21 engine? Were you near the generators? Were you on the very
22 bottom flat?

23 A. Yeah, very bottom. Yeah, very bottom.

24 Q. Okay. So were you on the port or starboard side?

25 A. Port side.

1 Q. Port side.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. So describe what happened as the vessel --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. -- came over. What -- where did you go?

6 A. He ran to the upper deck.

7 Q. Okay. You went up to the next deck?

8 A. Yeah, next deck.

9 Q. And then where?

10 A. And after that he could not move no longer because of the

11 ship has tilted so much.

12 Q. Did you get the EE, the Emergency Escape Breathing Device?

13 Did you get the orange -- no? Was it dark, completely dark?

14 A. Dark. Dark, yeah.

15 Q. Did you have a flashlight?

16 A. I have a flashlight but I can't find this EEED.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. So was there any smoke or fire in the engine room?

20 A. No.

21 Q. No?

22 A. No.

23 Q. So it was you could breathe?

24 A. Yeah, breathe. It can breathe, well -- he can breathe but

25 the odor of the fuel --

1 Q. Yes. The -- oh, you smelled diesel exhaust, steam?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. How long were you on the second deck, the second flat?

4 A. He doesn't remember.

5 Q. Don't remember? Did -- after you went to the side, did you
6 stay there for many hours or 2 or 3 hours?

7 A. For 6 hours.

8 Q. Six hours? And then where did you go?

9 A. Okay. He could not see because it's so dark and he was
10 trying to escape from the water.

11 Q. Uh-huh.

12 A. And he -- and there were -- he can grab, you know, away from
13 the water and so he doesn't really know where, but he trying to
14 escape from the water.

15 Q. Okay. Did you hear tapping?

16 A. Yeah. There is tapping.

17 Q. Did you tap back?

18 A. Yeah, just tap back for this not loud It's even though he
19 tap he feel like no one could hear him.

20 Q. What were you tapping with?

21 A. Just driver. Driver and --

22 INTERPRETER: With a screwdriver?

23 MR. LEE: Yeah, screwdriver.

24 BY MR. WILLETT:

25 Q. Screwdriver. Did you ever go back to where shaft alley,

1 where the shaft of the screw, did you make your way back that way?

2 A. No.

3 Q. You stayed there the whole time?

4 A. Yeah.

5 MR. WILLETT: Okay. All right. I'm --

6 MR. LEDET: I have no questions right now.

7 BY MS. BELL:

8 Q. I just -- I know he asked those questions, but can you just
9 tell us -- excuse me -- in your own words what happened from the
10 time you left port until the incident?

11 A. At the time of departure there was a normal and nothing
12 unordinary. And we did not recognize anything above the normal.
13 And he was making his routes and in the engine room and
14 patrolling. He can't really -- he doesn't have any recollection
15 to really explain, but he knows that his normal activities at time
16 of departure were they say he can (indiscernible).

17 MS. BELL: Okay. That's all I have. Thank you.

18 BY MR. FLAHERTY:

19 Q. So you, at the time you didn't have your flashlight or you
20 lost your flashlight when the incident happened?

21 A. Okay. He was with a cadet and the cadet had the flashlight
22 so he was able to use cadet's, the flashlight. He did not have
23 his so he used the cadet's.

24 Q. Okay. And when the incident happened did the -- did any
25 emergency lights come on at all or it just went dark?

1 A. He say he cannot recollect.

2 Q. Okay. Did the water that entered the engine room was it
3 immediately after the vessel heeled over or was there some time
4 between the vessel heeling over and water coming in?

5 A. It was immediately after the incident was -- he could see the
6 water was coming up.

7 Q. Okay. And as you were in there the -- as you were climbing
8 up to get away from the water --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- did the -- over time did the water level keep coming up?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. All right. So the -- you were on the lowest level. How many
15 levels is that to the -- where the engine control room is?

16 A. Third deck, three floors.

17 Q. Three decks above where he was? Okay. What piece of
18 equipment, just as a reference, were you standing next to prior to
19 the incident occurring?

20 A. He says on the bottom.

21 Q. What was there -- what piece of -- what machinery or
22 equipment was next to him?

23 A. Just sewage treatment.

24 Q. Sewage treatment? Okay.

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. All right. When the incident happened did you hear any other
2 of the people who were also -- verbally did you hear anyone
3 speaking who were also in the engine room? Did you hear anyone
4 talking or were you completely by yourself the whole time?

5 A. There was an announcement by the captain and then he was with
6 a cadet.

7 Q. Okay, so he was with a cadet. Okay. And you and the cadet
8 stayed together during the whole time?

9 A. Yeah. Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. And the cadet, did he still have his flashlight?

11 A. Yeah, flashlight.

12 MR. FLAHERTY: Okay. All right. I have no further
13 questions.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have no questions.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions, sir.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions for me.

17 BY MR. WILLETT:

18 Q. I have one final. When you were making your rounds on the
19 way out would you know if a ballast pump was running?

20 A. I don't know.

21 Q. Do you know where the ballast pumps are?

22 A. He knows.

23 Q. Where are they?

24 A. Float (indiscernible) is almost middle, middle, yeah.

25 Q. It's in the engine room?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Okay. If they are on would you know?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Yes? But do you recall if they were on or off? You don't
5 remember or you just -- you think they were off?

6 A. He doesn't --

7 Q. He doesn't remember?

8 A. No.

9 INTERPRETER: He doesn't remember.

10 MR. WILLETT: Okay.

11 BY MS. BELL:

12 Q. Did you say that you heard an announcement by the captain?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. What was that announcement?

15 A. That he announce they come to a certain point but he doesn't
16 remember where, but he was -- the captain was announcing to come
17 to certain point but he does not remember where to.

18 Q. Okay, thank you.

19 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

20 Q. Excuse me. Did you -- Les Ledet, U.S. Coast Guard. Do you
21 recall was that announcement -- did you hear it on a P.A. system
22 or a handheld radio?

23 A. P.A. system.

24 Q. A P.A.?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Okay, thank you.

2 MR. WILLETT: All right. If nobody has any further questions
3 we'll conclude the interview. It's approximately 9:49 a.m.

4 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA19FM048

PLACE:

DATE: September 11, 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.



Teresa Holevas
Transcriber