

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY BRIDGE *

COLLAPSES AFTER VESSEL * Accident No.: DCA24MM031

COLLISION IN BALTIMORE, *

MARYLAND ON MARCH 26, 2024 *

* * * * *

Interview of: LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
United States Coast Guard
Sector Maryland, National Capitol Region

via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday,
August 7, 2024

APPEARANCES:

DAN WALSH, Highway Factors Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

BRIDGET QUINN, Group Chair of Medical Operations
National Transportation Safety Board

MARCEL MUISE, Investigator-in-Charge
Office of Marine Safety
National Transportation Safety Board

DEREK SODEN, Principal Structural Engineer
Federal Aviation Administration

JIM HARKNESS, Chief Engineer
Maryland Transportation Authority

ERIC NIELSEN, President
Association of Maryland Pilots

JATINDER SANDHU, Managing Director
Synergy Group USA

LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Staff Attorney
United States Coast Guard, Fifth District
Counsel for LCDR [REDACTED]

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:08 a.m. CDT)

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3 MR. WALSH: Today is Wednesday, August 7th, 2024. The time
4 is about 8:08 a.m. Central Daylight Time. This interview is in
5 regard to the Key Bridge collapse in Baltimore, Maryland, that
6 occurred on March 26th, 2024.

7 My name is Dan Walsh, D-a-n, W-a-l-s-h, highway factors
8 investigator, in the NTSB's Office of Highway Safety. And with me
9 is Ms. Quinn.

10 MS. QUINN: My name is Bridget Quinn. That's B-r-i-d-g-e-t,
11 Q-u-i-n-n. I'm the group chair of medical operations for this
12 investigation.

13 MR. WALSH: Mr. Muise.

14 MR. MUISE: Good morning. This is Marcel Muise, also with
15 the Office of Marine Safety, and I'm the investigator-in-charge.
16 My name is spell M-a-r-c-e-l, M-u-i-s-e.

17 MR. WALSH: Mr. Soden.

18 MR. SODEN: Good morning. My name is Derek Soden, Federal
19 Aviation Administration, principal structural engineer, D-e-r-e-k,
20 S-o-d-e-n.

21 MR. WALSH: Mr. Harkness.

22 MR. HARKNESS: I'm Jim Harkness, J-i-m, H-a-r-k-n-e-s-s, and
23 I am the chief engineer for the Maryland Transportation Authority.

24 MR. NIELSEN: My name is Eric Nielsen, E-r-i-c, N-i-e-l-s-e-
25 n, president of Association of Maryland Pilots.

1 MR. WALSH: Mr. Sandhu.

2 MR. SANDHU: My name is Jatinder Sandhu. I am the managing
3 director of Synergy Group USA, NMCF (ph.). My name is spelled J-
4 a-t-i-n-d-e-r, S-a-n-d-h-u.

5 MR. WALSH: Okay. Lieutenant [REDACTED]

6 LT [REDACTED] My name is Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED],
7 [REDACTED]. I'm a staff attorney for the Fifth District of the
8 Coast Guard and counsel for Ms. [REDACTED]

9 MR. WALSH: And Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED]

10 LCDR [REDACTED] Good morning. My name is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED] I'm the waterways management division chief for
12 Coast Guard Sector Maryland, National Capitol Region.

13 MR. WALSH: Thank you.

14 INTERVIEW OF LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

15 BY MR. WALSH:

16 Q. Lieutenant [REDACTED] what are your duties as the Sector's
17 waterways manager?

18 A. So the waterways division has three branches, waterways
19 management, port safety and security which is facilities and
20 container inspections, and then also cyber security. Under the
21 waterways management branch, we regulate marine events. We act as
22 liaisons to District 5 bridges. We -- any projects going on, on
23 the water, if things come up, derelict vessels, we handle that
24 sort of things. We handle messaging out to industry. We attend
25 meetings such as harbor safety committee meetings. We also manage

1 the aids to navigation. We have an aids navigation officer who
2 works for me. Under him, are three aids to navigation teams.

3 Q. Up until the collapse, how did your duties impact the Francis
4 Scott Key Bridge?

5 A. My duties for the Francis Scott Key Bridge would have been if
6 there was work going on, on the bridge, we would have worked with
7 District 5. They would have issued a permit to let us know about
8 the work, sent out a local notice to mariners, and then we would
9 communicate that to industry to let them know that the work was
10 going on and if there was any concerns, we would bring that back
11 up to District.

12 Q. Thank you. What was your involvement with pier protection
13 for the Francis Scott Key Bridge?

14 A. I had no involvement that I'm aware of.

15 Q. Okay. Thank you.

16 MR. WALSH: Ms. Quinn will continue with the questioning.

17 MS. QUINN: Dan, I have nothing further at this time.

18 MR. WALSH: Thank you. Mr. Muise will continue with the
19 questioning.

20 MR. MUISE: Thanks, Dan.

21 BY MR. MUISE:

22 Q. The latest Marine Safety Manual I could find was from 1997.
23 Is there a better pub that we should using or researching
24 waterways management?

25 A. I don't know. I could get back to you. I'd have to check

1 the Coast Guard portal.

2 Q. Yeah, I don't think there's been a recent change since then,
3 but I was just curious if there was a better reference for that.
4 One of the things that we're struggling with is finding data for
5 the vessel arrival. Some of the formulas that the architects use
6 in building bridges, the variables are deadweight tonnage, number of
7 arrivals. Does your staff in the inspections division, is there
8 like a log of arrivals or what might be a good source of arrival
9 data for ships?

10 A. We have a -- it's under inspections. We have a vessel
11 arrivals desk. They would track that stuff. I don't know
12 historically where it's held, but the inspections division would
13 know that.

14 Q. Okay. Somebody looking up where data on bridges is kept in
15 the Coast Guard. Is it in AMES or is it in MISSILE or both or
16 what's the difference between the two?

17 A. For waterways, we don't deal -- like in terms of permitting
18 and stuff, if that stuff was put in, that's all going to be
19 District 5. So that question would probably be best answered by
20 District 5, by Mr. Hal Pitt.

21 Q. Is there any ATON on the bridge that you maintain or your
22 staff maintains or is it all privately maintained?

23 A. On the FSK Bridge?

24 Q. Yes.

25 A. Not that I'm, not that I'm aware of.

1 Q. How about the AIS data, number AIS -- I'm not sure if there's
2 even an AIS numbers for a bridge, but some bridges have AIS
3 transponders? Do the owners do that or is that something the
4 Coast Guard provides?

5 A. I'm not -- I don't know for sure what the answer to that is.
6 I know that once the bridge fell and then we -- the piers needed
7 to be lit, that was MDTA.

8 Q. Okay. Can you tell us a little bit about the port and
9 waterways assessment that you guys do? There's a program for
10 that, and I don't -- it's like so many years.

11 A. (Indiscernible).

12 Q. Yeah, it's every so many years you guys do that. I'm just
13 curious when the last one was for Baltimore and where we might
14 find that?

15 A. The last -- I could pull up my Teams real quick and look.
16 One of them is I believe 2001, and that may be PAUSA (ph.). Let
17 me just pull up, because there's several different ones. Let me
18 see if I can find it. Do you mind if I pull -- oh, here it is.
19 I'm sorry. So PAUSA is the risk assessment process to identify
20 major waterway safety hazards, estimate risk levels, evaluate
21 potential mitigation measures and set the stage for implementation
22 of selected measures to reduce risk. Involves convening a group
23 of waterway users, stakeholders, to conduct a two-day workshop to
24 kind of identify risks and mitigation. And I'm pretty sure this
25 is the one that hasn't been done since 2001.

1 Q. Can we get a copy of that somewhere or is that on home port
2 or --

3 A. This is -- this came from the Waterways Management School.
4 It's waterways management reference guide. It's probably on the
5 Coast Guard portal, but I believe -- I sent it over to legal, and
6 they said it's internal use only. It's just various C.F.R.
7 references and definitions that we use in waterways.

8 Q. Okay. There is an analysis that looks at -- where you get
9 industry input on buoys and things like that, right?

10 A. We've started a -- so there's the WAMS. I think that's
11 probably what you're talking about.

12 Q. That's what it is, yes.

13 A. Waterways Analysis and Management System Studies, yeah.

14 Q. How old is that one?

15 A. Is it okay if I pull up my Teams.

16 Q. Yeah, go ahead.

17 A. Then I can tell you. Okay. I think the WAMS was done more
18 recently. Sorry. Our computers are very slow.

19 Q. Understood.

20 A. WAMS.

21 Q. We're getting new ones in 2 weeks.

22 A. Good luck. Yeah, in 2019, one was done for the Upper Potomac
23 River.

24 Q. So can we get a copy of that? Is that public?

25 A. That's a legal question. I don't know.

1 LCDR ██████ Lieutenant ██████ do you know?

2 LT ██████ Let me -- honesty, I have not worked with the
3 WAMS. So let me look into it, and I'll get back to you. I'll put
4 that on my to dos.

5 MR. MUISE: Yeah, do that.

6 BY MR. MUISE:

7 Q. Your harbor safety committee, is it a pretty active one or --
8 I know they vary all around the country?

9 A. Yes, we go to two. We go to the Baltimore one, and then we
10 also go to the DWTC which is out in Salisbury, Maryland.

11 Q. Okay. Can you share any kind of bridge discussion or Francis
12 Scott Key Bridge discussions that have gone on there or any
13 concerns that have been brought up or actions that have been
14 taken?

15 A. Well, I know there was the mention of the change in the
16 pilot's reporting procedure that was brought up very briefly. I
17 don't remember -- I was not part of the discussion as to the
18 change and what that would be, and I don't want to speak to
19 internal pilot policies. I know there was discussion of that. I
20 think it was in the March committee meeting before the bridge came
21 down.

22 Q. Do you know what the genesis of that was? Like why was there
23 a change? And if you don't know, that's fine.

24 A. I don't, I don't want to speak outside of something that I
25 don't know.

1 Q. That's okay. That's okay. Is that a Coast Guard wide thing
2 or was that just specific to Baltimore?

3 A. That was just specific to Baltimore.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. But it was not a -- it was not a change in the Coast Guard
6 policy. The Coast Guard policy remains the same.

7 Q. Who would be the best person to talk to about that? Is that
8 Commander Smoak or somebody else there, like the Command Center?

9 A. Commander Smoak I know was part of the conversation outside
10 of the meeting as to what that change should be providing
11 recommendations. So he would probably be the best. He was really
12 just in an advisory role. The Coast Guard was in more of an
13 advisory role.

14 Q. Okay. Internal to the Coast Guard -- sorry. Internal to the
15 Sector, is there any like policy or procedure or TTM or T&Ps on
16 how to do that?

17 A. Yes, we have quick response cards. That would be the Command
18 Center as to exactly what that says, but it was something in terms
19 of, you know, reaching out to MDTA and they would have, you know,
20 a list of whoever they contact and what steps to take.

21 Q. Okay. So there is a QRC -- there should be a QRC for this?

22 A. There should be.

23 Q. Okay. That's actually all I have for you. Thanks,
24 Commander.

25 MR. MUISE: I'll pass it to Captain Nielsen. Anything?

1 CAPT NIELSEN: No, nothing from me. Thanks.

2 MR. MUISE: Mr. Soden.

3 MR. SODEN: Nothing comes to mind related to waterways
4 management, no.

5 MR. MUISE: Okay. Maryland, Mr. Harkness.

6 MR. HARKNESS: No, no questions from me.

7 MR. MUISE: Okay. Chief Sandhu?

8 CHIEF SANDHU: Yeah, nothing from me. Thank you.

9 MR. MUISE: Okay. All right.

10 LT. [REDACTED] Marcel, I just -- I just had a couple of
11 questions.

12 MR. MUISE: Yeah, go ahead.

13 BY MR. WALSH:

14 Q. In your sector, Lieutenant Commander, how many ports require
15 the assistance of tugboats for deep sea carrying vessels?

16 A. What do you mean by that question? Like we say they have to
17 or just in practice they use them?

18 Q. They would have to.

19 A. I don't know that the Coast Guard would mandate that. I know
20 that the -- at Cove Point they use tugs and then in Baltimore they
21 use tugs, but I don't know that the Coast Guard said they have to.

22 Q. Okay. In your sector, how many regulated channels are there?

23 A. Oh, I don't know. Off the top of my head, a lot.

24 Q. Okay. In your experience, can you please discuss the
25 advantages and disadvantages of a regulated channel?

1 A. Do you mean a regulated navigation area?

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. Okay. Yeah, we do not have any of those.

4 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any training for contractors working
5 on a bridge of the potential for bridge strikes?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay.

8 MR. WALSH: Are there any additional questions from anyone?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I guess I did think of one.

10 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

11 Q. In terms of waterway management, is there any regulations or
12 regulatory limits on vessel size or weight?

13 A. In terms of coming into the port?

14 Q. Coming into the port or, you know, port specific, waterway
15 specific or even generalized?

16 A. The -- not regulatory. The limitations to the Port of
17 Baltimore is generally the air draft of now the Bay Bridge.

18 Q. So practical limitations, not regulatory?

19 A. Yes.

20 MR. MUISE: Can I ask a follow up to that?

21 MR. WALSH: Absolutely.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Sure.

23 MR. MUISE: This is Marcel again.

24 BY MR. MUISE:

25 Q. So post casualty though, was there any restrictions on the

1 Bay Bridge further down the Bay as far as size or requiring tugs
2 or requiring bridge shutting down?

3 A. No.

4 Q. There is none. Okay. Thanks.

5 MR. WALSH: Are there any additional questions?

6 (No response.)

7 MR. WALSH: Okay. The time is now 8:24 a.m. Central Daylight
8 Time. We're going to go ahead and conclude the interview. Thank
9 you very much, Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] for your
10 participation.

11 (Whereupon, at 8:24 a.m. CDT, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

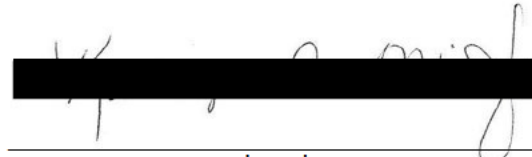
IN THE MATTER OF: FRANCIS SCOTT KEY BRIDGE
COLLAPSES AFTER VESSEL
COLLISION IN BALTIMORE,
MARYLAND ON MARCH 26, 2024
Interview of LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA24MM031

PLACE: via Microsoft Teams

DATE: August 7, 2024

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]

Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Highway Safety

Washington, DC 20594



Interview Clarification Form

Sheet 1 of 1

NTSB Interview of: LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Date of Interview: August 7, 2024

NTSB Case Number: DCA24MM031

INSTRUCTIONS: After reading the transcript or summary of your interview, please note any clarifications or additions on this sheet. If additional space is needed, make as many additional copies of the second page as necessary. When completed, please sign the bottom of each sheet. DO NOT make any marks or notations on the actual transcript.

If there are no changes, please check this box and sign the bottom of this sheet.

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I declare that I have read my foregoing interview transcript or summary and, together with any clarifications and/or additions made above, the facts stated herein are true.

Name: LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED] MARIE.126591 Digitally signed by [REDACTED] MARIE.1265910061 Date: 2024.08.30 12:39:04 -0400

Date: August 30, 2024