



U.S. COAST GUARD INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Matter Under Investigation: Collision (OSV) THUNDER and (Bulk) BUNUN QUEEN on July 23, 2022.

Interview Of: Dao Trong Cuong , Master

Date/Time: 0942-1025 29 July 2022

Location: BUNUN QUEEN

Interviewed By: CWO [REDACTED]

The Master the (Bulk Carrier) BUNUN QUEEN has been employed by the company Wisdom Marine for 12 years and has been working in the maritime industry for 25 years with 6 years on bulk carriers.

The master stated he was responsible for the overall safety of the vessel and training of the crew. The vessel was underway on a voyage from the Port of Houston to New Orleans when the incident occurred. The vessel had a planned stop at the 9 mile anchorage and was then headed to Cargo Westwego for loading. This was the master's first trip from Houston to New Orleans but had transited U.S. waters many times before. On the day of the incident, the master was resting in his cabin. He suddenly heard a loud sound and looked out the window to see another vessel on the port bow. The master is able to look forward on the vessel out of his cabin window. He immediately went up to the bridge and saw the vessels separate after collision and the other vessel begin to drift behind/ to the stern of the BUNUN QUEEN.

The master directed the 2nd Officer to save the data on the VDR and direct the engine to stop. The vessel is not outfitted with bridge controls, only an engine telegraph. He also directed the 2nd Officer to keep a safe distance from the other vessel. Even when the engine was brought to stop, the vessel continued to move and they tried to maintain heading. It took approximately 20 minutes for the vessel to stop and roughly 5 nautical miles. All of the crew began to muster on the port side of the vessel and the master said he did not need to make a call to muster stations because everyone was already there and communicated with everyone in front of him. Teams were sent to conduct damage assessments and it was noted that there was water ingress in the forepeak tank. The Captain was on the bridge trying to communicate with the OSV THUNDER. He tried calling multiple times with no response. He believed the crew of the THUNDER was in a similar state of panic and continue to call over Channel 16. After stopping the vessel, the master proceeded to call and make a report to Coast Guard Sector New Orleans informing them that his vessel collided with the THUNDER and that the BUNUN QUEEN was taking on water. The master then called the Charterer's agent and sent a report to the NRC with the help of the Chief Mate.

When he initially got to the bridge. The 2nd Officer was the only person on the bridge. The Chief Mate had made a watch schedule change with the approval of the master because extra manpower was needed on deck to clean the cargo holds. For short-term schedule changes, there are no written approvals, just verbal. The minimum manning on the bridge per company policy is two people. The


Master stated he was aware that only one person would be on the bridge due to the schedule change since the Chief Mate had informed him.

There was a container ship aft of the BUNUN QUEEN at the time of the incident. There are multiple navigation alarms but the master was unsure if the officer on watch was utilizing the ECDIS alarm. The Houston pilot requested the audio alarm be turned down due to distraction and congested vessel traffic, so the 3rd officer was directed to turn off the alarm temporarily, but the Master never instructed anyone to turn the alarm back on. The Master was not aware of any sound signals before the collision, and stated that there is nothing that would block the view in the wheelhouse. The working environment with the crew is one of “closeness” and friendly with everyone on board.

The master stated that a fairway is a channel designated to follow with specific guidelines. He believes the BUNUN QUEEN was the stand on vessel because the Thunder was not supposed to enter the fairway. He stated there are designated areas to cross fairways, like turning signals on highways. The Master stated that COLREGS was not applicable to this incident, only in open sea. The Master stated you cannot cross a fairway anywhere you like or it will distort the meaning of a fairway. The fairway is followed for safety and the master had no intention to leave it because it is designed for safe transit.

The Captain also stated the following from follow-on questions with Liberia Flag reps and Parties in Interest:

The ship did not turn back towards the THUNDER because it was also in distress. The crew called the engine room in addition to the engine order telegraph so that the engineering watch was not surprised. The master remembers the 2nd Officer standing at the center of the bridge when he first got up to the wheelhouse. If the incident had occurred in “open sea” the master admits that the BUNUN QUEEN would have been the give way vessel, but insisted it was the stand-on vessel due to being in the channel. The Master said he is familiar with the inland nav rules of 33 CFR but does not have them memorized.

 , LTJG
04 OCT 2022