

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SINKING OF THE FISHING VESSEL  
*REBECCA MARY* SOUTH OF NANTUCKET,  
MASSACHUSETTS, ON JUNE 17, 2020

Accident No.: DCA20FM021

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Interview of: EDWARD ANDERSEN, Deckhand  
*Rebecca Mary*

Wednesday,  
June 17, 2020

APPEARANCES:

CWO [REDACTED], Investigating Officer  
U.S. Coast Guard

[REDACTED], Investigating Officer  
U.S. Coast Guard

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Edward Andersen:

By CWO [REDACTED]	4
By Mr. [REDACTED]	26
By CWO [REDACTED]	32
By Mr. [REDACTED]	33

I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. ANDERSEN: Edward Andersen, mate.

3 CWO [REDACTED] All right.

4 MR. ANDERSEN: Deckhand.

5 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

6 INTERVIEW OF EDWARD ANDERSEN

7 BY CWO [REDACTED]

8 Q. What is your experience on the vessel?

9 A. This would be going into my second year. I've fished last  
10 year, started at the beginning of illex season. Fished all  
11 through loligo season, fluke. You know, I can run the winch. I  
12 can take -- we all, we've taken drags, we all take watches, you  
13 know, we all rotate. Pretty much anything that's on that boat, I  
14 can operate. Any of the hydraulics or whatever. We are one of  
15 the only boats out of Narragansett. We do all of our own dock  
16 work. We just spent 3 weeks on that fucking -- on that boat doing  
17 all kinds of things. You know what I mean?

18 Q. Okay. Two years on this boat. How many years fishing?

19 A. That -- this is it.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I've been a roofer my whole life.

22 Q. Okay. So this is -- okay.

23 A. This is it, yeah. Yes, sir. First time I've ever been in  
24 seas that deep. Florida they fish in 18 inches. I mean, you  
25 know, shrimp boats.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. They fish in 18 inches of water. This is my first time ever  
3 experiencing the big water like that.

4 Q. So let's say -- let's just start before we get into the  
5 actual, like, what happened and stuff like that. You mentioned,  
6 like, you guys do all the work onboard.

7 A. We -- well, we do a lot of the, we do a lot of the dock work.  
8 A lot of the other boats -- at least this is what I've been told.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Like, we do all of our own oil changes.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. You know, we do -- we change the filters. We change the  
13 Racors. You know what I mean? We -- and then we also do the  
14 maintenance. Like, since they were -- I went back to roofing  
15 while, you know, this has been down because of the pandemic. And  
16 they, the captain there, re-welded all of the chutes, all of the  
17 deck plates. We're very well-versed on what goes on, on that  
18 ship. And I think that it's, I think that it's a good policy.

19 Q. Chutes?

20 A. The chutes where you have your hatches, underneath you'll  
21 have a ring. And a lot of times they degrade over time. They  
22 didn't use stainless steel. So it's just a chute.

23 Q. Okay. Got you.

24 A. Stainless steel casing, about 12 inches down into the fish  
25 hold.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. So they cut them all out. We replaced them. We re-wired it.  
3 We re-foamed it, the entire fish hold. We did everything top to  
4 bottom.

5 Q. When was that done?

6 A. This was done just prior to this first illex trip. This was  
7 the second trip. So this would have been less than 10 days ago  
8 that --

9 Q. Oh, okay.

10 A. -- we finished up everything.

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. They had been doing it, like I said, for a couple of weeks  
13 prior to me because I have a family. A lot of the guys are  
14 single. So I was roofing. I came back on that last week. So  
15 what I was actually a part of was just replacing pen boards,  
16 helping them to grind down what we did, put in new -- we put in  
17 new checkerboards, new stanchions for the checkerboards, all  
18 stainless steel. We just got it done, man. Fucking shame.

19 Q. Got you. Where was the welding done?

20 A. The welding was done at a welding shop, and then the  
21 individual pieces were brought back onto the boat and welded on  
22 the boat.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. At the dock.

25 Q. And the captain welded them?

- 1 A. The captain, yes, sir.
- 2 Q. Cool.
- 3 A. All, yeah, all.
- 4 Q. And where, like, where exactly was the welding taking place  
5 on the vessel?
- 6 A. Well, it would be -- been taking place on the deck. You --  
7 when you replace the hatch, it has, you know, it has a molly  
8 around it, a sleeve around it.
- 9 Q. Which hatch are we talking about?
- 10 A. Each hatch.
- 11 Q. All, all hatches --
- 12 A. They replaced --
- 13 Q. -- they did?
- 14 A. -- every hatch.
- 15 Q. Okay.
- 16 A. Yes, sir. I want to say that there's 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,  
17 8, 9, 10, 11. Maybe 12. It's 11 or 12. I can't really --
- 18 Q. Okay. So the hatches were cut out and re-welded?
- 19 A. Yes, sir. We had some of the -- they weren't -- they didn't  
20 use stainless steel. So it -- in any event, generally, like this  
21 year, after this season it was going to go to Goodison's, and they  
22 were going to redo the bottom and all that stuff, and they would  
23 have done that there. But since they hadn't had any work, they  
24 allowed them to work on the boat, and he's a great welder.
- 25 Q. Got you. Do you know why they had to do the welding to begin

1 with or --

2 A. Why they had to do the -- just because when you're doing  
3 illex it's not such a big problem during the winter, when you're  
4 fishing for loligo, and the water temperature is cool. If your  
5 hatch is compromised in any way, shape, or form, you get a -- it's  
6 not even like the way it sounds. You get a couple cup-fulls of  
7 whatever inside of that fish, it will go bad. Illex, you have a  
8 2-day limit. If you are not back in unloading that fish in 2  
9 days, it will cook.

10 And we ice the shit out of it. We ice it three to one. They  
11 bitch all the time how much ice we put, but that's because we've  
12 seen hot spots. Patches wear out over time. And if there's any  
13 type of hole that's on the deck that you would have to wait for it  
14 to go to a shipyard to be taken out, you can circumvent that issue  
15 by just cutting out around it, putting that sleeve with that  
16 collar back on the deck, and welding it to the deck.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Stainless. So that's why we did that. It was mostly just a  
19 -- it was a preventive maintenance thing.

20 Q. Yeah. So it was stainless welded?

21 A. Yes, sir. They're beautiful too.

22 Q. And you say it was a steel deck, right?

23 A. Yeah, steel deck. Very good shape. Boat's very well  
24 maintained. It's one of the nicest looking boats in Point Judith,  
25 and that's no bullshit.



1 Q. Yeah. I get you. Round hatches. And so you said there's 11  
2 hatches. All hatches were done?

3 A. All hatches were done, and that was not because all of them  
4 needed them. We had two hatches on the port side that were an  
5 issue. They did that just because they were going to have to do  
6 it anyway.

7 Q. But these hatches, they're -- one's to a lazarette, one's to  
8 a --

9 A. No, no, no, no. Only to the fish hold.

10 Q. Only to the fish hold.

11 A. No, no, no, no. That's not -- the lazarette is in the aft  
12 portion of the ship.

13 Q. That's what I was --

14 A. Yeah, no. The lazarette is in the rear, in the stern.

15 Q. So it's solely to make sure that nothing is leaking around  
16 the hatches to protect the fish?

17 A. Right. Because you --

18 Q. Protect the squid.

19 A. Those fucking hatch -- those hatch covers cost \$1,000 apiece.  
20 You know what I mean? And we had already -- last year, they got  
21 five of them. We had to get five of them, and the fuckers were  
22 just still leaking. But it was just because of the deterioration  
23 of that steel chute around it. They just were not seating  
24 properly. You have -- when you're dogging down that hatch, it's  
25 got this little angle piece of metal underneath, and once that

1 degrades, it just simply will not dog down. You can tighten it  
2 up. It won't dog down.

3 Q. Got you.

4 A. And, like I -- it's not like there's this massive amount of  
5 water. I don't want you to get that idea. It's a very minimal  
6 amount of water, and you got --

7 Q. But a little bit will --

8 A. A little bit will --

9 Q. -- as far as --

10 A. -- totally fucking spoil it.

11 Q. I get it.

12 A. Now this year every piece of fish you brought in was going to  
13 get a grade, you know, from double A down to D.

14 Q. Got you.

15 A. And anything from C to D you might as well not even fucking  
16 bring it.

17 Q. Got you.

18 A. And we can't get double A rated fish because we don't have an  
19 RFW tank. We don't freeze it. We ice it.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. So we don't fuck off, you know. We --

22 Q. Got you.

23 A. -- don't compromise our fish. It comes in, it's nice looking  
24 fish.

25 Q. So take me from -- you left the dock on the 14th from New

1 Bedford. You left Crystal Ice. You --

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. -- picked up ice. You started steaming out.

4 A. Yep.

5 Q. Take me through your account of everything from that point  
6 until you --

7 A. We did a slow steam.

8 Q. -- abandon ship.

9 A. We took the slow steam because we got out of Crystal Ice --  
10 we had to stay a second extra day for Crystal Ice for whatever  
11 reason because it took so long to pack out the day before. We  
12 slow steamed it. We got to the fishing ground at --

13 Q. About what time did you leave?

14 A. Good question. Hold on. I can tell you. Tell you right  
15 now. Tell you exactly when we left that motherfucker. I texted  
16 my old lady.

17 MR. [REDACTED] I was going to say, you've got to ask the guy  
18 who has a wife because she's the one -- we're heading away now.

19 (Laughter.)

20 MR. ANDERSEN: There we go. All righty. We left -- we were  
21 steaming out into the channel by about -- by 5:40 p.m. We were in  
22 the -- we were already in the channel. I was about to lose  
23 reception.

24 CWO [REDACTED] Okay.

25 MR. ANDERSEN: So we had been going for nearly an hour at

1 that point. I just finished up what I was doing. I texted my  
2 wife.

3 BY CWO [REDACTED]

4 Q. So it would be safe to say you left Crystal Ice about 4:30?

5 A. Yes, sir. Yeah, yeah, that's perfect. We waited there for a  
6 second because we had to finish doing something, and then we  
7 turned around and left out of there. We were putting a new bag  
8 on, matter of fact.

9 Q. Bag on?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Bag of ice?

12 A. No. A bag -- a fucking -- our chaffing bag. We had old  
13 chaffing bag. We had a 30,000-pound haul the last trip, the last  
14 haul, and the fucker just blew apart. So we had to get a new  
15 chaffing bag. They brought it to New Bedford. We attached it  
16 there, put new rings on it, put a new pucker line, and put a new  
17 tripper on it, and that's what we were doing while we were doing  
18 the ice, you know, in tandem, and then we left out of there.

19 Q. And that's just to keep the net from --

20 A. You -- when you're -- yeah, you know, you have a chaffing  
21 bag, and we've always used the chaffing bag, the new chaffing  
22 bags. It's just that it looks like your regular bag. They just  
23 put an extra layer on it where it's touching the bottom. Once  
24 those knots, they get a little --

25 Q. You don't want --

1 A. They get compromised, but --

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. -- I've never -- we've never seen one blow apart like that.  
4 But that was also a 3-year-old net. So they brought this old  
5 school cheap fucking bag. I hated it. But anyway, we used it.  
6 It worked fine.

7 Q. All right. So you texted the old lady. You guys were  
8 steaming out.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Slow steam. Continue.

11 A. Slow steam. We set out at 4:30 that next morning. Up until  
12 then there was nothing, you know, nothing of any importance to  
13 report there. We -- everything was fine. We got out to the  
14 fishing grounds 4:30. We set in. I want to say anywhere between  
15 two and three hauls. I can't be perfectly specific with you.  
16 Generally we set in five. We haul back at eight. That's  
17 generally the timeframe. Then we'll set back in after we've  
18 already gotten the fish off-loaded, reset the bag. Set it so  
19 you're resetting -- there are three -- you know, between three-  
20 and four-hour tows generally.

21 Q. Got you.

22 A. All depending on what he's going to see on the screen, too,  
23 as well. One of them was very long. The last tow was very long.  
24 We weren't really landing on the meat the first day. We got on  
25 the meat the second day. By the end of the first day, we had

1 about 45,000 on, I want to say, give or take. Then we had a  
2 couple small -- a small tow in the morning, two small tows in the  
3 afternoon. And then the last tow we got a big bad 25,000-pounder  
4 with a fucking 20-foot basking shark in it, and that was the last  
5 tow. And that was what we put down. We got it down in an hour,  
6 iced it.

7 The boat was sitting low, but that's not -- that's to be  
8 expected. That was -- we had about 85,000 pounds of fish, and the  
9 seas were rougher than I'm -- you know, I don't have vast  
10 experience like Gee does, but this, it felt like fishing in  
11 winter. Because generally, when you're out there in the  
12 summertime, it's like glass out there. We had probably, I want to  
13 say, 3-foot seas, to be honest with you, consistently, throughout  
14 the entire -- these two trips. Very strange.

15 Q. So you said you started at 4:30 the first day. What time you  
16 go -- you roll to? All the way till --

17 A. We go until -- you can't fish for illex after sunset.

18 Q. Got you.

19 A. So 8 o'clock we haul back. That's the last set.

20 Q. And then you fired back up on the 16th at 4:30?

21 A. Actually, we were 30 minutes late that day because Josh is an  
22 asshole. He's your next victim. But he -- we were 30 minutes  
23 late that day. We set in at 5 o'clock.

24 Q. And then you went all the way till 8:00 again?

25 A. Yes, sir, all the way till 8:00, and that was it. That was a

1 good tow. That sundown tow, we were going to steam back to the  
2 other side of the canyon. Got a call saying the guys were coming  
3 back to that side of the canyon. Because we hadn't landed on the  
4 meat all day. We set out, went back to where we were at, and got  
5 a big bad haul, man.

6 Q. Nice.

7 A. Yeah, it would have been. Fucking sucks, man.

8 Q. Yeah. So you started steaming in. You put everything away.  
9 Put the illex away.

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. You started steaming in roughly, you know, just after that,  
12 right?

13 A. I'm going to say we got that fish down very fast because he  
14 was able to run it. We were concentrating it in one area, which  
15 we don't -- you can't always do because you've got to watch. We  
16 mind the list. We're on top of the list. If you go -- you put  
17 too much on one, you know, on starboard side, it's going to list  
18 to the -- you know what I'm saying?

19 Q. Sure.

20 A. So we were able to, we were able to lay it right down the  
21 center in the slaughter, and we got it down. They lifted out a  
22 basking shark. I want to say that we were steaming back at 20  
23 after 9:00 or thereabouts. It was very fast we got that fish  
24 down.

25 Q. Okay. And then what were you doing at that point? So you

1 started --

2 A. At that point, I go in. It wasn't my watch. It was Josh's  
3 watch, but he didn't take one right away. The captain was still  
4 up in the wheelhouse watching a movie until approximately 11  
5 o'clock. Josh took the watch until 2:00. I took the 2 o'clock  
6 watch. At the end of my 2 o'clock watch, I -- beginning of my  
7 watch, excuse me, I had -- the engine room alarm went off. I went  
8 down and pumped the engine room. I went back --

9 Q. That was when?

10 A. That was at the beginning of my watch. It was --

11 Q. It was about --

12 A. It was almost --

13 Q. -- 2:00 a.m.?

14 A. -- right at 2:30. It was 2:30 that fucking thing went off  
15 right away, of course. You know what I mean? So I went down and  
16 pumped it out, and I smoked a cigarette while I was out there.  
17 There was nothing amiss. We were still sitting low, but we had  
18 been sitting low. I went back in. I was in the wheelhouse. The  
19 fish hold bilge alarm went off near the end, about 30 minutes shy  
20 of my 2½-hour watch.

21 Q. So --

22 A. So about 4 o'clock. And that's when I went down. I -- first  
23 I went and I hit the small manifold pump. I hit the large  
24 manifold pump. I ran down to the engine room to switch so that I  
25 could put it on the fish hold bilge because we usually keep it on



1 the sump when we have fish aboard. It wasn't going off. That was  
2 the one that was going off. That's why I'm changing it. So I  
3 went back up, and then that's when I noticed we had water coming  
4 over the fucking gunwales over the side of the lazarette. I ran  
5 in. I alerted the captain. We got the suits and, you know, it  
6 was all downhill from there.

7 Q. So just to kind of recap that, those moments there. Josh had  
8 until 2:00. You took over from Josh at 2:00?

9 A. Yeah. It was, it was -- actually it was 2:10 that I took  
10 over. 2:10.

11 Q. About 2:30, the engine room bilge alarm went off?

12 A. Engine room bilge alarm went off.

13 Q. You went down there. Pumped it out.

14 A. Pumped it out.

15 Q. Good to go.

16 A. And there was nothing amiss over there. Because I was in --  
17 I was out on the deck smoking a cigarette. So I --

18 Q. How much -- when you said the high alarm went off, how much  
19 water was in the bilge?

20 A. In the, in the engine room?

21 Q. Oh, yeah, yeah.

22 A. Well, it's very low. He sets it very low. It's about like  
23 that.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. So, like, you know what I mean? The way that we were

1 squatting, it was just consistently going -- you get 6 inches in  
2 there, it goes off. Sometimes, you know, if it's all -- if you're  
3 up, you know, you could fit a whole lot more water in there; there  
4 was a very minimal amount of water in there.

5 Q. Okay. And then at that time when -- at that 2:30, you smoked  
6 a cigarette, and everything seemed --

7 A. Everything seemed exactly the way --

8 Q. -- fine.

9 A. -- that it seemed before there was --

10 Q. Well, it was squatting a little bit, but it was --

11 A. But it was the --

12 Q. -- the same?

13 A. It was the same that it was. You know, we've had, we've had  
14 100,000 pounds of fish on that boat before, and I -- and that was  
15 a little, you know, it was hairy. It wasn't hairy for me. It was  
16 the first time I'd ever seen that amount of fish, first of all.  
17 But you have that slip, and generally you got 6 feet of slip out  
18 of the water at any given time. That time we had about -- we were  
19 about a foot shy at the top of the slip, and we were low. We  
20 couldn't have fit much more. This time, it was lower, but it was  
21 still -- it was between probably 18 inches shy of the top of the  
22 slip. It was just, you know, it was a lot of fish onboard.

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. It wasn't anything -- there wasn't anything that alarmed me  
25 at all. And I'm kind of -- I'm not a -- I'm a hypochondriac and I

1 worry. I feel like if you get in that water, you're a fucking  
2 dead man. That's been in my head my whole entire life. You land  
3 in that water, you're a dead man. People die of hypothermia in  
4 Florida landing in the water. Your body heat dissipates 25  
5 percent. So I'm very fastidious about things like that.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. The alarms, all of that. So I didn't notice anything amiss.

8 Q. Got you.

9 A. The last time, I did.

10 Q. 4:00 a.m., fish hold bilge --

11 A. Fish hold bilge gets off. So I get out of the chair -- I'm  
12 in the wheelhouse. I get out of the chair, and I hear something  
13 fall in the kitchen. I'm thinking, what the fuck, you know. It's  
14 not rough. But then I get out of the chair, and I almost fell  
15 right through because we were slanted so -- so I just -- that's  
16 why I ran down there. I hit the pump.

17 I walked up on deck, and I looked. On this side, on the side  
18 of the conveyor, it didn't look so bad. But then I looked on the  
19 side where the lazarette was, and we were taking water over the  
20 gunwale at that point. And I wasn't going to wait around. I  
21 immediately got --

22 Q. Taking water over the gunwale on the port or the starboard  
23 side?

24 A. On the port side, the lazarette. It was coming over that,  
25 the top of the gunwale in the back there, the stern, and going

1 over the top of the lazarette, you know, hatch. The hatch was --  
2 hatch cover is on, but it's going over the top. And I didn't  
3 dilly-dally. I ran in there immediately, said, Kevin, we got a  
4 huge fucking problem.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. And from that point on, it wasn't 30 minutes before we were  
7 in that water.

8 Q. It wasn't what? You said --

9 A. Between -- if you're asking me, to be honest with you guys, I  
10 want to say between 30 and 45 minutes that we had to bail.

11 Q. Got you.

12 A. We stayed on that boat as long as we could. Nobody wanted to  
13 see it go.

14 Q. Yeah. So the fish hold bilge alarm went off, but the laz and  
15 the net --

16 A. Never did.

17 Q. Never did.

18 A. And we -- and, you know, and the thing was, we just tested  
19 that lazarette alarm before just because you got -- you have to  
20 clean up to maintain them. They get -- it gets a little gummy.  
21 You get clean water generally inside that lazarette, but it will  
22 just -- you know, that -- your bobber or whatever your magnetic  
23 bobber, you've just got to maintain it. But we just tested it, so  
24 I know that it worked. I don't --

25 Q. About how long ago did you test it?

1 A. We tested it on the first -- before the first illex trip.

2 Q. Which was?

3 A. Which was --

4 Q. Couple weeks ago, a week ago?

5 A. Yeah, 10 days approximately. I mean, I could -- I'm sorry I  
6 can't be more specific.

7 Q. No. You're fine. You're doing great.

8 A. We were running -- we ran through everything. We're very,  
9 we're -- it just, it sucked. You want to speculate when something  
10 like that happens because we know that fucking vessel. You know  
11 what I mean?

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. There's no -- we don't let people on that -- you know, when  
14 there -- something happens with the engine, Mr. Mike over there,  
15 they do a lot of that stuff where they'll help out with things  
16 that we -- you know, like the hydraulic lines. But we know that  
17 vessel. That's our fucking home. We know it. There was nothing  
18 amiss. That engine, the engine was acting fine. Everything was  
19 acting fucking fine. (Indiscernible), actually. Everything was  
20 working perfectly.

21 Q. What would you think would be the only way that it went down?  
22 I mean, you were sitting in that chair before -- I mean, just 5  
23 minutes before it went down. What you're saying is you didn't  
24 hear anything?

25 A. No.

1 Q. There was no excessive vibration.

2 A. The RPMs --

3 Q. There was no alarms.

4 A. -- were exactly the same. The RPMs were the same.

5 Q. She was running like she normally does?

6 A. Yeah. It was -- we were running at about 15 30, and that --  
7 we were still making about 6.4 knots. 15 55 is what the captain  
8 has always told me that that's your -- that's where you stop, 15  
9 55. You don't go any higher. So you just -- you'll throttle it  
10 back. It doesn't mean you're hurting anything. You just, if you  
11 got a big load on there, 15 55 is your limit. We were below that  
12 limit. The engine was not under any -- it wasn't laboring.

13 And, like I told you, I had been down there one previous time  
14 pumping it out inside that engine room. It's loud, but it's -- if  
15 there's something wrong, it will make a --

16 Q. You know it.

17 A. -- distinct -- the only thing that you're not hearing is a  
18 generator at that point. You're not running your winch, so the  
19 generators aren't on. You've just got the main engine. So if it  
20 was under any stress or strain, we would have heard, and there  
21 would have been an oil alarm, whatever, would have gone --

22 Q. Sure. Yeah.

23 A. -- off, you know, pressure alarm. Nothing. I don't want to  
24 speculate, but I guess I will just because I don't have anything  
25 to hide. I feel like, honestly, that it was -- we had a lot of

1 fish on that boat. We had it right down the center. We were low.  
2 And like I -- the only thing that is different in this particular  
3 trip that has been different for any other trip was the ocean.

4 I feel like maybe when you took a couple -- you took one or  
5 two waves up onto the slip that got on -- into the hog pen, was  
6 not able to get out through the scuppers, and it took one or two  
7 or three more, and that was all it took to get that gunwale down  
8 that low, and the water just filled that lazarette. I mean,  
9 that's the only thing that -- it's the only --

10 Q. Where would --

11 A. -- thing that could have happened.

12 Q. Where would the water, if it came over, where would it have  
13 gone?

14 A. Where would it -- what do you mean?

15 Q. You're saying that it filled up the hold. First of all, what  
16 hold, and how would it have gotten --

17 A. No. I'll tell -- like, all right. You've got your hog pen.  
18 Here's your slip. Got your boat. Here's your stern going like  
19 this. All right.

20 Q. Yeah, yeah.

21 A. And here's your slip. Here's your hog pen. If you're --  
22 when -- you know, by the time I got out there, the boat was  
23 already under -- you know, it was in duress or whatever. But you  
24 -- there was water coming -- there was waves coming up from the  
25 prop wash up on to where the net locker hatch is, inside the hog

1 pen. So if the water is staying in there, and the boat is already  
2 that low, I think --

3 Q. Oh, you think the water was getting into the net --

4 A. No. I think it was just getting onto the back of the boat  
5 and not able to -- you don't have your -- you don't have scuppers  
6 all the way back there. You've got a scupper -- about 10 feet,  
7 I'd say, from that lazarette house is your first scupper, a big  
8 scupper.

9 Q. Yeah, yeah.

10 A. And I think that the water was just pooling there. And as  
11 that angle -- you know, as that deflection is continuing, the  
12 water is just sitting against that stern gunwale back there and  
13 just weighing it down. And the lower it gets, the more water was  
14 coming over, and I think it was just a series of misfortunate  
15 events. I think that that's --

16 Q. So you think it was just the water on deck that weighed it  
17 down, not --

18 A. I think --

19 Q. -- water --

20 A. Absolutely.

21 Q. -- getting into the hatch.

22 A. I think that -- well, I think once it got to a certain point,  
23 that water got inside the lazarette, and then just -- and then  
24 that was, that was it. It was curtains from there.

25 Q. How would water get in that lazarette?



1 A. If it gets up to a high enough level -- you know, it's an  
2 aluminum hatch. It will float. It could float that hatch. It's  
3 not -- you don't -- it's not a secure -- you don't secure  
4 lazarette. It's up high. It's up at the level of the gunwales.  
5 It has a hatch. You cover the hatch, and it has a handle on it.  
6 It probably weighs 30 or 40 pounds. It's heavy enough, but that  
7 sea, you know what I mean?

8 Q. So it's not a watertight hatch you --

9 A. The lazarette? No, no, no. No lazarette. No. It's in the  
10 back. It's at the height of the gunwale, nearly. It's about 2  
11 inches lower. And it's kind of set inside of it.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. You pop it because you have that -- you've got to go down  
14 there, and you check your -- what the hell is that thing there?  
15 We keep all of our dock lines down there. There's nothing that  
16 really goes on in there. But occasionally you get water down  
17 there just like you will anywhere else. If the net locker fills  
18 up or gets a lot in it, it will overflow into that lazarette, and  
19 the alarm goes off, and you pump it out. We always use the  
20 lazarette to prime the pumps just because it always picks up.  
21 There's -- because there's nothing in there.

22 Q. Yeah, yeah.

23 A. There's no fish goes in there. So it's not -- there's  
24 nothing ever going to clog that drain. It immediately picks up.  
25 We always use it to prime that pump. So, in my view, it got over

1 -- it was coming over the gunwales, getting behind there, not able  
2 to get out through those scuppers, weighed it down, and then  
3 eventually filled the lazarette. That's the only thing I could  
4 think of.

5 Q. Could you see that lazarette hatch when you looked back there  
6 and said, oh, we're --

7 A. When I looked back there --

8 Q. -- have a problem?

9 A. -- we were taking waves over the top of that gunwale onto the  
10 top of that hatch.

11 Q. But the hatch was still on?

12 A. The hatch was still on. It stayed there the entire time.  
13 But I hit the -- you know, we were trying to do whatever we could  
14 at that point. I went and I hit the net locker pump. I hit the  
15 lazarette pump, and it was pumping water. So there was water  
16 inside that lazarette. The alarm just never sounded.

17 BY MR. [REDACTED]

18 Q. So you're saying that the waves were coming over into this  
19 hog pen. Is that like an actual structure on the deck?

20 A. Let me see if I can -- all right. So we'll see. Here's your  
21 aft portion of the ship. Okay. Here's your slip. Here's your,  
22 here's your net drum. Your hog pen -- our hog pen goes like this.  
23 You know what I mean? Then you put your stern boards in once you  
24 got your bag in.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And these are up -- these are 2x12, rough cut, red oak  
2 checkerboards. And we stack ours four high. It's exactly 4 feet  
3 off of that deck. So you have this hog pen. This entire area is  
4 4 feet enclosed. Now, these stern boards are out at this point.  
5 But they're checkerboards. You ever pick one of them fucking  
6 things up? They're like 100 pounds apiece. They're very heavy.  
7 And they're meant to keep that fish confined in that area so  
8 that's not going all over the place. You know what I mean? And  
9 so that you can manipulate it.

10 Now, this point, water -- here's our lazarette hatch right  
11 here. The water was up to here. Here's your first scupper. And  
12 it just was not -- it was not reaching it at this point. And it  
13 was all concentrated in this area, these aft areas, the water.  
14 And the waves were coming up -- when I was able to see, it was  
15 coming up over this slip, hitting the front of this checkerboard,  
16 and coming right up and over. It was that -- you know what I  
17 mean? And then by 30 minutes the water is already up to here, our  
18 winch system, and that's when we bailed.

19 Q. So, but these boards around here, these are always in place?

20 A. Yes. They're always in place. Well, generally, if we've  
21 already gotten that area cleaned up, and the fish is out of it,  
22 we'll take the first -- you know, the top boards out so that we  
23 can get up and over.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Four feet to me is like this. You know what I mean? I got a

1 -- basically need a ladder. But, yes, they're always in place.

2 These stern boards are not.

3 Q. Right.

4 A. You take them out when the fish is gone. Once that fish has  
5 been put down in the hold, those stern boards are removed.

6 They're put back in place.

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. I mean --

9 Q. All right.

10 A. That was my take on it.

11 Q. Yeah. Well, I mean, what -- I mean, what honestly could it  
12 have been? I mean, it's either you have steering gear like the  
13 rudder --

14 A. That's what he was, that's what -- you know, see, that's  
15 where -- that's what I mean. That's where my speculation stops.  
16 I'm a curious person by nature, and I like to solve problems if I  
17 can. I just don't want to get myself in trouble with my fucking  
18 mouth. You know what I mean? But he was saying the rudder post,  
19 if the rudder post is under too much strain it will bust, and  
20 that, you know, that's -- that is the only place in the -- okay.

21 I'm glad you brought that up. That's the only place that  
22 water comes inside of that lazarette. It's a very minimal amount.  
23 Just like your fish hold bilge, you have your stuffing box. You  
24 want it tight, but you don't want it too tight because it will  
25 fuck up your cutlass bearing. You want a slow trickle of water,

1 and you're not constantly pumping that water out, but it's a  
2 consistent thing. You pump it out couple of times a trip. So  
3 there is always going to be a minimal amount of water.

4 And where that rudder post is, I always -- because I'm the  
5 one that always greases it, so I know you'll -- when -- if he's up  
6 there manipulating the rudder, you'll see a very minimal amount of  
7 water. But it's always clean water, and it always pumps, and the  
8 alarm always sounds. Only time we've ever had an alarm stick was  
9 the fish hold, and that's just because you're cranking oil onto  
10 that -- the shaft. Sometimes that grease will get inside of that,  
11 and it will compromise that alarm. But that alarm always sounded.  
12 And, like I said, we checked it. We tested it.

13 Q. So you actually say you normally go down to grease the, to  
14 grease the --

15 A. I generally do. I like to stay on top of that. I grease it.  
16 Maybe I over grease it, but I do it before every trip. I grease  
17 everything. I grease the winches. I grease the net drum. I  
18 grease the lazarette. I grease the conveyors. I grease the upper  
19 conveyor; I greased it too.

20 Q. Okay. But nothing seemed out of the ordinary with the rudder  
21 arrangement, nothing --

22 A. No. And we actually had to -- Josh had to go down and switch  
23 a dock line because we had a short springer line. And he was down  
24 there, and he said, there's a little bit of water down here. So I  
25 went and I put bilge cleaner in there and then pumped it out. But

1 it was -- we hadn't pumped it since the end of that trip, and in  
2 an area about nearly the size of this truck here, you know, that's  
3 -- the lazarette is quite a -- it's a big area. You have  
4 -- you've got this much water. It's cambered down just like --

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. -- a bath sink. There's essential drain. So I want to say  
7 at that -- there would be about that much. Usually once it covers  
8 that drain, your alarm --

9 Q. Goes off.

10 A. -- is over here on this side, and it goes off. It rarely  
11 ever gets to the point that the alarm does go off, which is why I  
12 think, you know --

13 Q. So is there anything at the top of this -- of the ramp --

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. -- in the aft side of this? Is that -- do those boards just  
16 sit straight down --

17 A. You have --

18 Q. Any sort of like a combing or anything like that?

19 A. In here you have, where your superstructure is to hold your  
20 winch, there's a little area where there's boards right here, and  
21 there's a welded chute, like a stanchion. Just it's about -- it  
22 goes about -- that one goes -- this inner one, you have two  
23 sections. You have one for the stern boards, and one is for the  
24 front -- we call them the front boards. Those go as high as the  
25 checker. But it's just like a stanchion. There's a -- it's a

1 flat bar, like I-beam or whatever type material, the stainless  
2 steel, and you just slide your boards in it, and you pull them  
3 right out.

4 Q. Okay. But as far as, like, the checkerboard to the deck,  
5 there's nothing there? It's just --

6 A. No. The first board here, and this front board is right  
7 above the net locker. So we -- I cut that particular board. You  
8 cut it. And you just cut the front at a bevel, and you cut the  
9 outline out like a scribe for where the hatch cover is so that it  
10 lays flat. And it goes with the pitch of the ship so that it's  
11 laying flat on there. But they lay flat. But there's no -- no,  
12 there's no type of -- you're not setting it in a footer or  
13 anything like that. It just lays right on the deck.

14 Q. Okay. So that water that was coming up, it could flow back?

15 A. Yeah. It always, it always does. I've never -- I have never  
16 -- up until that point, I had never seen any water come up above  
17 that ramp like that. Even when we had 100,000 pounds of fish. It  
18 was close, but it was not coming over.

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. So his theory about that rudder, I mean, it almost kind of  
21 makes sense just because it was such a violent prop wash right  
22 there by the time I'm seeing it. It's -- it wasn't just waves.  
23 They weren't aft of us. They're coming -- they were going to --  
24 they're going to starboard. But the water was just coming up,  
25 broiling up onto that deck, and then --

1 Q. It was coming straight from the back aft, aft deck?

2 A. Yeah. You had all that water that was still coming over. We  
3 were now -- we were listing to port, and it was just freely coming  
4 up. You could still see the top of the gunwale above the water at  
5 that point, but it was coming up over that ramp hitting that front  
6 checker, and just splashing up.

7 BY CWO [REDACTED]

8 Q. When you were in that helm before that alarm went off, were  
9 you listing to port or were you straight?

10 A. No, we weren't. I didn't feel any list. I felt, you know,  
11 you -- I felt that deflection towards the back just because we --  
12 I had felt it. But I didn't feel it -- it wasn't significant to  
13 me until I got up to check the alarm, and then I was like, that's  
14 a little different. Just because it was rougher. But generally  
15 you're used to getting tossed side-to-side.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. I wasn't -- I took one step, and I was like this. You know  
18 what I mean? Like, what the fuck?

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. And then I went out and saw.

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. But it was -- I mean, I'd like to say it was a gradual thing,  
23 but watching that fucking big boat sink like that, it was -- I  
24 told you, man, it was less than -- it was 45 minutes, if, that was  
25 topped out, and that was when we had to bail. We had -- I had to



1 jump through all the fucking stay wires in the outriggers to get  
2 out there. It was that fast. We were trying to stay on there as  
3 long as we could. Nobody wanted to see it go. Engine ran the  
4 entire time. Until that boat went upside down, that engine ran.  
5 So it wasn't an engine problem.

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. And there was no -- and I'd like to say that there was no  
8 water in that engine room. Remember, I told you I pumped it  
9 prior.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. There was nothing in that engine room. And that was the only  
12 thing giving us any amount of hope. We're -- if you get water in  
13 the engine room, you're fucked. If you see that start filling up,  
14 that's when you know it's over.

15 Q. Did you or did the captain check the engine room?

16 A. Multiple times.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. You know, jumping in and out.

19 Q. Definitely no water in the engine room.

20 BY MR. [REDACTED]

21 Q. So is there any way for water that gets into that lazarette  
22 space to get into the net locker that you know of?

23 A. It would generally -- it would be vice-versa.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. It would be, if you're getting an excessive amount of

1 lazarette alarms, that's telling you that you're getting an  
2 excessive amount of water inside of the net locker. Up about --  
3 if you're standing inside the net locker, you have a checker split  
4 here, there's a hole where a pipe comes in. Water can go through  
5 there, and go onto that alarm, and then turn -- you know, flip  
6 that lazarette alarm. It's never the other way around.

7 Q. But it would be possible for water to go the other way into  
8 the hold and into the --

9 A. That's the normal -- that's how it normally works. Yes. It  
10 could go either way. Yes, sir.

11 Q. How big is that hole?

12 A. It's just a conduit. I'd say an inch and a half conduit.

13 Q. So is it normal for water to be in that net locker space?

14 A. It's normal to have a little bit. Not ever -- there's never  
15 been a huge amount, no. It's got -- you've got a big hatch, and  
16 it's got about 15 or 20 dogs all the way around the perimeter of  
17 that hatch, and it stays pretty tight.

18 And we just changed the gasket also before we went out. No,  
19 I feel that either that, that alarm just -- something happened  
20 with that alarm. It just never went off, never alerted anybody to  
21 the danger that was there. And it just put too much on her.  
22 Overwhelmed her.

23 Q. So then at that point, so you see what's going on. You wake  
24 the captain up. Like, what did you do after that? Did he tell  
25 you to get the life raft, the EPIRB? Like, what else did --

1 A. I told -- I woke him up. He came outside. He looked at it.  
2 He ran inside, grabbed the lift suits, grabbed -- the EPIRB was on  
3 top -- is on the top deck. He instructed me to go down into the  
4 engine room, pump the lazarette, pump the net locker to see -- so  
5 we could see if we could make -- because at that point we knew  
6 that there was water coming into that, into that lazarette.

7 And then after that, we stayed. We tried to -- we visually  
8 made a mark on where the water was up to at that point. We had  
9 one final scupper near the net drum that it hadn't reached yet.  
10 It reached that one, overwhelmed it. You know what I mean? And  
11 then that's -- we started -- we just started going over at that  
12 point. We had everything out. Everybody had their suits on. Had  
13 that fucking raft. We threw the raft out. It didn't deploy  
14 properly. So thank God for these things. It could have gotten  
15 caught on something. I think it got caught on something. It  
16 just, it didn't -- wasn't able to fully deploy. And we were  
17 unable, obviously, to get it to the lee side. We were already  
18 listing hard to port. You know what I mean? We weren't able to  
19 get it to the lee side. Like, you know what I mean?

20 You want it to ride alongside the boat, whatever. That's how  
21 they say it, but you don't ever -- they tell you, well, you're  
22 supposed to, you're supposed to kill the engine and then throw  
23 that. Well, let me tell you something. You don't kill the  
24 fucking engine or you're going like the *Titanic*. You know what I  
25 mean? Then you're screwed. You can't -- they don't discuss that

1 scenario. Like, if you have to keep your fucking boat going so  
2 that you can save your life, you know, then what do you do? We  
3 should have gone to that side, but like I said, there was -- it  
4 was this high.

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. And there was no sense risking it. These things right here  
7 are un-fucking-believable.

8 Q. And you had no issue getting it on?

9 A. Hell no. These -- I like the -- I want to write a letter to  
10 this guy. You could stand right up in -- you could stand right in  
11 that water and never submerge. That's how we did it.

12 Q. Yep.

13 A. Stand up, and you just move around. They're great. They're  
14 awesome. No. No, sir. No issues.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Captain grabbed the small one. He grabbed the small one. So  
17 he was having an issue. I grabbed the biggest one. I fucking --  
18 I didn't have any issue. It took me 30 seconds.

19 CWO [REDACTED] All right, cool. You got anything else?

20 MR. [REDACTED] I don't think so.

21 CWO [REDACTED] Appreciate it. Thanks for your time, Ed.

22 MR. ANDERSEN: Thank you guys. I'll send Josh over.

23 CWO [REDACTED] Cool.

24 MR. ANDERSEN: I think he's right here.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:                   SINKING OF THE FISHING VESSEL  
  *REBECCA MARY* SOUTH OF NANTUCKET,  
  MASSACHUSETTS, ON JUNE 17, 2020  
  Interview of Edward Andersen

ACCIDENT NO.:                       DCA20FM021

PLACE:

DATE:                                 June 17, 2020

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.

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of the transcriber.

Transcriber