



Maritime Management, LLC

3363 N.E. 163RD ST.
SUITE 501
NORTH MIAMI BEACH FLORIDA, 33160
USA

TEL: (305) 947-6657
FAX: (305) 947-6762
CEL: (305) 794-5398
mtsmiami@mtsmiami.com

STATEMENT

AB SHENLY C. POUCHIE

1. My name is Shenly C. Pouchie.
2. I am 43 years old.
3. I reside in Roatan, Honduras.
4. I worked as an AB Seaman aboard the tanker TROPIC BREEZE for the last six years.
5. My formal training and experience includes watch keeping.
6. I was aboard the TROPIC BREEZE on December 23, 2021, and have personal knowledge of the sinking.
7. The TROPIC BREEZE departed around 6:00 p.m. At the time I assisted releasing the lines.
8. At the time of departure, the navigation lights of the TROPIC BREEZE were all on and functioning.
9. After departing I was on watch until 8:00 p.m.
10. During my watch the navigation lights of the TROPIC BREEZE were all on and functioning.
11. I was not aware of any malfunctioning equipment aboard TROPIC BREEZE.
12. After my watch, I went to my bunk to rest and was sleeping at the time of the collision.
13. I awoke at the sound of the collision and the shouts of my fellow crewmates.

14. I got out of my bunk and went to see what was happening and saw the TROPIC BREEZE was sinking.
15. I put on a lifejacket and made my way to the lifeboat.
16. At that time, I was able to see that the navigation lights of the TROPIC BREEZE, including the stern light, were on and functioning.
17. Once we were in the life raft, I heard shouts from the UTOPIA IV asking if everyone was okay. They threw out some lines, but did not launch a tender to assist us. Given the sea conditions, the lines were ineffective. We were rescued by another vessel about 30 to 40 minutes later.

THE ABOVE STATEMENT IS TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

Signed: _____

SHENLY C. POUCHIE

Dated: 1-7-2022



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STATEMENT OF AB ON WATCH MR. EGAN MORGAN

(on the Collision of the M/T "Tropic Breeze" and motor yacht "Utopia IV")

Vessel's name: Tropic Breeze


IMO number: 8906315

Flag State: Belize

1. My name is Egan Antelmo Morgan. I am 47 years old. I reside in Comfort District, Jamaica.
2. I have worked as an Able-Bodied seaman on the tanker TROPIC BREEZE since 1997.
3. I received my watch keeping and STCW certifications from the Jamaica Maritime Institute in 2000.
4. I was onboard the TROPIC BREEZE on December 23, 2021, and have personal knowledge of her sinking.
5. The TROPIC BREEZE departed Clifton Pier, Nassau at approximately 1800 local time December 23, 2021. The TROPIC BREEZE was bound for Great Stirrup Cay, Bahamas
6. During the transit, visibility was good, approximately 2 - 3 miles with naked eye and several miles to any bright lights.
7. I stood the first watch with Captain Travis Taylor. My duties included watching the RADAR, keeping a 360-degree visual lookout, taking and logging the position, and conducting a safety round every hour on the hour.
8. The safety round included checking the TROPIC BREEZE navigation lights, the weather, and inspecting the accommodation and engine room spaces.
9. My safety round usually would take approximately five (5) minutes.
10. At 2200, I made my hourly round. All Navigation lights were operational. There were no other vessels in sight and no targets on the RADAR.

11. Soon after I returned to the bridge, I heard a loud bang. I opened the port bridge wing door, and saw the UTOPIA IV had hit the TROPIC BREEZE in the stern, slightly to port. I informed the Captain.
12. The Chief Engineer ran up from the Kitchen, and said the TROPIC BREEZE was taking on water. Captain Taylor rang the general alarm. I grabbed my personal effects and went to my muster station.
13. I never heard horns, sounds, communications or signals from the UTOPIA IV, before or after the collision.
14. The Captain ordered the crew to abandon ship. I proceed to get into the life raft. We were later rescued by another vessel's tender and brought to Nassau.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: 
EGAN ANTELMO MORGAN

Dated: 31 December 21



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STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN TRAVIS WELLINGTON TAYLOR

(on the Collision of the M/T "Tropic Breeze" and motor yacht "Utopia IV")

Vessel's name: Tropic Breeze

IMO number: 8906315

Flag State: Belize

1. My name is Travis Wellington Taylor. I am 30 years old. I reside at 43 Wilmar Rd., Nassau, Bahamas.
2. I hold a 500 Ton Master's / 3,000 Ton Chief Mate's License from the Bahamas Maritime Authority.
3. I am a graduate of Holland College in Canada, where I did training as Able-Bodied Seaman and Junior Officer.
4. In my approximately 11-year career I have worked as an Able-Bodied Seaman and Officer (First Mate and Master) on a variety of vessels, including RO/RO passenger ships, bulk carriers, and tankers.
5. I worked aboard the tanker TROPIC BREEZE for approximately three years, and was the Captain from December 1, 2021 through December 23, 2021.
6. The TROPIC BREEZE departed Clifton Pier, Nassau at approximately 1800 local time December 23, 2021 and was bound for Great Stirrup Cay, Bahamas.
7. Before departing I personally conducted the all the pre-departure checks on bridge. As part of the pre-departure preparations, the navigation lights aboard TROPIC BREEZE were turned on and checked, and were found to be on and working properly.
8. If there was a problem with the navigation lights, there would have been a visual alarm - lights flashing - in the wheelhouse to alert the crew. There was no such alert at any time prior to the collision.
9. I maneuvered the TROPIC BREEZE from the dock and assumed the first watch with AB Egan Morgan. I set the TROPIC BREEZE on a northerly course toward Great Stirrup Cay. We proceeded at 1600 RPMS or approximately 5 knots.

10. Winds were from the NNE at 5-10 knots, with 2-4 foot seas with a light chop; it was a dark night, but visibility was clear, approximately 2-3 miles with the naked eye and several miles to any bright lights.
11. During the transit, both Egan Morgan and I kept a constant lookout, using all available means, including sight, hearing, RADAR and monitoring VHF radio channel 16.
12. During the transit, Egan Morgan conducted safety rounds each hour, on the hour, which included looking out for other vessels, checking the weather, navigation lights, and the accommodation and engine spaces.
13. Egan Morgan conducted a round at approximately 2200. There were no targets on the RADAR, which was set to the three-mile scale with occasional longer range scanning, and no other vessel lights in sight.
14. At approximately 2207, I heard a loud "bang." I went out to the port bridge wing and observed the yacht UTOPIA IV impaled about 7 to 10 feet deep into the TROPIC BREEZE's port quarter, at an angle of about 5 degrees from dead astern.
15. The TROPIC BREEZE's stern appeared to be down approximately 5 feet. The engine room was flooding with water, as were the accommodations and kitchen.
16. Prior to the collision there had been no horn or other sound signals by and no radio communications from the yacht UTOPIA IV.
17. I sounded the general alarm. I instructed the crew to prepare to abandon ship. I made Mayday calls on VHF channel 16, but received no response. I called the UTOPIA IV for assistance and asked for them to lower tenders, but received no response.
18. After approximately 3-4 minutes after the collision, the UTOPIA IV reversed engines, extracting itself from the TROPIC BREEZE, which caused the TROPIC BREEZE to sink faster.
19. Approximately 7 minutes after the collision, I saw smoke from the engine room, the TROPIC BREEZE went black, and went on emergency power for limited systems.
20. With the crew mustered, I gave the order to abandon ship, and the crew launched the life raft. All seven crew made it off the vessel safely.
21. The TROPIC BREEZE sank within approximately 25 minutes after the collision.
22. I was able to grab the EPIRB, but lost the handheld radio and ship documents when transferring to the life raft. I had my personal cell phone, and the TROPIC BREEZE's phone.
23. I tried to take photos and video, but was unable to do so from the life raft.

24. The UTOPIA IV attempted to recover us from the life raft, but due to the height of the swim platform and the danger posed by the propellers, was unsuccessful. The UTOPIA IV never launched its tenders.

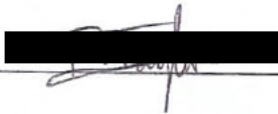
25. A tender from another vessel, M/Y AMARA, arrived approximately 30-40 minutes later. The tender took us to Lyford Cay Marina.

26. I observed no sheen on water or fuel smell. None of the TROPIC BREEZE's tanks appeared to be breached.

27. I never heard any VHF communications or sound signals from the UTOPIA IV before the collision.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: _____



Dated: _____

31/12/21



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SUPPLEMENTAL STATEMENT

CAPTAIN TRAVIS WELLINGTON TAYLOR

1. My name is Travis Wellington Taylor. I am 30 years-old. I reside at 43 Wilmar Rd., Nassau, Bahamas.
2. As reflected in my prior statement, I hold a 500 Ton Master's / 3,000 Ton Chief Mate's License from the Bahamas Maritime Authority. My certifications include:
 - Certificate of Competency – Master 500GT
 - Certificate of Competency – Chief Mate 3,000GT
 - Certificate of Competency – Officer in Charge of Navigational Watch (OICNW) –Unlimited
3. My time aboard the TROPIC BREEZE included service as a Chief Mate from December 07, 2019, to November 30, 2021, and service as the Master from December 01, 2021, to December 23, 2021.
4. The TROPIC BREEZE departed Clifton Pier, Nassau at approximately 1800 local time December 23, 2021, and was bound, on a northerly course, for Great Stirrup Cay, Bahamas. We proceeded at 1600 RPMS or approximately 5 knots.
5. The collision happened at approximately 2207 hours. At the time, winds were NNE at 5 to 10 knots.
6. There were no issues with the radar. The radar was showing targets during the voyage. The radar antenna is located forward of starboard side monkey island. There is a radar blind spot located aft of the exhaust funnel.
7. The AIS system, which is not required equipment, had intermittent power loss but was otherwise functional. The power loss caused the AIS to cut off approximately once a week for a minute or two before powering back up automatically.

8. Prior to the collision there were numerous communications over VHF channel 16 and channel 9 during the voyage.
9. As per company checklist, there are physical and visual rounds of the full accommodations interior and exterior and the navigation equipment, and a detailed 360 degree look around of the vessel's surroundings.
10. There was no response to the "MAYDAY" call.
11. The navigational rules that should and were considered include:

- Rule 5 - Look-Out.
 - This applies to both vessels. TROPIC BREEZE was maintaining a proper lookout.
- Rule 6 - Safe Speed.
 - This applies to both vessels. TROPIC BREEZE was maintaining a proper speed. By contrast the UTOPIA IV had sufficient speed to impact TROPIC BREEZE with sufficient force to sink TROPIC BREEZE.
- Rule 7 - Risk of Collision.
 - This applies to both vessels. Consistent with the Rule, TROPIC BREEZE maintained proper watch and safe speed throughout – including use of radar and frequent checks of the surroundings – to assess the risk of collision.
- Rule 8 - Actions to Avoid Collision.
 - This applies to both vessels, but TROPIC BREEZE despite operating with a proper lookout and at a safe speed did not have any opportunity to take action to avoid the collision.
- Rule 13 - Overtaking.
 - Put's responsibility on the UTOPIA IV as the "give-way" vessel ("any vessel overtaking any other shall keep out of the way of the vessel being overtaken").
- Rule 16 - Action by Give-way Vessel
 - Applicable to UTOPIA IV ("Every vessel which is directed to keep out of the way of another vessel shall, so far as possible, take early and substantial action to keep well clear.")
- Rule 17 - Action by Stand-on Vessel
 - Applicable to TROPIC BREEZE ("(a) (i) Where one of two vessels is to keep out of the way the other shall keep her course and speed. (ii) The latter vessel may however take action to avoid collision by

her maneuver alone, as soon as it becomes apparent to her that the vessel required to keep out of the way is not taking appropriate action in compliance with these Rules. (b) When, from any cause, the vessel required to keep her course and speed finds herself so close that collision cannot be avoided by the action of the give-way vessel alone, she shall take such action as will best aid to avoid collision.”)

12. As the overtaking vessel UTOPIA IV should have altered her course in ample time so as to overtake the TROPIC BREEZE at a safe passing distance. There was a substantial differential (around 15 knots) in speed of the two vessels. A simple (substantial) course alteration by the watchkeeper of the UTOPIA IV, plus close monitoring of the TROPIC BREEZE as she was being overtaken, would have been the correct and prudent action. Clearly, the UTOPIA IV failed to keep a proper lookout visually, and make use of her radar to detect the TROPIC BREEZE which should have easily been detected by the yacht’s radar.

I declare, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: _____
TRAVIS WELLINGTON TAYLOR

Dated: _____07/01/2022_____