

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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CAPSIZING OF THE LIFTBOAT *SEACOR*
POWER SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,
LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 13, 2021

Accident No.: DCA21MM024

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Interview of: JOSEPH RUIZ, General Manager
Seacor Marine

Via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday,
April 28, 2021

APPEARANCES :

MICHAEL J. KUCHARSKI, Group Chairman for Operations
National Transportation Safety Board

ANDREW EHLERS, Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MELISSA HUFFMAN, Warning Coordination Meteorologist
National Weather Service

██████████ Member
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of

PETER TOMPKINS, Attorney
(On behalf of Mr. Ruiz)

MICHAEL CENAC
Seacor Marine

JOHN PRESTON, Chief Surveyor Offshore
American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)

██████████ Member
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

LT ██████████ Recorder
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

MARCEL MUISE, Survival Factors Group Chairman
Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CAPT TRACY PHILLIPS, Chair
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

MICHAEL RICHARDS, Meteorologist, Weather Chair
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(1332 p.m. EST)

MR. KUCHARSKI: Good afternoon again to all. The time is 1332 Eastern Standard Time -- correction, Eastern Daylight Time, on the 28th of April 2021. We are all gathered to perform an interview or interview Mr. Joey Ruiz in relation to the *Seacor Power* capsizing, which occurred back on the 13th of April.

And this meeting is being held, so to speak, or this interview using Microsoft Teams. It is a video interview except for some I see that are on just telephone. Shortly, I will go around the room to ask all to introduce themselves. And also this time around, sorry, if all could spell their names. The court reporter has already come back and said if you would do that for each interview. But at this juncture, I can wade through it for today's interviews, and just say listen to the others because I think everybody will still, when we do Paul Fremin's interview, I think it will be the same people.

Little bit of bookkeeping. We are here -- the purpose of the investigation is to increase safety, not to assign fault, blame or liability.

Mr. Ruiz, the NTSB cannot offer any guarantee of confidentiality or immunity from any legal or certificate actions. I don't think you have a certificate, but I will ask you anyway shortly. And, Mr. Ruiz, you said we can record; is that correct?

MR. RUIZ: Yes, sir, that is correct.

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. And just so you know, you're allowed
2 one representative of your choice. When I go around the room, I
3 think I know who that is, we will ask he or she to identify
4 themselves as your personal representative.

5 Any question so far?

6 MR. RUIZ: No, sir.

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. My name is Mike Kucharski. I'm the
8 Group Chairman for this accident for the NTSB. And spelling on my
9 last name is K-u-c-h-a-r-s-k-i.

10 Mr. Ruiz, would you kindly give us your full name and spell
11 it for us?

12 MR. RUIZ: Yes, sir. Full name is Joseph Ruiz, J-o-s-e-p-h
13 R-u-i-z.

14 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you. And your title, if you don't
15 mind, at this juncture.

16 MR. RUIZ: General Manager, Seacor Marine.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

18 Okay, next I have a number as 1-361-877-3323. Please
19 identify yourself and spell your name.

20 MS. HUFFMAN: This is Melissa Huffman with the National
21 Weather Service. M-e-l-i-s-s-a H-u-f-f-m-a-n.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

23 Next is telephone number 1-985-850-6465.

24 MR. [REDACTED] Good afternoon. This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the
25 U.S. Coast Guard. Last name spelled [REDACTED]

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

2 Next on my list is -- let me see here -- is the Carrollton
3 Conference Room.

4 MR. TOMPKINS: Yes. This is Peter Tompkins, T-o-m-p-k-i-n-s,
5 here as the representative with Mr. Ruiz.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

7 MR. TOMPKINS: From Seacor.

8 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

9 Next is Michael Cenac.

10 MR. CENAC: Yes. This is Michael Cenac with Seacor Marine.
11 C-e-n-a-c.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

13 I see Drew Ehlers next.

14 MR. EHLERS: Yes. Good afternoon. This is Andrew Ehlers,
15 the Investigator-in-Charge for the NTSB. My last name is spelled
16 E-h-l-e-r-s.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

18 I see [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is on as a guest. Is that separate, [REDACTED]
19 Do you have a separate two lines going right now?

20 MR. [REDACTED] I have one on computer, and one on the
21 telephone. I'm trying to hook up the other computer. I might
22 have it now. Let's see what I can do with that.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. That's all right. I just wanted to
24 make sure we had that right.

25 Mr. Preston, John Preston.

1 MR. PRESTON: John Preston with ABS. J-o-h-n P-r-e-s-t-o-n.

2 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you, sir.

3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

4 MR. [REDACTED] Good afternoon. This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with
5 the Coast Guard. Last name is [REDACTED]

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: Captain Phillips. I'm sorry, sorry. Marcel
7 Muise, I skipped over.

8 MR. MUISE: Good afternoon. This is Marcel Muise, M-u-i-s-e,
9 with the NTSB. For this accident I'm the Survival Factors Group
10 Chair.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

12 Captain, sorry.

13 CPT PHILLIPS: Good afternoon. This is Tracy Phillips. I'm
14 the Chair of the Marine Board of Investigation for the Coast
15 Guard. Name is Tracy, T-r-a-c-y, Phillips, P-h-i-l-l-i-p-s.
16 Thank you.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

18 Mike Richards.

19 MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, R-i-c-h-a-r-d-s. I'm the NTSB
20 Weather Group Chair.

21 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

22 [REDACTED] and we see you now. I have you on video. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
23 Thank you.

24 MR. TOMPKINS: Peter Tompkins.

25 MR. TOMPKINS: I've already appeared. This is Carrollton

1 Conference Room, the Conference Room I'm in.

2 MR. KUCHARSKI: Oh, I see, right. Correct, correct. You're
3 on twice.

4 And, Monty Dames.

5 MR. TOMPKINS: Sorry.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: That's okay.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. He's not in attendance.

8 MR. KUCHARSKI: He's not.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It shows others invited. He's not in
10 attendance.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. I saw Peter Tompkins too, but he was
12 in attendance, but I see it another way. Okay. Very good.

13 Captain Phillips, is anybody at the Coast Guard recording
14 this as a secondary?

15 CPT PHILLIPS: Not that I'm aware of. I'm going to try and
16 see if I can get [REDACTED] on, and if he does come on, I'll have him
17 record as a backup.

18 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. I don't know if Marcel or Drew are --
19 can step in.

20 MR. EHLERS: Yes. Mike, this is Drew. Yes, I have a
21 secondary recording.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Captain, you can hold off on that. No
23 need now as long as we have a secondary recording just in case.

24 So, Mr. Ruiz, Ruiz, let me also mention that you heard
25 different organizations, parties to this investigation besides, of

1 course, the NTSB, Coast Guard, ABS, National Weather Service, and
2 of course yourselves.

3 INTERVIEW OF JOSEPH RUIZ

4 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

5 Q. So, Mr. Ruiz, please tell us a little bit about yourself. A
6 little bit about your background.

7 A. Okay. Well, good afternoon everyone. I graduated in 1989,
8 and I got into the oil field soon after. Started at McDermott
9 Fabrication in '91. Was a pipefitter to '93, and then I got into
10 the vessel business with offshore supply vessel repairs and barge
11 repairs at McDermott Shipyard. And then later that year in '93, I
12 ended up going -- being hired by Trico Marine to work in their
13 shipyard as well.

14 And working there I became a welder fitter working my way up.
15 And then in 1998, I was moved from the shipyard into the
16 operations, and from there I became a port captain for Trico
17 Marine, working -- visiting various ports, facilities, vessels,
18 making sure that all the vessels followed their compliance, and
19 passing through Coast Guard inspections as ABS inspections.

20 And then I ended up moving into a manager's role, vessel
21 manager from there. And then I became a traffic manager for a
22 period of time. And then I became Assistant Director of
23 Operations for a period of time. And then became ultimately
24 Director of Operations for Trico Marine, and was in that capacity
25 for a couple years. And then I was hired on at Superior Energy in

1 the same role, same capacity in 2007 to run their operations for
2 the liftboats, and I was introduced to the liftboat fleet.

3 So I had a good background of OSVs and the PSV market and
4 FSVs as well. And now I want to broaden my horizon by going into
5 a different field with the liftboats. And definitely different.
6 It's different operations for sure, but it was challenging, and it
7 was good experience. And then eventually I worked my way up to
8 Vice President of Operations with Superior Energy.

9 And then 2012, Seacor Marine acquired all our vessels. So I
10 made the transition over to Seacor in the same capacity. And
11 since then, been working with the liftboats. And then couple
12 years ago ended up going back into the PSV, FSV, and managing the
13 liftboats. So kind of double capacity role, and I became a
14 general manager at that time. So and that's where we're kind of
15 at today. That's just a high level view of my background. I've
16 been through numerous trainings through my career far as
17 leadership training, CPR. I mean, it's just a vast amount of
18 training I did through my career and to where we're at today.

19 And I was a certified crane operator, certified welder,
20 rigger, forklift operator, pipefitter, all those things along with
21 all the other training that I did. Was shipyard competent,
22 confined space, the HAZWOPER training, CPR. I mean, I just, I
23 have an abundance of training. Water survival (indiscernible)
24 training. So I've been through a lot of training through my
25 career as well. So -- yes, sir.

1 Q. Thank you. Thank you for that -- full of information. That
2 was great. That was great. Out of curiosity, did you have any
3 specific training to become port captain or was that an OJT
4 essentially?

5 A. Yeah, OJT in a way, but, yes. What we ended up doing with
6 becoming a port captain because my background was steel repair and
7 fabrication. So, yes, I was sent to various shops, engine repair
8 shops, propeller repair shops. I spent quite a bit of time at
9 those facilities, hydraulics, pneumatic. So I had a pretty good
10 six-month window of training through different shops with hands-on
11 training to prepare me to be a port captain, in port captain
12 capacity. On the things that I was weak in, I became strong in.
13 So when I was on the road, I was able to facilitate a lot of
14 repairs hands-on with the crewmembers.

15 Q. And is that --

16 A. And also taking -- yes, sir. I'm sorry.

17 Q. No, no. I thought you were finished. Please go on.

18 A. I'm good. But also taking vessels out on sea trials, and
19 working with the crews to make sure they were satisfied with
20 everything that was going on as well.

21 Q. Did any of those duties involve navigation issues or weather
22 issues as port captain for Trico?

23 A. Not really because it's normally the captain, he's
24 responsible for that. And it was always on -- I was a port
25 captain. They're responsible for navigating. So never really got

1 involved with the navigation of the vessels.

2 Q. Okay. And --

3 A. Just wanted to make sure they ran right, that's all, and they
4 were repaired correctly.

5 Q. Enough work, right?

6 A. Yes, sir.

7 Q. Do you hold a Coast Guard license?

8 A. No, sir, I do not.

9 Q. Okay. Your current position, how long did you say as general
10 manager have you served?

11 A. Probably going right on two years now.

12 Q. Okay. And how many vessels do you oversee or do you --

13 A. Well, we have, currently we have five liftboats and two FSVs
14 here, but we also support other operations globally as well. We
15 have two liftboats that actually operate in the Persian Gulf
16 currently. So we also have a support there. And we have the
17 liftboat *Jill* that's in -- that's currently operating in Europe
18 that we support, Paul and I do, from here. Paul is more involved
19 with that, but when needed, I do step in, and help out with that
20 as well. And then we have the *Power* that's -- not the *Power*. The
21 liftboat *Robert* working down in Mexico currently, and the liftboat
22 *Paul* working in Mexico currently as well. So been pretty busy.

23 Q. Are there separate general managers for those vessels?

24 A. Yes. We manage them from here, but we do have boots on the
25 ground far as shoreside support down in Mexico.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And same goes for the other vessels in the other regions.
3 But we do have a general manager of Latin American, which is Monty
4 Dames, which you're going to probably going to meet soon. And
5 then we have another general manager that's for the international
6 group within Seacor as well. And I'm the general manager of the
7 GOM here.

8 Q. Which is Gulf -- GOM is Gulf of Mexico?

9 A. Yes. And East Coast.

10 Q. Okay. The court reporter --

11 A. Currently don't have anything operating in the East Coast
12 right now.

13 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Thanks. Okay. And before I get into
14 more detailed questions about your current job, I'll stop for a
15 quick second here to see if any on the line have any follow-up
16 questions. Okay. If you think of them, something that I passed
17 over, we'll always catch at the end or you can put up your hand.
18 I'd rather sort of limit that until I ask for it.

19 Okay, Captain Phillips.

20 CPT PHILLIPS: No questions at this point, but I did hear
21 that Lieutenant [REDACTED] joined us. So I didn't know if you needed
22 him to introduce himself to get on the record.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes, please.

24 LT [REDACTED] Yes, Lieutenant [REDACTED] on the line, Marine Casualty
25 Investigator for the Coast Guard.

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Please spell your name, Lieutenant.

2 LT [REDACTED] A-n-t-h-o-n-y A-l-g-e-r.

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you very much. Okay.

4 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

5 Q. So continuing along, Mr. Ruiz. Can you tell us what your
6 day-to-day job entails, day-to-day? Not collateral duties, if you
7 will. Just some -- I know it may appear monthly or weekly or
8 whatever it is.

9 A. Yes, sir. Day-to-day operations, I normally get up in the
10 mornings, and I check in with my two ops managers, and that's Paul
11 Fremin and Clay Stribling. Just to make sure I read my e-mails
12 because we get an abundance of e-mails. I'm not sure if Mike
13 shared with you all, Mike Cenac, that is. But we get an abundance
14 of e-mails, and I'm sure all of us on this call does as well. But
15 review the e-mails, and also check in with the -- with my two ops
16 managers, and just checking on the vessels making sure that we
17 don't have any issues or anything. And then I normally check in
18 if we've got vessels in shipyards. I normally check with those
19 technical managers that's overseeing those projects to see how
20 repairs and everything's going. Just to see if they need any
21 assistance from me or -- and then I pretty much start my day from
22 there. We do get a weather forecast in the morning. I review
23 that because liftboats are so critical in weather. And so I
24 review that in the mornings. We'll get that report from dispatch.
25 And then I'll start my day. There's various things that we get

1 pulled on throughout the day. You plan, but also you get pulled
2 in a lot of different directions, so. But reviewing costs for
3 projects, reviewing some of the master reviews that we get in.
4 Any stop work authorities that come across from across the
5 regions. Just various things that I do during the day. Dealing
6 with the financial group on projects where cost is, and upcoming
7 projects we look in that with the Marketing Department, and other
8 opportunities that we may have. So it's just a vast number of
9 things that I do on a daily basis.

10 Q. Okay. And when you mention weather, is it weather for every
11 vessel in every area of the world?

12 A. It's mostly on the GOM because that's where we -- the
13 liftboats operate, yeah.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And then I rely on the other managers that take care.
16 Especially the vessels in the Persian Gulf. We have boots on the
17 ground there. They monitor those vessels in that region, yeah.
18 And then I go over the information with Paul for the liftboat
19 *Jill*.

20 Q. Okay. And I understand you mentioned the two deck -- direct
21 reports of the two operations managers. Do you have other direct
22 reports that report directly to you?

23 A. Yes, sir. I have some of the technical group that reports
24 directly to me as well.

25 Q. And if I can bring something up, and I'm going to share

1 screens, and if you can just tell me when you start to see this.
2 You should see an organization chart. It says operations slash
3 technical services U.S. Seacor Marine. Do you see that?

4 A. Yeah. Can you enlarge it some for me, please?

5 Q. Sure. Yeah. It's funny, when I see these -- somebody else
6 share a screen, I automatically try to enlarge them, and realize I
7 can't. It's the person --

8 A. Understood.

9 Q. So does this look -- is this correct, all these names that
10 are in here?

11 A. Yeah. And scroll. All that's correct on the left, yeah,
12 it's all correct.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. So far. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Okay, great. Thank you.

16 A. That is correct.

17 Q. Thank you. You also -- do you have on a non-daily basis so
18 collateral duties? Just give us an overview of what those are.
19 Anything? So, specifically, let me ask you. Do you have any
20 involvement with the drafting of the master charter party
21 agreements?

22 A. On that regard, we do have a marketing manager here that's
23 very familiar with that, and I rely on him for that resource. And
24 that's Vince Manzo (ph.). And so I rely on him on a lot of the
25 charter agreements. And also Dan Alvarez. I do divvy into it,

1 but I rely on Vince, and I will review it with him, but I rely on
2 him for a lot of that information.

3 Q. Okay. So when it says supervision and preparation, I'm
4 reading from another document called FOM Chapter 3. Supervision
5 and preparation, authorization of all contracts, marine management
6 agreements, and charter party agreements.

7 A. Understood.

8 Q. Do you get involved with that?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. You do.

11 A. I do get involved when needed. I also rely on Vince Manzo to
12 help me out with that as well.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. He's able to sign as well.

15 Q. Okay. And who do you report to?

16 A. John Gellert, the CEO of the company.

17 Q. Okay. And does your job include being part of incident
18 response? And, if so, how?

19 A. Yes, incident response. We have a team that we put together,
20 and (indiscernible) Seacor, and exactly what we did on the day
21 that event occurred, and -- excuse me, Mike. But -- all right,
22 I'm going to get back into -- I'm sorry.

23 Q. Would you like to take a break? I didn't say --

24 A. No. I'm good, I'm good, I'm good.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. I'm good. So, anyway, yeah, we have a incident response team
2 that we have, and we have our most qualified individuals on that
3 team. And it's Mike Cenac, myself, Jacob Charpentier, all the
4 higher up and the most experienced people are involved with our
5 response team.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. I'm going to hold there. Go around
7 the proverbial room here to see if there are any follow-up
8 questions. My next line for everyone on there, I'd like to go
9 into the incident itself, okay, and ask some questions on there.
10 Okay. Have Mr. Ruiz describe his involvement. Okay. So before I
11 go into that, going around the room.

12 MR. EHLERS: And, Mike, this is Drew.

13 BY MR. EHLERS:

14 Q. Mr. Ruiz, just a couple of questions. You mentioned that in
15 the morning, I believe you said in the mornings, you review the
16 weather report; is that correct?

17 A. That is correct, sir.

18 Q. All right. And what report is that?

19 A. That's off of Buoy Weather that we receive from our Dispatch
20 Office.

21 Q. Okay. So the report --

22 A. This is -- overlook, outlook of the GOM that we normally
23 operate in. It's no vessel specific areas, just a broad forecast.

24 Q. Okay. So the -- and we have a copy of one of the reports
25 from the dispatcher. So that's one of the things you take a look

1 at?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Okay. Do you receive any -- is that once a day? Do you
4 receive any updates through the day?

5 A. That was once a day, sir, on that. We normally get it once a
6 day.

7 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Thanks.

8 MR. RUIZ: Thank you.

9 MR. KUCHARSKI: I don't see any other hands raised. Everyone
10 familiar with the raising of the hands icon up at the top? Should
11 be at the top of your screen. If you have a question.

12 Mike Richards.

13 MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards, NTSB.

14 BY MR. RICHARDS:

15 Q. Regarding that weather information, is there any other
16 weather information that the company sends to the vessels during
17 the day or night?

18 A. No, sir. What they don't -- what they have is the equipment.
19 Also, the vessel has the capability of logging on to Buoy Weather,
20 and we have the Navtechs unit as well that's onboard the vessel
21 that provides information as well far as weather goes. The GMDSS
22 unit also provides weather. But normally that's the weather
23 reports that are provided to the vessel. But they are able to log
24 in to Buoy Weather as well. They have a login account.

25 Q. Thank you. I'd like to ask about that account. So would I

1 be correct in saying that the company has an account with Buoy
2 Weather, and that access to that account is provided to personnel
3 within the company or are these individual accounts owned by,
4 let's say, the captains? How does that work?

5 A. This is a login that was shared from the vessel manager,
6 well, operations manager, Paul, to the vessel. They may be using
7 his login as a generic login. But they are aware, and they have
8 used it in the past.

9 Q. And are the logins made available to the captains or is it
10 other people onboard? Who has access to the account?

11 A. Definitely the captain, but everyone that's on there should
12 have availability to it. We don't restrict anyone from having
13 that.

14 Q. And this account, is this something you access online on a
15 computer or on a phone?

16 A. On a computer, sir.

17 Q. Is there Internet access while underway while at sea?

18 A. Yes, sir, we do. We have stabilize antennas on our vessels,
19 and we do have connectivity while underway.

20 MR. RICHARDS: Okay, Mike, that's all the questions for now
21 for me. Thank you.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Any other questions?

23 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

24 Q. So, Mr. Ruiz, if it's okay with you, we'd like to -- I'd like
25 to move into in your own words for you to tell us your involvement

1 in this accident from the very beginning when you were notified,
2 what you did yourself, what you managed, if you would, until the
3 end of, if you will, those six or let's say when the Coast Guard
4 said they -- the search and rescue, they were winding down the
5 search and rescue operation.

6 A. Okay. I was actually in my truck. And, like, every now and
7 then I might have to take a break here.

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. But I'll do my best. I was in my truck, and I got a --
10 actually got a phone call from a co-worker I used to work with at
11 Superior, and I was told that my vessel, the *Seacor Power* had
12 capsized. And I said, no way. Are you sure? He said, well, I'm
13 on the, I'm on the phone with my captain, and that was the captain
14 of the *Rockfish* talking to Nick Monyo (ph.), that I received the
15 call from. And about the same time I received a call from Mike
16 Cenac, and I also told Mike what I had heard. So from my
17 understanding, Mike immediately reported that to the Coast Guard.
18 I'm not 100 percent sure on that. But, also, Paul Fremin reached
19 out. I called Paul and told, made a comment to him that what I
20 heard, and he made a call to Coast Guard as well notifying them of
21 what we heard through the telephone conversation I had with
22 Mr. Nick Monyo. And I recall Mike ended up sending out a meeting
23 invite, which we started immediately, and we got involved with
24 that, and we got all parties involved from CEO to CFO, everyone
25 that was involved, all upper management was on the call. And I

1 know I had a previous experience with a situation not even close
2 to this. We did have a vessel that went down back in '09 when I w
3 as at Superior Energy. And I know how important it is. We've got
4 to set up a command post somewhere. So what we did, I told Mike
5 the only place I could think of was Ballinger. They have a bunch
6 of trailers at their location in Fourchon. So I had -- I got
7 connections there. I called my contacts there. They said no
8 problem. We have a trailer available. So Mike and I was
9 communicating back and forth through the Teams meeting we had set
10 up, letting everyone know what we were doing. And we started
11 advising our response team to start getting their stuff together
12 because we're going to set up a post in Fourchon to start dealing
13 with the situation that we had at hand.

14 And that's what, exactly what we did. So I ended up taking
15 off. I went home, packed a bag, got in my truck, took off to
16 Fourchon. Unfortunately, on my way down, they had a accident
17 where a 18-wheeler had flipped over, and from what I understand
18 that was from the same weather event that caused the *Power* to
19 capsize. So I had to wait for that to clear up.

20 Once that was cleared up, I made my way down to the command
21 post. And then once I got there, then Mike Cenac dispatched from
22 there going to Fourchon as well. And then once we got there, we
23 started making a lot of phone calls to different parties that was
24 necessary, making our necessary reports that were needed. But
25 continuously while we were doing that, which was nice about Teams,

1 we were able to keep the line open, so everyone involved with
2 Seacor understood everything that we were doing. We all stayed on
3 the same page in doing so. It was a controlled event, I can
4 explain it best. It was a controlled event for us to get our
5 response team down there as quick as possible, and everyone
6 staying on the same page. Because once I got in my truck going to
7 Fourchon, I joined back on my phone in my hands-free device in my
8 truck. So I was able to listen in and communicate as needed while
9 I was going down.

10 And then once we got there, we set up a command post. We
11 also enacted our response plan, which Don John Smith got down with
12 the divers that night, which they responded very well.

13 Unfortunately, for the sea state, we were unable to mobilize
14 divers as soon as we wanted to, to get people in -- get the divers
15 in the water. So that took some time to get that done.

16 And then from there, I mean, it's just been doing daily
17 briefs with the families. I started that Friday evening with the
18 families doing daily briefs with them. Started out it was very,
19 very rough going, starting the daily briefs with the families.
20 You all can imagine. And, look, those people were hurting. We
21 were hurting. And I understand their frustration because they
22 wanted things to happen as soon as possible. But as I was telling
23 them in these family briefings that, look, the last thing we need
24 is a diver to get hurt or have another -- someone else lose their
25 life. We've got to take our time. We've got to be safe exactly

1 what we're doing, and do a thorough search of the vessel. Our
2 main initiative for when we did get the divers in was going search
3 for air pockets. And so canvassed areas as fast as they can, as
4 safe as they can looking for air pockets and different areas of
5 the living quarters, and also in the engine rooms. Unfortunately,
6 after we were able to do that, I did notify the families in
7 another briefing that, look, we are going to make a second sweep
8 of the vessel due to the fact that we kind of were aggressive
9 about our search. And so we went back, and did a second sweep.
10 Unfortunately, we did not locate anyone at -- on the second sweep.
11 And, now, we're moving into the salvage plan, which we had a
12 ceremony for the families yesterday, and they -- it was greatly
13 appreciated by all the parties involved. And it was something
14 good that I felt like needed to be done to make a transition,
15 along with my team, and also our CEO felt highly regarded as this
16 needed to happen. And so it did, and the families were very
17 grateful for that.

18 And now we're going to start the salvage process, which I
19 will be working with Captain Russell in Houma in the incident
20 command. I also have one of my tech supervisors that's going to
21 be boots on the ground in Fourchon and on the vessels as needed
22 working with Don John Smith. And also, Mike and I have a HSC
23 representative working. He's going to be living on the
24 (indiscernible) as well overseeing everything that's going on as
25 well throughout this salvage operation. And but that's pretty

1 much where we're at today.

2 Q. Thank you, Mr. Ruiz. Are you doing fine? Do you need a
3 break here or can we continue?

4 A. We can continue. I just need a little sip of water.

5 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Regarding the actual incident
6 response, does anyone have follow-on questions? Please raise your
7 hand or --

8 Drew.

9 MR. EHLERS: Yeah. Hold on. Let me get my camera on here.

10 BY MR. EHLERS:

11 Q. Thank you, Joey, for that. I just have some --

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: And this is Drew Ehlers asking the questions.

13 MR. EHLERS: This is Drew Ehlers asking the questions. Yes.

14 Sorry.

15 BY MR. EHLERS:

16 Q. I do have some just detail questions to ask you. And, again,
17 take your time with these. There's no rush. The first is kind of
18 going back to the morning weather report that you got. Did you
19 review the weather the morning of the accident?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. Okay. In that weather report, was there anything of concern
22 to you?

23 A. Not in the weather report that I read that morning. No, sir.

24 Q. Okay. All right. And then when you got the call from your
25 former co-worker who -- the *Rockfish*, do you remember what time

1 exactly that was that he called you?

2 A. I do not know exactly what time, but I do -- I have it in my
3 call log, I'm sure. But I do not have the exact time. I don't
4 remember that. I was too busy making other calls at that time.
5 I'm sure my call log will show, indicate when Nick Monyo called
6 me.

7 Q. Okay. If you could look that up, and just --

8 A. Okay.

9 (Simultaneous comments.)

10 A. Yeah, yes, sir.

11 Q. Okay. I'll let you make that note.

12 A. Yeah. Got it. Go ahead, Drew.

13 Q. Okay. And then you mentioned that you set up a Teams call, I
14 think, with all the leadership and the key -- go ahead.

15 A. That was actually Mike Cenac that set up that call.

16 Q. Okay. All right. And do you remember when that call
17 started?

18 A. No, sir, but --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- I can get that to you.

21 Q. We can look that up as well.

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. And did you just keep a Teams, that same Teams call open the
24 whole time; is that correct? Did I understand you correctly?

25 A. Yes, sir.

1 Q. Okay. And did you have that Teams call, that same Teams call
2 running the entire time that you had your command center set up?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Okay. And did that work well for you as far as coordinating
5 on your --

6 A. Absolutely. It worked great. I'm going to tell you that
7 was, that was a great tool, and it worked fantastic. It really
8 did. Because all parties knew exactly what we were doing within
9 Seacor. So, yes, absolutely.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I never want to do this again, but if something ever happens,
12 that's -- it was excellent.

13 Q. Okay. And tell me again, I'm sorry, who was on that call or
14 who were the main participants in that call?

15 A. Well, the main participants are, again, myself, Mike Cenac,
16 had John Gellert, our CEO, Jesus Walker, Andrew Evert, Michael Van
17 Dalen, you know, the salesman. Because he was in communication
18 with -- he was in communication with Talos. I mean, I'm trying to
19 think. Jennifer Forey (ph.), I think was on the call. He had all
20 parties and all -- on the vessel within Seacor that really needed
21 to be on there, and giving guidance as needed. It was all hands
22 on deck.

23 Q. Okay. And then the command center down in Port Fourchon,
24 what time did that get set up? You got an approximate time for
25 that?

1 A. If I had to guess, probably around seven. If I had to guess,
2 around seven o'clock. Due to the fact that I was delayed getting
3 there because of that 18-wheeler that was on the side.

4 Q. Sure.

5 A. And it could have been a little later, but I think it was
6 around seven, Drew.

7 Q. Okay. Fair enough. Now, this is a somewhat only
8 tangentially related question. Can you tell me a little bit about
9 the '09 accident at Superior?

10 A. Oh, yeah. Well, what happened there, we had a liftboat on
11 location working, and I got a call from the crew the day before
12 saying they had some concern. We had some incoming weather. It
13 was a late season hurricane. And, unfortunately, we couldn't get
14 our vessel off location. So we were there. So, anyway, in '09 on
15 that incident we actually took the crew off Sunday evening. We
16 removed the crew from the vessel. Left the vessel jacked up on
17 location. We did close all closures that we could. I mean, when
18 we do this, we leave a generator online, okay. That way we have
19 power. We have AIS. We have certain systems for trackability so
20 we can track the vessel if something happens.

21 Anyway, about 4:30 that next morning, Monday morning, I get a
22 phone call the vessel is down. I say, oh, here we go. So in that
23 regard, I set up shop in New Iberia. That's where we were working
24 out of at that time. So we set up command post, which worked very
25 well. We got together that day, and we had to make all the

1 necessary notifications again. And even though she went down, she
2 stayed afloat, which caused another problem for us because now
3 we've got a vessel transiting across the Gulf, I guess, with sea
4 state current, and we ended up having to get a offshore tug, a big
5 tug to go offshore because we had about 15 to 20-foot seas that
6 day. And in doing so, we had to hire a helicopter as well out of
7 Fourchon, which by that time I think it was referred as
8 Cougar, and they had very experienced people, rescue swimmers
9 involved with that. So we ended up dispatching that helicopter
10 offshore with two of our captains, and we lowered those captains
11 down to the heliport of the *Seacor Respect*. And doing so, they
12 got onboard the vessel. Just remember, we're at the top of the
13 legs so we didn't have any legs beneath the hull. All the legs
14 were sheared off, all three legs were sheared off at the location.

15 So with the vessel transiting across the Gulf, we lowered our
16 two personnel down with the rescue gentleman from that helicopter
17 service. He received our guys, put them down safely, and then we
18 were able to secure the offshore tug to the *Respect*, and tow it
19 into Gulf Island Shipyard where it went on -- on the way to
20 extensive repairs as well as we had to fabricate three new legs
21 for her. And through the investigation, we also had to bring in
22 the sister ship, which we brought in the sister ship before that
23 because once I boarded the *Respect*, I saw things that I didn't
24 like. And when I put my eyes on it, I told my boss at that time,
25 I said, we need to bring the *Influence* home, and which we did not

1 hesitate. We brought the *Influence* home, and thank God we did.
2 So we brought the influence home, and we actually had -- not three
3 legs we had to build. We had to fabricate six legs; three for the
4 *Influence* and three for the *Respect*. The legs needed to be
5 replaced on the vessels.

6 Q. All right, I appreciate that. That's helpful. Just to
7 confirm, the vessel that the legs sheared, was it already jacked
8 up before the weather hit?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. That's all I have. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. RUIZ: Yes, sir. Thank you, Drew.

13 MR. KUCHARSKI: Captain Phillips.

14 CPT PHILLIPS: Good afternoon. This is Tracy Phillips.

15 BY CPT PHILLIPS:

16 Q. You talked about getting the weather reports in the morning.
17 Did you send -- then forward those weather reports onto the vessel
18 or does the vessel get those from somebody else?

19 A. They get that same report I look at the vessel gets in, in
20 the morning. It's from dispatch. It's sent out in the morning to
21 the vessels.

22 Q. Okay. So dispatch sends it to you, and they also send --

23 A. Yeah. I'm copied on that e-mail. Yes, ma'am. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay. And you walked us through the timeline for the day of
25 the incident. I understand that the first call you got about the

1 incident was from the company that owned the *Rockfish*. Besides
2 the incident related phone calls, earlier in the day had you
3 received any calls from the *Seacor Power* or did you receive any
4 calls about the *Seacor Power* earlier in the day?

5 A. No, ma'am. No, ma'am, not at all. Normally, it has
6 communications with my ops manager. He's making sure that the
7 vessel is ready to set sail, and I did not have any communications
8 with the *Seacor Power* that day. No, ma'am.

9 Q. Okay. No communications about the vessel either?

10 A. No, ma'am.

11 Q. Thank you.

12 A. Far as from before the incident? No, ma'am. I had no
13 communication about the *Seacor Power* before the incident.

14 CPT PHILLIPS: That's all. Thanks.

15 MR. RUIZ: Okay. Thank you.

16 MR. KUCHARSKI: I see no other hands from the group.

17 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

18 Q. I have a couple follow-on questions, Mr. Ruiz. Do you know
19 who in your organization is notified if an EPIRB or an EPIRB
20 broadcast on your vessels or other distress entity? Do you know
21 who the --

22 A. Normally, normally, it goes through our Dispatch Office, and
23 the Dispatch Office passes it onto the appropriate parties that
24 need to handle those distress signals, and that's the normal
25 process for us.

1 Q. Okay. And so back to the question. Are you aware of any
2 notification prior to your being notified by the shoreside person
3 for the other vessel?

4 A. I wasn't. Because from what I understand it came across as
5 an e-mail, which I was on that e-mail, but I did not read. I was
6 in my truck at the time. So, anyway, Paul Fremin was notified
7 about the EPIRB, which he did reach out to the -- our normal
8 process when we get notified about a EPIRB because they do go off
9 when it's not an emergency situation, so we want to verify before
10 we start making calls. But on this situation, he did reach out to
11 the vessel, and my understanding, he was not able to reach the
12 vessel. And we did have some communication. I did call Paul
13 after I found out what was going on and told him, and that's when
14 I found out that he was trying to reach the vessel because he was
15 notified about the EPIRB. And that's -- and I told him, look, I
16 just found out about this. The vessel capsized. We've got to put
17 our emergency plan in action, and that's when we started that
18 process.

19 Q. So he was, Paul Fremin, was notified of an --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- EPIRB, a broadcast? Who told him of that?

22 A. He got -- from what I understand, he was e-mailed from
23 dispatch. I'm not sure if he received a call from dispatch, but
24 he was e-mailed from dispatch.

25 Q. Okay. And that was prior to your notification from the

1 *Rockfish*, I believe it was.

2 A. *Rockfish*. Yes, sir.

3 Q. Okay. A little follow on to weather, if you'll allow me, and
4 I'm going to share my screen again. And first off, let me go --
5 I'm going to go to page 48 eventually, but I just want to make
6 sure you know this publication, the *Marine Operations Manual* for
7 *Seacor Power*. Have you ever seen that before?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Okay. I'm not -- I just -- so I have to ask --

10 A. No, that's --

11 Q. -- seems like --

12 (Simultaneous comments.)

13 Q. -- stupid questions just to make sure that I establish that
14 you have seen that.

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. So you have? Okay. Great. So just out of curiosity, I'm
17 going to go to page 60, and it talks about abnormal operations,
18 environmental conditions. Do you see that on the screen?

19 A. Yes, sir, I do.

20 Q. Okay. And in Section 6.1.1.1, again, add another 1, it says,
21 continue to monitor weather closely, obtain forecasts by any means
22 possible, from the client, office, Coast Guard, insurance
23 surveyors. How would they -- I'm not understanding. So the
24 client, was the client in this particular situation was that *Talos*
25 was it?

1 A. Yeah. It's Talos Energy. They have their own forecast as
2 well. I'm not sure if they shared any forecasts with the vessel
3 that day or their company man that was onboard. But normally we
4 take our own from, from the, like I told you all, Buoy Weather and
5 also the other information that is shared on -- through the
6 systems that we have on the vessel. Through the Navtechs or the
7 GMDSS.

8 Q. Okay. So but it says client here, and that's Talos. Do you
9 know if this requirement for sharing weather or for the master to
10 go to them for weather is in your master charter party agreement?

11 A. I'd have to look through it, Michael. I'd have to look and
12 see.

13 Q. I was just trying to tie these together.

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Wrap my head around it how it talks about weather monitoring
16 and when a heavy weather forecast is received. Do you know if the
17 masters of the vessels get a separate heavy weather forecast or
18 would that be something to ask Paul Fremin?

19 A. I know whenever we have events like major storms coming in,
20 yes, we talk and communicating with these -- with the captains.
21 That way we're pre-planning if we can remove the vessel from the
22 location before the heavy weather event happens for hurricanes and
23 major storms. For thunderstorms you would have to ask Paul to see
24 if he did any communication with the vessel that day, but far as
25 the general weather that we currently see at this time of year, I

1 can't say that he actually, the captain received any heavy weather
2 report for that day.

3 Q. Okay. So there's not something in your procedures or from
4 this weather service that you use? I think it's Buoy Weather you
5 said.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. That has a specific heavy weather forecast. Have you ever
8 seen that from them?

9 A. Not that I recall on that regard.

10 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. I'm going to just hold there briefly
11 to see if there are any follow-up questions related to that.

12 MS. HUFFMAN: This is Melissa Huffman. I have a question.

13 MR. KUCHARSKI: Please.

14 BY MS. HUFFMAN:

15 Q. Is the forecast ever updated? I know you said that you got
16 the forecast in the morning. Is the forecast ever updated or how
17 were those updates communicated, if Buoy Weather comes back to
18 you, and says that it has changed?

19 A. Well, if we log in or if we've got any -- if we have any
20 reasons of concern, we will reach out to the captains, the
21 masters, and make sure that they're aware of incoming weather.
22 But on this day, I don't recall that we were advised about any
23 incoming weather that would exceed our ops manual on this
24 particular day.

25 MS. HUFFMAN: Okay. Thank you.

1 MR. RUIZ: Thank you.

2 MR. KUCHARSKI: I don't see any other show of hands.

3 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

4 Q. So I'll ask a little follow-on question, if you will,
5 Mr. Ruiz. Did you have any coms that day at all with the vessel?

6 A. No, sir, I did not. I had zero coms with the vessel that
7 day.

8 Q. Okay. And the -- I sort of asked you this question before
9 the interview about how you're structured. And can you tell me if
10 you also have a technical manager for the vessel?

11 A. Yes, sir. We have multiple technical managers that
12 specialize in their field. We have one technical manager that
13 actually all he oversees is engine repairs and engine overhauls ad
14 engine swap-outs. We have one technical manager that's very
15 familiar with PSVs and FSVs. And then we have two technical
16 managers that are very familiar with liftboats.

17 Q. Okay. And I've looked through the operations manager and the
18 technical manager what their responsibilities are. I think it's
19 under FOM, and I think -- is that *Fleet Operations Manual*, FOM, is
20 that what that is?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. FOM. Okay. And just in my own mind, you know, I asked you
23 questions earlier about your background as port captain. And do
24 you have -- when you hire, do you have a list of requisites, must
25 have, and sometimes you see nice to have credentials or background

1 for that particular position?

2 A. Yeah for that particular position. For the team I have,
3 these gentlemen been with me from -- they've been with the
4 companies longer than I have. So they have so much experience.
5 So I haven't brought on anyone that I knew with our team. These
6 individuals that I have on my team are very experienced. So the
7 qualifications is, is hands-on. They come from different
8 backgrounds. Some are engineers, captains. I have one captain
9 that's working for me. He's a technical manager now. So it's a
10 vast area of expertise that I have in the house here.

11 Q. Okay. And I guess what I'm sort of trying to understand in
12 here, if I were to go down -- I'm scrolling through this -- are
13 you seeing your FOM 3? Are you seeing the page 4 of 11? Are you
14 seeing that now?

15 A. Yes, sir, I'm seeing that.

16 Q. Okay. Great. And, specifically technical and operations
17 manager. Can I go down here, and on these bullets that you see,
18 is there anything that says this is the technical manager? I
19 understand now that they're different positions. You have a
20 technical manager, and you have an operations manager. They're
21 different people, correct?

22 A. They're different people. And also with this group that I
23 have with operations managers and the technical managers, sometime
24 they've got to play dual roles. It's the nature of the beast that
25 we have right now. Sometimes we have to play dual roles.

1 Sometimes I have the operations manager overseeing a project in
2 the shipyard which they have the experts (verbatim). They have
3 the experience to do so, and vice-versa. Some of these tech
4 managers have the expertise to run operations as well. So and be
5 honest with you, that's pretty much why it's lined up that way
6 with the technical and operations men again and the
7 responsibilities. Because sometimes we have to play dual roles
8 with the amount of people that we have, and the assets that we
9 manage.

10 Q. Okay. Fair enough. I understand collateral duties, and
11 having to step in as needed. But so can I say that everything in
12 here would apply to the technical manager or the operations
13 manager? That's my --

14 A. It could at different times. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Okay. So any one of these particular things. So if I say
16 timely processing of hull and machinery insurance claims, either
17 one of those could do that?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Also, just so you know, I do have the vessels assigned to two
21 different ops managers. So they know they're responsible for
22 their vessels. I want to make sure we understand that. Which
23 Paul Fremin is assigned to the liftboats. So he knows his
24 responsibility is making sure those liftboats is -- that's his
25 responsibility. And then I have Clay Stribling, my other ops

1 manager, he knows that's his responsibility for the PSVs, anchor
2 handler, and FSVs that we currently have. So I do have them
3 assigned to their particular vessels. So to make sure everyone
4 understands that.

5 Q. So then to follow on there. So you have a technical manager
6 that handles the liftboats also?

7 A. Yes. So I have two technical managers. I have one technical
8 manager that handles liftboats that's also familiar with PSVs.
9 And so he's able to help out there. And then I have one technical
10 manager with liftboats. He's pretty much just sticks with
11 liftboats. And then I have a technical manager that's very
12 familiar with PSVs and FSVs that he strictly deals with those
13 vessels.

14 Q. Okay. Fair enough. So do you know if Talos, they view any
15 portion of your *Operations Manual*? Are they provided any portions
16 of it, if you know?

17 A. I mean, they're provided -- they pretty much know what we
18 (indiscernible) because that's information we just share through
19 communication. I mean, it's available, if they want to see it to
20 them. I'm not sure if we ever shared it with them, but they know
21 liftboats, the capabilities just as well as we do when it becomes
22 being able to mobilize or not mobilize. Because all that comes
23 into planning with them, with the client. Not just Talos, but all
24 -- with all parties when we have a vessel. That's all part of the
25 planning process. We're all looking at the weather. That way

1 we're making a determination exactly when the boat -- when we need
2 to move the vessel. All that goes into planning, and we're always
3 planning that with our clients.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you for that.

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. So do you know, since you, I think, according to your job
7 description I asked you earlier about the technical aspects of the
8 charter party or what's needed in there, and you said you have
9 somebody else that works with you on the overall agreement. But
10 on some of the more technical aspects of it, and I'm not talking
11 about legal aspects, technical. Try to separate that, okay.

12 A. Yeah. Understand.

13 Q. Do you know whose responsibility it is to secure the cargo on
14 the deck of the vessel?

15 A. Yeah, the master. The master is ultimately responsible for
16 the cargo securing of his vessel.

17 Q. Okay. And --

18 A. (Indiscernible).

19 Q. The ultimate authority, I think I --

20 A. The master. Yes, sir.

21 Q. I think I understand that. But is there any -- let me be
22 direct. Is Talos, do they have any responsibility to secure cargo
23 on those vessels?

24 A. I mean, it may lend a hand to make sure that none of the
25 equipment far as being secured, make sure it's secured properly.

1 They may have some oversight with the company man. But,
2 ultimately, the responsibility does fall on the master.

3 Q. Okay. But contractually, I guess, what I'm trying to get to,
4 do you know if they have any contractual obligations to --

5 A. I do not --

6 (Simultaneous comments.)

7 Q. -- to either secure --

8 A. -- know. I would have to look that for you.

9 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. I'm going to hold there to see if
10 there are any follow-on questions.

11 MR. TOMPKINS: Mike, this is Peter Tompkins.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Please.

13 MR. TOMPKINS: I'm wondering two things. One, about a maybe
14 a break; and number two, notifying Paul. Do we have a ballpark as
15 to when I should tell him to stand by? Might be coming down the
16 home stretch or --

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yeah, oh, yeah, we're in the home stretch.
18 I'd say by three -- well, two o'clock your time.

19 MR. TOMPKINS: That's good.

20 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yeah. So we can take a little break here. I
21 do have some follow-on questions, and then I'll go around the
22 room. Take a five-minute break. How's that?

23 MR. TOMPKINS: I mean, if we're 20 minutes from ending, I
24 think I'm --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, I'm good if you want to --

1 MR. KUCHARSKI: Actually, let's take a five-minute break.
2 We'll do that and -- okay, five minutes everyone.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Five minutes. Thank you.

4 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

5 (Off the record.)

6 (On the record at 2:43 p.m., EDT.)

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: The time is now 2:43 or 1443, Eastern
8 Daylight Time, and we're resuming the interview with Mr. Ruiz from
9 Seacor.

10 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

11 Q. And just going to -- I had asked you a few questions about
12 the actual contract, and the client, which you said for the *Seacor*
13 *Power* during the accident voyage was *Talos*. Correct me if I'm
14 wrong, if I misstate anything. And I'm sort of looking at this,
15 sharing my screen with you. That's why I asked you about the
16 manual specifically. And it says pre-departure procedure, client
17 representative. The client representative shall provide the
18 master. Do you see that section?

19 A. Yes, sir, I see it.

20 Q. Okay. So that's why I'm sort of wondering. I'm trying, like
21 I said, trying to get my head around this thing. And seeing the
22 client representative. So according to this the bullet says
23 anticipated weather.

24 A. I got some background noise, Mike.

25 Q. Yeah, I do too. I don't know who that is. Sounds like

1 somebody opened a door or I hate to say flushed a toilet, but
2 that's sort of what it sounded like there. It's like an
3 evacuation system on the passenger ships.

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. So that's what I'm saying. Would they look at this? And
6 does the client provide the weather along the anticipated, the
7 duration of move? I'm guessing the duration of the move is from
8 when you leave the dock until you get to the site until you get
9 back. Would that be the duration of the move?

10 A. That's the duration of move. But we don't get any weather
11 from the client from my understanding.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Let me hold there, and see if anyone
13 has any follow-on questions along what I've asked so far.

14 Nothing heard. No questions. Okay. Now in the home
15 stretch.

16 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

17 Q. Do you have any involvement with the compensation for those
18 aboard your afloat units? And let me say afloat, you know, the
19 liftboats or the other vessels. As general manager, do you get
20 involved with that?

21 A. Far as compensation like --

22 Q. Salary. Salary or bonus.

23 A. Oh, yes. Yes, sir, I do.

24 Q. Okay. Is there a bonus system for the afloat personnel?

25 A. We don't currently have a bonus system currently. We do

1 have, like people work out of the country, we do have a program
2 for that for incentive pay for working out of the country. But
3 far as the Gulf of Mexico, we don't currently have a bonus
4 program.

5 Q. Okay. And how about for -- you know what, I'm sorry. I'm
6 going to jump around. But I knew what it was, and I didn't write
7 it down, but it was lucky I remembered it. So according to the
8 charter party, is there any off hire or demerge under the charter
9 party, the master agreement, do you know?

10 A. Not that I know of.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Not that I know of.

13 Q. And it just came to my mind while I was asking the other
14 question, and I apologize. Jumping around a little bit. How
15 about the shoreside personnel? Are you involved in the
16 compensation for them discussions, management discussions?

17 A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. And do they -- were they under any bonus system?

19 A. Yes. At times we do have a bonus system.

20 Q. Do you visit the vessels?

21 A. Yes. When I can, I do visit the vessels.

22 Q. And how often would you do that about? So let's say the
23 *Seacor Power*, how many times have you -- were you onboard the
24 *Power* over the last year say?

25 A. The last time I went to the *Power* was February while they

1 were in shipyard. I went visit the vessel and the crew. I
2 actually went visit with Captain David.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Thank you. And maybe a little bit difficult question. How
6 would you rate Captain Dave there on his performance?

7 A. It's a difficult. But I have utmost -- I have all the
8 respect in the world for Captain Dave, and all the crewmembers and
9 everyone that's onboard that vessel for what they do every day.
10 And like I said when I joined Superior Energy in '07, he was
11 already captain on the *Seacor Legacy*, and which is pretty close to
12 the *Seacor Power*. And pretty much some of the same crew that been
13 with him for all those years. And so when I go visit these guys,
14 and I mean, it's like family. That's why it tore me up. It tore
15 me up because I was really close to these, and not just by going
16 visit them on the vessel. Dave and I would even have
17 communication by cell phone, just talking about life, whatever.
18 And but it was good, and but Dave is a number one, number one guy
19 in my book. He was a -- he was very, very experienced, knowledge
20 of the sea. I slept good at night knowing that David Ledet was
21 onboard, the captain of the *Seacor Power*.

22 Q. Thank you. Thank you for that. Thank you. I have a couple
23 follow-up questions. Is there a point of contact for Buoy Weather
24 that we would be -- that you could provide us with?

25 A. I can get that for you. I can get that for you.

1 Q. And, also, you mentioned earlier, I think it was Mike
2 Richards asked about Internet, if they had Internet service on the
3 liftboat.

4 A. Yes, sir. Yes, we do have Internet service, and I can get
5 you the VSEP provider for that.

6 Q. Great, great. For the Internet and --

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. -- for e-mail service, whatever. I don't know if that's
9 separate or the same, but if you --

10 A. It's all pretty much the same. Internet, e-mail all works.
11 But I can get that for you as well.

12 Q. And, final question. Thank you. Thank you very much. And
13 the final question that I have off of my list is, is post-
14 accident, I know you've been very busy. I just can't -- I can't
15 imagine. I hate it when people say I know. I don't know. No, I
16 don't. Impossible. I can't imagine. So but I will ask did you
17 have any meetings, management meetings, I don't care if they're
18 top hat or all your management team, post-accident, post-accident
19 involving the, you know, discussions, meeting for the *Seacor*
20 *Power*?

21 A. Post-accidents, I mean, we had a lot of discussions, Mike.
22 My main concern post-accident was getting in front of the entire
23 team. I also talked to the entire team globally, all the GMs
24 around the globe with their teams. And just telling them that
25 there's a lot going on with this incident. We have a great team

1 that's at ground zero. The main focus for the team around the
2 globe, and also for the GOM is we have other assets that are
3 currently operating, a lot of them, and a lot of people. And the
4 main thing I stress to all those individuals, we've got to keep
5 everyone focused on the job at hand. And don't worry about us.
6 We've got a great -- we've got the best team that we can here at
7 ground zero working this incident. And I just told the team you
8 got to stay focused with everyone else, all captains, all
9 mariners, contractors that we may have on the vessel to make sure
10 that they're having meetings with them, making sure that they stay
11 on focus to perform the job at hand. Because this -- because when
12 you have an incident like this a lot of people start worrying, and
13 they're not thinking about what they're doing. And just want to
14 make sure everybody stays in touch and stays engaged in what their
15 responsibilities are with the other vessels and other mariners and
16 contractors that we have onboard our vessels. So I thought that
17 was very important to get that message out as soon as possible.

18 Q. And any thought from what you've learned so far, any follow-
19 up directives to the fleet on what not to do or what to do or?

20 A. Well, I'm sure after this investigation working with NTSB
21 along with all the parties on this call, I'm sure there's going to
22 be some learning points. And once everything is said and done, I
23 think there's going to be some things that we can put out and
24 improve the industry as a whole. And that's my goal. That's why
25 it's so important to be transparent with everything that we're

1 doing, and so to find exactly what took place. Because like I
2 told Captain Russell the other day, I said, I'm not used to doing
3 this, and I'm glad I'm not. I said, but if I'm running off the
4 tracks, just get me back on the tracks, I said, because hopefully
5 this is my first and last time I got to do this.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. Because this is hard. It's hard.

8 Q. Thank you.

9 A. I'm going to stay strong for everyone, and do what I got to
10 do to get this resolved, and try to bring closure to those
11 families that are still hurting. That's my goal.

12 Q. Okay. Thank you. Thank you for that, and thank you very
13 much for the information you've given.

14 MR. KUCHARSKI: Around the room, around the proverbial room,
15 any follow-on questions? Open for anything.

16 Tracy, TP, Captain Phillips. Now, I realize who that is.
17 Yes. Yes, ma'am.

18 BY CPT PHILLIPS:

19 Q. This is Tracy Phillips.

20 A. Hi, Tracy.

21 Q. Thank you for the information you shared with us. What was
22 your overall impression of the condition of the *Seacor Power*?

23 A. I thought the *Power* was in great condition. When I boarded
24 the vessel, I made my rounds like I normally do. Without going in
25 the house, I went around the machinery spaces and stuff like that.

1 Everything looked fine. And then I thought the vessel was in
2 great shape. I really did.

3 Q. How would you stack it up with the other vessels, the other
4 vessels you managed?

5 A. I would stack it right up against all of them. I think we do
6 a very good job here at Seacor of keeping our maintenance up on
7 our fleet. So I would stack it up against all the other vessels
8 that it was in great shape.

9 Q. Okay. At the beginning, when you were talking about your job
10 description, one of the things you said is that you check in every
11 morning to see if there's any issues with any of your vessels.
12 Did the *Seacor Power* have any open issues that you were working?

13 A. I do know they had some repairs that took place, and from the
14 e-mails that I saw from Captain Scott, all issues had been closed.
15 And also talking with Paul, from what I understand, all
16 deficiencies that we had when we came into the shipyard were taken
17 care of. We had quality crane inspections, which were done. We
18 had a life raft -- life raft -- we had an inflatable that was
19 actually replaced. So those two items were taken care of while we
20 were in the shipyard, and they were completed prior to departure.

21 Q. The shipyard in February when you visited the vessel or just
22 --

23 A. No, ma'am. This was like, this was the weekend before
24 departure, before Tuesday. I'm sorry.

25 Q. Okay. So those items you just mentioned were taken care of

1 over the weekend?

2 A. That is correct. That is correct.

3 Q. Okay. And as far as you know, there were not outstanding
4 issues?

5 A. Far as I know, there were no outstanding issues with the
6 vessel.

7 CPT PHILLIPS: Okay. Thank you very much.

8 MR. RUIZ: Thank you.

9 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

10 Q. Mr. Ruiz, I do have a couple follow-ups. Who is the
11 technical superintendent? Do you have a technical superintendent
12 for that vessel?

13 A. Yes. Not assigned like Paul Fremin, but we have Tommy Sonea
14 (ph.) that actually put the vessel through Coast Guard. And then
15 we had -- we had David Cole also. But Tommy, Tommy Sonea deals
16 with the vessel. He put it through Coast Guard. But David Cole
17 also assists as technical.

18 Q. Okay. Thank you. And who is your direct -- you have a
19 direct liaison with someone at Talos?

20 A. I don't have a direct, but I have Mike, Michael Van Dalen,
21 which is our salesman. He actually communicates directly with
22 Michael Budreau (ph.) with Talos.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, once around the room before I leave the
24 last with you, Mr. Ruiz. Anyone else?

25 Okay. Nothing heard.

1 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

2 Q. Is there anything you would like to add?

3 A. Well, I found out we're kind of -- the beast of social media.
4 Man, that was tough. Just when everyone -- want to make sure
5 everyone on the call understands that just going through these
6 family briefings was very hard. Again, that's -- the crewmembers
7 -- part of my family. And as one of the parents said in there,
8 and family members said, that's all our family. And it's true.
9 We went from when I first started the family debriefings to lot of
10 criticism, a lot of hurting, and I understand that. And I let the
11 families speak, and get it off their chest. But, also, what I
12 did, and this is where Derek with NTSB came in, and he said, Joey,
13 if you could, bring some drawings of the vessel. Bring some
14 drawings with you. So we did. We brought the drawings, and I
15 started educating the family members where their loved ones may
16 be, and that was very, very helpful.

17 And asked them whatever, hey, ask whatever questions.
18 Because they're not familiar what we do. So that was very, very
19 helpful in those meetings. And so I think the families really
20 appreciate that.

21 And so we went from a lot of hard feelings at the beginning,
22 which I totally understand. I totally get it. Because if I was
23 in their shoes, I'd be in the same boat, and I get that. So we
24 went from that, and at the last few meetings we were hugging each
25 other, telling each other we love. It was like a big family

1 affair now. It was awesome. It was nothing like I've ever seen.
2 And so there is a way for communication. And they understand here
3 at Seacor it affects us just like anybody else. It's our family
4 too.

5 And but one thing I did, one of the challenges I had was
6 social media because so many of these poor families were reading
7 so much false information, and they would carry that to the
8 meetings. And until they started actually listening to us in the
9 meetings, and started -- and that's when we started getting things
10 swung over because there's so much false information out there.
11 And I think in that regard it also puts us at risk when things are
12 out there because they think Seacor or whoever it may be, it's not
13 just us, may not be doing enough. And someone takes it the wrong
14 way, and it shows up in one of these meetings, and who knows what
15 may happen.

16 So we made sure security was very high at these meetings.
17 And I just want to make sure you all understand. It's a
18 possibility, not just with this event, but more events coming.
19 This ain't the last. I hope it's the last for this kind of
20 incident, but they're going to have other incidents. But I'm just
21 concerned about other incidents where so much false information is
22 on social media, and people are not held accountable for it. I
23 know we all live in America. I get that. It's freedom of speech.
24 I get that. But when we have a disaster like this, and you never
25 know how people's going to take this. And so I want to leave

1 everyone with that. You always need to think about that, what if?
2 What if that would happen? And we can't afford that either. So I
3 just want to leave you with that one. So, and thank you all. I
4 greatly appreciate the time. I really do. And whatever I can do
5 to help this, I'm here. So I'm available.

6 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you. Thank you very much, and much
7 appreciated, and your cooperation and the information you and your
8 team have provided. And I wish you some rest.

9 MR. RUIZ: Well, I told my boss yesterday, I'm going to rest
10 when this -- when we get some closure for these families. That's
11 when I'm going to rest. Yes, sir.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Well, the time is 1503, Eastern
13 Daylight Time. The interview has concluded.

14 (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: CAPSIZING OF THE LIFTBOAT *SEACOR*
 POWER SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,
 LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 13, 2021
 Interview of Joseph Ruiz

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21MM024

PLACE: Via Microsoft Teams

DATE: April 28, 2021

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.



Katherine Motley
Transcriber



Office of Marine Safety
Transcript Errata

SUGGESTED CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW FOR

JOEY RUIZ

TAKEN ON

APRIL 28, 2021

WITH NTSB REPLY

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING	NTSB REPLY
			Mr. Ruiz's suggested corrections to the transcript were inserted directly into the transcript as either "strikethroughs" to the wording with the suggested wording above the "strikethrough".	<i>NTSB's replies were inserted directly into the transcript inside either green, yellow or red "balloon" comments.</i>

Ruiz Errata w NTSB reply