

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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In the Matter of:	*	
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ACCIDENT OF THE LADY D	*	
ON MARCH 6, 2004	*	Docket No. DCA 04 MM015
in Baltimore, Maryland	*	
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Tuesday  
March 9, 2004

INTERVIEW OF:

SARAH KERNAGIS

PRESENT:

MORGAN J. TURRELL, NTSB  
MARIETTE BURER  
SCOTT BURNOWSKI  
TREVOR COWEN

## P R O C E E D I N G S

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MR. TURRELL: Okay. Good morning, this is Morgan Turrell with the NTSB. We are conducting a telephone interview of one of the passengers who was involved in the water taxi accident on Saturday, March 6, 2004. We are at the Naval Reserve Unit here in Baltimore.

My name is Morgan Turrell and to my right is?

MS. BURER: Mariette Burer, from National Transportation Safety Board.

ENSIGN COWEN: Ensign Trevor Cowen, U.S. Coast Guard Sector, Baltimore.

LIEUTENANT BURNOWSKI: Scott Burnowski, U.S. Coast Guard Sector, Baltimore.

MR. TURRELL: Introduce please, yourself and spell your name, please.

MS. KERNAGIS: My name is Sarah Kernagis, Sarah, S-A-R-A-H, Kernagis, K-E-R-N-A-G-I-S.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. And, Sarah, how old are you?

MS. KERNAGIS: I am 23.

MR. TURRELL: Twenty three. And were you onboard the water taxi March 6 here in Baltimore?

MS. KERNAGIS: Yes, I was.

1                   MR. TURRELL: Okay. And what brought you to  
2 Baltimore on Saturday?

3                   MS. KERNAGIS: Actually my fiancé Eric, he was  
4 up there for a business on Friday, so, we came up and  
5 decided to make a weekend of it. So we were visiting  
6 around the city and decided to go the Fort.

7                   MR. TURRELL: Okay. And Sarah, have you ever  
8 been around boats before, are you much of a maritime  
9 person?

10                   MS. KERNAGIS: It is not something I  
11 frequently do, when I was a child we would go, my  
12 father had a friend that had a boat, and we would go  
13 out all the time. We have friends in Charlotte, so  
14 maybe in the summer time, maybe like three or four  
15 times we have been out on boats or we usually go in the  
16 boat during the summer. But, you know, I am fairly  
17 comfortable with the water, I have been around that  
18 because I was actually scuba certified.

19                   MR. TURRELL: Okay. And can you tell me a  
20 little bit about your background and your education and  
21 where you work now?

22                   MS. KERNAGIS: Sure. Well, I actually was  
23 born in Waterloo, Iowa. I was brought to Raleigh when  
24 I was around, actually five years old, and raised in  
25 Raleigh, North Carolina. I graduated from -- high

1 school in 1999 and then moved onto college where,  
2 actually in Charlotte, and just brought me -- and  
3 attended the University of North Carolina, Charlotte,  
4 and I graduated there with a psychology degree in 2003.

5 Right now actually, while I was in college I interned  
6 with Wachovia, which is where I currently work. I have  
7 been here since, I believe it is August of 2002. I  
8 work with the -- Department actually as a interview  
9 specialist. I do telephone interviews all day, so.

10 MR. TURRELL: Oh, great.

11 MS. KERNAGIS: No, it is really, it is a  
12 talking on that phone thing, doing interviews.

13 MR. TURRELL: Great, great. So, Sarah, just  
14 go ahead and tell us, if you would start on Saturday  
15 morning, just take us through the day, through the  
16 accident, events leading up to it. As much detail as  
17 you can.

18 MS. KERNAGIS: Okay.

19 MR. TURRELL: And we will go around the room  
20 here and ask questions.

21 MS. KERNAGIS: Okay. Well, the thing about  
22 Saturday, we didn't even get up until two o'clock, we  
23 were kind of lazy and had a long night the night  
24 before. We decided there were a lot of things that we  
25 had or people had recommended for us to do is to go up

1 to the Fells Point, and take a ferry up to Fort  
2 McHenry. And we decided, of course, by the time we got  
3 out of there that was just the first thing that we had  
4 to do and naturally we got on the last taxi, water taxi  
5 that was taking people out to Fort McHenry. So, we did  
6 that, I believe, we entered the taxi around 2:30 or so,  
7 we got up there around three o'clock, did everything,  
8 walked around the Fort and came back, and we were one  
9 of the first people there waiting for the boat to come  
10 back to take us out.

11 The weather was getting a little bit bad, not  
12 the weather around us, but you could see dark clouds  
13 off in the distance. And the boat ended up coming. We  
14 were hoping -- And the boat came. We got on the boat  
15 and we were actually like the first passengers to get  
16 on the boat, so, we got onboard. We went all the way  
17 to the back and I was sitting actually next to the back  
18 exit door that they had. The rest of the people  
19 boarded on. I remember at one point they were going  
20 back and forth and making sure they had the proper  
21 number of people. And they said, I think it was two,  
22 they could let two more people on, two more people got  
23 on the boat, and some people ended up having to stay  
24 ashore and wait. And they said they would send another  
25 boat to pick up them up, I guess.

1           So, at that point then we pulled off and  
2           right as we started to pull off, and leave for Fells  
3           Point, it really started, this is right after we left,  
4           it started to rain pretty hard. The water was still a  
5           little bit calm, but you could tell there really wasn't  
6           a transition, typically when you have like a bad storm,  
7           like this was a transition period, you know, from to  
8           light rain to really heavy rain, and then it gets  
9           worse, and there wasn't a lot of transition with that.

10          It started coming down hard and as we got out, things  
11          just kind of got worse and it was really sudden where  
12          things just started rocking and got bad. Maybe five  
13          minutes after we had actually pulled away from the  
14          dock, it got pretty, pretty shaky and at one point when  
15          we were out there, and I was already, I get on boats,  
16          you know, I start planning, I am one of the persons  
17          that always like to have an extra out plan. So when I  
18          got on, I was immediately and was just kind of looking,  
19          checking things out and thinking, you know, if an  
20          emergency happened, what happens. We get out there and  
21          things were just really, it wasn't very stable. I  
22          mean, you could kind of feel that as things, of course,  
23          is right before the accident.

24                 And just sitting out there and the boat  
25          started to rock and at one point it rocked pretty hard,

1 everybody, and I apologize, I don't know the nautical  
2 terms, but, people, if I was facing the front of the  
3 boat where the captain was, the people on the right of  
4 the boat actually got up and moved to the left side  
5 because the right side was sinking down, so everybody  
6 just kind of walked naturally off that balance, or that  
7 weight. And the boat calmed down at that point. And  
8 then I heard the captain say they were going to try to  
9 climb in the bulkhead and they were going to try to  
10 come back. And I remember the boat, I didn't know if  
11 it was the captain turning the boat or I didn't know if  
12 it was wind turning the boat, but, I remember the boat  
13 turning and hearing someone say that we are just going  
14 to have to go where the wind takes us and that point  
15 then the boat again started to rock as it had the first  
16 time with the people on the right side of the boat got  
17 up and moved to the other side.

18 At this time it didn't actually settle back  
19 down and I remember looking over my shoulder and seeing  
20 that the edge of the boat, I guess right edge of the  
21 boat was in the water, that is kind of like when it hit  
22 me, like we are really going to flip. And it was a  
23 really quick transition too, when that happened on the  
24 first time the boat rocked to when it actually  
25 capsized, I think, probably about a minute between the

1 two. There wasn't a lot of time.

2 And it was a sense in the boat, that everyone  
3 was kind of, you know, sitting there trying to figure  
4 out what exactly to do and -- As the boat then tipped,  
5 it was really sudden when we actually realized the boat  
6 was going to go over. So, I immediately fell, I hit a  
7 glass window, and somebody landed on top of me and it  
8 broke the window. I remember the water just rushing in  
9 all around me, but the first thing that went through my  
10 head was thank God I am outside a window. That was the  
11 first thing was I have got an extra out there. And I  
12 was halfway in, halfway out the boat as the whole  
13 thing, you know, flipped around and under the water and  
14 the water was rushing in and everything. And I  
15 remember trying to keep kick and it was pretty  
16 difficult assuming this was because the water was still  
17 coming in.

18 Afterward, probably about five to ten  
19 seconds, I was able to kick and get some bruises on the  
20 way down, but I kicked my way out and I was able to pop  
21 up on the surface and I remember just really having a  
22 hard time breathing. I didn't really feel the cold  
23 water. I guess what it was that was making it  
24 difficult, but I pulled myself up on the boat. Then I  
25 remember seeing one other person come out of the water,

1 and then as they got up on the boat, actually they are  
2 still in the water, another person came out and grabbed  
3 my arm and I kind of pulled my arm up and got them out  
4 of the water. They got on top, I remember thinking,  
5 oh, gosh, there is, you know, I don't know what to do.  
6 Obviously, you don't want people or initially  
7 panicking and things are going on. You don't want to,  
8 trying to, I guess get involved with that. The first  
9 thing you want to do is just kind get away from  
10 everything and the panic. And then I just, at the  
11 point, sitting on top of the boat and from there, you  
12 know, people started coming out slowly and I remember  
13 just thinking, you know, what should I do. Physically  
14 you couldn't really do anything. I mean, it is amazing  
15 you think you have these things planned out, but you  
16 really don't know how you are going to react until you  
17 actually get into the situation.

18 And I saw my fiancé come up and other people  
19 started to come up. We got on top of the boat, and  
20 people still, I remember, there was a man outside  
21 floating. I remember bringing somebody else up,  
22 somebody else floating, I guess, that wasn't breathing  
23 and he was brought onboard and people starting doing  
24 CPR on them. And they came back to life, of course.  
25 I remember sitting there for a little while, it seemed

1 like everybody was onboard again. Me and my fiancé,  
2 though we didn't really associate with them, I remember  
3 looking wise, but it seemed like at that point that  
4 everybody was on there. I remember it seemed about  
5 after, maybe like 10, 15 minutes, I remember actually  
6 recognizing that somebody said there are people that  
7 are still under that boat. There are people out there  
8 that had been swimming down and trying to find people,  
9 but the woman next to us, I remember she had a  
10 dislocated shoulder and she said, oh, my gosh, my, my  
11 son is still under the boat, my son and his girlfriend,  
12 but she said they are still there.

13           And at that point people, like I said, there  
14 were some people trying to go down, I remember seeing  
15 them, we were just kind of sitting around looking and  
16 realizing or thinking did somebody see this, what  
17 should we do? At one point I actually wanted to swim  
18 into the shore, but there wasn't any place to even get  
19 onto the shore. There were life vests that floated  
20 around everywhere, grab onto our boats because really I  
21 mean, I knew at one point that it was cold and if we  
22 sat up there longer, you know, people are in shock, it  
23 is not a good thing. Basically, though, we saw then  
24 after being out there it seemed like a long time, but,  
25 it wasn't extreme amount of time when the Coast Guard

1 and they were able to come out and help us.

2 Do you want me to keep on going through  
3 the --

4 MR. TURRELL: Sure, please.

5 MS. KERNAGIS: Okay. So we saw the boat  
6 actually coming towards us and I remember seeing  
7 everybody on the back of the boat. It was a little bit  
8 difficult, I know trying to get everything attached to  
9 the part where they could get up, because the water was  
10 still shaking. I know they didn't want their boat run  
11 over our boat or anything. So, they threw out a rope  
12 to us, tied the boat off. But, I remember them coming  
13 up, the people on the boat kept saying, there are  
14 people are under the boat, there are people under the  
15 boat. That is the first thing that anybody on the boat  
16 actually yelled. And immediately you could see when  
17 the people heard there were people still under the  
18 boat, I remember one guy without a suit on, jumped into  
19 the water and you could just see that sense of action,  
20 I mean, it escalates another level.

21 There is somebody in the water looking, I  
22 can't remember if it was two. I remember the one guy  
23 without a suit on, because I was thinking, oh, my gosh.

24 And he was almost, I remember he was almost crushed by  
25 the boat, too, when they were trying to tie to the

1 other. He was almost crushed between the pontoon and  
2 the ship. He was luckily, I guess was able to get away  
3 from that situation. And we ended up anyway, they  
4 steered the rope and tied that off around the ends and  
5 were able to pull the, they were able to pull the  
6 vessel close enough. I remember hopping off and  
7 getting onto the actual Coast Guard boat. And sitting  
8 back then in the corner, watching other people come up  
9 at that point and again, everybody in the boat was  
10 really, you know, rushing around. And everyone kind of  
11 has series of things that they were trying.

12 As far as everybody, I really saw the boat  
13 kind go up, but I remember when I got onto the boat I  
14 was just so cold at that point, that I wasn't looking  
15 around much to see what is going on. I remember seeing  
16 a little girl, I know was getting CPR and seeing  
17 somebody at the edge of the boat, but, I wasn't looking  
18 as much. I was concentrating on just basically trying  
19 to stay warm. I had never shaken that hard in my life  
20 and I guess it never really hit me how cold I was until  
21 I got up there.

22 And then at that point they brought us back  
23 or of course, they tried looking at the boat and they  
24 got the people, I guess they did, they found everybody  
25 that they could, so they brought everybody back and

1 once we got actually back to the base, I was walked  
2 back and immediately they were just trying to give us  
3 whatever they could as far as clothes, you know, shoes,  
4 socks, anything that they could find. Things out of  
5 the cars, things out of their lockers, you know, I had  
6 a fire suit on at once because I had all wet clothes.  
7 And then I changed into actual some Navy gear, putting  
8 the heaters out and you know, everyone is kind of like  
9 in their own stations and just trying to warm up and do  
10 as they could. And as they would go out, people were  
11 just in shock of what happened.

12 And it was kind of, it was pretty amazing,  
13 you know, sitting there not, I remember looking,  
14 everybody looking at us and kind of thinking like,  
15 okay, that has been, this is real.

16 Do you want me to keep going?

17 MR. TURRELL: Yeah, please.

18 MS. KERNAGIS: Okay. So, I guess afterwards,  
19 it was like I said, I was changing to some Naval gear  
20 and somebody came around and they asked us if we were  
21 okay, and kept asking us if we wanted water, something  
22 hot to drink, you know, we said no, thank you. We just  
23 trying to get, you there were tons of people there, but  
24 just really wanted to make sure that everyone else was  
25 taken care of, because we knew that we were okay. And,

1 you know, I had a cut on my, I will mention that, too,  
2 I was on the bottom of the boat or, you know, the  
3 bottom of the boat which became the top actually, but  
4 my fiancé told me that I had a cut on my neck and I was  
5 bleeding pretty good. And I was holding onto my, my  
6 sweater up to the spot where I thought it was and I  
7 kept missing it and it kept bleeding. And that was  
8 another thing, it was kind of like, oh, I don't really  
9 know what is going on with my neck. I didn't know how  
10 bad it was. But, when I got in, they looked at that.  
11 And they, they, of course, cleaned up the cuts that I  
12 had on my neck and on my back. They took our  
13 temperatures and everything and then, after, I guess  
14 after awhile, it seemed like a lot of people started  
15 and they started taking people to the hospitals and we  
16 went to St. John's Hospital. I got on the stretcher  
17 and they took us over there. And then, you know,  
18 everyone was talking to us. And I had probably, I had  
19 given out my name to about four people at the base, at  
20 that point.

21 I got to the hospital and as I say, gave the  
22 information. I remember I guess that is the first time  
23 I realized how cold I really was, because I remember  
24 sitting there, when they were going through the vitals  
25 and my, my body temperature was at 96 degrees, so I was

1 kind of shocked, because it had been awhile, going  
2 through all the stuff trying to keep warm. So, we got  
3 there and got warm blankets and everything and at that  
4 point, we were doing a lot better. They called my  
5 parents. The media had actually called my parents  
6 before I talked to them. Somebody got my name somehow.

7 And I called my parents and at that point, they just  
8 started, they cleaned up my cuts. Make sure I didn't  
9 need any stitches and we went back to the base and  
10 given our, or afterwards, of course, the police came  
11 and we waited for them, and they picked us up and took  
12 us back to the base and we gave our statements for the  
13 night.

14 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

15 MS. KERNAGIS: I don't know what kind of  
16 detail or, you know, exactly what, opinions or anything  
17 you wanted.

18 MR. TURRELL: Well, we are going to ask you a  
19 few questions, Sarah.

20 MS. KERNAGIS: Okay.

21 MR. TURRELL: First of all, if you could  
22 describe where you were sitting on the boat to some  
23 degree of accuracy.

24 MS. KERNAGIS: Sure, no problem. Actually when  
25 we came on the boat, I apologize because I am not going

1 with the port and starboard side, but if you are facing  
2 the front of the boat where the captain, I guess the  
3 front end of the boat, we were on the right side where  
4 it actually tips and the side that was first to go  
5 under. And I was actually all the way in the back. So  
6 I was right next to the back exit door.

7 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

8 MS. KERNAGIS: And then my fiancé was sitting  
9 next to me, of course, to the right of me.

10 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And could you describe the  
11 rescue boat that rescued you, can you give a  
12 description of that?

13 MS. KERNAGIS: Yeah, the first thing, I  
14 remember, it was a big gray, I am trying to think, it  
15 reminded me a lot of the bed of a truck because it kind  
16 of had ridges in it and the grooves and it had the back  
17 of it had the, almost hitch like. It, of course, had  
18 the ramp that went down, we were able to run up on the  
19 boat. But, that boat, probably was around 50 feet  
20 long, maybe 20 feet wide. And I am probably not  
21 accurate with that. I am not very good with  
22 measurements.

23 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And can you tell me where  
24 the life preservers were stowed on the boat?

25 MS. KERNAGIS: On the --

1 MR. TURRELL: On the water taxi, sorry.

2 MS. KERNAGIS: Under the seats on the boat.

3 MR. TURRELL: Were there any other life  
4 preservers in the overhead or anything?

5 MS. KERNAGIS: To tell you the truth, I didn't  
6 even, I don't recall. I remember them saying that they  
7 had some under the seat. I didn't really, I was  
8 looking for those as much.

9 MR. TURRELL: And when did they, when you  
10 boarded the boat, both in Baltimore and then at Fort  
11 McHenry, did they ever do a safety briefing, tell you  
12 where the life jackets were and --

13 MS. KERNAGIS: I don't remember, I think, I  
14 remember when we were actually getting Baltimore, I  
15 distinctly remember them saying it, because I remember  
16 the guy who actually said it had a nose ring and it  
17 looked kind of weird, so I was looking at him the whole  
18 time he was giving that safety briefing. But, I  
19 remember him, they went through that. I don't  
20 distinctly remember if they did on the one going to  
21 Fort McHenry and back. I think it was one of things  
22 it almost like if you had been on an aircraft where you  
23 know where things are but something you don't really  
24 pay as much attention to the, you know, the emergency  
25 exits, and the seat belt, as long as we knew where they

1       were.   So I guess we are not paying as much attention.

2               MR. TURRELL: Right.   And do you recall  
3       hearing any communications with the boat, with the  
4       water taxi from a radio at all?

5               MS. KERNAGIS: I remember, I remember the one  
6       that when they were radioing back and forth and talking  
7       about how many people that they actually had on the  
8       boat and how many could actually get on the boat.   But  
9       that is all I remember, and again, we were all the way  
10      in the back of the boat, so, we weren't really close to  
11      the captain when he was talking to, and I guess  
12      everything was going on.   But, you know, I remember and  
13      of course, at the dock, I remember him saying that.

14              MR. TURRELL: Okay.   And when did you first  
15      notice the weather?

16              MS. KERNAGIS: We knew, we noticed the weather  
17      when we were just sitting on shore.   It really didn't  
18      look, it didn't look like it was close.   I mean, you  
19      could see the really dark clouds.   It looked like it  
20      was at Baltimore, but it didn't look like it was close  
21      to the harbor.   And when we first noticed it that it  
22      was going to get bad, I mean, it was pretty close that  
23      we pulled off the dock, it started to rain really hard.

24      Like I say, there really wasn't any kind of transition  
25      period, typically, you know, if the winds pick up more

1 and you know, you start getting a little more choppy  
2 water, there really wasn't a lot of transition, it just  
3 started raining like hard. And then, you know, the  
4 winds, and everything else just got really bad real  
5 quick.

6 MR. TURRELL: All right. Okay. Sarah, I will  
7 turn this over to Mary Epps, for some questions, okay.

8 MS. KERNAGIS: Okay.

9 MS. BURER: Hi, Sarah.

10 MS. KERNAGIS: Hi.

11 MS. BURER: You were talking earlier about  
12 when you got onto the boat that you were sitting all  
13 the way in the back. Were you sitting in the middle  
14 part of it, or were you sitting up against the wall or  
15 --

16 MS. KERNAGIS: There wasn't a middle part of  
17 it. There is just two benches.

18 MS. BURER: Right.

19 MS. KERNAGIS: Both benches were along the  
20 wall. And I was actually on the right wall. Again, if  
21 you are facing the front of the boat, from the back, I  
22 was on the right wall.

23 MS. BURER: Okay. Okay. Were there any windows  
24 by your or --

25 MS. KERNAGIS: Yeah, there were windows all

1 around the boat. And my window was initially open, that  
2 was one of the things I remember thinking was, and  
3 again, this is just because I am very paranoid  
4 traveler, and, you know, that is just how I am and I  
5 sitting there thinking, well, just in case something  
6 happens, you know, I wouldn't mind having that window  
7 open. But, we shut it and we shut all the windows  
8 because it was raining.

9 MS. BURER: Okay. Okay. And then how much, do  
10 you recall how much time, when you actually got on the  
11 boat again, right, after the incident and you pulled  
12 yourself up on the boat, how long do you think you were  
13 waiting for rescue to come?

14 MS. KERNAGIS: It seems like maybe, I would  
15 say 15 minutes. And of course, it seems a lot longer  
16 when you are actually in the situation, because you  
17 don't know if anybody saw it or anybody is coming.  
18 But, I would say it was about 15 minutes by the time we  
19 actually got up there.

20 MS. BURER: Okay. And when you were on the  
21 boat, when you first got on the boat, waiting for the  
22 rescue, were you the first ones to be on then?

23 MS. KERNAGIS: I think there was one other  
24 person that I saw on top before getting up there. I  
25 was one of the first two that got up, because again I

1 was thrown immediately through the window, so I was  
2 halfway into my exit route, you know, when everything  
3 finally settled down. And I was definitely one of the  
4 first two people getting on top of the boat.

5 MS. BURER: Okay. And then when they actually  
6 rescued you, and you were the first passenger on the  
7 rescue boat, right?

8 MS. KERNAGIS: I think so. I think I was, but  
9 I am kind of, I guess embarrassed, but, you know, I  
10 wondered if anybody else had got on the boat, but, I  
11 was ready to get off, but I think I was first person to  
12 get on the boat.

13 MS. BURER: Right. And how long do you think  
14 it would take by the time you got back here to shore?

15 MS. KERNAGIS: I would say, sitting out there,  
16 again probably another 15 to 20 minutes.

17 MS. BURER: Fifteen to 20.

18 MS. KERNAGIS: I would say like 20 minutes,  
19 because I knew that they were having to go through a  
20 lot with trying to resuscitate the people that were  
21 pulled onto the boat and also trying to make sure that  
22 they couldn't find anybody else that was on the boat.  
23 So I would say it was about, you know, another 15 to 20  
24 minutes.

25 MS. BURER: Okay. And then your injuries that

1 you sustained, can you go back over that again?

2 MS. KERNAGIS: I had, I guess from the fall  
3 through the window, I got a pretty nice cut on my jaw  
4 line. Some other cuts on my neck. I got some very long  
5 scratches on my back from hitting that window. And  
6 then from actually started to struggle to get out of  
7 the boat while the water was still kind of rushing in,  
8 my legs are pretty bruised up and I have got some cuts  
9 on them.

10 MS. BURER: Okay. All right, thank you, Sarah.

11 MS. KERNAGIS: No problem.

12 LIEUTENANT BURNOWSKI: Yes, Sarah, I have got  
13 a question for you. You said, this is Scott Burnowski

14 MS. KERNAGIS: Okay.

15 LIEUTENANT BURNOWSKI: I have a question for  
16 you. You said during, just prior to the second  
17 incident, the vessel going over to the starboard side,  
18 the right side, that somebody said that the wind will  
19 take us, it looks like the wind is going to take us  
20 over to the right.

21 MS. KERNAGIS: They said it looked like, I  
22 don't remember who said it in the front of the boat,  
23 but, it looks like we are going where the wind is going  
24 to take us.

25 LIEUTENANT BURNOWSKI: Do you remember who

1 said that?

2 MS. KERNAGIS: I don't remember. It came from  
3 the front end of the boat.

4 LIEUTENANT BURNOWSKI: Okay. And when the  
5 vessel did go over on the right hand side, you said the  
6 water was rushing into the vessel.

7 MS. KERNAGIS: When it initially came, when we  
8 had the first initial rock, I remember when I looked  
9 around my side, I guess my right shoulder, I looked out  
10 and saw the water had just like engulfed, I guess the  
11 edge, the outside of the edge of the boat. That is  
12 when I knew that we were just going to flood, I mean,  
13 right at that moment that we actually did, and the  
14 right side went into the water first. And I guess that  
15 is when I hit, that is when I hit the window and was  
16 thrown into the water. And the water from, I guess, it  
17 is harder for me to or I guess for me to, to talk about  
18 what happened inside the vessel, because again my whole  
19 upper body was actually outside of the boat. So, I am  
20 not sure how quickly it filled up inside the vessel or,  
21 you know, what end filled up faster, because I remember  
22 just having all the water rushing around me and then  
23 having my, like my whole upper body was actually  
24 outside of the boat instantaneously when we flipped.

25 LIEUTENANT BURNOWSKI: Okay. Sarah, that is

1 all, thank you.

2 MS. KERNAGIS: No problem.

3 ENSIGN COWEN: Okay. Sarah, this is Trevor  
4 Cowen, U.S. Coast Guard. Just a question for you in  
5 regards to after the boat rocked the first time, did  
6 the captain give any kind of orders to put on life  
7 vests or was anybody doing anything with regards to the  
8 life vests?

9 MS. KERNAGIS: No, he didn't, and actually,  
10 he, I didn't hear anything about life vests when we  
11 were there. It was a good thing, in my assumption,  
12 that we didn't because more people would have been  
13 trapped inside that boat. So, I assume it is probably  
14 good thing that we didn't have life vests on, but I do  
15 not recall anybody saying to put on the life vest.

16 ENSIGN COWEN: Okay. Thank you.

17 MS. KERNAGIS: And again, it was about a  
18 minute transition I would say between the two things. I  
19 think at that point it was kind of like, you know, not  
20 really knowing what was going on. I remember again him  
21 saying, we were going to try to find the nearest  
22 bulkhead to tie up to, and you know, it was pretty,  
23 again, like a minute transition from the first rock and  
24 the second rock.

25 ENSIGN COWEN: Okay.

1           MR. TURRELL: Sir, can you tell us to the best  
2 of your knowledge, if you saw any children and where  
3 they were on the boat?

4           MS. KERNAGIS: I did. The children were on, I  
5 want to say that the children were on the, I am trying  
6 to remember, we were actually on the boat with the  
7 families that lost the younger boy. We were on the  
8 boat with them on the way to Fells Point and then out  
9 to Fort McHenry and then back. So, trying to think,  
10 remember when -- I remember, I can't remember exactly  
11 which side they were on. I remember the three children  
12 that were being with the parents. I want to say that  
13 they were actually on the west side of the boat. But,  
14 I am not again positive of that. But, I do know they  
15 weren't at our end and they weren't at the very, very  
16 front part of the boat. I think they were more in the  
17 middle part of the boat. Again, I just don't remember  
18 which side, though.

19           MR. TURRELL: Okay. So when the boat started  
20 rocking and people started getting concerned, did you  
21 look around and see any other passengers and what, what  
22 any preparations they may have been making to, like you  
23 said, you were looking around for exit routes.

24           MS. KERNAGIS: Yes. I guess on the first, the  
25 boat had initially rocked and -- and the initial rock

1 and when the boat actually kind of came back to its  
2 normal position, they told us, of course, to sit back  
3 down and it made sense because you don't want  
4 everybody, you don't want the boat to rock. But, so  
5 they told everybody to sit down and I mean, me,  
6 personally, I don't remember looking at anybody else's  
7 preparations, because I just remember looking at the  
8 door, thinking, okay, how do I get out of this thing,  
9 is it locked, what do I need to do, and it wasn't  
10 locked. I remember looking at the door and trying to,  
11 you know, plan out my own, okay, you know.

12 MR. TURRELL: Right. Do you remember who told  
13 you to or who told the other passengers to return to  
14 their seats?

15 MS. KERNAGIS: I believe that was the first  
16 mate.

17 MR. TURRELL: Okay. The mate.

18 And can you recall in that moment of turning  
19 over, I know it is difficult, you said someone fell  
20 upon you.

21 MS. KERNAGIS: Yes. Somebody fell on me. I  
22 didn't even really see them, but, I just remember  
23 feeling the impact of somebody and then hearing the  
24 glass break behind me.

25 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Did you hear them say

1 anything or it was just you felt someone hit you?

2 MS. KERNAGIS: Yes.

3 MR. TURRELL: Could you tell if it was a man  
4 or a woman?

5 MS. KERNAGIS: I couldn't tell if it was a man  
6 or a woman. I think, actually I wear glasses and during  
7 the initial tumble, my glasses were knocked off, so I  
8 couldn't see anything around. When I actually came up,  
9 the next person that came up was a man, so I was  
10 thinking and again it is kind of odd because he was one  
11 of the three in front of me on the boat, but I am not  
12 definitely sure on that. I don't know hit me.

13 MR. TURRELL: Sure. Can you tell us a little  
14 bit about the actions of the crew -- Well, first of  
15 all, let me step back just a moment.

16 When the people got up and moved to the port  
17 side of the boat or left side of the boat, can you tell  
18 us how many people stood up and moved across?

19 MS. KERNAGIS: It was the majority. I think  
20 there might have been maybe one or two people that  
21 stayed seated, that couldn't get up, maybe, as fast.  
22 But, a majority of the people on the right side of the  
23 boat got up and moved to the left side of the boat.

24 MR. TURRELL: So --

25 MS. KERNAGIS: I would say probably and again

1 not knowing the exact numbers, saying maybe that there  
2 were 10 people seated, I would say at least eight stood  
3 up to move to the left side of the boat.

4 MR. TURRELL: Okay. And do you recall if they  
5 were all men or just bodies, you couldn't tell men or  
6 women?

7 MS. KERNAGIS: It was an mixture of men and  
8 women. The one I distinctly, you know, there are  
9 certain people I can remember where they sat, and I  
10 will tell you the truth on this, it sounds really bad,  
11 but we, when we were coming out initially on the way  
12 from Fells Point to the Harbor, I guess there was an  
13 off set of weight when we had gotten, when were going  
14 out there initially, and the front of the end of boat  
15 was kind of, not under the water, but the water was  
16 coming up a lot, so the first mate went to the back of  
17 the boat and my fiancé and a couple of other men had  
18 asked if they should move back, too, and they said,  
19 yeah, go ahead and move back, just so, they all sat in  
20 the back and of course, three people in the back that  
21 were standing up and actually one of them was the, I  
22 believe one of them the father of the children. And so  
23 when we exited on the boat and people were loading on  
24 the boat, I distinctly remember seeing people and in my  
25 mind trying to, to place out the weight of people and

1 thinking, okay, you want the weight to be even up on  
2 both sides, because I don't want anything to happen,  
3 you know, and trying to get on the boat. If that  
4 makes sense.

5 There were certain people that I can remember  
6 where they sat just for that purpose of thinking like  
7 when they got on the boat, this person should go on  
8 this side and this person should go on this side.

9 MR. TURRELL: Can you perhaps recollect any of  
10 those thoughts as far as where people were sitting,  
11 that would be helpful?

12 MS. KERNAGIS: I think the first thing that  
13 actually came through, one of the gentleman was  
14 actually, he was older, he was shorter, had a beard and  
15 moustache and he was very, and he was a very large man.  
16 And I remember he came in and thinking, okay, he needs  
17 to sit on our side and him and his wife actually sat on  
18 our side. And he was, I don't remember his name, he  
19 was actually standing next to me on the rescue boat. I  
20 remember the Naval --

21 MR. TURRELL: Sorry, Sarah, can you perhaps  
22 tell us if they in the fourth, third, middle third or  
23 after third perhaps?

24 MS. KERNAGIS: And we were in the fourth or we  
25 were the --

1           MR. TURRELL: You were in the back, give me  
2 the last third, if you will.

3           MS. KERNAGIS: Okay. They were, they were  
4 actually between on the edge of being on the first  
5 third and the second third, because the actual steering  
6 part of the boat, or the engine, I guess, the whole  
7 helm part of the boat, where the place the captain was,  
8 to the front of it. But, I would say they were on that  
9 right, that fine line between the two.

10          MR. TURRELL: And then these people again,  
11 were, we are trying to draw a little map here.

12          MS. BURER: The woman, we are considering up  
13 against the wall or --

14          MS. KERNAGIS: And again, there is actually,  
15 you have them against the wall. There wasn't any  
16 middle.

17          MR. TURRELL: Okay.

18          MS. BURER: Okay.

19          MR. TURRELL: Two benches.

20          MS. BURER: Okay.

21          MS. KERNAGIS: And I remember the man got on  
22 first and then the woman got on after him. And again,  
23 I remember it wasn't the family that had the two, the  
24 younger couple, it was, the man on the boat had  
25 actually said that he couldn't find his son or his wife

1 and I don't, they are not missing, so, I am not sure  
2 why. But, I am not sure maybe it was the woman had  
3 passed, is his daughter. I don't know what it was.  
4 But, he, I remember he got all right, by the boat.

5 And then the other ones, I remember, I  
6 remember the Puerto Rican Coast Guard getting on and  
7 there were four of them. Everybody, the last four  
8 people, I guess to get on, had gotten on in the front,  
9 west half side of the boat.

10 MS. BURER: So, the Naval Reserve, they were -  
11 -

12 MR. TURRELL: They are Air Force actually.

13 MS. BURER: They are Air Force. They were  
14 sitting on the left hand side.

15 MS. KERNAGIS: Yes, if that is what they were,  
16 I am sorry. They were actually, a man with a camera,  
17 and there is a guy with red hair that had a moustache,  
18 and two were Puerto Rican men had gotten on the front  
19 side of the boat. And I think one of them got on,  
20 actually three of them got on that side and one of them  
21 got on to the right side. After that, and I am trying  
22 to think if there is anything, if I can remember anyone  
23 else on the boat.

24 (Pause.)

25 MS. BURER: Now, do you recall where the mate

1 was standing?

2 MS. KERNAGIS: The mate was standing close to  
3 the front, right hand side of boat. And again, it was  
4 just a small pass way between the two, that there  
5 wasn't really, I mean, you have the one rail where you  
6 are sitting, you have a middle walk way and then you  
7 have the left side. And to me it seemed like the thing  
8 was maybe, you know, eight feet across max.

9 MR. TURRELL: That is the length across. Very  
10 good.

11 MS. KERNAGIS: Oh, it was, okay. I don't mean  
12 to laugh, I think everything again is so real at this  
13 point, but I have talked to some many passengers --  
14 Anyway, so, there wasn't a lot of room in the aisle, so  
15 he was pretty much in the center of the boat, but  
16 closer to the captain and the front of the boat.

17 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

18 MS. KERNAGIS: If that makes sense. As far as  
19 width wise, he was in the center and then as far as  
20 length wise, he was closer to the captain, pretty much  
21 right behind in on the front of the boat.

22 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So, can you remember who  
23 sitting next to Eric on the boat?

24 MS. KERNAGIS: I can't remember who was  
25 sitting next him on the boat.

1 MR. TURRELL: You don't.

2 MS. KERNAGIS: I can't even remember, it felt  
3 like, I can't, I can remember the people getting on the  
4 boat at the end, but I can't even remember who was  
5 sitting in front of me on the boat. I don't, it is  
6 kind of shocking, but, I can't. Because I was  
7 thinking, these are actually the people, the woman that  
8 dislocated her shoulder and her husband the one that  
9 had the children, or the younger couple that are still  
10 missing. I believe that they actually sat close to us,  
11 but, I am not sure on that, again, because it seemed  
12 like there were a few couples, a few older couples that  
13 look the same, I guess, in my mind for some reason. I  
14 know they weren't really looking the same, thinking  
15 back, pictures or looking at pictures and all, but,  
16 they, you know, they weren't, I can't really  
17 distinguish between any of those.

18 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Sarah, so, who was sitting  
19 directly across from you, then, when you sat down?

20 MS. KERNAGIS: I can't remember.

21 MR. TURRELL: Okay. I think that is pretty  
22 much, anyone else have any other questions? Mary,  
23 anything else.

24 MS. BURER: No. So the Air Force was sitting  
25 up here, right.

1           MR. TURRELL: Right, so we are still working  
2 on a map here.

3           MS. BURER: Yeah, we are still trying to draw  
4 this out, Sarah.

5           MS. KERNAGIS: That is fine, that is good.

6           MS. BURER: The four guys of the Air Force,  
7 all four of them were sitting on the left hand side.

8           MS. KERNAGIS: I remember when they came on,  
9 they really didn't have an option, I remember at least  
10 the last few of them got onto the front left hand side  
11 of the boat because that is where there was space left.

12          MS. BURER: Okay.

13          MS. KERNAGIS: I believe and one of these is  
14 one with the red hair and he was on the front left hand  
15 part of the boat.

16          MS. BURER: Okay.

17          MS. KERNAGIS: And then somebody, I remember  
18 just looking and after they all got on the boat, I  
19 remember thinking, I mean, it was fairly well balanced.

20          I think, because I can't even remember, again, I wish  
21 I could remember more about who was seated. I was just  
22 looking around thinking that, and again, it sounds so  
23 paranoid, but that is just how I am. I can't remember  
24 people were sitting where.

25          MR. TURRELL: Okay.

1 MS. BURER: Okay.

2 MR. TURRELL: Well, it has been a big help,  
3 Sarah. And we are going to stop the recording right  
4 now. So if you could just please acknowledge it has  
5 been recorded.

6 MS. KERNAGIS: Okay. It has been recorded,  
7 yes.

8 MR. TURRELL: Thanks.

9 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)