



National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C. 20594
Office of Marine Safety

Interview Summary

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2 **Interview with:** Captain Travis W. Taylor
3 **Date/time:** January 4, 2022
4 **Location:** By phone (Interview was at the BMA Office in Nassau.
5 **Interviewed by:** LT [REDACTED], USCG; Marcel L. Muise, NSTB
6 **Case:** DCA22FM009

8 **OVERVIEW**

9 I participated by telephone in a U.S. Coast Guard led interview of Captain Taylor. Captain Taylor was the
10 *Tropic Breeze* master and had the conn at the time of the collision with the yacht *Utopia IV*. He was
11 interviewed by U.S. Coast Guard LT [REDACTED] in Nassau, Bahamas, accompanied by Mr Kenneth Carey
12 (Bahamas Maritime Authority), Mr. Berne Wright (Bahamas Port Controller), Mr. Patrick Mckenzie
13 (counsel for *Utopia IV*), Mr. Caleb King (CGIS), Mr. [REDACTED] (CGIS), Mr. [REDACTED] (USCG
14 Investigator), Mr. [REDACTED] (USCG Inspector).

15 Unless specifically delineated by quotes, the text that follows is not a verbatim record of the
16 conversation. It has been developed from notes taken of the online conversation.

17 **INTEVRIEW SUMMARY**

18 *Tropic Breeze* was a 159-foot long product tanker, originally 135-feet long. The ship had no outstanding
19 Conditions of Class. The last port state control exam was two weeks prior with no deficiencies. On
20 December 23, the ship had only a couple of slack cargo tanks and empty ballast tanks. There was no
21 double hull.

22 Captain Taylor had been onboard nine months and had been promoted from chief mate on December 1.
23 *Tropic Breeze* left Nassau at 1800, enroute Great Stirrup Cay, a 12-hour trip at 5-knots. The ship made
24 this voyage about twice monthly.

25 Prior to getting underway, he checked that both Furuno radars were operational. He described the
26 radars as one "very old" and the other "somewhat new." He kept one on a three-mile range and one on
27 stand by. The radar scanners were forward of the mast, starboard of centerline and had a blind spot
28 directly astern where the mast created a shadow. There were two fixed radios, one of which stayed on
29 Channel 16.

30 The AIS was a stand-alone unit and had been occasionally inoperative, about weekly, but was
31 functioning on departure. The AIS antenna was on the port side of "Monkey Island." There was a new
32 AIS unit onboard that had yet to be installed due to COVID travel restrictions on the technician. The
33 equipment casualty had been verbally reported to the company and was to be repaired during the
34 upcoming drydock period.

1 Underway, the watch made hourly rounds. There were targets visible on the radar but no crossing or
2 meeting situations on his watch. There was a navigation light panel on the bridge with no alarms
3 indicated. They did not see *Utopia IV* on radar.

4 After the collision the ship vibrated and came to a stop. The engines shut down (the vessel had twin
5 screws) when they submerged. There were no injuries. The chief could not see the source of the
6 flooding. The ship took on water very fast and he made a VHF distress call. His only communications
7 with *Utopia IV* was verbally as he was not able to reach them on Channel 16. He made the decision to
8 abandon ship and told the crew to grab personal effects.

9 *Utopia IV* lowered her stern ramp though the yacht *Amara* rescued them from the raft after hearing the
10 distress call. He had no radio communication with *Amara* before the collision.

11 Captain Taylor stated he believed the ship could not survive a flooded engine room. He speculated he
12 didn't see *Utopia IV* in the radar shadow astern.

13 **END SUMMARY**

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