

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of:

*

*

CAPSIZING OF THE LIFTBOAT *SEACOR*

*

POWER SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,

* Accident No.: DCA21MM024

LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 13, 2021

*

*

* * * * *

Interview of: BRANDON AUCOIN, Survivor
Cardinal Coil Tubing

Via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday,
April 21, 2021

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947



National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, D.C. 20594

Transcript Errata

**TABLE OF CORRECTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH: BRANDON AUCOIN
RECORDED ON APRIL 21, 2021**

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEED. _____
Initials

Marcel L. Muise

Printed Name of Person providing the above information

 Digitally signed by Marcel L.
Muise
Date: 2021.06.16 08:38:28 -04'00'

Signature of Person providing the above information

16 June 2021

Date

APPEARANCES:

ANDREW EHLERS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL RICHARDS, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board
(Via Microsoft Teams)

LT ANTHONY ALGER, Recorder
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

ERIK VERDIN, Member
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

LTJG VICTOR ALMA, Search and Rescue Controller
U.S. Coast Guard

MELISSA HUFFMAN, Warning Coordination Meteorologist
National Weather Service
(Via Microsoft Teams)

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

MICHAEL CENAC, QHSE Manager, Designated Person Ashore,
Chief Security Officer
Seacor Marine

GEORGE HOLLIS, Attorney
(On behalf of Mr. Aucoin; via Microsoft Teams)

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

I N D E X

| <u>ITEM</u> | <u>PAGE</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Interview of Brandon Aucoin: | |
| By Marcel Muise | 5 |
| By Andrew Ehlers | 13 |
| By Marcel Muise | 24 |
| By Andres Ehlers | 26 |
| By LT Anthony Alger | 28 |
| By John Preston | 29 |
| By Erik Verdin | 18 |
| By LTJG Victor Alma | 20 |
| By Michael Cenac | 22 |
| By Melissa Huffman | 23 |
| By Michael Richards | 24 |
| By Erik Verdin | 30 |
| By LTJG Victor Alma | 31 |

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

I N T E R V I E W

(1403 p.m.)

3 MR. MUISE: It's 1403 Central Time. This is Marcel Muise
4 with National Transportation Safety Board. We are interviewing
5 Mr. Aucoin of Cardinal regarding the capsizing of the Seacor Power
6 that happened on April -- yes, April 13th.

7 Mr. Aucoin, can you introduce yourself to us, and spell your
8 name for us?

9 MR. AUCOIN: Yes, my name is Brandon Aucoin, B R A N D O N,
10 and my last name is spelled A U C O I N.

11 MR. MUISE: Ms. Huffman, go ahead.

12 MS. HUFFMAN: Hi, I'm Melissa Huffman. I'm with the National
13 Weather Service office out of Corpus Christi, Texas.

14 MR. MUISE: And let's going around clock-wise from here.
15 John, go ahead.

16 MR. PRESTON: John Preston with the American Bureau of
17 Shipping.

RECORDING: This meeting is being recorded and/or transcribed.

20 MR. MUISE: Sorry, you cut out.

21 MR. PRESTON: John -- sorry, this is John Preston with the
22 American Bureau of Shipping.

23 MR. MUTSE: Okay.

24 LT ALGER: Anthony Alger, Marine Casualty Investigator with
25 the Coast Guard.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 MR. EHLERS: And this is Drew Ehlers. I'm the Investigator
2 in Charge of this investigation for the NTSB.

3 MR. MUISE: Go ahead.

4 MR. CENAC: Michael Cenac, Seacor Marine.

5 LTJG ALMA: Victor Alma, U.S. Coast Guard.

6 MR. VERDIN: Erik Verdin, U.S. Coast Guard.

7 MR. MUISE: So, Brandon, I'll apologize, I didn't bring my
8 little portable camera so I can spin it around and look at
9 everybody, but that's everybody in the room here. Who else is in
10 the room with you there?

11 MR. HOLLIS: George Hollis with Guglielmo, Lopez, Tuttle,
12 Hunter and Jarrell.

13 MR. MUISE: Okay, thank you, sir.

14 INTERVIEW OF BRANDON AUCOIN

15 BY MR. MUISE:

16 Q. So, Brandon, can we start with just a little bit of your
17 background? What is it that you do for a living, and what were
18 you -- what do you do for Cardinal?

19 A. So I am a Service Technician 1 for Cardinal Coil Tubing. My
20 main job is to assist other personnel in various job scopes on
21 different job locations for different customers.

22 Q. Okay. What is it that Cardinal does as a company?

23 A. The -- I only work for the Coil Tubing Division and they're a
24 service company. The -- mostly, they clean and service wells for
25 creek production.

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947

1 Q. Okay, and what is coil tubing?

2 A. Coil tubing is a reel of copper pipe that we use to push down
3 the well and pump various materials down for different things.

4 Q. Okay.

5 MR. MUISE: Just a point here, Michael Richards is a NTSB
6 Meteorologist -- is online with us as well.

7 BY MR. MUISE:

8 Q. Okay. So with as much detail as you can remember, please,
9 I'd like -- we'd like to hear your story about what happened that
10 day from the time you got on the boat, until the time you got off.
11 Take your time. Again, as much detail as possible. I'm not going
12 to interrupt you. In fact, I'm going to turn my camera off so
13 there's no distractions. Just go ahead, please, and tell us what
14 happened that day from your point of view.

15 A. So I'll start from the dock. We used the cranes that were on
16 the Seacor Power itself to load our -- everybody's equipment. I
17 say everybody and not only Cardinal's equipment but there's our
18 rental equipment, and just everybody's equipment, basically.

19 Towards the end of loading the equipment, the sky turned
20 gray, it was starting to drizzle, and I remember one of the crane
21 operators coming on the radio saying that he spotted lightning in
22 the distance. But we finished loading, we all went inside, the
23 cargo crew, crane operators, everybody. We had our meeting, our
24 JSA meeting. After that was concluded, we ate lunch and we pretty
25 much were heading underway. We were told it was supposed to be an

1 18 to 22 hour ride out there to the location. The only thing I
2 know about the location is it was somewhere in main pass. I don't
3 know the specifics of the location. But after we ate lunch, and
4 showered, and got cleaned up, we pretty much -- we were going to
5 bed. We were done for the day so we were going to get as the rest
6 we could possible (verbatim).

7 I remember I was in a room with another cargo employee named
8 [REDACTED] (ph.). He went to sleep approximately around 1:30
9 in the afternoon. I went to sleep approximately 2:30 in the
10 afternoon, and when I woke up, the boat was already capsizing. It
11 was turning over. The sudden shift woke me up, and we hit the
12 water. When it hit the water, the locker that was in the room
13 shifted violently to the other side of the room and smashed a hole
14 in the wall. [REDACTED] and myself were able to move the locker out
15 of the way, and he was able to climb through the wall with a life
16 jacket. I was too big to climb through the hole in the wall, but
17 I, myself, grabbed a life jacket. I grabbed a fire extinguisher
18 in the room, climbed through his bed and smashed out the window.
19 I climbed out the window, and I have cuts -- some cuts on my hand
20 from that.

21 I climbed around the side of the railing, and I met up with
22 [REDACTED] (ph.), also of Cardinal Coil Tubing,
23 and I'm assuming people who worked for the boat, Seacor, itself.
24 I'm not sure. I know that we were holding onto the dock railing
25 and we kept getting pummeled by waves and rain. There was a big

1 piece of wood. I don't know what it was attached to, but it was
2 floating in the water. The waves were throwing it around and
3 eventually it threw that piece of wood into my foot, injuring my
4 foot. Eventually, I was swept off the hand railing and onto the
5 crane railing where I tried to hold on, and I was trying to get
6 back to the people I was just with, and I got swept away again
7 into the water, and that's the last I saw of them.

8 I would surmise -- and this is just a guess on my part. I
9 would guess I was in the water for 30 to 45 minutes before what
10 seemed like a crew boat found me. The first boat that found me
11 threw me a life raft -- not a life raft, a life , a life ring. I
12 don't know what it was actually called. But I was too weak to
13 climb onto the boat from being in the water so long. They --
14 another boat was coming by and they signaled them, and the people
15 on that boat pulled me in on the life ring and they were able to
16 pull me onto the deck of their boat, after which I was able to
17 warm up and get my wounds tended to by the crew on that boat.
18 That's -- I believe the name of that boat was the Alice Mary
19 (ph.).

20 And from there I was -- they made their way to the dock after
21 searching for more people, where I was brought to Our Lady of the
22 Sea Hospital where I was checked out there and further worked on.
23 Q. Okay, well, thank you Brandon. I appreciate that detail. I
24 just have a few follow-up questions for you. When you joined the
25 vessel was there any kind of orientation to point out where stuff

1 was or did you already know from being on this boat before?

2 A. I had never been on this boat before, and they did point out
3 the muster areas. That was part of the orientation, and the JSA
4 were part of the same meeting as I remember.

5 Q. Okay. The life jacket that you mentioned, that's -- is that
6 a life jacket or a work vest?

7 A. I believe it might have been a work vest. It was just to
8 save my life. It wasn't an uprigting life vest.

9 Q. So it's something that you would wear on deck every day, as
10 opposed to during an abandon ship drill?

11 A. Typically, yes. It was in the room. That's where I located
12 it.

13 Q. Okay. The windows you crawled out of, they went to the back
14 of the boat -- the stern of the boat?

15 A. I honestly don't remember.

16 Q. Okay. I'm going to try something. I'm going to try to bring
17 up a diagram of the ship.

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. Let me know if you can see my screen, okay?

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. Let's see if this works -- I haven't done this since I've
22 been here. Can you see that?

23 A. No, sir. All I see is -- oh, okay, there we go.

24 Q. So this is -- I can't see it, I'm sorry. This looks like the
25 mess deck, whereas we want to go --

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This is the 03 level.

2 MR. MUISE: This is the 03 level?

3 BY MR. MUISE:

4 Q. So what deck were you on, Brandon?

5 A. I was on the deck labeled 01; that had the 01 on it.

6 Q. There it is, okay. So I see -- this is looking forward at
7 the top.

8 MR. MUISE: And for the record we're looking at the general
9 arrangement diagram for the Sea Power -- Seacor Power, the 01
10 deck. There are five state rooms across the stern.

11 BY MR. MUISE:

12 Q. And Brandon, do you remember which one you were in?

13 A. I think I was in 01 that was by the water tight door.

14 Q. On the port side?

15 A. I don't know which side it was on.

16 Q. Okay, and then Jay was in the next room over from you?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Okay, and the windows here appear to go out to the stern. So
19 is that correct that you -- when you escaped the vessel, you were
20 outside on the back of the rig?

21 A. If that's what the blueprint is showing, that would make
22 sense.

23 Q. Okay. But you didn't wind up on the main deck, obviously?

24 A. No.

25 Q. The way you described it -- okay.

1 A. No.

2 Q. The cargo on the deck, did you get a chance to look at that?
3 Did that -- any of that -- was any of that your equipment that was
4 secured outside?

5 A. Yes, that -- some cargo equipment was on the deck.

6 Q. And was that secured down by the crew, or by people ashore?

7 A. It was -- I'm trying to think -- I know it was --

8 Q. In other words, was it just sitting on deck or was it tied
9 down?

10 A. I don't know.

11 Q. That's fine. If you don't know the answers to any of these,
12 just say so. That's okay. We don't want you to guess.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Was -- during the accident itself, did you see cargo moving
15 around on the deck at all?

16 A. I never saw the deck.

17 Q. Okay. How about the cranes? Did you see the cranes moving
18 before or after?

19 A. Afterwards -- before I was swept away, one of the cranes fell
20 off of the vessel itself.

21 Q. Do you know if that was the port one or the starboard one?

22 A. I have no idea.

23 Q. When you did escape the vessel, what level -- how high was
24 the water in your state room? Had the water reached that the room
25 yet?

1 A. So where my room was -- our room, we were at the top when it
2 hit its side. Water was coming up through the hallway. Another
3 detail I did just remember, [REDACTED] was able to open the
4 door because water was coming up through the hallway.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So he was able to open the door to the outside because there
7 was one or two people in the hallway floating up with the water.

8 Q. Do you know who those were?

9 A. I do not.

10 Q. Your partner, [REDACTED], do you remember what he was wearing?

11 A. I know he was wearing a self-righting life vest.

12 Q. Okay, and did you have -- actually have your life jacket on
13 when you abandoned the ship, or did you put it on later?

14 A. I did.

15 Q. Okay, so you --

16 A. I had it on.

17 Q. You had it on the whole time you were floating around for 45
18 minutes?

19 A. I had it on before I climbed out the window, yes, sir.

20 Q. Okay. And the Alice Mary -- how did you get on board the
21 Alice Mary?

22 A. They had a ladder that attached to the railing that had a
23 small platform on it, and two men were able to pull me onto that
24 platform and I was able to climb on deck from that platform.

25 Q. This sounds like a crew boat, is that --

1 A. That's what I thought it was.

2 Q. Okay, and what kind of medical care did they give you on
3 board?

4 A. Basic medical care. Just -- they cleaned up my wounds, and
5 wrapped up what they could.

6 Q. Okay, well, thank you, Brandon. I'm going to pass this onto
7 Investigator in Charge, Drew Ehlers.

8 BY MR. EHLERS:

9 Q. Thanks again, Brandon. So -- and I'll just, again, ask a
10 couple of follow up questions. The orientation session that you
11 had when you got on board -- the familiarization. Do you remember
12 who gave you that familiarization?

13 A. It was the -- it was one of the captains. I remember -- so
14 I've seen the picture of the one that they found, and it was him.

15 Q. It was him? Okay, all right. And what all did he cover with
16 you?

17 A. He covered muster areas --

18 Q. Do you remember did he --

19 A. -- and --

20 Q. Oh, go ahead.

21 A. -- and he covered the places that were prohibited on the
22 boat.

23 Q. Okay. Did he tell you where the life jackets were?

24 A. Yes. He also told us where the life raft was, I think.
25 Yeah, the life raft.

1 Q. Okay, all right. Let me back up a little bit. Have you ever
2 had any training in -- on shipboard safety?

3 A. Yes, I have.

4 Q. And what kind of training is that?

5 A. That is your basic oil field training.

6 Q. Okay, and did they -- what kind of things did they teach you
7 about being on either off-shore supply vessels or lift boats?

8 A. They teach us about safety being on the deck, having your
9 life jacket on, securing down anything that might fly away with
10 the wind or get washed away with waves. They also teach us how to
11 survive in the water itself if we ever do have to abandon ship.

12 Q. Okay, and was that training provided by Cardinal?

13 A. It was a third-party Cardinal contracts with.

14 Q. Okay, but when you joined Cardinal, they -- the company
15 provided it for you through this third-party. Is that correct?

16 A. That is correct.

17 Q. Okay, all right. So then the JSA meeting, which I think you
18 said was done in conjunction with the orientation, was that --
19 everyone on board participated in that? Was it only for the
20 Cardinal employees? Who all participated in that JSA?

21 A. Everybody. Everybody on the boat.

22 Q. Okay, and in addition to the orientation, what kind of stuff
23 was discussed as part of the JSA?

24 A. The things that were discussed at the JSA leaving the dock
25 were nobody was allowed on the deck, keeping all the water tight

1 doors sealed, if we had to -- if we left our rooms to go down to
2 the galley, mess hall, whatever you want to call it, we had to do
3 it through the interior stairway system of the ship.

4 Q. Have you ever ridden on the Seacor Power before?

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. No? Okay, so this was your first time?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. Okay. I believe you said you had lunch that day, is that
9 correct?

10 A. That is correct.

11 Q. And was it there on the 01 level?

12 A. It was in the galley itself.

13 Q. Okay, and where is the galley?

14 A. The galley was directly under the 01 level rooms.

15 Q. Okay. So on the main deck, is that correct?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. It was the same level.

19 Q. Okay, and the Seacor Power was underway while you were eating
20 lunch?

21 A. I don't remember if we had left yet while we were eating or
22 not.

23 Q. Oh, okay.

24 A. I don't think so. I don't remember.

25 Q. Okay, was the door of the galley open or closed -- the door

1 to the galley, while you were eating there?

2 A. It was closed.

3 Q. It was closed, okay. So then you gave a very detailed
4 account of what happened, and I appreciate that. You mentioned
5 that the locker caused a hole in the wall. Was that an external
6 wall or was that an internal wall? Did it go to another room or
7 did it go to the outside?

8 A. I don't know. I was -- I did not go through that wall.

9 Q. Okay, so when the vessel turned over -- when it stopped, was
10 your whole room sideways?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. So were you standing on the wall when you tried --
13 when you opened -- or when you used the fire extinguisher to get
14 out?

15 A. No, I was standing on the bed itself.

16 Q. Okay, all right. And they -- again, you used the fire
17 extinguisher to smash out the window, that's correct?

18 A. That is correct.

19 Q. Okay, and then did you get on the railing right outside your
20 window?

21 A. Yes, I had to -- once I got out of the window, I had to climb
22 around the railing, and I eventually met up with the three other
23 people.

24 Q. Okay, so you climbed around so you were on the side that was
25 highest out of the water, is that correct?

1 A. I believe so, yes.

2 Q. Okay. You mentioned waves washing -- do you have any idea
3 how high you were above the water's surface? That's probably a
4 silly question given the waves, but how high --

5 A. Maybe six feet?

6 Q. Okay, and how big do you think --

7 A. I know we were very close to the water.

8 Q. Yeah. How big do you think the waves were?

9 A. When the waves were hitting us, they were hitting all of us.
10 It was -- it hit the entire railing that we were on.

11 Q. Okay. I think that's all I have for now. Thank you,
12 Brandon.

13 MR. MUISE: Coast Guard?

14 BY LT ALGER:

15 Q. This is Anthony Alger with the Coast Guard. Just a couple of
16 questions about kind of the -- any of those briefs and things that
17 would've knocked out before you guys got underway. Was there any
18 specific concerns about the weather or any emphasis on a -- on the
19 -- a weather brief outside of just normal orientation? Did they
20 emphasize anything about the weather specifically?

21 A. The only thing they emphasized about the weather was the
22 crane operators deciding if operations would cease if the weather
23 got bad enough. As I stated, the skies were gray, it was starting
24 to drizzle, and one of the crane operators called out on the radio
25 that he had spotted lightning in the distance.

1 Q. Okay. Was there any other weather report or weather stats
2 that were conveyed to you guys as far as wind speeds, wave
3 heights, anything like that?

4 A. No, sir, not to me personally.

5 Q. In that briefing, was there any heavy weather instructions in
6 the event of heavy weather or rough seas? Did they instruct you
7 anything specific outside of staying within the skin of the ship?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Any egress instructions or abandon ship instructions,
10 anything like that specifically discussed during this briefing?

11 A. I don't remember.

12 Q. Okay. And you've -- have you -- you said it's your first
13 time on the vessel. Have you completed any drills on this vessel
14 or --

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Not on this vessel.

18 Q. Okay. I think that's it for right now.

19 MR. MUISE: Okay, John with ABS?

20 MR. PRESTON: No questions.

21 MR. MUISE: Erik?

22 BY MR. VERDIN:

23 Q. Hey, Erik Verdin with the Coast Guard. I'd like to go back a
24 little bit. Actually, a couple of questions about your training.
25 You said you -- it was third-party training. Where was that? Do

1 you remember?

2 A. It was called M&A Safety Services in Youngsville, Louisiana.

3 Q. M&A Safety Services?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Okay. Is that any type of -- or SafeGulf Training or
6 anything? Are you familiar with the SafeGulf Training? Is that
7 still required?

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Is it?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Okay, and can you tell us a little bit about -- well, more
12 about what's taught; water survival, rigging, emergencies,
13 evacuations, those things. Can you tell us a little bit more
14 about what's taught in those trainings?

15 A. So we were taught all three of those. We were taught water
16 survival, and the water survival itself was exiting a helicopter
17 and abandoning a ship, as well as finding a life raft and entering
18 it in the water itself. They did teach us safe rigging practices.
19 There was theory and practical on both of those. I'm sorry what
20 was the third thing that you had mentioned?

21 Q. Anything on, like, safe water survival, rigging, any --
22 donning life jackets, any use of safety equipment, anything safety
23 related that you would encounter on in the off-shore environment.
24 Whatever -- first aid, CPR, maybe some of those things.

25 A. Yes, we -- they did teach us the different types of life

1 jackets, and how to properly take -- put them on and take them
2 off. We did go through a first aid, CPR, (indiscernible) and
3 blood-borne pathogens course.

4 Q. Okay, and how often did you have to go back? Is there -- do
5 you have to go back retrain for that, or is it a one time? And
6 how long ago -- when did you do your training?

7 A. So I did my training in March.

8 Q. In March.

9 A. It was -- yeah, and I know some of the training is every --
10 some parts of it is annually, some parts of it is two years. I
11 think water survival is three or four years.

12 Q. That's good. And where you said this -- it was in
13 Youngsville, or --

14 A. Yes, sir. Youngsville, Louisiana. M&A Safety Services in
15 Youngsville, Louisiana.

16 Q. I think that's it.

17 MR. MUISE: Victor, anything?

18 BY LTJG ALMA:

19 Q. Hey, Brandon, this is Victor Alma with the Coast Guard. A
20 couple follow-up questions for you. When you were on the good
21 Samaritan boat, The Alice Mary, how long were you on that boat
22 for?

23 A. I would say a few hours --

24 Q. A few hours.

25 A. -- because the -- at the time that I got on deck, I had

1 gotten medical treatment. I was able to take a shower, eat some
2 food, and I eventually laid down with a blanket and went to sleep
3 for a little while, and when they woke me up and told me that we
4 were at the dock, I asked him what time it was and he said it was
5 a little after 9:00 -- probably 9:15, so that's -- after 9:00 p.m.

6 Q. Understood. And throughout your time on the Alice Mary, did
7 you happen to overhear any radio transmissions between the Coast
8 Guard and other mariners in the area? Were you privy to any of
9 those radio conversations?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay, and the work vest you had -- that was just a very basic
12 work vest, is that correct? Were there any whistles, strobe
13 lights, signal mirrors on it?

14 A. There was a light -- a signal light on it.

15 Q. Okay. Did you have time to activate that strobe light? I
16 know it was probably during the day --

17 A. I did.

18 Q. You did not?

19 A. I did have time to activate it, I -- it got wet and it did
20 not activate when it got wet.

21 Q. Is it the --

22 A. So I had to manually activate it.

23 Q. Got it. Is it the strobe light that flashes up like 50-70
24 blinks per minute?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. Do you think that that contributed to you being seen
2 by the Alice Mary?

3 A. I believe the -- I believe it did because I remember seeing a
4 boat in the distance and pointing my light at it.

5 Q. All right. And during your familiarization and brief on the
6 Seacor, you said you were made aware of the location of other Type
7 One or Two PFD's, is that correct?

8 A. I was made aware of the location of the life vessels and the
9 life jackets that were on the deck itself, and the
10 (indiscernible).

11 Q. So those were two different types of life jackets?

12 A. I do not know. They did not take any of them out of the
13 boxes. They just showed us the location of the boxes.

14 Q. Okay, and were you assigned a life raft in the event of an
15 abandon ship?

16 A. No, sir.

17 Q. Okay, were you told to bring any provisions in the event of
18 an abandon ship?

19 A. No, sir.

20 Q. Okay. I think those are all my questions. Thank you.

21 MR. MUISE: We'll go back around after this, go ahead
22 Michael.

23 BY MR. CENAC:

24 Q. This Michael Cenac with Seacor. Thank you for taking the
25 time to tell us your story and provide these details to us.

1 The orientation -- I think that's an important part, and I'm
2 glad to hear that they receive some orientation on board. And
3 just a couple clarifying points: the whole crew was there. I
4 believe you said it was the captain that the picture was, so I
5 believe that would be the Master, David Ledet. You said
6 -- just stop me -- I'm clarifying now -- you recovered restricted
7 areas, your muster station in the event of any emergency, they did
8 show you life jackets that were on deck and in the state rooms, as
9 well as the location of the life rafts. Is all that accurate?

10 A. That was all on paper, but yes, sir.

11 Q. Okay. So they showed you the general arrangement or
12 (indiscernible) where you could find everything where you'd be
13 staying at when your room was assigned?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Okay. But they didn't actually run an abandon ship drill,
16 but they made you aware of all of the locations, emergency exits,
17 life jackets, correct?

18 A. That is correct.

19 Q. Okay, thank you, sir.

20 MR. MUISE: Weather Service?

21 BY MS. HUFFMAN:

22 Q. Just trying to get a better sense of -- Brandon, when you
23 were either leaving port or when things were getting underway, the
24 only weather briefing you had been given was what?

25 A. The only mention of weather was that the crane operator said

1 that he saw lightning over the radio, and the skies were gray and
2 it was drizzling as we were finishing up loading the boat itself.

3 Q. So you hadn't been given any kind of forecast information or
4 any expectations for what may happen as you guys were going to
5 your next location?

6 A. That is correct, I did not.

7 Q. Okay. That's the only question that I have.

8 MS. HUFFMAN: I don't know, Mike, if you have any questions?

9 BY MR. RICHARDS:

10 Q. Yes, just -- Mike Richards, NTSB. Just one question,
11 Brandon. Do you recall how long before you departed that you
12 heard the crane operator report lightning over the radio?

13 A. From what I remember, we finished loading the boat around
14 noon, and it was around that time. It was before we finished
15 loading the boat, that is for sure.

16 Q. Okay, thank you. Did you, yourself, observe lightning?

17 A. After the fact, I did.

18 Q. I'm sorry, after what event?

19 A. After we had finished loading the boat. The crane operator
20 had already stated that he had noticed lightning. I began looking
21 for it myself.

22 Q. Okay, thank you. That is all I have.

23 BY MR. MUISE:

24 Q. Okay, Brandon, this is Marcel Muise again. I have a few
25 follow-up questions for you and then we'll go around the room one

1 more time.

2 Did you work for another Cardinal employee, or did you work
3 directly for the company man?

4 A. I worked for Cardinal Coil Tubing.

5 Q. Who was the Cardinal Team Lead on board?

6 A. Dylan Daspit.

7 Q. Okay. Then he would work for the company man on board --
8 Steve -- or Duane Lewis, is that right?

9 A. Steve Lewis was the company man, and he would report to him,
10 yes.

11 Q. Okay. Did you hear any -- was there any discussions between
12 the company man and the crew, or between the crew, about the
13 weather before you left or on the way out?

14 A. No, not that I was made aware of.

15 Q. Did you see any kind of disagreements about any kind of
16 operations or whether to proceed or not?

17 A. No, sir, but I did not see any discussions about it either.

18 Q. Okay, thank you.

19 So you were in the water for a long time, and in some pretty
20 heavy seas and winds that I don't think anybody here has got to
21 experience. So can you shed some light on what helped you
22 survive? Is there something we can share with other people?

23 A. I mean, I'll say, when I was -- when I got swept away, just
24 holding on -- I was holding onto my life jacket with my left hand
25 just because I'm left handed, that's my strong hand, but I was

1 making sure that I was not losing my life jacket, and just will
2 power, I would say. Me just telling myself, try to remain calm,
3 try to stay above water.

4 Q. Did the life jacket fit you okay?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. You were able to tie it down -- cinch down on you good?

7 A. Absolutely.

8 Q. Okay. How about the life rafts? Did you see them at any
9 time floating away or getting blown away?

10 A. I saw one life raft capsized in the water floating around
11 while we were hanging onto the hand railing.

12 Q. Was it inflated or still in its capsule?

13 A. It seemed to be inflated. It looked more like a life boat,
14 like a -- it didn't seem like it was one of the inflatable ones,
15 but I can't be for sure. But it was -- if it did inflate, it was
16 inflated, and it was upside down.

17 Q. It was upside down. Okay. Could that be the rescue boat
18 instead?

19 A. It was a small man boat, I know that for sure.

20 Q. Okay, all right. Well, thank you. That's all I have for
21 you.

22 MR. MUISE: Drew?

23 BY MR. EHLERS:

24 Q. Brandon, just a couple additional questions. So when you
25 were alongside and loading and you heard the crane operator talk

1 about the lightning, what was the wind like at that point?

2 A. The wind was blowing strong.

3 Q. Any idea how many miles per hour? Or is it too -- that's a
4 tough question.

5 A. No idea.

6 Q. Okay. Was it getting stronger?

7 A. It seemed like it was picking up in short bursts.

8 Q. Okay. Do you -- actually, let me ask this, what time did you
9 start loading cargo, do you remember?

10 A. Just after 6:00 a.m.

11 Q. Okay, and when you started loading cargo, what was the wind
12 like then?

13 A. It wasn't as strong, but it was blowing.

14 Q. It was blowing? Okay, all right. And then I just have one
15 other question, and that is: when you were up there on the
16 railing with the other folks from the boat, did everyone else have
17 a life jacket?

18 A. No.

19 Q. How many folks had life jackets, do you think?

20 A. Four of us.

21 Q. Four. And how many were up there with you?

22 A. Five total. Two were with no life jacket.

23 Q. Okay. Do you remember who didn't have the life jacket?

24 A. I remember -- I believe this was one of the cooks. He seemed
25 to be an older black man. He did not have a life jacket. And one

1 of the people for the boat did not have a life jacket.

2 Q. Okay, thank you.

3 BY LT ALGER:

4 Q. This is Anthony Alger with the Coast Guard. You said this
5 was the first time on this particular vessel. This may have been
6 established. How much experience do you have on lift boats or
7 these particular types of vessels?

8 A. This was my second time working on a lift boat itself.

9 Q. From your -- what was the other boat -- you can give me a
10 name, or is it similar size, a lot smaller -- what -- how do they
11 compare to this boat?

12 A. I don't remember that information.

13 Q. So you said you guys got in the rack and took a nap. What
14 time frame was that again when you fell asleep and then woke up
15 again, roughly?

16 A. So I know my bunkmate, [REDACTED], went to sleep around
17 1:30. I know because I was playing -- I was laying in my bed
18 playing on my phone, and I fell asleep around 2:30. That's the
19 last noted time that I have for myself.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. As for what time it was when we woke up, I do not know.

22 Q. Okay. How long was the transit from when you guys were
23 moored in Fourchon to the -- basically, once you got out to the
24 Gulf? Do you -- were you -- or is that the time that you were
25 napping?

1 A. I honestly don't know.

2 Q. Okay. From the time that you were awake, as far as the
3 transit, was there anything out of the ordinary that you can
4 comment on, or anybody in the vessel that was discussing anything
5 that they were concerned with, that you're aware of?

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. That's it.

8 BY MR. PRESTON:

9 Q. This is John Preston with ABS. Hey, Brandon. I really -- I
10 can't imagine what you had to go through to do this. I'm really
11 glad you made it, and I'm sorry that everybody didn't.

12 When you were able to get out of your room and make it around
13 to the side of the vessel, were you able to actually stand on that
14 platform on that side, or were you, at that point, standing on the
15 side of the vessel?

16 A. I was standing on the side of vessel, and loosely standing
17 because we actually flipped around a bit because the water made it
18 very difficult to get your footing. I was not on solid ground.

19 Q. Okay. So the -- it wasn't so much the vessel was moving
20 around, but the waves were coming up through the grating around
21 you?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And then you said something about the crane fell off, or
24 that's what I heard anyway. So --

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. At that point -- at that stage, you -- the crane boom
2 would've been slightly below you folks standing on the platform?

3 A. Yes, sir.

4 Q. Okay, and then the crane boom started moving around, I guess?
5 That's what you meant when you said the crane fell off?

6 A. I don't know, actually, where it started moving, but we
7 watched the crane fall off of the boat.

8 Q. Okay. So these cranes are wrapped around the leg, so it --
9 at that point, it would have moved up the leg, and then the boom
10 would have gone with it, or the -- because you ended up on the
11 boom at one point, you said?

12 A. I ended up on the railing that was attached to the boat, but
13 the crane itself had fallen off. The railing was still attached.

14 Q. Okay, thank you, sir.

15 MR. MUISE: Go ahead, Erik.

16 BY MR. VERDIN:

17 Q. Brandon, Erik Verdin again with the Coast Guard. Hey, look,
18 I'm a mariner and I know a lot of the training that you've gone
19 through; I've attended. And I'm just trying to get -- I can only
20 -- thankfully, I've never used my training, other than teaching it
21 to other people. So I'm just kind of curious, what was your
22 feeling about your training? Did it help prepare you? I know
23 there's no comparison to what you actually experienced versus what
24 you were trained, but just having gone through the training, and
25 having gone and experienced what you experienced -- ways to better

1 prepare other mariners and people that work off shore. What's
2 your thoughts on that?

3 A. Well, I feel that that training helped save my life. I
4 really do. Once I was able to calm myself and remember the
5 training of being in the water, pulling in, trying to keep my body
6 warm, just trying to stay afloat, trying to keep my head above
7 water. I know all of that contributed.

8 Q. Good. I'm sure you're like me. When you went through the
9 training, it's like oh, this sucks, why do we need this, but,
10 hindsight, I feel confident as well, but yeah, that's what I was
11 hoping. Thank you for sharing that with us.

12 MR. MUISE: Victor, any follow ups?

13 BY LTJG ALMA:

14 Q. Hey, Brandon, my last question to you is, given the totality
15 of your experience as a mariner, and the on-scene weather
16 conditions that you saw that day, did you have any apprehensions
17 whatsoever about going out that day? Now, I know there's no way
18 you could have forecasted what ultimately ended up happening, but,
19 again, were there any concerns with going out that day?

20 A. For me personally, no.

21 Q. All right. Last that I'll say is I've been a Search and
22 Rescue controller for the Coast Guard for about four-and-a-half
23 years, and we use very sophisticated computer models to calculate
24 where a person can drift over a certain period of time. They're
25 very sophisticated, but the one thing that we cannot account for

1 is the human spirit, the will to live, and you demonstrated that
2 you have a very strong will to live, and I believe that that was a
3 major contributing factor to you being here today. So I'm glad to
4 see you here. Thanks.

5 MR. MUISE: Mike, do you have any follow-ups?

6 MR. CENAC: No. Thank you, sir, for your time.

7 MR. MUISE: Melissa, any follow-ups?

8 MS. HUFFMAN: No, thank you.

9 MR. MUISE: Mike?

10 MR. RICHARDS: No more questions. Thank you for your time
11 today, Brandon.

12 MR. MUISE: So, Brandon, is there anything else you think
13 that we didn't ask that you'd like to share with us that we should
14 know about?

15 MR. AUCOIN: No, that pretty much covers it. I will say I
16 did a lot of praying on -- hanging onto the rail and in the water
17 itself, but that's my personal beliefs.

18 MR. MUISE: Okay, well, thank you. And with that it's 14:50.
19 I will secure the recording.

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

21

22

23

24

25

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 Brandon Aucoin

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21MM024

PLACE: Via Microsoft Teams

DATE: April 21, 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.



Transcriber

FREE STATE REPORTING, INC.
Court Reporting Transcription
D.C. Area 301-261-1902
Balt. & Annap. 410-974-0947