

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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COLLISION BETWEEN USCG CUTTER *

WINSLOW GRIESSER & F/V DESAKATA * Accident No.: DCA22PM034

OFFSHORE OF DORADO, PUERTO RICO *

ON AUGUST 8, 2022 *

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Interview of: LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Port Engineer
Sector San Juan
United States Coast Guard

U.S. Coast Guard Facilities
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Friday,
August 12, 2022

APPEARANCES:

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

■■■■ Investigating Officer
United States Coast Guard

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MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise with the National Transportation Safety Board. It's August 12th. We're in San Juan, Puerto Rico, talking to LTJG [REDACTED] regarding a collision involving an FRC on the 8th of August.

[REDACTED] can you introduce yourself?

MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED], investigating officer for Sector San Juan.

MR. MUISE: LTJG [REDACTED] can you state your full name and spell your last name, too?

LTJG [REDACTED] Name [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Last name [REDACTED].

INTERVIEW OF LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

BY MR. MUISE:

Q. So, LTJG, can you give us a little bit about your background. What is it you do for the Coast Guard and how did you get there?

A. I got here from the academy. I'm coming from Virginia on a 270 as a DCA. I've been in Puerto Rico for the past, about 3 weeks. I am the port engineer for patrol boats pipeline. And that's all I have.

Q. So what is it a port engineer does?

A. A port engineer, so I'm in charge mainly of be a representative for SFLC for all the FRCs here. I share that position with another PE. I was currently underway with the Griesser so that I can complete my Chapter 4 of my naval

1 engineering PQS open ocean qualification.

2 Q. So what's an FLS -- what's FL -- I'm sorry -- SFLC?

3 A. SFLC is the like headquarters for engineer industry in
4 Maryland, in Baltimore. And they are basically -- any product
5 line goes through them in order for me in getting parts. What was
6 the question? Sorry --

7 Q. Okay. What does SFLC stand for?

8 A. I cannot recall right now.

9 Q. Okay. That's fine.

10 A. It's something like (indiscernible).

11 Q. So do you work for the yard in Curtis Bay?

12 A. No. So I work here, but whenever the FRCs go to a yard, like
13 dry dock, or they have an availability here in Puerto Rico, then
14 I'm in charge of like dealing with the contract, being like the
15 COR, contracting officer representative.

16 Q. Okay. So it's similar to a civilian port engineer, setting
17 up dry docks and --

18 A. Yes, like where the contract --

19 Q. -- and approving scope of work and finding shipyards and that
20 kind of stuff?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. It's still kind of like split to different like -- like I
24 have a PM who -- he's more in charge of like the scope of the
25 work. I'm more in charge of like when we are dry dock making sure

1 that they are calling up inspectors, whatever the scope says, the
2 agreement reached in the contract, whether with the Coast Guard or
3 whether it's like a civilian yard.

4 Q. Okay. Are you involved in any like design changes to the
5 boats or designing new boats or --

6 A. Not as of now. If there's anything in regards to like a
7 change, like I can send it for suggestions and provide to the
8 proper chain of command and people, work like, hey, we've seen
9 this could be adjusted, but I personally don't have a say. I can
10 just do the protocols of suggesting it.

11 Q. So is there one office in headquarters that's in charge of --
12 not operations, but the maintenance and design of these
13 particular -- one particular class of boat? I think they call
14 them tech commanders. Is that --

15 A. I'm not familiar.

16 Q. Okay. I'm just curious how is -- is somebody tracking all
17 the problems that might be with this one particular class of boat?

18 A. With the patrol boat?

19 Q. Yes.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. In my opinion I think, though, I think that's the whole point
23 of like any engineer, because they have to like update or whatnot
24 because we do like -- I think it's called like TCTOs. Like
25 anything that's been designed that we come to find out like, oh,

1 we have to make this change, and then like eventually all the
2 patrol boats or 270s, any class (indiscernible) are like going
3 through those changes. And then you just kind of schedule it to a
4 calendar. Like some of them are priorities, some of them are not,
5 and there'd be like -- it could be as simple as like, oh, for
6 example, on our 270s we have flight nets that we just changed the
7 material. But like one of the screws over time was affecting like
8 part of like the flight net like structure. So they're like, oh,
9 it's because of the type of a screw, now we should change it to
10 something else before we start updating. But it's a whole process
11 before it actually happens.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. But specifically for product line, we have not like updated a
14 lot of TCTOs just because budget.

15 Q. What's a TCTO?

16 A. Like any of these that come in that have to be changed.

17 Q. Okay. What does TCTO stand for?

18 A. You're getting in acronyms --

19 Q. I'm just trying to help the -- I'm trying to help the
20 transcriptionist here, so --

21 A. No --

22 BY MR. [REDACTED]

23 Q. I got a question. So you say you were on -- the DCA on
24 Virginia?

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. You were on a cutter?

2 A. Yes, 270.

3 Q. Which cutter?

4 A. *Forward*.

5 Q. The *Forward*?

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. And what was -- as a DCA, what was your job?

8 A. So my first year or like a half a year, I was CD, so I was
9 like pretty much learning all the -- from the ground up on the
10 (indiscernible) equipment. I left that position pretty much
11 learning how to do the rounds, learning how to be the auxiliary
12 watchstander, the engine watchstander. Then engine room, and
13 just was working my way up to EOW, which just requires you to be
14 the eyes and ears of the engineering officer of the boat. So
15 just, again, familiarizing yourself with the equipment,
16 anything -- as much knowledge as you can get from naval
17 engineering side and then completing my PQS. It's pretty much
18 like a training billet.

19 And then that first summer I went to DC school, which in case
20 of an emergency -- damage control assistant officer. In case of
21 an emergency, whether it's collision or flooding or fire, then I'm
22 the person that (indiscernible) and kind of has the overall
23 picture of what's going on and directing the crew go access this
24 space through this route, you're going to use this type of
25 equipment, how many people are going to go in, tracking people

1 when they're going to seek ICBAs, and just managing all the repair
2 lockers. But at the same time, not just focusing on one problem,
3 but carrying the whole picture.

4 Q. Okay. And when you left, you finished up your EOW
5 qualification?

6 A. My EOW? Yes. Correct.

7 Q. Okay.

8 BY MR. MUISE:

9 Q. Do you have a merchant mariner credential, like an assistant
10 engineer license?

11 A. I do not.

12 Q. Or a PE?

13 A. A PE?

14 Q. Or a PE, professional engineer?

15 A. I do not.

16 MR. MUISE: Okay. Do you have any other background questions
17 before --

18 MR. [REDACTED] No. We can dive in.

19 BY MR. MUISE:

20 Q. So tell us about this particular FRC, any -- what's your
21 involvement there?

22 A. I just reported -- part of my naval engineering PQS, on a
23 long term, I've completed Chapter 4, which requires for me to
24 get -- there's two options. Option 1 is like an open ocean of
25 getting familiarization of getting underway and having spent time

1 on the bridge. On my last unit, I was only there for about a year
2 and a half, but I was solely focused on the engineering aspect so
3 I didn't get time on the bridge, personnel preference at that
4 time. And after speaking with mentors, and I'm like this is for
5 career progression, something I would have to complete, I started
6 looking at what would be my best way of doing -- completing that
7 Chapter 4. And because of my schedule right now, we don't have
8 any major dry docks or big projects going on, so it just worked
9 out for me for me to find a cutter to get underway with.

10 I chose the *Griesser* because the CO has prior naval
11 engineering background. So he was just the first person that I
12 went out to reach out to of -- to get that like mentorship of
13 like, hey, can -- what do you think about me getting underway?
14 What are the requirements? And he was on board. He told me to
15 communicate with the -- their OPS, I believe, Ensign [REDACTED] (ph.),
16 and the XO, Mr. [REDACTED] and coordinated with them, their patrol
17 schedule of getting underway.

18 Then they informed me like about a week afterwards that they
19 were going to get underway. I went to my command, let them know
20 and asked them for permission. They said -- gave me the thumbs
21 up; it would be a good opportunity. And I got underway with them
22 that first day.

23 Q. Okay. So you're not there as -- because there's engineering,
24 just to confirm, there's engineering issues with the vessel?

25 A. No. I was there solely for training purposes of getting

1 underway experience on the deck watch officer side.

2 Q. Okay. Does the vessel have any engineering issues or
3 maintenance issues?

4 A. Prior to like underway, I know they had a couple --
5 currently, yeah, that should have been fixed. But prior, I know
6 they had issues with their main -- not super familiar because I
7 was transitioning of like relieving the old, previous PE. But
8 from my understanding, they did a power trial to make sure that
9 their mains were running properly and they weren't having any
10 leaks of -- I think it was the coolant into the bilges. And that
11 was that.

12 And then early that morning, we were supposed to get underway
13 at 8:30. We had our nav brief around 8, and the only thing that
14 was holding us back from getting underway on time was that the raw
15 water pressure wasn't like sat. So the engineering department
16 were pretty much working on that and trying to figure out what the
17 problem and different solutions. And yeah -- I don't know if that
18 answers your question.

19 Q. How about the fleet in general in the San Juan fleet? Is
20 there ongoing outstanding major issues with the fleet, the patrol
21 boats?

22 A. I'm still -- pretty much this is a training billet for
23 myself, so I'm still learning. Unfortunately, like being that
24 it's like my third week, and the first couple weeks have been
25 mainly getting myself situated with being here in Puerto Rico and

1 admin side, I'm not too familiar to be able guide you. From my
2 opinion, I know they are reaching that time of that a lot of the
3 FRCs have to go to their dry dock and that's pretty much all I
4 have right now.

5 BY MR. [REDACTED]

6 Q. Okay. You've been here 3 weeks only, right?

7 A. About -- I reported here July 18th.

8 Q. And the bridge, the navigation brief, what did it encompass?

9 A. So for the nav brief, pretty much we're going over the plan,
10 like what are we doing, what's our mission. So it was getting
11 underway, around what time, going over who's billeted for each
12 position, going over kind of like the tide, how's the weather
13 looking, how's everyone feeling. And then we basically do a GAR
14 to everyone who's present, which was pretty much everyone with the
15 exception of the engineers, who were still working on the raw
16 water pressure. Just kind of giving like a thumbs up, like low,
17 medium or high on certain conditions, and I believe it was sat.
18 And then the game at the end, kind of going over like the whole
19 day of we're going underway for picking up ship riders in Punta
20 Cana, around this time we're going to be in Punta Cana, and that's
21 pretty much it. How long does it take to leave. And then that's
22 usually led -- that was led by the XO. And then the CO would
23 brief at the end, just to make sure that we're all good.

24 Q. So any issues that were briefed other than the engineering
25 side?

1 A. No, not that I can recall. We brought up the water pressure,
2 but that wasn't necessarily an issue that we wouldn't have gotten
3 underway. Like that can be -- like the water pressure couldn't go
4 up.

5 Q. Okay. What about the weather?

6 A. Weather, oh, we brought up that it was going to be a little
7 bit of a rougher weather. It was the CO who brought it up later,
8 but he had a plan which -- maybe not using the right terminology,
9 but to stay in a certain location where we wouldn't be as affected
10 by the weather throughout the day. Yeah.

11 Q. And when he said about the certain location was, it was the
12 track line he was taking or the weather when you're -- where you
13 were heading?

14 A. It was very generic. Again, I think because of lack of
15 terminology -- I sat down in like nav brief, but I wasn't -- for
16 me it was just more of like a break-in, taking it all in my first
17 time underway with them, see how they do things. I wasn't
18 tracking too much on like -- he said the -- I think the inside of
19 the bay or -- I don't recall.

20 Q. Okay.

21 BY MR. MUISE:

22 Q. What was the GAR score?

23 A. I want to say it was medium. I can't recall, to be honest.
24 I can't recall.

25 Q. Okay. That's fine.

1 A. I know it was not high.

2 Q. Okay. So what I'd like to do now is just -- we talked about
3 nav briefs and raw water a little bit already, but just walk us
4 through that day. I'm not going to interrupt you. Just in as
5 much detail as possible, tell us from the time you guys' liberty
6 expired up to the incident, or actually until you get back. Like
7 I say, I'm just -- I'll let you talk. And with as much detail, if
8 you could, as possible.

9 A. Okay. So liberty expired at 7:30. I got there a little bit
10 beforehand. I brought in my things and -- because I was staying
11 at the empty rack for one of the ensigns who was not going to get
12 underway with us. Then I was informed that the nav brief was
13 going to be at 8 on the bridge. Stood by, just kind of saw
14 everyone, meeting everyone for the first time. Went to the nav
15 brief. The nav brief was like what I mentioned before, everything
16 in the nav brief.

17 I, after the nav brief, gave -- I introduced myself being a
18 port engineer for the FRCs and that I was getting underway with
19 them to get some training on the deck watch officer side. Then
20 after that, we stood by to see what was going on with the raw
21 water system. The (indiscernible) around it. So one of the --
22 not the strainers, but like the sea chest and whatnot had gotten
23 clogged.

24 I was just kind of running around talking to different
25 crewmembers, just checking in, hey, how are you? And talked to

1 the -- [REDACTED] and pretty much with her. She printed out my
2 packages so I can start getting the sign-offs for me for QMOW and
3 for OOD. Then I had gone down to the engine room to kind of see
4 what the engineers were doing, kind of get more experience on that
5 and see how they were solving it. They ended up talking to other
6 members from another cutter. I can't recall which cutter or who
7 it was. But it's a common issue that they have here in Puerto
8 Rico that a lot of their -- like the sea chest and strainer get
9 clogged, causing the low water pressure.

10 From then, eventually we blew the system out. Tried it out.
11 We gained water pressure. It took pretty much until, I would
12 say -- because we then -- I went back up, roaming around.
13 Lunchtime came and we all had lunch at around 11:30 and we're
14 still not underway. A boat pulled in, then -- the
15 (indiscernible). Then around 12:30 or more like 1, we're like,
16 okay, we're coming with a solution, like raw water should be good
17 now and that we're going underway. 1:07 was the last time I
18 looked at the clock.

19 And then we -- the CO piped, all hands again to the bridge to
20 just kind of like redo like the GAR. Was like, how's everyone
21 feeling? Like last time we had done it was at 8:30 -- or, sorry,
22 8, so just kind of what we're planning and stuff all over again.

23 And then after that it was like, all right, special sea
24 detail. Everyone had their positions. I was the nav eval. But
25 BM2 [REDACTED] was the qualified person. So he was just kind of

1 showing me -- well, we were getting -- when we were in special sea
2 detail, I was kind of standing by, kind of shadowing him, seeing
3 like what he was doing and try to get as much information. But it
4 was mainly a training mode. I was just observing.

5 And then it took about, I want to say, like 10, 15 minutes
6 for us to get out of like the main channel, like off the pier and
7 all that stuff. It was me, CO, BM2 [REDACTED] the QMOW, another
8 person bridging in under the QMOW. [REDACTED] was up there, too. And
9 then after we -- once we were secure from mooring and then we're
10 secure from special sea detail -- oh, what happened after -- BM2
11 had relieved the XO just because he had the next watch and he was
12 training me on ECDIS and like, hey, like explain to me how we no
13 longer do paper chart, we do the electronic, and how -- what are
14 the major components that you have to be calling out or letting
15 the OOD know, hey, you're off of track, what's around -- what's
16 surrounding it and what's in the area, a recommendation.

17 And then we moved on to -- I don't know what it's called, but
18 it's just like the system that we can control whether you're
19 driving the boat on manual versus auto, and like just explain the
20 difference to me, and the stick that you can use to drive the boat
21 from anywhere and just kind of like loading a lot of information
22 on like training on the items.

23 And then because we were -- he would place at different
24 systems where the XO was, he had told the XO, hey, I'll just
25 relieve you because I have the next watch. He relieved the XO. I

1 believe the XO, he left the bridge. The CO had gone to, I want to
2 say, ECDIS and he was looking at a track line.

3 At that point we're secure from everything. We're just kind
4 of like -- whoever's on watch is up there, pretty much. I was not
5 on watch. I stayed behind to -- he was still giving me
6 information and I wanted to take advantage of that training. [REDACTED]
7 had come to check in with the XO -- or not the XO, sorry, the CO,
8 saying just like, hey, sir, like what are you doing? The CO was
9 on ECDIS checking -- I think checking the track lines and seeing
10 if he could adjust the ECDIS. It seemed adjusted since we're
11 going on our way to Punta Cana or like that changed -- I think the
12 chart changes from when we're pulling out versus like, okay, now
13 we're going to pull a different chart. So he was doing that.

14 Then the BM2 was explaining to me the difference between like
15 how you adjust your course and the difference between auto and
16 whatnot. Everything was pretty much clear. There was always
17 someone on the bridge, like no vessels that I could have seen.
18 And then we have someone -- I can't recall who. I want to say it
19 was the XO, but I don't know who had first gotten information
20 mentioning I think we, I think we hit a boat.

21 And then for myself, from my perspective, it felt that
22 everyone on the bridge was shocked because we -- after he had said
23 that, I -- from again my perspective, I think that no one -- we're
24 so surprised, like what do you mean, we hit a boat? Like already?
25 Like we didn't feel anything, we didn't see anything, like -- and

1 then immediately we went out to the wings and like were looking
2 around. And then saw the boat pieces, debris in the water. And
3 we -- everyone started to like -- we did a man overboard, go
4 outside, see who -- try to find the person, point out and like
5 just keep pointing in that direction until -- pointing in that
6 direction until we rescued a person so we didn't lose track
7 which -- a person's a little bit harder than -- because of the
8 waves.

9 But then I had stayed outside, so I don't know -- like on the
10 wing side. I don't know like what else happened inside the
11 bridge. But pretty much we were tracking to make sure that we
12 were in that proximity. I went to the first deck and just started
13 asking questions to the individual. And pretty much just like how
14 many people were on board with you? The individual didn't speak
15 English, so I was pretty much translating. And whatever I was --
16 or not whatever, but it was me -- there's a lot of people pretty
17 much on that side. And one person threw a life ring and the line.
18 Immediately, as soon as like we had identified a person and they
19 were in that vicinity, they immediately had thrown it out.

20 He kept saying there's two, it was him and his brother. From
21 far you couldn't -- I couldn't tell. The XO was, I believe, at
22 that point on the bridge because he had asked me how many people.
23 I told him the person had said two. Then someone had noticed
24 like, oh, the other person, it looks like he's holding him.

25 So the guy was holding his brother while floating. He kept

1 yelling like, like help, I can't like -- anymore, can't swim
2 anymore. He is -- at this point we're doing -- I can't recall
3 what it's called, but we're letting go of the small boat. There's
4 three people who are boarding that boat. But that on it's own
5 kind of takes a little bit of time. It was not immediate. But
6 given the situation, it was just -- it felt like a little longer.

7 We're kind of directing -- I told bring the stretcher, just
8 kind of get ourself -- I think some people were in shock at first.
9 It took them a while to like -- a lot of people were telling the
10 person what to do, like, hey -- so it took a little bit to
11 translate to him.

12 He then tried -- the first attempt was to use the ladder to
13 get on board, but he didn't want to let go of his brother, so we
14 couldn't have brought him up that way. Which the smaller boat was
15 in like the process of getting out, it was just because he just
16 kept saying like hurry up, because I can't hold on anymore. So he
17 first attempted to put the life ring over his brother so like he
18 wouldn't have that weight. And then we were going to try to pull
19 it up. That didn't go smoothly. Pretty much the weight, we --
20 just didn't work.

21 I tried to explain to him like where you would do like -- use
22 a life raft. We were going to throw him another one for himself
23 or like the jacket one, but he already started swimming towards
24 like the smaller boat. And I was trying to explain the smaller
25 boat is going to get there, put the -- and once we're there --

1 he's on the side. He's struggling to bring the body up. I can't
2 remember exactly who was on the side. So I'm trying to explain to
3 him that he needs to push the body up and then the other person is
4 going to grab the body or his brother, because he didn't want to
5 get on the boat until his brother was on the boat first.

6 The MK2 -- it took like maybe a couple of times and with all
7 the attempts, you could see that the body was like -- you could
8 see that the person had just like passed away and like things were
9 coming out and like they had -- it took three -- after they pull
10 him over, he got on board. He just kept -- a little bit in shock,
11 I'm sure, a little bit of -- a lot of emotions on his end at least
12 from what I could see.

13 Brought the small boat back in. I went and grabbed water,
14 asked for blankets. We had gotten -- we were bringing the small
15 boat detail, like bringing it back up. But I think it was CS1, he
16 brought gloves and a mask and stuff for us. Went to the side. I
17 had asked him whatever help he needed with, let me know.

18 The boat comes in. He first didn't wanted to leave the --
19 his brother in the smaller boat, but we were able to get him to
20 the side. But we -- like the person, the MK2, I guess like when
21 he had helped him, he was like, I'm mainly talking to you, like
22 I'm not -- I don't want to talk to anybody else.

23 So gets to the side, talking to him, and I'm trying to
24 explain -- because at first we wanted to move him to the mess deck
25 so he can get proper treatment or care, see like where is he hurt.

1 He had concussion in the back and like a big bump, was bleeding.
2 His ear was bleeding. Couldn't really tell if it was from the
3 side. He, at first, was like deal with my brother, like I'm fine.
4 And then like he had another injury on like his leg. From just
5 looking at it, nothing that would require like any like, oh,
6 you're coming on immediately. More like his brother. And then he
7 didn't want to go to the mess deck. So then (indiscernible) was
8 going -- taking him to the back side of the bridge.

9 And then at this point he was still refusing. I had given
10 him the water. Someone had brought in the medical bag and I
11 wrapped his head. And then he just kept saying like *soy fuerte*,
12 like I'm strong, like how can you guys do this to us, I'm strong,
13 and looking at his brother and just like a lot of emotion. Tell
14 him that his brother was going to be taken care of by our person
15 that's a medical, that we would like for him to move to the bridge
16 and to the dock side so we get him taken care of. He said, I'm
17 fine. I'm like, can you please cooperate? And he had gotten up.
18 I asked him how he was feeling. He said he was feeling a little
19 bit dizzy. I'm like, okay.

20 At that point that's -- because when we were trying to go to
21 the -- or move him out, I know, because the, I believe, CO had
22 taken command already and we're on our way back. And we're going
23 as fast as we can. And like from where we were positioned, it was
24 just not -- we're just like bouncing back, up and down. So it was
25 not a good spot. So we moved there, and then while we're there, I

1 had asked him -- he already had his head wrapped. I asked him if
2 he needed more water, what was his name, his brother's name.

3 Then I went to the bridge. I wrote it down, came back in --
4 or came back outside. He had asked me and the other person -- his
5 name was Samuel. His brother was Carlos Rosario. And he was
6 telling me like their age. I had asked him the question. He said
7 he was 29. He said his brother was 59, his older brother. He
8 said he would like to make a call.

9 I went to the bridge. I went to find the XO. He was there
10 as well. And I had asked him like, he wants to make a call.
11 Brought up a sat phone. They said -- the CO was like it's easier
12 to just give him a -- we're close enough that he can have like a
13 cell phone. So went back outside. I gave him my cell phone. He
14 called his wife, explained to him the situation -- or to her.
15 Sorry. Then they were just pretty much standing there with him
16 just to make sure that he was all right.

17 He had asked for some medication because his head was hurting
18 a lot, and he had asked how his brother was doing, if they had
19 done anything. And went down below, talked to CS1. I'm not a
20 certified person for medical either. And the CS1 had said no
21 because it's a concussion and like -- and we're close enough to
22 shore that we're going to wait. The -- his brother was in the
23 same conditions from when they had just put his body and they
24 weren't touching it until we had pulled in and like whatnot.

25 Went back up. I tell him like we couldn't give him any

1 medicine. He said, how's my brother? I tell him that he's
2 being -- there's a -- CS1 was there. I used the term like medical
3 training person in Spanish was there and that he was still in the
4 same condition, that they hadn't moved his body and that we're
5 waiting to go in. He was for sure determined to have passed and
6 I'm sure like his brother knew that before he had got him up to
7 the small boat.

8 Then it was -- we're heading back, trying to figure out --
9 the XO has said the first time, was like we're going to pull -- I
10 kept telling him that we're close. He's like, oh, I'm from this
11 area, I go out here, like I know the whole like coast, we're X
12 amount from the Coast Guard, like I'm -- I've known this area for
13 so long.

14 And the wife, I talked to the wife. I guess the wife was a
15 little bit in disbelief of like what's happening? She had said
16 that like -- just reaffirming like what he just said, was -- is
17 that really what happened? I tell her yes, your husband's right
18 here, we are watching him until we get to the pier and he will get
19 medical assistance. She started asking some questions like, you
20 know, what base, and I tell her we're going to San Juan base, that
21 I don't have the proper information to give her right now, but as
22 soon as I get it, like, I will give it to her.

23 Went back inside to the bridge to kind of just ask those
24 questions, like, hey, the wife is asking me should go to the base,
25 can I get more information on that? Do know what hospital or

1 what's going on? I called the wife again to give her that
2 information. I kind of explained how the base worked in terms of
3 her getting in. She wanted to know the condition of the brother,
4 which is the part that -- or her brother-in-law, which was like
5 what she couldn't understand. I had to use like the term like a
6 medical -- once we got there was going to take care of it and that
7 they're going to the hospital, which I think confused her maybe a
8 little bit, like was not aware that -- of like terminology of
9 like, oh, if you're going to the hospital, they're both alive. So
10 she at one point thought maybe like, oh, then is he all right?
11 And I was like, no, he had passed, and then that (indiscernible)
12 was going to come.

13 So that was -- with that, we had a small conversation with
14 the individual who was telling us like he had built the boat, it
15 had taken him 2 years, a little background about himself. Then we
16 were going to have another small boat come in and -- so we can
17 like bring him down, so that I guess it was supposed to be faster
18 to take him in instead of taking the FRC in. But he refused. He
19 said no, I'm going -- I can wait until we officially pull in; it
20 takes more time to do it that way, like I'm staying on the boat.
21 I told the XO that. And then we waited until we pulled in.

22 And before like -- or as we were pulling in to special sea
23 mooring -- oh, we -- before we pulled in we did another nav brief
24 to pull in. All hands were on the bridge. And I had gone into
25 the bridge to see what the all hands was for. Recognized it was

1 the nav brief, and then I stepped back outside to be with Samuel.
2 And then as we're pulling in, you can see -- or like you can see
3 the ambulance was there, there were already people on the bridge.
4 I was telling him that.

5 Someone else called me. I don't know who it was, but it was
6 a male voice, and they just wanted to confirm again that
7 everything happened. I tell him, hey, ambulance is here, we're on
8 this base, I am with your brother. And they confirmed is the
9 brother-in-law passed? I said again, yes. And I had told him
10 again like I do not know what hospital, as soon as I get that
11 information, I'll let you know.

12 The wife had said on a previous call -- I can't remember
13 which one happened on or to who -- I know that when I talked to
14 the guy, it was very short. It was like, I want to confirm this
15 happened, and okay. And she said that -- on like the
16 conversation -- Samuel wanted to tell his wife, he's like, you
17 know, make sure like be careful how you tell like their parents.
18 And then the wife had -- when she was on the phone, like we had
19 said that she can't drive. It was -- I don't know, like just like
20 listening. So hang up. I feel like I'm jumping back and forth
21 just because stuff is -- I'm remembering.

22 I had gone down because his brother was still uncovered, and
23 I wanted to know if we can put a thing over him because Samuel was
24 going to down and so he wouldn't see it again, but was told that
25 we can't touch it, we're just going leave everything how it is.

1 Okay. I had asked a question like is he really going down or
2 what's going to happen? He stayed -- sit there the whole time.
3 Medics came on.

4 The CO, prior to them like coming on had step outside of --
5 Samuel had asked earlier on like who is in charge here and certain
6 questions and where we were going. I just told him like we can't
7 reveal where we were going, what was our mission, but that the
8 person that he had seen going by -- because he kept seeing me
9 going back and forth in the translation so he's like who are you
10 going to? I was going to the XO mainly, but I was telling him
11 like that's not the CO.

12 Eventually CO comes back out and he kind of tells him like,
13 hey, I'm sorry, condolences, and then MK2 was translating what the
14 CO was saying. And then he didn't want to talk to him. He was
15 just sitting there. Then a medic comes on board and MK2 briefs
16 him about the wound that I had wrapped, no medication, just like
17 the stage, medical stage.

18 There's a lot of people. I had asked one of the medics with
19 the ambulance where the ambulance is going and she didn't know,
20 the first person I asked. Or she said the person we can ask is
21 someone else she pointed to. And he gets up, he looked at MK2,
22 myself. He said thank you. He walked down toward the ambulance.
23 He had stopped to look at his brother, but at that point his
24 brother was already covered. He gets off. I don't see him again.
25 I confirmed that he was at the -- I can't remember the hospital,

1 Medico (indiscernible) -- I can't remember.

2 MR. [REDACTED] Centro Medico.

3 LTJG [REDACTED] Centro Medico.

4 And I had informed the wife that it was Centro Medico. And
5 then she goes on a rant again on like emotionally putting blame
6 and asking questions. And I just kept telling her like I -- a
7 proper investigation is going to be conducted. I can't -- I'm
8 not -- I don't have that information. I can't give you anything.
9 I can't -- like I just generally don't know. And she just kept
10 venting on like how things are going to happen because we're the
11 military, that there isn't going to be any punishment, that this
12 is our fault, that -- I don't recall -- I don't know, I can't
13 recall right now like the full conversation.

14 I didn't know -- I didn't want to hang up. I -- she was just
15 to me venting. And given the (indiscernible), so like I didn't
16 know what to do but to listen and just keep saying the same thing,
17 an investigation is going to get done, that I cannot inform you,
18 all I can tell you right now is your husband is with -- going to
19 the hospital. And then she had asked me again like -- I confirmed
20 with her like he is going there, because she -- but the brother is
21 staying in the forensic -- *forensico*, (indiscernible) *forensico*,
22 is going to come and deal with that.

23 Then I think in between, I like -- I was saying things, but
24 then like then I started crying and I would step outside to the
25 corner. And then I guess once we officially got -- like everyone

1 left, they did an all hands on the mess deck.

2 On the conversation the wife had brought up like, of course,
3 certain questions and she's like, of course, like the brother-in-
4 law can't answer, he's dead, and like I guess putting the blame on
5 us. From my perspective, I think emotionally one of the reasons I
6 cried was just, with the conversation, it just seemed like with
7 the passing it's a lot to deal with, a lot of emotions. But I
8 didn't take anything personally. I think she was speaking out of
9 like, again, emotion.

10 We had an all hands on the mess deck and that's when, I don't
11 know, I remember seeing CDR [REDACTED] the HS person, and they gave
12 us a 72-hour checklist, explained what was the purpose of that,
13 explained that we were -- some of us are going to be told to do a
14 urine test and a blood test, and those individuals would be told
15 like who they are. We were informed not to speak about the event
16 amongst ourselves, just to not skew the sequence of events.

17 Got the form. I went to the bridge to fill out the form. I
18 think I started crying again. I like couldn't remember what I did
19 the past 72 hours, so I was like, okay, I need to calm down. I
20 didn't want to do it, but I just wrote down whatever. And then
21 went down below again, went to see if I could change, shower.
22 Didn't see any problem with that, but then we immediately we have
23 to go to -- I was one of the persons to get my blood drawn. So I
24 just went there instead.

25 And I don't know, I think I was a little bit in shock. Then

1 blood drawn, urine. Waited there maybe like -- it took a while,
2 probably like an hour, an hour and a half. Then we were good to
3 go afterwards. I went back to the boat, kind of asked -- I
4 asked -- [REDACTED] and the XO talked to [REDACTED] see how he was doing.
5 He seemed very out of it, say, quiet. But we weren't talking
6 about -- again took that -- I don't think any of us really wanted
7 to either. It was a lot of emotions.

8 Waited, came back. We had ordered pizza. People were
9 sitting on the mess deck. Ate and then left and drove back home.
10 And I called the medical -- one of my mentors, if we can't talk
11 about it with each other, I just -- I don't know. And then once I
12 got home, I don't remember.

13 BY MR. MUISE:

14 Q. Well, that's awesome. That was a good job. Thank you very
15 much. I know that's hard, incredibly hard. Do you need to take a
16 break?

17 A. No, no. I'm fine.

18 Q. Okay. I just have a few follow-up questions, mostly about
19 the bridge team itself before the incident. Do you remember where
20 people were standing on the watch, like who is where?

21 A. If we're facing forward, right was -- we were looking at
22 where manual and like auto stuff, like the helm.

23 Q. The centerline? Okay.

24 A. Yeah. So he's on the centerline. They explained to me
25 that -- are you saying like when we first came up?

1 Q. Yeah, where is -- right, just before all this happened, where
2 were people standing their watch?

3 A. So once special sea detail got secured --

4 Q. Yeah, after that.

5 A. Okay. So he's there. To his left, the CO is by ECDIS
6 dealing with the chart stuff. The QMOW is -- on the QMOW there's
7 like a little desk; he's there. And that is before someone came
8 up to let us know that that had happened. That is the last scene
9 that I see from like how we were looking at, that's the last
10 picture that I have in my mind.

11 Q. Okay. So the OOD is the BM2. He's driving and navigating
12 and doing collision avoidance, or is there -- how are those duties
13 split up?

14 A. Between QMOW and the --

15 Q. Right, and the CO. Or is the BM2 doing everything?

16 A. So I'm -- myself, I'm trying to learn the rules because from
17 being there and observing is very different than -- I've been on a
18 bridge on a 270. This is a very different breakdown from what
19 I've seen.

20 Q. So from where he sits -- standing or sitting, the helm is in
21 front of him.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. Is he in autopilot or is he --

24 A. He's on autopilot.

25 Q. He's on autopilot.

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. Can he see the radar from there?
- 3 A. I don't know.
- 4 Q. Okay. Was there any talk about radar targets at all?
- 5 A. Like vessels around us?
- 6 Q. Right.
- 7 A. No.
- 8 Q. Was he tracking any targets or was he explaining the stuff to
9 you and like --
- 10 A. I --
- 11 Q. If you don't know any of this stuff, just say so. It's okay.
12 That's fine.
- 13 A. Yeah. I --
- 14 Q. Do you remember seeing anything on the radar for targets?
- 15 A. I was not looking at that.
- 16 Q. Okay. How about visually, was there any visual targets?
- 17 A. No. Special -- I know like -- oh, after special sea, there
18 was -- I don't remember seeing like anything. But I don't -- like
19 I was looking more at the equipment. I'm like, okay, the last
20 time I received training on this was at the academy in like --
21 well, almost 3 years, 2 years or so, and I was trying to recall.
22 Like my focus was there was trying to learn, all right, where do I
23 read these, how do I know like the part where are we in relative
24 to everything else. Like I was so focused on -- for myself, on
25 the equipment.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah, I would look up and it's like clear, middle of the
3 ocean, nothing. With the BM2, I know he was talking to me and he
4 was -- because, again, I was breaking-in under him for nav eval.
5 And then once he took over the watch, he kept explaining to me the
6 autopilot stuff. So, but I was in tune of like he was going to
7 tell me. I don't know what exactly he was tracking. I don't know
8 the passdown.

9 Q. Okay. So you weren't talking about watchstanding with him,
10 like, hey, there's a target over here, we need to maneuver this
11 way. You're more focused on equipment. Do I have that right?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. We were not talking about the actual status of the boat. We
15 were talking --

16 Q. Actually driving?

17 A. We were talking about the difference of manual and --

18 Q. Okay. Where was the swell from? Were you turning into the
19 seas or were they on the bow or --

20 A. I would hate to say this wrong. From -- to me, it just felt
21 like shitty overall. But from what I heard, we were going down
22 like the swell.

23 Q. The swells are behind you?

24 MR. [REDACTED] Behind you?

25 LTJG [REDACTED] Yeah.

1 BY MR. MUISE:

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. So we weren't going like this.

4 Q. If there was a small boat in the trough of the swell would
5 you have seen it?

6 A. If there was a small boat?

7 Q. A 20-foot fishing boat. From where you are on the bridge of
8 that vessel, of the FRC, visibility wise, would you be able to see
9 a small boat in the trough of the swell?

10 A. So during our special sea when we were actually pulling out,
11 the BM2 was nav eval. And we had a sailboat coming in or on our
12 side and he had called it out while, I think -- I think the XO at
13 that point was like in training and also like driving the boat,
14 but I can't really remember. But he had called it out, and I just
15 remember myself just from like observing, when I finally got to
16 see it, I was like, oh, wow. Like it just blew my mind how like
17 you got to get up there close (indiscernible) to be able to see
18 it, versus like when he had called it out. I don't know if that
19 answers your question.

20 Q. Sure. That's fine. Who is [REDACTED]

21 A. [REDACTED]

22 Q. Okay. You mentioned a track line getting changed. Was that
23 after sea detail or do you know the details about that?

24 A. It was -- I don't know if it officially got changed. I don't
25 know. I just know that after special sea detail the CO was

1 working on looking at the chart. Because right beforehand, BM2
2 had asked the CO do you want me to change the -- excuse me -- do
3 you want me to change the chart to the Punta Cana route? And he
4 said like, oh, yeah, we're good to go, to change it. But then the
5 CO had taken over it. And then he was -- I think he was just kind
6 of maybe -- I don't know if he was reviewing the charts or the
7 track or -- I know we were going pretty fast.

8 When -- during special sea detail, actually, we had a couple
9 ones where the raw water -- with raw water pressure being low, but
10 then like eventually I think it was cleared. And then he had
11 changed -- or he was working on the system. I don't know if he
12 changed it or he was trying to see if there's a possibility to
13 change it. I don't know the intentions. I don't know what
14 actually happened. I just remember he was on -- looking at it and
15 had asked if everything was good or like what he was doing. And
16 he had said like that everything's fine, he's just reviewing the
17 track line.

18 Q. Okay. Was there any other distractions on the bridge like
19 music or people on phones?

20 A. No music that I was aware of. No one on, like on their
21 phones or games. I -- very quick special sea detail. I think
22 going pretty fast, but like I don't think like anything unusual.

23 Q. Okay. Do you remember the speed?

24 A. I want to say I don't, because I remember they had set it and
25 then -- I don't know remember.

1 MR. MUISE: Okay. I have a few questions about after the
2 incident.

3 But [REDACTED] do you have anything up to this point?

4 BY MR. [REDACTED]

5 Q. No, just going back a little bit. So you said they were
6 going to Punta Cana for ship riders?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Can you just elaborate a little bit more?

9 A. So from my understanding, we were going to go -- so during
10 our first nav brief, the CO had operated the -- I'm telling you
11 based on what I heard at that point. I don't know if I'm saying
12 corrected. But we were going to go to Punta Cana, pick up two
13 ship riders. He had reviewed over like, you know, they don't have
14 clearance so they can't be -- certain stuff that they can't see or
15 certain locations. But it was one of like the projects that the
16 Coast Guard was going to do for the first time, which having two
17 ship riders from the DR, they're two naval officers allowed to
18 like -- I don't know if it's like jurisdiction, but I guess it's
19 like a -- like we could board DR vessels and more stuff that I'm
20 not like -- I don't know, I don't have an expert in.

21 Q. Okay. How long -- do you remember the time of the incident?

22 A. So last time I looked at the clock was 1:07. I want to say
23 it took us like maybe 15 minutes at most to get out. So around
24 1:30 to 1:45; before 2 for sure.

25 Q. Okay. So going back to visibility of the sailboat. So they

1 called it out. You're looking forward at that time?

2 A. When they had called it out?

3 Q. When they called it out.

4 A. I don't remember. Like am I looking forward?

5 Q. Yeah, if you're looking forward at that time when they called
6 the sailboat and you're --

7 A. No. I was looking down. The person who had called it I'm
8 assuming they -- and then when I looked, that's when I saw it.

9 Q. You saw it on your port side?

10 A. I don't remember.

11 Q. By the bridge window?

12 A. I want to say so, but I don't remember.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Not port. I think it was like starboard.

15 Q. Okay.

16 BY MR. MUISE:

17 Q. So after the incident, before you got these people on board,
18 was the deceased victim, was he responsive at all? Was there any
19 signs --

20 A. No.

21 Q. You never saw anything at all?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. He was -- we could tell he was pretty much -- the moment he
25 was in the water.

1 Q. Okay. Was a rescue swimmer get dressed out?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. But he never got deployed or she never got deployed?

4 A. No. So the rescue swimmer, he was -- he kind of came dressed
5 out (indiscernible), but at that point the small boat was already
6 launched.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. And we were already directing him to take the body in.

9 Q. So when you're talking to -- I think his name is Samuel, and
10 he was talking about how they built the boat. Did he tell you
11 anything else about where they were going, what they were going to
12 be doing, where they came from?

13 A. He said that he was just out with his brother and they do
14 this normally and he knows the area a lot. He talked about -- he
15 had pulled his necklace out and talked about like catching a shark
16 once and having a tooth from it. He talked about -- he kept
17 asking how did you guys not see us?

18 Q. One more thing. Sorry. Were they northbound or were they
19 moving or were they stopped? Did he say any of that at all? And
20 if you don't know, that's okay.

21 A. I -- he was explaining it, like how it happened, and I was
22 not tracking what he was saying.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I -- all I -- I don't know. I was -- that was not my --

25 Q. That's okay.

1 A. Like I just -- I know on the bridge I didn't see it.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. I know after it happened, we were saying like, what? We just
4 hit a boat? And after he was explaining it, he literally said we
5 just -- you all just ran us over. Like you all just kept going
6 and ran us over. So I know he had kind of explained it, maybe the
7 other -- MK2 or -- I don't know his rank anymore -- maybe he knows
8 or he paid more attention. I wouldn't be telling you the most
9 like accurate.

10 Q. Did the corpsman -- not he corpsman, but the CS1, did he
11 interact with Samuel as well at all?

12 A. (No audible answer.)

13 Q. No. Okay. Do you remember what ambulance picked them up?

14 A. What what?

15 Q. What ambulance, what the company was?

16 A. No.

17 Q. No. Okay.

18 BY MR. [REDACTED]

19 Q. Do you -- when he talked to the wife, because you gave him
20 the phone and he talked to his wife. Do you recall the
21 conversation that he had with his wife?

22 A. Yes. He had said, he had said -- the phone rang. She picked
23 up. He had said I think -- he said (untranslated), they hit us.
24 Wife was like, you know, like what are you talking about? And
25 then he's like, I'm here with the Coast Guard.

1 Q. You can say it in Spanish. I'll translate if you want.

2 A. Okay, (untranslated), I think Carlos. And he said
3 (indiscernible), he pretty much kept telling her.

4 Q. So the translation is they hit us and they kill my brother.

5 A. And I think the wife was like in shock, saying like what do
6 you mean? What's going on? Like, where are you right now? And
7 then he just kind of like explained what happened.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah.

10 BY MR. MUISE:

11 Q. So you've been on a 270 before.

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. What -- was there anything that you were impressed with that
14 went well in this incident as far as equipment or procedures or
15 some training that you've had in the past? This doesn't happen
16 very often so we like to learn not the just the lessons learned,
17 but best practices as well that we can share with the fleet.
18 What -- is there something that you thought went -- you were
19 impressed with?

20 A. Yeah. I think like they just -- I think because a 270 is
21 bigger, but we have a helm lookout, we have a person who -- I
22 remember my last CO just being like no one was allowed to sit down
23 on the bridge, no -- like the lookout is the lookout, they're not
24 looking down or looking at their radar or like -- they are the
25 lookout and they keep switching between the helm.

1 I think the FRC's a smaller crew, but it's kind of, it's kind
2 of -- I don't know. The whole thing was kind of like a very --
3 you're relying a lot on like the auto driving. That to me is like
4 (indiscernible) even realize like how that was. And I come to
5 learn like, okay, well, they do that but then the OOD is
6 technically the lookout and you're looking outside because like
7 it's (indiscernible) by itself. But I don't know, to me just like
8 having a helm-man lookout.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Or like emphasizing that. If the boat is going to be driving
11 by itself, like it's a lot. Like the -- [REDACTED] was explaining to
12 me. So --

13 Q. Sure. Is there anything else I didn't ask that you think I
14 should have though?

15 A. No. I think I said everything that I can recall.

16 Q. Sure.

17 A. I don't know if the order is right. I don't --

18 Q. That doesn't matter. It's okay.

19 A. Okay.

20 MR. MUISE: Okay. It's 10:13 and we'll conclude this
21 interview.

22 (Whereupon, at 10:13 a.m., the interview was concluded.)
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: COLLISION BETWEEN USCG CUTTER
WINSLOW GRIESSER & F/V DESAKATA
OFFSHORE OF DORADO, PUERTO RICO
ON AUGUST 8, 2022
Interview of LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA22PM034

PLACE: San Juan, Puerto Rico

DATE: August 12, 2022

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]
[REDACTED]

Kay Maurer
Transcriber

