

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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COLLISION BETWEEN CONTAINER *MSC*

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RITA AND F/V *TREMONT*, IN THE NORTH

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Accident No.: DCA23FM003

ATLANTIC OCEAN ON OCTOBER 27, 2022

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Interview of: SARAH WILSON, Captain
Tremont Fisheries, LLC

via Microsoft Teams

Thursday,
November 3, 2022

APPEARANCES:

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 LT [REDACTED] Good to see you again. I know I got to see you a
3 little bit up in Chincoteague. We appreciate your cooperation on
4 everything. We'll kind of go around just to introduce ourselves.
5 I'm Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm an investigator with the Coast
6 Guard. I'm out of Norfolk, Virginia, the Chincoteague area.
7 Really, all of Virginia falls under my AOR, so that's why I was
8 able to grab an interview in Portsmouth and then head up to
9 Chincoteague. So, that's all the area I investigate.

10 We have Mr. Muise here with the NTSB if you want to introduce
11 yourself?

12 MR. MUISE: Hi, good morning, Captain, and thanks for joining
13 us. So, I work for the NTSB, we have a dual role with the Coast
14 Guard to investigate accidents of this size because of the loss of
15 the vessel. Lieutenant [REDACTED] is the lead investigator and I'll
16 basically tag along with him. But I'll produce my own report at
17 the end.

18 MR. FITZGERALD: Good morning, I don't know, is it Sarah or
19 Ms. Wilson, whatever your preference is -- what is your
20 preference?

21 CAPT WILSON: Sarah is fine.

22 MR. FITZGERALD: All right, great. So, good morning, my name
23 is Dan Fitzgerald, I'm an attorney with the law firm of Freehill,
24 Hogan, and Mahar in New York, and we're here on behalf of the
25 party in interest, MSC.

1 MR. HONEA: Hey, good morning, my name is Tanner Honea, I'm
2 also an attorney with Freehill, working with Dan, on behalf of
3 MSC. Good to see you.

4 CAPT WILSON: Good morning.

5 LT [REDACTED] Just to kind of let you know, I know we've got
6 some members of MSC here, obviously, the Coast Guard and the NTSB
7 have a process that we call the party in interest process and what
8 they means is that the people in this meeting have an interest in
9 the fact-finding mission of our investigation. So, all the
10 questions that we're going to ask you today are just to determine
11 what happened, what were the causal factors behind them, and our
12 main role is to see if the Coast Guard or the NTSB can implement
13 things to ensure that this type of incident doesn't happen again.
14 So, do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

15 CAPT WILSON: No.

16 LT [REDACTED] All right, so what will happen is I'll kind of
17 kick it off, ask some basic questions, ask you to recount, you
18 know, what your perspective was from that night. Then we'll kind
19 of go around the meeting room to ask some follow-up questions.
20 All right?

21 CAPT WILSON: Okay.

22 INTERVIEW OF CAPTAIN SARAH WILSON

23 BY LT [REDACTED]

24 Q. All right, Sarah, so how long have you been in the fishing
25 industry for?

1 A. 27 years.

2 Q. Okay, and can you tell me what those 27 years looked like for
3 you as far as what your roles have been on vessels and what you've
4 been doing in that time?

5 A. I started out as a deck hand and then I became a mate and
6 then I got my captain's license.

7 Q. Awesome, how long have you been a captain for?

8 A. It'll be five years in April.

9 Q. In the five years, is that how long you've been a licensed
10 captain for?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. And have you been serving as a captain since you've gotten
13 that license?

14 A. I have been serving as the licensed captain on the *Tremont*.

15 Q. Okay, and when did you begin your employment with the
16 *Tremont*?

17 A. September of, I think, 2017 I want to say.

18 Q. Was that directly after Tremont Fisheries purchased the
19 *Tremont*?

20 A. Yes, I started out as a deck hand and then I got my captain's
21 license.

22 Q. Okay, so have you been -- have you always been a captain on
23 the *Tremont* or were you a deck hand first?

24 A. I started as a deck hand.

25 Q. Okay, and how --

1 A. But I had been -- I'm sorry.

2 Q. Go ahead.

3 A. No, I was -- nothing.

4 Q. Okay, sorry. Just to clarify, how long have you been a
5 captain on the *Tremont* for?

6 A. Since April of -- four years -- this April it'll be five
7 years.

8 Q. Okay, so your window as a deck hand on the *Tremont* only
9 lasted a few months, is that correct?

10 A. That's correct.

11 Q. Okay, can you tell me what your responsibilities are as you
12 know them as captain on the *Tremont*?

13 A. As the captain on the *Tremont*, the owner, Andrew, and I share
14 the navigational responsibilities.

15 Q. Okay, and what's Andrew's responsibility on the vessel?

16 A. Andrew is the fishing captain.

17 Q. Okay, do you have any roles or responsibilities with regard
18 to the fishing operation on board?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay, what's your responsibilities with regard to the fishing
21 operation?

22 A. To assist as needed.

23 Q. Okay, what does that normally look like for you?

24 A. It really depends. Sometimes I'll be helping in the factory,
25 sometimes I'll be doing watches in the engine room, just whatever

1 I can do to help.

2 Q. Okay, you mentioned watches in the engine room. Can you
3 explain what your watch schedule is with Andrew as far as
4 navigational duties are concerned?

5 A. It's pretty fluid and it depends on what's happening.

6 Q. Okay, can you explain what -- let's say three days prior to
7 the incident, what was the watch rotation like between you and
8 Andrew?

9 A. Well, he had been going to bed at midnight and getting up at
10 6:00.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And then -- you're asking about what I did?

13 Q. Right, I'm just trying to figure out how the duties are
14 split?

15 A. Oh, okay, and then I would go to bed at 6:00 and sleep until
16 about 10:00, and then I'd take another nap between, maybe, 3:00
17 and 6:00, and then he'd take another nap.

18 Q. Okay, so let me just kind of recount so I can make sure we're
19 correct. So, his normal watch schedule was midnight to 6:00 a.m.,
20 or is that yours?

21 A. That was his sleep. That would be mine, yes.

22 Q. That was your watch, okay.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay, and then you go to bed at 6:00 a.m. and wake up at
25 10:00 a.m.?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. And that means Andrew is on watch, obviously, for that time,
3 right?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay, and then at 10:00 a.m., who is on watch then? Andrew
6 takes back over?

7 A. No -- yeah, Andrew would be -- yes, Andrew would be on watch.

8 Q. Okay, and how long is he on watch for that second time?

9 A. Until, maybe, 7:00 in the evening.

10 Q. Okay, and then you take over at 7:00. How long are you on
11 watch for?

12 A. It just really depends, a few hours.

13 Q. Okay, I think the night of the incident, Andrew told us that
14 he took over the watch around 10:00 that night, is that correct?

15 A. 10:15, yes.

16 Q. 10:15, okay. All right, so what were you doing at the time
17 of the incident?

18 A. I was in the factory.

19 Q. Okay, can you explain for us what the factory is? What are
20 you doing in the factory? What type of stuff goes on?

21 A. It's where we process our fish.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. We sort our fish and then prepare them for the freezer.

24 Q. Okay, so the factory is primarily, like, a sorting area on
25 the vessel?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay, so the good fish go into the hold and then everything
3 else just kind of goes out?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay, can you explain what your perceptions of that night, of
6 that incident starting from -- let's say you relieve Andrew at
7 10:15, can you kind of walk us through what you were doing all the
8 way up to the incident until the rescue?

9 A. I went to the stern down below to help sort the fish, and
10 then I felt a disturbance and a loud noise, and then I ran up the
11 hatch -- up the stairs to the hatch and I saw the ship hitting us.
12 Then I went and ran across the deck after the ship was clear, I
13 ran across the deck and took my daughter from Andrew, quickly
14 looked at the damage and then went back up in the wheelhouse. I
15 took a few minutes to regain my composure and then was told to
16 make a mayday.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can I just take a minute, Lieutenant,
18 there's people outside the room here that are too loud. I just
19 got to shush them. You may not hear it on your end, but --

20 LT [REDACTED] Okay, no problem.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sorry, go ahead.

22 BY LT [REDACTED]

23 Q. Sarah, I think we were at the point where the vessel just got
24 hit and I think you just made the mayday call. Can you continue
25 on?

1 A. Pardon me?

2 Q. What happened after the mayday call?

3 A. Oh, are you asking about the radio communications?

4 Q. Everything that you remember, everything that you were a part
5 of?

6 A. Okay, I made a mayday and I guess we were in a dead zone; the
7 Coast Guard couldn't hear us and the *R/V Atlantis* offered to
8 transmit information to the Coast Guard for us. I think they were
9 eight miles away and they came over to sit with us. Then the
10 *Drystan* came and told us that they were there to assist and the
11 crew was in their survival suits at that point. Then after some
12 time had passed, the decision was made to abandon ship, climb down
13 the Jacob's ladder, got into the life raft and we were towed by
14 the skiff of the *Atlantis* to the *Drystan*. We got on the *Drystan*
15 and then the Coast Guard's small boat came and picked us up and
16 took us to the Coast Guard base.

17 Q. Okay, you said that you saw some damage on the *Tremont*. Can
18 you explain what you saw?

19 A. I saw the entrance on the portside couldn't be opened. Like,
20 it had been damaged so badly that I could not open the watertight
21 door. I didn't take the time to really inspect it thoroughly.
22 That's what I saw and then I went up in the wheelhouse.

23 Q. Okay, that door on the portside that had some damage, where
24 is that door located on the vessel? Where does that lead into?

25 A. It leads to the interior.

- 1 Q. Okay, what's just on the other side of the door?
- 2 A. A hallway.
- 3 Q. Okay, and then can you kind of walk me through that hallway?
- 4 If I walked down the hallway, what would I see?
- 5 A. You would see some crews' quarters, two crew rooms and a
- 6 room -- a storage room.
- 7 Q. Okay.
- 8 A. And stairways.
- 9 Q. Stairways?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Okay, did the stairways lead up to the bridge and down below?
- 12 A. Correct.
- 13 Q. The crew that was in their quarters, how did they get from
- 14 their quarters to the deck?
- 15 A. They went from their quarters to the galley.
- 16 Q. Okay, so is there -- so, what I'm envisioning now is this
- 17 exterior door on the portside that's an access point to the inside
- 18 of the vessel. I'm just wondering how I got from the inside of
- 19 the vessel, outside on the deck?
- 20 A. Oh, from the stern. The stern also has an exit point.
- 21 Q. Got you, is that, like, an emergency escape or is that
- 22 another door?
- 23 A. Just another entrance to the bow -- to the factory.
- 24 Q. Okay, got it. Okay, did you see the vessel taking on water
- 25 at all?

- 1 A. Not until the very end.
- 2 Q. Okay.
- 3 A. Because I was at the high point of the boat in the
4 wheelhouse.
- 5 Q. Got you. Okay, you said not until the very end, at what
6 point did you see the vessel taking on water and what did you see?
- 7 A. I saw the bow -- I believe it was the Coast Guard airplane
8 landed on the bow. It was going down.
- 9 Q. Okay. All right, I want to back up a little bit just to kind
10 of -- your role in the -- as far as navigational duties are
11 concerned. Can you explain to me what kind of equipment you have
12 in the bridge?
- 13 A. The navigational equipment?
- 14 Q. Yes.
- 15 A. We have Nobel Tech, WindPlot (ph.), and I always forget the
16 name of the other one -- Olex.
- 17 Q. Okay, are those brand names?
- 18 A. Correct, they're navigational programs.
- 19 Q. Okay, is that, like, on an electronic chart system?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 Q. Okay, can you explain what each one of those does?
- 22 A. Nobel Tech and WindPlot are to keep track of our tows.
- 23 Q. Okay.
- 24 A. And Olex is to -- it is a map of the bottom's depth so we can
25 tow in a certain depth.

- 1 Q. What was the last one that you mentioned? I'm sorry.
- 2 A. It just shows the depths of the ocean.
- 3 Q. What was the name of it?
- 4 A. Olex.
- 5 Q. So, that -- those three systems, those are primarily used for
- 6 the fishing operation?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. Okay, what other type of equipment do you have, radios,
- 9 radar, AIS?
- 10 A. Three radios, one radar, we had AIS, we were -- we had an AIS
- 11 but it wasn't receiving.
- 12 Q. What do you mean wasn't receiving? How did you know that?
- 13 A. What's that?
- 14 Q. Can you explain how you knew that the AIS wasn't receiving?
- 15 A. It just wasn't receiving.
- 16 Q. Okay, do you know if it was transmitting?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. What would you expect to see if it was receiving and what did
- 19 you see?
- 20 A. The names of the other vessels.
- 21 Q. Okay, so it was just coming up blank for you?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. How long had it been malfunctioning like that?
- 24 A. I guess part way through the trip.
- 25 Q. So, is that about a week-and-a-half or so? I think you were

1 underway for about three weeks, is that correct?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Was there any attempts to fix the AIS or any discussions with
4 regard to why it was not working?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. All right, let's move onto the radar. Can you tell me
7 what kind of radar you had or what brand?

8 A. I believe it was a FURUNO.

9 Q. Can you explain what the settings on that radar typically are
10 and what you believed them to be that night, like range and that
11 type of thing?

12 A. It was dependent on what we were doing.

13 Q. Okay, to your knowledge, did the radar work as it was
14 supposed to?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. All right, can you tell me about your autopilot system on
17 board?

18 A. It's connected to a gyrocompass.

19 Q. Okay, is the autopilot system fed into the same desktop that
20 the Nobel Tech and the WindPlot are fed into?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Can you explain to me if you wanted to set a course in
23 heading on your -- on the *Tremont*, how would you physically do
24 that?

25 A. I would turn on the autopilot, and then match it to the

1 gyrocompass, and then set it.

2 Q. Can you explain what you mean by match it to the gyrocompass?

3 A. Go and look at the heading on the gyrocompass and then match
4 it to the autopilot.

5 Q. Okay, who sets the heading on the gyrocompass? How is that
6 set?

7 A. It's set by the Earth.

8 Q. I guess I'm -- let me clarify, does the autopilot follow what
9 the gyrocompass is doing?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay, so if the gyrocompass changes, the autopilot will
12 adjust to track with it?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay, had you ever had any problems with the gyrocompass or
15 the autopilot system before?

16 A. About four or five days into the trip, it was being a little
17 bit drifty. But --

18 Q. Can you -- what do you mean by drifty?

19 A. Like, maybe ten degrees -- it would kind of drift, like, ten
20 degrees.

21 Q. Okay, so I guess my question -- if it's drifting off ten
22 degrees, what -- how does it know to stay at the heading that you
23 want it to stay at?

24 A. Because it's supposed to follow the magnetic -- it's supposed
25 to follow the heading based on the Earth's magnetic pull.

1 LT [REDACTED] Does anybody else understand the question I'm
2 trying to ask here or am I off base?

3 Marcel, do you understand what I'm trying to ask? Am I not
4 asking it in the right way?

5 I don't want to keep -- Sarah, I don't want to keep asking
6 you the same question and maybe I'm just not understanding or
7 maybe I'm not asking it correctly.

8 BY MR. MUISE:

9 Q. I think I understand what you're trying to say. When you
10 pick a heading, you steer on that heading and then you set the
11 autopilot to that heading. So, when it matches whatever heading
12 you want, that is being displayed by the gyrocompass?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So, you have to steer -- you have to get to that course on
15 your own first and then you hit set, is that correct?

16 A. Right.

17 MR. MUISE: Okay.

18 LT [REDACTED] Okay, I see. I got you.

19 CAPT WILSON: Thank you.

20 LT [REDACTED] Thank you. Sometimes what you're trying to ask
21 doesn't always come out the way you intend.

22 BY LT [REDACTED]

23 Q. Okay, so you said four to five days into the trip or prior to
24 the incident that it was drifting?

25 A. I think it was kind of sporadic.

1 Q. Okay, so with it being sporadic, was there any discussion on
2 ceasing the use of it?

3 A. Pardon me?

4 Q. Did you and Andrew, or yourself, as the captain, did you
5 decide that it was safe to continue using it or was it within a
6 certain usability that you felt it was safe to continue using it?

7 A. We felt that the -- it was a reasonable thing to continue to
8 use it.

9 Q. Okay, so once it -- once the autopilot kind of drifts because
10 of the gyrocompass, is that something that you would immediately
11 notice, or is there any kind of alarm for that, or any
12 notification system?

13 A. There is not, no.

14 Q. So, if somebody wasn't paying attention, is it -- they would
15 have to come back and match their heading that the vessel was
16 going on and see that there was a difference, is that right?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Have you ever had an extended period where the gyrocompass
19 was drifting and you didn't realize it for a period of time?

20 A. No.

21 Q. All right, what radio channels do you typically monitor?

22 A. 16, 13, and 17.

23 LT [REDACTED] All right, Mr. Muise, do you have any additional
24 questions for Sarah?

25 BY MR. MUISE:

- 1 Q. Captain, again, thank you for joining us. Have you had
2 any -- do you have a radio license in addition to your Coast Guard
3 license?
- 4 A. I do not.
- 5 Q. Are you familiar with --
- 6 A. Andrew has it.
- 7 Q. I'm sorry, go ahead.
- 8 A. Andrew has a radio license.
- 9 Q. Are you familiar with GMDSS or Global Maritime Distress
10 Safety System?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. Have you ever heard of digital selective calling?
- 13 A. No.
- 14 Q. On your VHF radio, there should've been a red button that
15 said distress on it. Do you remember seeing that?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 Q. Do you understand how that works?
- 18 A. I suppose you would just push the button.
- 19 Q. Do you know if that was hooked up to your GPS, or to the
20 gyro, or both?
- 21 A. I don't know.
- 22 Q. Okay.
- 23 A. I imagine it was. I would assume --
- 24 Q. Did you use that button that night?
- 25 A. No.

1 Q. Was there any other distress equipment on the bridge that you
2 could've used when you couldn't reach the Coast Guard?

3 A. The EPIRB.

4 Q. Is there a reason why you guys didn't bother to get the
5 EPIRB?

6 A. Well, the research vessel replied quite quickly and they were
7 relaying messages for us.

8 Q. Okay, regarding the flooding, do you know which compartments
9 flooded first and in what order and where was the water coming
10 from?

11 A. I believe it started in the shaft alley.

12 Q. Was there an impact back where the shaft alley is in addition
13 to the bow?

14 A. I don't know.

15 Q. How would water get into the shaft alley?

16 A. I don't know.

17 MR. MUISE: [REDACTED] that's really all the questions I have
18 right now.

19 LT [REDACTED] Okay.

20 BY MR. FITZGERALD:

21 Q. Sarah, on the *Tremont*, did you only work with Andrew, your
22 boyfriend? Is he the only other navigational watch stander that
23 you've worked with?

24 A. Andrew, yes, he is.

25 Q. Right, so I understand when you first started working as a

1 deck hand, Andrew was the captain, right?

2 A. No, there was another licensed captain on
3 board -- two -- there were two.

4 Q. Okay, who was that?

5 A. A gentleman named Wes and another gentleman -- two gentlemen,
6 both named Paul.

7 Q. All right, so at some point, someone gave you the thumbs up
8 and said hey, you're qualified, you should be the captain. Was
9 Andrew involved in that decision making?

10 A. I mean, I was the most qualified person on the crew.

11 Q. What I'm -- Andrew was the captain already, correct?

12 A. No, he had other licensed captains on board every trip.

13 Q. All right, let me ask it this way. So, who gave you the
14 thumbs up and said Sarah, you're ready to be the captain? Who
15 made that decision?

16 A. I supposed Mike and Andrew did.

17 Q. And did Mike base -- now, you worked Andrew, did you ever
18 work with Mike on the *Tremont*?

19 A. No, but I have been around for 27 years, and been a long-time
20 mate, and had a hundred-ton license already. So, I suppose he
21 considered me qualified.

22 Q. Okay, but just so the record's clear, you never worked with
23 Mike Walsh on the *Tremont*, correct?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. Okay, and the only owner that you worked with was Andrew,

1 correct?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay, before this interview, did you review any of the AIS or
4 the navigational data?

5 A. It was not made available to me.

6 Q. So, you -- before the -- at the time of the collision, you
7 said you were in the factory and you were sorting fish. Were you
8 there from 10:15, when you left watch, until you -- until the
9 collision?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Was that fairly common for you, when you were not on the
12 wheel to be helping out with sorting fish?

13 A. Occasionally.

14 Q. Okay, have you ever completed a formal rules of the road
15 course?

16 A. I took a class in Florida at MCA.

17 Q. Okay, when did you take that class?

18 A. January five years ago.

19 Q. Okay, Sarah, are you the only woman on the vessel besides
20 your daughter? Were you the only woman on the vessel?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay, and you would be the only woman who would use the VHF
23 radio up in the bridge, correct?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. You stated earlier that someone told you to make a mayday

- 1 call. Who told you to make that mayday call?
- 2 A. Andrew.
- 3 Q. Okay, was that his decision?
- 4 A. I guess it was a joint decision because I chose to make it.
- 5 Q. Okay, are there standing orders on the *Tremont*?
- 6 A. Regarding?
- 7 Q. Do you know what standing orders are?
- 8 A. Regarding watch standing or what do you --
- 9 Q. Yes.
- 10 A. Watch standing orders? Not officially.
- 11 Q. So, you don't have any standing orders -- official standing
- 12 orders on the *Tremont*, do you?
- 13 A. No.
- 14 Q. Was anyone injured as a result of the collision on the
- 15 *Tremont*?
- 16 A. No.
- 17 Q. The problems -- we understand there were problems with the
- 18 gyrocompass. Did you ever experience those problems on prior
- 19 voyages?
- 20 A. No.
- 21 Q. Did you ever instruct your mates to track radar contacts?
- 22 A. No.
- 23 Q. Did you ever instruct your mates to update their AIS
- 24 navigation status?
- 25 A. No.

- 1 Q. Did you ever read the AIS operators manual?
- 2 A. No.
- 3 Q. Have you ever received training -- formal training on AIS?
- 4 A. No.
- 5 Q. Did you ever instruct Andrew to call you if he was fatigued?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Has he ever done that?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. And what happens? What do you do in that situation?
- 10 A. I get up and relieve the wheel -- relieve him.
- 11 Q. Okay, so, Sarah, just so I'm clear, when you're not standing
- 12 a navigation watch, sometimes you'll help out with the fishing
- 13 operations, correct?
- 14 A. Occasionally, yes.
- 15 Q. And do you also have to take care of your daughter, correct?
- 16 A. Well, she sleeps during the night. But, yes, certainly I do
- 17 take care of her.
- 18 Q. Does this affect your rest periods?
- 19 A. My rest periods?
- 20 Q. My question is --
- 21 A. No.
- 22 Q. My question is the fact that you sometimes help with the
- 23 fishing operations and you have to take care of your daughter
- 24 while you're on board, do you believe that affects your rest
- 25 periods?

- 1 A. No.
- 2 Q. Why not?
- 3 A. Because she sleeps with me.
- 4 Q. The -- you said the type of radar was a FURON radar? Oh,
- 5 FURUNO?
- 6 A. I believe so.
- 7 Q. Do you know the make and model number?
- 8 A. No.
- 9 Q. Did you ever read the operator manual for that radar?
- 10 A. Yes, I have read quite a bit of it.
- 11 Q. As the captain, what do you do to make sure that your mate is
- 12 well rested before taking a navigational watch?
- 13 A. I guess I just visually look at him and we try to organize
- 14 everything so that he can get plenty of rest.
- 15 Q. Okay, anything else?
- 16 A. No.
- 17 Q. Did you ever discuss your drifting gyrocompass with your
- 18 mate?
- 19 A. Yes, we discussed it.
- 20 Q. Okay, what was it -- when did you have this discussion?
- 21 A. Maybe four or five days into the trip.
- 22 Q. And what did you say and what did Andrew say?
- 23 A. We felt like it was, you know, ten degrees and it was
- 24 something that we could live with.
- 25 Q. Anything else?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay, so at this point -- so, we've got problems with the
3 gyro, correct?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And we've got problems with the AIS, correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And the owner, Andrew, is aware of that, correct?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay, did you ever discuss or did you ever consider hey,
10 let's end the trip, let's head home here?

11 A. No.

12 MR. FITZGERALD: I'm okay at this time. Thanks, we can
13 continue, L T.

14 BY LT [REDACTED]

15 Q. Do you have -- so, if the autopilot stopped functioning, do
16 you have a backup that you could use on the bridge?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. What would the backup method be?

19 A. A magnetic compass.

20 LT [REDACTED] Okay. All right. Okay, Sarah, thank you for your
21 cooperation. Just a final --

22 MR. FITZGERALD: I thought we were going to circle back. I
23 have a couple more areas.

24 BY MR. FITZGERALD:

25 Q. Sarah, you -- after the incident, during the coordination

1 phase, you were talking on the VHF radio, correct?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay, and who were you communicating with at that time?

4 A. I communicated with the research vessel and with the *Drystan*.

5 Q. Okay, and while you were up in the wheelhouse, did

6 Andrew -- he left the wheelhouse at different times, right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay, did you ever tell anyone on the VHF radio that the
9 master is not in the wheelhouse at this time?

10 A. I may have.

11 Q. And who would you be referring to as the master?

12 A. I wouldn't have used the word master.

13 Q. What word -- would you use the word captain?

14 A. Possibly fishing captain.

15 Q. So, when you were -- so, you were discussing what's going on
16 in the vessel and you were telling the other boat that the captain
17 was not in the wheelhouse, do you remember that?

18 A. I do.

19 Q. Okay, and now -- so, you were referring to Andrew, your
20 boyfriend, correct?

21 A. Well, the fact that he's my boyfriend isn't really relevant.

22 Q. I'm just -- I agree a hundred and ten percent and I
23 missed -- I'm just trying -- so, mate, captain -- Sarah, it's not
24 clear to me. You're saying fishing captain, captain, but what I'm
25 trying to highlight here, and I'll be very precise with you, is

1 that here you are on VHF, you've got the radio, you're talking to
2 the other two vessels and the VHF radio -- the recording is you're
3 basically -- you said the captain's not in the wheelhouse. Do you
4 remember saying that?

5 A. You're right, that sounds --

6 Q. And you were -- that's right and you were referring to
7 Andrew, correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay, so my question is why are you referring to -- why are
10 you telling those other boats that the captain's not in the
11 wheelhouse?

12 A. Because that's how we ran things.

13 Q. I don't understand that. Can you explain that?

14 A. Well, he's the owner and he knows the fishing grounds, he
15 knows the gear, how to catch fish a lot better than I do. So,
16 that was the way that we managed things on the boat.

17 Q. The -- was it -- when you stood a watch, was it fairly common
18 to have your daughter in the wheelhouse with you?

19 A. Sometimes. We have a special area for her, like her -- kind
20 of her living room for her.

21 Q. Where is that? Is that on the portside or the starboard side
22 of the bridge?

23 A. Portside.

24 Q. Okay, and describe this area to us. Is it, like, a play pen?

25 A. No, it's like, kind of, a corridor type thing with blankets,

1 and cushions, and stuffy animals, toys, and a television.

2 Q. Okay, and where does -- when she sleeps up on the bridge,
3 what does she sleep in? Does she sleep on the deck, or does she
4 sleep on a bed, a bassinet?

5 A. Well, when she sleeps up there, she sleeps on just a bunch of
6 cushions and blankets.

7 Q. All right, how old is your daughter?

8 A. Two and half.

9 Q. Okay, Sarah, after this accident, you were drug tested,
10 correct?

11 A. No, I offered to be, but I was not.

12 Q. Who did you offer it to?

13 A. I don't know, I just asked -- I don't know who I offered to.
14 I was more than willing to. I'm willing to now -- get drug
15 tested.

16 Q. All right, but did someone tell you, you know, we don't need
17 you to test or you don't need to be tested?

18 A. I don't --

19 LT [REDACTED] I'm going to chime in. Yeah, so the Coast Guard
20 only required that Andrew be drug tested because he was the only
21 one on watch at the time for the navigational (indiscernible).

22 (Background conversation)

23 CAPT WILSON: I certainly wasn't using.

24 MR. FITZGERALD: Right, thank you, and I wasn't implying that
25 either, Sarah. I appreciate that.

1 BY MR. FITZGERALD:

2 Q. Sarah, the AIS positioning data reflects that the *Tremont's*
3 course changed significantly seconds or minutes before the
4 contact. The course change, I have it as -- it went from -- let
5 me look at my notes here -- it went from roughly -- I think it was
6 330 degrees to almost about 090 degrees. Were you aware of that?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Have you ever discussed that with anyone?

9 A. Discussed?

10 Q. The course of the *Tremont* -- the heading of the *Tremont*
11 changing significantly right before the collision?

12 A. I don't know what happened up there.

13 Q. Okay, understood. The problems that you were experiencing
14 with the gyrocompass, could that cause that type of course change?

15 A. I didn't see that type of course change. But I wasn't --

16 Q. I appreciate that but what I'm asking you --

17 A. I wasn't there --

18 Q. But the problems that you were experiencing on the gyro,
19 could that explain why the heading changed so significantly?

20 A. I don't know.

21 MR. FITZGERALD: Okay.

22 All right, L T, I think I'm good at this stage.

23 LT [REDACTED] All right, Mr. Muise, anything remaining?

24 MR. MUISE: I just have one closing question.

25 BY MR. MUISE:

1 Q. Sarah, I'm very glad to hear nobody was hurt in this
2 incident. That's not always the case. Actually, it's often not
3 the case. So, I'm curious to what was different here. Why was it
4 that everybody made it here when others don't? So, if you could
5 credit a piece of equipment, or some training, or an individual.
6 You know, what made the difference that night that you're glad
7 that you had?

8 A. Well, there was the training, you know, everybody was very
9 comfortable, the survival suits and they knew don't go back on the
10 boat and they were very compliant. Also, Andrew, he untangled our
11 line and at his own peril because he risked his own life, and the
12 Coast Guard, and the people that were there to help. So, it was
13 just a lot of things that fell into place for us, I suppose, in a
14 terrible situation.

15 MR. MUISE: Okay, thanks for that, Sarah, I appreciate that.
16 Again, I'm glad that everybody is okay.

17 CAPT WILSON: Thank you.

18 MR. FITZGERALD: L T, I just had one remaining.

19 BY MR. FITZGERALD:

20 Q. Sarah, when you're up in the wheelhouse, did you ever
21 instruct anyone to close all watertight doors?

22 A. No.

23 MR. FITZGERALD: Thank you.

24 All set.

25 LT [REDACTED] All right, Sarah, thank you for being here with us

1 today. Obviously, the Coast Guard seconds what Mr. Muise and the
2 NTSB said. We're very happy that everyone got off okay. Thank
3 you for being here with us today. Do you have any questions or
4 anything before we conclude?

5 CAPT WILSON: No.

6 LT [REDACTED] All right, thank you very much.

7 (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: COLLISION BETWEEN CONTAINER *MSC RITA* AND F/V *TREMONT*, IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN ON OCTOBER 27, 2022
Interview of Captain Sarah Wilson

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM003

PLACE: via Microsoft Teams

DATE: November 3, 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.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

Tremont captain **ERRATA**

Marine Investigation Report

Collision between *MSC Rita* and *Tremont*
DCA23FM003

Page/ Line	Original	Correction
10/17	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:	MR. REGAN:
10/21	UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:	MR. REGAN: