

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CAPSIZING OF THE LIFTBOAT *SEACOR*  
*POWER* SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,  
LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 13, 2021

Accident No.: DCA21MM024

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Interview of: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] CM1  
*Station Grand Isle*

Via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday,  
April 21, 2021

APPEARANCES:

ANDREW EHLERS, Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

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U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

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U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

LTJG ██████████ ██████████ Search and Rescue Controller  
U.S. Coast Guard

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(Via Microsoft Teams)

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██████████ ██████████ Lieutenant Commander  
District 8 Legal



# National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

## Transcript Errata

**TABLE OF CORRECTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH: BM1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
RECORDED ON MAY 4, 2021**

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
1	N/A	CM1	BM1
4	17	CM1	BM1
4	25	Buds	Boats
5	19	BMA	BM "A"
5	23	173	175
6	1	Tax	tact
6	2	captain	Coxswain
6	3	REF	RB-S
6	3	ad hoc	as cox
6	4	captain	coxswain
6	23	captain	coxswain
6	23	OD	OOD
7	5	west	east and west
7	7	Bastion	Bastian
8	38	captain	coxswain
8	23	feet	Sea
9	38	past	passed
10	5	ETO	EPO
10	5	MK Seac	MKC
10	7	tarp ladder	chart plotter
11	13	resap	recess
11	19	trapped	driving
13	3	gunnel	gunwale
14	2	Glen	Glenn
17	38	soap splitter	Stokes litter
17	20	foreman	corpsman
18	3	filled	boom
18	11	both	Boats
19	14	moment	unit
19	21	captain	coxswain
19	23	captain	coxswain
21	15	captain	coxswain
23	11	sea schools	"C" schools
23	12	hooker	cutter
24	17	free	pre



I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	
By Mr. Muise	5
By Mr. Ehlers	18
By Mr. [REDACTED]	21
By Ms. Phillips	25
By Mr. [REDACTED]	30
By Mr. Cenac	32
By Ms. Huffman	32
By Mr. Muise	33
By Mr. Ehlers	34
By Mr. Muise	36

I N T E R V I E W

(09:04 a.m. CT)

1  
2  
3 MR. MUISE: Let me turn that off for a minute. Folks, I  
4 forgot to tell you Commander Cruz [sic] -- or [REDACTED] I'm sorry.  
5 Did I get that right?

6 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, I'm here.

7 MR. MUISE: So, he's with district legal, he's here for your  
8 counsel. So at any time if you need to talk to him, just say so,  
9 and we'll pause the interview and you guys can talk offline.  
10 That's -- he's here for you.

11 MS. [REDACTED] Thank you.

12 MR. MUISE: Okay. So this is Marcel Muise with the National  
13 Transportation Safety Board. It's 9:04 Central time. We are in  
14 Houma, Louisiana investigating the capsizing of the Seacor Power  
15 from April 13th. Today we're interviewing one of the cops in from  
16 Station Grand Isle. Both of you introduce yourself for us?

17 MS. [REDACTED] Yes. CM1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] spelling is [REDACTED],  
18 [REDACTED].

19 MR. MUISE: Do you agree to have me -- let me record this?

20 MS. [REDACTED] Yes, I do agree.

21 MR. MUISE: And around the room here, we have -- go ahead,  
22 Michael.

23 MR. CENAC: Michael Cenac, Seacor Marine.

24 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the U.S. Coast Guard.

25 MR. [REDACTED] Good morning, buds. Lieutenant Junior Grade [REDACTED]

1 U.S. Coast Guard.

2 MS. PHILLIPS: Captain Tracy Phillips, Coast Guard, Marine  
3 Board of Investigation Chair.

4 MR. EHLERS: Drew Ehlers, investigator in charge for NTSB.

5 MR. MUISE: And online, National Weather Service, please.

6 MS. HUFFMAN: Good morning. This is Melissa Huffman with the  
7 National Weather Service.

8 MR. MUISE: District Legal?

9 MR. [REDACTED] Good morning. This is Lieutenant Commander  
10 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with District 8 Legal.

11 BY MR. MUISE:

12 Q. Is there anybody else online that I don't know about? Okay.  
13 With that, Boats -- if to get started, would you just tell us a  
14 little about yourself? Your background, what quals you've had  
15 maybe with your previous stations?

16 A. Yes, I'm a BM1, I joined the Coast Guard in 2004, so I've  
17 been in for 16 and a half years. My first unit as a non-rate, I  
18 was at a search and rescue station, it was also a heavy weather  
19 station, and from there went to BMA school. I left BMA school,  
20 went to Philadelphia, and that's where I gained my first captain  
21 qualification on the -- well the skiff there, and the 55 aid to  
22 the navigation boat. Transferred from there as a BM2 out to  
23 California, I was on the Coast Guard Cutter George Cobb, 173 buoy  
24 tender, spent two years there. From there, transferred up to  
25 Hull, Massachusetts, I was at Station Point Allerton, also search

1 and rescue station, also a tax boat station, and I was there for  
2 three years. There, I got my 47 motor lifeboat captain  
3 qualification, and my 25 REF qualification ad hoc, then spent a  
4 little bit of time on the 41, but didn't get my captain  
5 qualification there before we got rid of that platform.

6 And then from there, I came down to Grand Isle. I was on the  
7 87 foot patrol boat, the Coast Guard Cutter Sturgeon. I was here  
8 for two years, and then I transferred to Training Center Yorktown,  
9 where I was an instructor for the National Aids to Navigation  
10 School for four years, and then from there, transferred down --  
11 back down here to Grand Isle in 2019, and have been here since.  
12 Gained my 45 RBM and 24 shallow water response boat about ten  
13 months ago.

14 Q. Okay. Thank you for that. Can you tell us about the Station  
15 Grand Isle, about the AOR, what boats you have there, where did  
16 your typical -- what's in your scope of work there?

17 A. Absolutely, sir. So I'm the operations petty officer, so I  
18 do the planning of operations that we do, any of the missions that  
19 we go out on, whether they're mostly LE oriented -- I do the  
20 plannings for that, I work alongside the training petty officer  
21 and we just come up with a training calendar and operations  
22 calendar for the month. I fill in where I can for the duty  
23 section if they need a captain. I'm also a BTM and OD, so  
24 wherever they need me to fill in, I do fill in.

25 And we have a 45 foot response boat medium, and then the 24



1 foot special purpose craft shallow water, because the AOR here has  
2 a lot of shallow water closer inland, and then the 45 is mostly  
3 used for some of our offshore response, and it's a -- yeah. It's  
4 a large AOR, and -- I don't really know what else to say about it.

5 Q. Where's the border for the stations AOR? Like how far west  
6 do you go?

7 A. Bastion Bay, then east to -- east of Bastion Bay, sorry. And  
8 then west -- Atchafalaya.

9 Q. And how far offshore?

10 A. Fifty nautical miles.

11 Q. Fifty. Okay. So, Boats, I'm going to ask you to just  
12 recount, tell us in as much detail as you can remember about the  
13 evening of the 13th. I think we can stick to just that day. We  
14 don't need to get into the following days, so for now, let's just  
15 stick to that Tuesday. I'm not going to interrupt you, in fact  
16 I'm going to turn my camera off, but please, with as much detail,  
17 just tell us what you remember about that case. I understand it's  
18 a difficult case, so if you need to take a break, that's fine.  
19 Just let us know, and we can step out and come back later. So  
20 it's -- please, we're -- none of us here were on scene, so we  
21 would love to hear your story.

22 A. Roger, sir. So I was standing duty, I was filling in for  
23 some crew members, we have quite a few people right now that are  
24 TDY, meaning they're off training in other states and whatnot for  
25 qualification, so I was standing duty. It was my second day of

1 duty, and we were mostly responding to the storm as it was hitting  
2 us, here, at -- in Grand Isle. Quite a few people were out doing  
3 damage control, and just trying to make sure that our boats were  
4 safe in their mooring slips, and I was inside the building trying  
5 to help out the comm -- the communication watch stander and the  
6 OD, because they're getting calls left and right, and -- oh, by  
7 the way, it was over the radio or over the phone.

8       So I was helping out with that when Lieutenant [REDACTED] walked  
9 in and said, did you guys get the call, and we were like, no, what  
10 call, and he said, there's people in the water off of Fourchon,  
11 you got to go. So myself and the other captain that was on duty  
12 both grabbed our bag and headed down to the 45. We each got on a  
13 45, got our crews together. We did a GAR score and we talked  
14 about the weather being within parameters at the unit, but we  
15 didn't know what we were going to see out there when we got there.  
16 And we did a GAR score, my crew came up with a high high.  
17 Lieutenant [REDACTED] was right there, and we discussed with him that  
18 we had a high high, and that we were talking about mitigating  
19 factors.

20       Once we decided that we would still continue forward the  
21 motion -- with the mission, we got underway at 1730, and headed  
22 that way, and then as we got closer, the -- it was a lot worse.  
23 The feet conditions deteriorated quite a bit. It went from -- at  
24 one point, I know I said, this is definitely eight footers, and  
25 then I was like, these are definitely ten footers. And then, on

1 scene, it was definitely ten to 12 feet. The winds were pretty  
2 strong, and when we got on scene, we had both 45s right there on  
3 scene. Took us a little over an hour to get there, and when we  
4 got on scene, there was four people hanging onto the structure on  
5 the vessel, and that's all that we could see. We could see that  
6 it had been overturned, and that we saw the four people hanging  
7 on. The other 45 on scene was closer up to the vessel, and we  
8 kind of held that position for a little while. I was back a  
9 little bit further, we were communicating between the *Glenn Harris*  
10 and the other 45, just kind of seeing who was out there and what  
11 had happened so far.

12 And then I was getting past a search pattern for -- to start  
13 searching for crew members that may have gone in the water when  
14 one of the four people holding on fell into the water -- or jumped  
15 into the water, I'm not sure. They ended up in the water somehow,  
16 and the 45 that was out there with me picked them up. And at that  
17 point, we decided not to do the search pattern, that we would just  
18 move up and take the position that the 45 had been in, just in  
19 case anybody else decided to jump in, or fall in, or anything like  
20 that, or if there was anybody close by.

21 So we moved up into that position, and pretty much  
22 station-kept -- station-kept and hung out. There was really no  
23 way of communicating with the people that were on the vessel.  
24 They did not have life jackets that I could see, and they had no  
25 way of communicating with us. And then we were on scene for

1 hours, just station-keeping and keeping an eye on them. During  
2 this time, my crew -- I had EM2 [REDACTED] as my engineer, and he was on  
3 the back deck. He was very sea sick, very fatigued. So he spent  
4 the majority of the time on the back deck, just trying to get air  
5 and feel better. And then I had the ETO of the unit, the MK [REDACTED]  
6 he -- I'm sorry, senior chief. And he did most of my crew member  
7 stuff. He was handling radios and tarp ladder, and everything  
8 like that for me while we were just keeping our eyes on the  
9 vessel, seeing if there was any way we could make closer approach,  
10 but then also just keeping an eye on the weather.

11 After dark, the -- there was a helo on scene. They were able  
12 to lower down PFDs, so they -- each person had a life jacket and a  
13 radio as well, and that was the first communication that we heard  
14 from the people there. They were very scared, of course, but did  
15 not want to enter the water. They were afraid, I know they'd  
16 mentioned that one of them didn't know how to swim, and we just  
17 kind of hung back -- well they didn't hung back -- we hung out  
18 right there as close as we could get to try and support in case  
19 any of the -- anybody went in the water.

20 And then the 45 that had brought the injured person that had  
21 fell in the water to Port Fourchon got back on scene. When they  
22 got back on scene, they were given a mission of possibly trying to  
23 float down a life raft to the people on the platform around the  
24 vessel. When they were working on that, we heard over the radio,  
25 he slipped in, and one of the crew members that had been on the

1 vessel slipped into the water. It wasn't clear as to whether he  
2 tried or if he had just fallen in. They just said he slipped in.

3       So we went right into searching for him, and then it took us  
4 two minutes and I -- we decided because of the winds, he was  
5 probably behind us. So we turned around and he was right off the  
6 bow. I was able to have a visual of him pretty quickly, but with  
7 the sea state, we took several attempts before we were able to  
8 bring him on board. He was non-responsive, face down, wearing a  
9 blue t-shirt and jeans, and all we could really see was his back  
10 with his t-shirt raised up and the life jacket that he was wearing  
11 had -- it was an inflatable, it had inflated. So that was up  
12 above where his head would be, was all we was the inflatable PFD.

13       My crew members were able to get him into the resap, and then  
14 when -- sorry. When my crew members were moving him to the aft  
15 deck, the EM2 [REDACTED] was maneuvering the person to the back deck and  
16 he, from my understanding -- I was watching the waves, trying to  
17 keep the boat bow into the waves, and the next thing I heard from  
18 senior chief was that, he's in the water, he's in the water. I  
19 looked out my window right there, I was trapped from the starboard  
20 side. I looked out the starboard side window and saw my crew  
21 member in the water off of the starboard quarter holding onto the  
22 person that we had recovered. They went in together, and he was  
23 holding onto him. I quickly maneuvered, and we were able to pick  
24 up our crew member, but lost sight of the person that we had  
25 retrieved that had fallen off of the vessel. Didn't gain sight of

1 him again.

2 My crew member was very shaken, and had already been  
3 fatigued and sick. So at that point, as soon as senior chief was  
4 able to come inside, I had him call the command and say that we  
5 needed to leave the scene because we had somebody that had fallen  
6 in the water, and that we were headed back to Port Fourchon. From  
7 there, we went back to Port Fourchon, but even then, coming in  
8 right up to the entrance of the -- right up to the entrance, it  
9 was still quite a few, I would say, eight to ten foot seas. I  
10 could see the buoys and the shoreline one second, and the next  
11 second I could see nothing because it was just black because of  
12 the sea state was so high that it took us quite a while to get in.  
13 So then we came into Port Fourchon, and we moored up, and were  
14 able to get him out of the wet clothes and everything.

15 Q. Hey folks, can you hear me?

16 A. Yes, can sir.

17 Q. Okay. Sorry. I thought I thought I'd muted myself. Well,  
18 thank you for that. I have a few follow-up questions. Do you  
19 need to take a break before we move on?

20 A. No, I'm good, sir.

21 Q. Okay. The lift boat itself, what kind of condition was it in  
22 when you arrived? Was it upside-down, was it completely -- mostly  
23 submerged?

24 A. Sir, it was upside-down. It wasn't completely submerged,  
25 just upside-down, and you could see very little of it. I could

1 see one of the jacks, and a little bit of the superstructure, but  
2 not much. It was very little of it that they were holding onto.

3 Q. Could you see the gunnel of the -- the portside gunnel? Or  
4 was that submerged? You know, was any of the main deck exposed at  
5 all at that point?

6 A. Yeah, so some of the main deck was exposed. It was just  
7 because it was like the corner of the vessel was sticking out of  
8 the water, so where that -- on that corner of the vessel that you  
9 could see the deck.

10 Q. Okay. And the survivors were located where?

11 A. They were holding onto a small portion of the superstructure  
12 that was exposed. It was probably like the first deck. It was  
13 really hard --

14 Q. Okay. So they were not sitting on the overturned hull -- on  
15 the bottom of the hull, then. Is that correct?

16 A. No, they weren't.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. That's what I expected to see when I got on scene from the  
19 report, but -- yeah, no, they were sitting on the superstructure.  
20 The first -- probably the first deck of the superstructure, so it  
21 was kind of like underneath the deck, but not -- because of the  
22 direction it was overturned, it was kind of like they were sitting  
23 on the superstructure that was --

24 Q. Okay. Thank you. Was there any lights on at all? On the  
25 vessel?

1 A. I don't recall seeing any light. I think the only light that  
2 we had was coming from the Glen Harris -- had their spotlight on  
3 there, we had our spotlight. I do remember seeing a mark lit up  
4 -- a strobe light, like one of them was wearing a strobe light.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. One of the people --

7 Q. Was there any -- did they have any lines or fire hoses  
8 available that they could've used to hang onto or used to climb  
9 down?

10 A. Not that I could see.

11 Q. How about life rafts? Did you see any life rafts either  
12 still secured to the deck or floating nearby?

13 A. There were three life rafts still secured to the deck, but  
14 they were about 25 feet above their heads, I'd say.

15 Q. And can you explain to us again why was it that you couldn't  
16 get closer to it? What hazards were blocking you?

17 A. So it was mostly the sea state that had me concerned. The  
18 sea state was definitely breaking waves. It wasn't like a rolling  
19 wave or anything, so it was very unpredictable out there. And  
20 then being the fact that we -- I saw that they were sitting on the  
21 superstructure, I didn't know how much of it was underneath the  
22 water. The portion that they were sitting on made me believe that  
23 if I had gotten close, then there'd be a strong possibility that  
24 the bottom of my vessel would hit the superstructure. Also,  
25 because of the jack that was in the water, the closer you got the



1 seas acted differently. It wasn't near what my -- what I was  
2 experiencing further away, where I actually had pretty much ten to  
3 12 foot seas with an occasional 14 coming, it was coming from,  
4 kind of, two directions once you got a little bit closer, because  
5 of the way the water was acting around the vessel.

6 Q. Okay. Do you think -- and this is just your opinion -- do  
7 you think that -- would it have made a difference if you had a 47  
8 or even the old 41?

9 A. I don't want to speculate on that.

10 Q. That's fine. Thank you. So I understand you had to get a  
11 waiver to get underway. Can you tell us a little about that?

12 A. Yeah, I can speak to that, I -- so we have a GAR score that  
13 we come up with as a risk versus gains, where we discuss position.  
14 We go through the PEACE model, which is planning, events, asset  
15 crew, asset cutter, boat and -- or asset boat recourse,  
16 communications, environment. So we break down each one of those  
17 categories and we talk about each part of it.

18 As we went through, we talked about the planning. We felt  
19 that we had a partial plan because we didn't know what we would  
20 see on scene. We felt that the event was extreme, the asset --  
21 the crew, we were marginal. The -- we knew that the EM2 gets  
22 seasick, we also didn't know what we were going to see out there,  
23 but we just felt that the -- actually, no, the asset -- I'm sorry,  
24 the asset was excellent. We felt that we all were feeling good,  
25 and we were good to go, rested and everything. Asset, that the

1 boat we were taking had just come up out of maintenance status  
2 that morning, so we did say we had restrictions just in case  
3 anything were to come up. Communications, excellent, and then  
4 environment, we had extreme.

5       So that put us in a high for our risk, but we felt that the  
6 gain was risk -- the gain was also a high, so once we took stock  
7 of that, it was kind of a -- are we willing to accept the mission?  
8 We talked to Lieutenant [REDACTED] who was right there in the boat  
9 house with us. We told him that we talked about mitigating  
10 factors, we didn't really feel like there was anything  
11 specifically that we could address at the moment, and he said that  
12 he was good with it if I was good with it. And I talked to the  
13 crew, and we were good with it, so we continued on with the  
14 mission, feeling that the gains, the high gain, was definitely  
15 worth heading out there.

16 Q. Okay. Thank you. When you're doing that risk assessment,  
17 where do you get your weather information from? Is it a  
18 commercial source, or are you using the National Weather Service,  
19 or somewhere else?

20 A. Yeah, usually it's from the NOAA website. From the National  
21 Weather.

22 Q. Okay. And the limits for the 45, again?

23 A. The limits for the 45, max seas, ten feet, maximum winds, 30  
24 knots.

25 Q. Can you tell me a little about the -- a little more about the

1 45 equipment specific, what do you have on board for, let's say, a  
2 line throwing apparatus?

3 A. The ability of the crew members is all we have on board for  
4 line throwing.

5 Q. Do you have hand lines on -- or heaving lines on board?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. How about emergency medical equipment? What kind -- what do  
8 you have for trauma kits on board?

9 A. On board, we have -- we had soap splitter, we have a basic  
10 first aid kit, miller board --

11 Q. Is there a -- go ahead, sorry.

12 A. Sorry, I just would -- if we had to treat somebody for  
13 hypothermia, we have blankets, pillows, and stuff like that as  
14 well, but other than that, that's it.

15 Q. The -- how about training for EMS? What kind of -- is there  
16 a requirement for at least somebody on board to have some EMS  
17 training?

18 A. We were all also required to be first aid certified, in CPR.

19 Q. And are there any EMTs at your station? Or higher?

20 A. Yes, there is. We -- yeah, the foreman is a EMT, and I  
21 believe -- I know he's at least EMT.

22 Q. Okay. I actually had a couple other questions about the lift  
23 boat that I missed. Did you see any doors or hatches that were  
24 open?

25 A. I could see one, looked like a door, but it was not open.

1 Q. How about the crane? Was the crane submerged? Or could you  
2 see portions of that on the port side? It's a big red lattice  
3 filled crane.

4 A. The crane was submerged from my viewpoint.

5 Q. How about any cargo on deck? Did you see any cargo secured  
6 to the deck?

7 A. No, I don't recall seeing any cargo secured to the deck. I  
8 do know that we had quite a few PFDs and debris floating in the  
9 water nearby, but -- and we couldn't really tell where it was  
10 coming from, just that they kept floating around.

11 MR. MUISE: Okay. Well thank you, both. I'm going to pass  
12 it on to my colleague, Mr. Ehlers.

13 BY MR. EHLERS:

14 Q. Good morning again, Boats. So I don't have the Coast Guard  
15 background that Marcel has, so I got to ask you some real basic  
16 questions -- acronym questions. I was in the Navy, so I'm very  
17 familiar with acronyms, but just not Coast Guard acronyms. So  
18 bear with me here. You mentioned a claw, I think you said BTM.  
19 What is that?

20 A. Yeah, a boarding team member.

21 Q. Okay. Is that like a law enforcement type qualification?

22 A. Yes, it's law enforcement.

23 Q. Okay. You explained the GAR score very well, but what does  
24 GAR stand for?

25 A. It's actually green, amber, red. So at one --

1 Q. Oh.

2 A. -- the, yeah. We used to have a different GAR score  
3 previously, where we actually came up with a color.

4 Q. I see. So --

5 A. There is also another acronym. It's general assessment of  
6 risk, sorry. There's -- we always used to say green, amber, red,  
7 because that's what I -- up until a couple years ago, that's what  
8 it was, so the majority of my career, we always were -- whether we  
9 were green, amber, or red to go, and now we do the actual GAR 2.0  
10 with that PEACE model that I explained. But yeah, it's a general  
11 assessment of risk.

12 Q. I see. All right. And the last acronym is -- I think you  
13 said your senior chief was an EPO. What is that?

14 A. Yeah, he's the engineering petty officer at the moment.  
15 Basically he oversees all of the engineering stuff at the unit.

16 Q. I see. Okay. All right. That's very helpful, thank you  
17 very much. So you mentioned going through the -- I think you said  
18 PEACE model and GAR score. How long did that process take?

19 A. Probably two minutes, maybe?

20 Q. Who makes the final decision on go, no go?

21 A. Well, it's the captain. And in that case, I did have to talk  
22 to Lieutenant [REDACTED] about it because of where it fell in the GAR  
23 score or the risk assessment, but in general, if the captain is  
24 not comfortable going into a situation, you do not go.

25 Q. Okay. All right. And Lieutenant [REDACTED] is he your CO?

1 A. Yes, he's the commanding officer.

2 Q. Okay. If he was on station there, I believe you said -- and  
3 this is just more of a procedural question -- if a CO is not on  
4 station, how do you make that determination?

5 A. We would give him a phone call.

6 Q. Okay. All right. The weather report you used to develop the  
7 GAR score, what do you remember it said? Do you remember  
8 specifics about what was in the weather report?

9 A. I was trying to think about this this morning, and honestly  
10 that part of it was such a blur. I remember looking at it, and I  
11 remember the thing that I said to the crew was that we were in  
12 parameters where we were, and that we don't know what we would see  
13 when we got out there.

14 Q. Okay. All right. So how long would you say it was from when  
15 you got the report, people in the water -- I think that's what you  
16 said -- to when you were underway?

17 A. Less than ten minutes.

18 Q. Okay. All right. And then the last question I have at the  
19 moment is, you mentioned keeping station on the wreck, on the  
20 Seacor Power. Where was that station? So in relation to the  
21 accident site, what I'm asking is, distance away, and if you  
22 remember, what direction?

23 A. I do not recall the direction, exactly. But the distance, I  
24 would say probably about 20 to 30 yards, maybe.

25 Q. So maybe for the direction, maybe relative to the vessel,

1 were you on the superstructure side, or on the hull side?

2 A. Superstructure side.

3 Q. Superstructure side. Okay. Were you directly opposite the  
4 hull or were you kind of behind the superstructure with the hull  
5 maybe to your port side?

6 A. Yes, we were kind of behind the superstructure with the hull  
7 to the port side.

8 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Thank you very much.

9 MR. MUISE: Lieutenant [REDACTED]

10 BY MR. [REDACTED]

11 Q. Hey, folks. This is Lieutenant Junior Grade [REDACTED] from Coast  
12 Guard. I just have some follow-up questions of my own. First one  
13 being is, can you explain to us the manning requirements for the  
14 45? What the minimum manning requirements are?

15 A. Yes, I can, sir. So you're required to have a captain, a  
16 crew member, and an engineer, unless it's for law enforcement.

17 Q. Understood. So to recap, on your crew, you served as a  
18 coxswain. Your engineering petty officer, which was the senior  
19 chief, served as your engineer, and you EM2 is a boat crew member.  
20 Is that correct?

21 A. I would actually say it was the reverse. They're both the  
22 senior chief and the EM2 are both engineers of that platform, but  
23 when it came to engineering like lighting off the boat and stuff  
24 like that, EM2 [REDACTED] was the one who lit off the boat and acted as  
25 the engineer to begin with. They both responded to anything

1 engineering, but -- and can both act as a crew member, but senior  
2 chief did most of my crew member activities in the sense that he  
3 answered radios and worked with the chart plotter, and took any  
4 transmissions -- you know, wrote down the search pattern they were  
5 giving me and everything like that.

6 Q. Understood. And for your -- the second 45 on scene, could  
7 you also go through the complement of that crew? I know you had a  
8 coxswain who was a BM2, but what was the rest of the crew  
9 complement made up of? Did --

10 A. So they had a -- I'm sorry, they had a BM2, that was a  
11 coxswain. The engineer is an MK3, and then there was another MK3  
12 on board that's breaking in crew member, and then they had a  
13 seaman on board that's also -- member.

14 Q. Understood. So would you say that -- how would you assess  
15 the overall level of experience between the two platforms who were  
16 actually out there?

17 A. Experience-wise, in the Coast Guard, the experience was  
18 definitely on our platform. Senior chief, I think, has over 20  
19 years in, and I have 16 and a half years. EM2 hasn't been in that  
20 long, I think -- I can't speculate on that, but I think he's been  
21 on for -- I don't know, like four years or so. But so like as far  
22 as overall experience, our platform -- but the crew on the other  
23 45 all are crew watch-standers the majority of the time, so on a  
24 daily basis they are out.

25 Q. Understood. And I know senior chief, as a qualifying



1 engineer and boat crew member, has to maintain the semi-annual  
2 currencies. Can you just walk me through the decision that was  
3 made for a senior chief to get underway that day? Was that just  
4 given the totality of the risk, you wanted to help buy that down  
5 by having a more experienced crew member or was it just, he just  
6 so happened to be available? Can you kind of just walk us through  
7 that decision?

8 A. Absolutely, sir. So it was pretty much the limitations of  
9 the crew we had on board that day. But as I said earlier, I was  
10 standing duty, I was filling in for -- we have a lot of people  
11 right now that are gone for schools, for sea schools, at the  
12 moment. We have another member that is TDY on the hooker --  
13 Moray, getting some experience for his next position. So we were  
14 -- we took the two crews that were available. We are one boat  
15 unit, so generally, we would only send one 45. But considering  
16 the circumstances and the number of people that we had potentially  
17 thought were in the water, we wanted to send both platforms. So  
18 we manned both platforms as best as we could with what we had.

19 Q. Understood. And just speaking for your crew itself, were you  
20 all a fresh crew? Had any of you been underway previous in the  
21 day, picking up any other sort of mission or op?

22 A. None of us had been underway yet that day, sir.

23 Q. Understood. So you had a -- the potential to devote a full  
24 eight hours to being underway that day, then. Correct?

25 A. Yes, we could've. I mean, depending on the sea state, we

1 could've been out for -- had it been a calm day, we could've been  
2 out for ten hours on that platform. But as the sea state  
3 increases, the amount of hours you're allowed to be underway  
4 decreases --

5 Q. Understood.

6 A. -- but way the sea state was in, it was six hours.

7 Q. Understood. Thank you for clarifying that for the record.

8 And when you all got on scene, were any self-locating data marker  
9 buoys or data marker buoys deployed?

10 A. No, I didn't see any, sir.

11 Q. Did you all bring some with you? Some SLDMBs?

12 A. No, we did not, sir.

13 Q. And then, I understand sector gave you search patterns, but  
14 you all made the on scene call to station keep. Was -- aside from  
15 that, did sector give you any other guidance or tasking?

16 A. No, they hadn't given me any specific tasking. They were  
17 doing most of their communications with the *Glenn Harris*, the free  
18 commission boat that was out there. They were doing most of the  
19 communication with them, and they kind of -- the *Glenn Harris* kind  
20 of served as the on-scene commander. So a lot of communication  
21 was going through them and then to us, and -- yeah, other than the  
22 search pattern, we weren't really given any specific tasking ever.

23 Q. Understood. And then my final question, as the *Glenn Harris*  
24 assumed the on-scene coordinator, were you receiving any tasking  
25 or guidance from them?

1 A. I don't remember getting specific tasking from them. We did  
2 get some just kind of back and forth communication, just what we  
3 were seeing, discussing back and forth. At one point, one of the  
4 members that was holding onto the hull was -- we couldn't see him  
5 at -- for a second, it was like two of them had gotten so close  
6 together that you couldn't see the three people that were still  
7 holding on. And so they kind of observed that, we observed that,  
8 we were able to move into a better position, and verify that there  
9 were in fact just three people holding on that we could visualize.

10 Q. Roger. And I've thought of one more question, I'm sorry.  
11 Does the 45 have forward looking infrared?

12 A. Yes, it does.

13 Q. And were you all able to capture some of those images on your  
14 FLIR recording as well?

15 A. No, we were not, sir.

16 MR. EHLERS: Understood. That's all I have.

17 MR. MUISE: Okay. Captain?

18 BY MS. PHILLIPS:

19 Q. Good morning. This is Captain Phillips. I have a few  
20 additional follow-up questions. What time do you normally do your  
21 watch relief?

22 A. It happens on Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Captain. It's  
23 -- well, the duty crew that's coming on is -- needs to be here at  
24 0700, but the actual relief happens after boat checks and  
25 everything like that, generally somewhere between 08 and 0900.

1 Q. Okay. And you said that this was your second day on duty?

2 A. Yes, it was, Captain.

3 Q. Had you been out the night before at all?

4 A. We had gotten underway the day before for two boat trainings  
5 just for ourselves, some break-ins and whatnot to try and get some  
6 training for our crew.

7 Q. But that was during the day time?

8 A. Yes, it was, Captain.

9 Q. So your crew was able to get a full night's sleep the night  
10 before?

11 A. Yes, they were.

12 Q. Okay. And tell me a little bit more about the weather that  
13 you experienced at the station earlier in the day before you got  
14 the call.

15 A. Okay, Captain. So we were -- the OD, which happens to be EM2  
16 [REDACTED] came into the operations slash training room -- or office,  
17 and had mentioned, do we want to move the boat, we've got some  
18 weather coming in. We looked at it and it wasn't predicted to be  
19 what it ended up being, so we decided not to move either of the  
20 boats. In that case, we would move them into Pirate's Cove  
21 Marina, where they're a little bit more protected than they are  
22 here at the station. We decided not to move them, but then the  
23 storm hit, and it was nothing like anybody expected. It -- we had  
24 crew -- the whole crew was actively doing something, whether it  
25 was responding to phone calls and calls on the radio, or working

1 out -- we had a light bulb go down on beige, and we had the -- you  
2 know, the winds -- we had stuff flying around. We had to go hold  
3 lines on the 24 so that it wouldn't break lines and possibly come  
4 on board.

5 We're keeping an eye on the 45 to make sure that the water  
6 didn't rise up enough so that they were at the top of the  
7 boathouse. Yeah, at one point, I had spoke with my husband  
8 because he was home with our four kids, and he is the engineering  
9 petty officer of the *Moray*. He spoke to his watch stander over  
10 there, and they had said that, according to their equipment, that  
11 it was sustained 70 knot winds, with gusts up to 90 on their  
12 equipment on board. So -- and we could see that the trees were  
13 moving, and the flooding was -- the whole base, almost, was  
14 flooded. Yeah, that was -- I mean, and we had everybody working  
15 on pretty much damage control at that point, trying to lessen the  
16 damage that we were receiving from the storm while still trying to  
17 hold up the unit.

18 Q. Wow. Did you see the forecast that everybody else looked at  
19 before the decision was made not to move the boats?

20 A. I did not look at the actual forecast, Captain.

21 Q. Do you know who did look at it?

22 A. EM2 [REDACTED] He was the OD, so he was keeping an eye on that.

23 Q. Okay. Thanks. Once you got on scene -- sounds like you have  
24 extensive experience in a lot of different areas in the Coast  
25 Guard. Once you got on scene, how would you rate the conditions

1 as compared to other situations you've been in during your career?

2 A. Captain, the -- honestly, the way I saw it was very similar  
3 to the weather we got on the East coast, both up in Maine and in  
4 Massachusetts. I mentioned a couple of times, I believe, to  
5 senior chief, like it's just a washing machine, out here. Meaning  
6 that the sea state was kind of -- would come from all over, it  
7 felt like any way except there was more, like a predominant set of  
8 waves that would come. It was like a washing machine of eight to  
9 ten when we were on our way out there, and then you would get a  
10 set of waves that were 14, maybe even more foot, and it would just  
11 be like a wall in front of you.

12 And then the set would go away, and you'd be kind of stuck in  
13 the washing machine, where you're just trying to not beat up your  
14 crew too bad, and transit at the same time. And then when we were  
15 actually on scene and just station keeping, it was just kind of  
16 trying to not beat up the boat, not beat up the crew while we were  
17 out there. I did feel that my previous experience as -- in heavy  
18 weather stations did help out a lot in there. At no point was I  
19 afraid for my own life, but the sea state was enough so that we  
20 did discuss it regularly. Like, you know, this -- wow. This is  
21 just a lot. And then the winds, too, contributed. The winds were  
22 40, 45 knots, with some gusts that were probably over 50. And  
23 that definitely had a huge impact on the hull, so once we were on  
24 top of the waves, it was like it was pushing the hull -- the bow  
25 of the hull, specifically, off to one side, it felt like. But

1 yeah, this is the -- the on scene weather was definitely not -- it  
2 was a lot more than I expected it was going to be when we got out  
3 there.

4 Q. Thank you. That was really helpful. Thinking back that  
5 evening, is there anything that you wish you'd had on board your  
6 boat that could've helped you better handle the situation?

7 A. That actually is a question that I hadn't even thought about,  
8 Captain. I don't think I have an answer for that, I don't really  
9 think --

10 Q. Okay. Well, think about it. If you do come up with anything  
11 after this interview, I'd be interested to know what that was.

12 A. Roger that, Captain.

13 MS. PHILLIPS: All right. Those were all the questions I  
14 had. Sounds like it was a really, really challenging situation,  
15 so great job out there. Thanks for being out there that night.

16 MS. [REDACTED] You're welcome, captain.

17 MR. MUISE: Boats, before we move on -- is the BM2, the  
18 coxswain for the other boat there with you?

19 MS. [REDACTED] Yes --

20 MR. MUISE: Or nearby? Can we -- can you let him know -- I'm  
21 going to talk to him right after this. Can you ask him just to  
22 hold off for a half hour? Because you've been very informative.  
23 So I'd like to keep going.

24 MS. [REDACTED] Absolutely, sir.

25 MR. MUISE: Okay. [REDACTED] go ahead.

1 BY MR. [REDACTED]

2 Q. Hey, BM1. Good morning. My name's [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm with the  
3 Coast Guard. I have no boat experience -- search and rescue boat.  
4 I came from the industry side of things, OSDs and the like, but my  
5 questions -- and it's more of just, I'll let you give a statement  
6 as opposed to question. The big concerns is the weather. You  
7 talked about some of the weather conditions. Can you explain the  
8 weather condition prior to getting underway? You said y'all were  
9 in the middle of trying to get things squared around the base and  
10 some flooding around the base -- can you describe the events prior  
11 to getting underway? The weather circumstances, you know, just  
12 previously went through right before y'all got the call, and how  
13 did y'all determine the GAR score, and then what conditions from  
14 the base to -- you said it took you an hour to get to Fourchon,  
15 approximately an hour to get on scene. What were the weather  
16 conditions en route? Did they improve? Did they diminish? And  
17 then after those hours, you were in Fourchon. Did the weather sea  
18 state stay consistent? Did they get better? Did they get worse?  
19 Kind of give us a rundown of the weather conditions, if you would,  
20 from the -- right before y'all left, or the events y'all had right  
21 prior to the call, to once y'all got in station and stuff.

22 A. Roger that. That was a lot of questions in one, so I'll try  
23 to start from the beginning but if I'm missing something, please  
24 let me know. So we were dealing with the storm here. Like I  
25 said, the weather report from the cutter *Moray* was that the wind



1 was 70, with gusts of up to 90 even, here on base. It kind of  
2 came out of nowhere, all of a sudden. It was just extremely  
3 windy, and the water was rising. I don't recall what time that  
4 actually was that that all started happening, but it did seem like  
5 we were dealing with it for quite a while.

6 And then when I had walked into the comm center --  
7 communications watch unit here we have, and I was trying to help  
8 them out. They had a couple of phone calls and other stuff coming  
9 over the radio that they were trying to deal with, so I was trying  
10 to help them out. And that's when Lieutenant [REDACTED] came in and  
11 said that there were people in the water. And I remember looking  
12 out the window at that point, thinking, okay, the weather has  
13 calmed down. I know I thought that, I hope this isn't the eye of  
14 the storm, and this is actually the end, or it's subsiding, and  
15 not just we're stuck in the eye of a storm and thinking that it's  
16 better, it's not actually.

17 So the weather had calmed down significantly at the base, and  
18 when we got on the 45, it seemed like it was going to be calmer as  
19 we left, but I know that generally, seas are worse off shore than  
20 they are in shore. So as soon as we left the station, it wasn't  
21 too bad until we got out of Baratavia Bay, and Baratavia Pass,  
22 that it was picking up. And as we got closer the weather  
23 definitely deteriorated. I would say it was worse on scene that  
24 it was at any point prior to that.

25 MR. [REDACTED] Yeah, that's good. That's kind of trying to get

1 the weather from the time you left base -- right before you left  
2 to getting on scene and kind of -- overall description of the  
3 weather. That's all I got.

4 MR. MUISE: Okay. Michael?

5 BY MR. CENAC:

6 Q. Good morning. Michael Cenac, Seacor. First, thank you to  
7 all your team for all your service. We're really appreciative of  
8 your efforts that night. And I think I have just one more  
9 question, additional -- maybe two. Was there any voyages planned  
10 that day by your team or anyone on base?

11 A. I'm sorry, I didn't understand. Could you say that again?

12 Q. Were there any trips planned out on the water that day?  
13 Drills, missions, anything pre-planned in advance that afternoon?

14 A. I don't remember. I think that we had a -- I would have to  
15 look at the calendar, honestly. But I think that we probably had  
16 a law enforcement patrol planned.

17 Q. Thank you. One other one. Do you recall if there was any  
18 other or how many distress calls were received that afternoon and  
19 evening?

20 A. When I was in the comm center right before the initial call,  
21 I know that he had two going on. One was on the radio, and one  
22 was over the phone.

23 MR. CENAC: Okay, thank you, ma'am.

24 MR. MUISE: Melissa, anything?

25 BY MS. HUFFMAN:

1 Q. I'm just wondering, [REDACTED] Did -- are you aware of anyone  
2 who reached out to the National Weather Service for forecast  
3 information or was the forecast information only being provided  
4 through the webpage?

5 A. That I'm aware of, it was only through the webpage.

6 MS. HUFFMAN: Okay. Thank you.

7 BY MR. MUISE:

8 Q. Hey everyone, this is Marcel Muise again. I just had three  
9 really quick follow-ups. When you got underway, how many  
10 survivors were you told -- or how many people on board that lift  
11 boat were you told were out there?

12 A. The report that I remember is 17 people seven miles off of  
13 Port Fourchon.

14 Q. And when you were on scene, did you have comms with the  
15 civilian helicopter, the Bristol helicopter that dropped the life  
16 jackets to the three on board?

17 A. Yes, we were doing comms with them directly. They were  
18 mostly doing comms with the *Glenn Harris*, and we were just  
19 listening. So we heard pretty much all the conversation between  
20 the two of them, and then the *Glenn Harris* said if the helo had  
21 any questions, they mostly would ask *Glenn Harris*, and *Glenn*  
22 *Harris* would ask us. But there was a couple -- I think at one  
23 point, they had asked us if we were willing to do the operation  
24 that they ended up attempting with the other 45, and we had said  
25 -- I had said, no, I was not comfortable.

1 Q. Okay. And my last question is, your AIS, was that  
2 transmitting in a law enforcement boat or in a public boat?

3 A. I don't remember.

4 MR. MUISE: That's fine, okay. Thank you again, Boats.  
5 Follow-ups? Mr. Ehlers?

6 BY MR. EHLERS:

7 Q. Yes. BM1, just a couple of these are sort of administrative  
8 questions to follow up. How many hours of sleep did you have the  
9 night before?

10 A. I'd say probably eight.

11 Q. Do you remember what time you woke up?

12 A. I don't remember -- I don't recall exactly, but I do think  
13 that it was probably around six o'clock, that's the time I  
14 normally wake up.

15 Q. Okay. Fair enough. The *Moray*, where is that located? Where  
16 is that based?

17 A. The *Moray* is right here in the station, at Station Grand  
18 Isle.

19 Q. Okay. And I believe you said you talked to your husband, and  
20 he gave you the data from the *Moray*. Could you tell from your  
21 cell phone what time you talked to your husband?

22 A. Yes, I can take a look at that. It might take me a minute, I  
23 can't remember if it was a text message or if it was an actual --

24 Q. That's fine. I'm putting you on the spot, I realize.

25 A. My phone calls stop at last Thursday. I don't know how to

1 make them go back further.

2 Q. Oh.

3 A. Let me see if it was a text message.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. So the first time I talked to my husband was at 1520,  
6 but that wasn't in regards to the actual winds. Then I talked to  
7 him again an hour later. I would say it was probably around then,  
8 1620 or so, that I talked to him about the actual wind speed.

9 Q. Okay. That's helpful. Was it at that time that the  
10 winds were so high or was it -- in other words, was it after the  
11 fact?

12 A. I can't recall.

13 Q. Okay. The last question I have is, you mentioned the  
14 folks -- the crew that were on the vessel. I think you said they  
15 were sitting on the superstructure. Were they actually sitting,  
16 or were they standing up, holding onto guard rails, do you  
17 remember exactly how they were -- what they were doing?

18 A. They moved around a little bit, sir, but one of them  
19 looked like he was standing kind of in a like a -- what was  
20 created almost by a corner of the hull and the superstructure, and  
21 then the other two -- when we first arrived on scene, it looked  
22 like he was using something. I don't know if it was attached to  
23 the superstructure to like break his seat, and kind of sit there.  
24 And then there was a third one that was in like another corner  
25 that would've been created by the second deck of the

1 superstructure, I assume, and the superstructure itself. So it  
2 was almost like the rooms of the second deck and the  
3 superstructure, he was kind of in there. And then as they moved  
4 around, the person that was kind of bracing himself that we could  
5 see the best when we came on scene, after when it was only down to  
6 three people, they -- he had moved kind of into the corner with  
7 the other guy that was up against the superstructure, but towards  
8 the second deck, I would assume that's what it is, because that's  
9 -- from what I could see, anyway.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. But yeah, that's why I couldn't see him, because he had  
12 moved over with that other guy, but yeah, they were -- one seemed  
13 to be standing, the other two seemed to be sitting.

14 MR. EHLERS: All right. Thank you, that's helpful.

15 BY MR. MUISE:

16 Q. Any other follow ups from anybody? No? Okay. Well, thank  
17 you for the information. You were very informative. And my last  
18 question as always: what do you think went -- what went well for  
19 you out there? Is there a piece of equipment, or a procedure, or  
20 some training that you were particularly thankful to have had or  
21 were impressed with that day that you think you'd want to share  
22 with other coxswains around the country?

23 A. I hadn't thought about that, sir. I mean, the boat, I  
24 would say overall, the 45 handled out -- you know, it was out of  
25 parameters, and it handled well. So overall, I would say I was

1 pretty impressed with that platform being that my experience prior  
2 to -- in any sort of seas was on the 47 or a life boat. So I was  
3 impressed that it did as well as it did out there.

4 Q. Okay. Well thank you for that. If you can think of  
5 anything else at all -- I'm sorry, go ahead.

6 A. Sorry, I did -- so I pulled up the calendar, and we were  
7 scheduled for LMR patrol. That's living marine resource, so like  
8 an LE patrol looking specifically for fishing boats.

9 MR. MUISE: Okay, offs. Again, thank you, and we do very  
10 much appreciate what you and your crew did that night. I hope  
11 that your other crew member that went swimming is okay. And with  
12 that, we will conclude the interview. It's 10:10, Central time.

13 (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 OF THE LIFTBOAT *SEACOR*  
                                  *POWER* SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,  
                                  LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 13, 2021  
                                  Interview of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.:               DCA21MM024

PLACE:                       Via Microsoft Teams

DATE:                        April 21, 2021

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.

[REDACTED]  
Ivy Radcliffe  
Transcriber