Loss of S/S El Faro
Anatomy of a Major Casualty Investigation

- 2018 International Marine Claims Conference, Dublin -
Coverage of EL FARO

Fate unknown of ship caught in Hurricane Joaquin off Bahamas

Container Ship With 33 People Aboard Goes Missing as Hurricane Joaquin Approaches East Coast

Cargo ship caught by Hurricane Joaquin, no word from crew since Thursday

Cargo ship in peril off storm-battered Bahamas

Coast Guard Searches For Ship, Crew Of 33 Caught In Hurricane Joaquin

Search underway for lost U.S. cargo ship

Morning Briefing

NBC Nightly News
U.S. COAST GUARD
The Search
**Timeline of the Tragedy**

- **Tues. 09/29:** 2010 El Faro departs Jacksonville with 33 POB.
- **Wed. 09/30:** Captain’s email to Tote
- **Fri. 10/02:** USCG assets search for the El Faro; no trace found.
- **Sun. 10/04:** USCG finds a large debris field.
- **Mon. 10/05:** USCG reports finding remains in survival suit.
- **Tues. 10/06:** NTSB begins investigation into the sinking.
- **Wed 10/07:** USCG suspends search at sunset.

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E-mail Snippet:

From: EL FARO [mailto:WFJK@globeemail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 1:12 PM
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: El Faro / Vessel Update / Hurricane Joaquin

**Good Afternoon,**

Per the latest BVN weather file and NWS Hurricane Center Miami, FL.

Center of Hurricane Joaquin: 24.7n 72.6w.
Direction and Speed: South Westerly at 5k.
Barometric Pressure: 971mb.
Winds: 50k with gusts up to 70k.
Seas: 12'-14' throughout tonight and into tomorrow morning are expected.

I have monitored Hurricane Joaquin tracking erratically for the better part of a week. Sometime after 09/30/2000 she began her SW'ly track. Early this morning I adjusted our direct normal route in a more SSE'ly direction towards San Juan, Puerto Rico, which will putail 65' MM south of the eye.

Joaquin appears to be tracking now as forecasted and I anticipate us being on the back side of her by 10/01/0800.

Present conditions are favorable and we are making good speed. All departments have been duly notified as before. I have indicated a later than normal arrival time in San Juan, Puerto Rico, anticipating some loss in speed throughout the night. I will update the ETA tomorrow morning during our regular pre-arrival report to SJP, etc.
28 Sep (0500 EDT) TD Joaquin forecast & position

01 Oct (0500 EDT) Hurricane Joaquin forecast & position

Heavy Weather Forecasting
Joaquin Predicted Tracks
Figure 5. Alternate route via Old Bahama Channel (green) from Jacksonville to San Juan, compared with normal route (orange) and El Faro’s route on accident voyage (purple). (Coast Guard diagram)
Key Storm Voyage Decision Points

El Faro (30 Sep-01 Oct 2015)

- Final Voyage
- Last Known Position (1136Z 1 Oct 2015)
- Joaquin

Small exchange: Master D. Turtles and D. Faro with 100 knots report from D. Turtles. Show the C. Faro or use the New Providence Channel/CRS route to San Juan. (DECISION POINT)

3M Cells Master with weather and the D. Faro could have slowed or reversed course and take the New Providence Channel as an alternate and safer route (DECISION POINT).

3M Cells Master and recommends alternate route once clear of San Salvador and other island, new course 188 deg T and then over the Old Bahama Channel to San Juan (DECISION POINT).
Sinking of the S.S. El Faro
Tote’s Initial Response

- Response & initial actions
- Addressing immediate questions & concerns raised by crewmembers’ families
The National Transportation Safety Board announced yesterday the convening of a voyage data recorder group to develop a detailed transcript of the sounds and recognizable words captured on the EL Faro’s bridge audio, following the conclusion of the ship’s VDR.

The voyage data recorder from the EL Faro, a vessel involved in an accident that caused during Hurricane Joaquin in October 2015, was successfully recovered from the cargo ship August 5 and transported to the NTSB’s laboratory in Washington, D.C., on August 12. Information from the EL Faro’s VDR was successfully recovered August 15.

About 26 hours of information was recovered from the VDR, including bridge audio, navigational data, onboard video images, and wind data. Investigation revealed it to be in good condition, and downloaded its memory module data.

Numerous events leading up to the loss of the EL Faro, are heard on the VDR’s audio, recorded from microphones on the ship’s bridge. The quality of audio contains high
Engagement with Family Members
Organizing the Team
Limitation Action & Government Investigations
Voyage Data Recorder
Government Investigation Reports

Articulating the Cause:
Release of the USCG & NTSB Reports
EL FARO Lessons Learned

- Focus on the families
- Assemble the Team
- Watertight Integrity
- Stability
- General ACP Issues
- Third Party Oversight
QUESTIONS
Vanity Fair Article

Maritime Executive Article on enactment of EL FARO Safety Recommendations
https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/house-passes-bill-to-enact-el-faro-safety-recommendations#gs.w2vMoa4

NTSB Report on EL FARO sinking
https://www.ntsb.gov/investigations/AccidentReports/Reports/SPC1801.pdf

Coast Guard Marine Safety Manual Volume V -- Investigations
https://media.defense.gov/2017/Mar/29/2001723821/-1/-1/0/CIM_16000_10A.PDF

46 CFR Part 4 – Marine Casualties and Investigations
https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?rgn=div5&node=46:1.0.1.1.4

46 USC 6301 – Investigation of Marine Casualties
https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/46/6301

49 CFR Part 831 – Investigations (NTSB)
https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=343a4704d4d7e6aa1cf8c540d407dd4d&node=pt49.7.831&rgn=div5
IN MEMORIAM

Louis Champa -- Palm Coast, Florida
Roosevelt Clark -- Jacksonville, Florida
Sylvester Crawford Jr. -- Lawrenceville, Georgia
Michael Davidson -- Windham, Maine
Brooke Davis -- Jacksonville, Florida
Keith Griffin -- Fort Myers, Florida
Frank Hamm -- Jacksonville, Florida
Joe Hargrove -- Orange Park, Florida
Carey Hatch -- Jacksonville, Florida
Michael Holland -- North Wilton, Maine
Jack Jackson -- Jacksonville, Florida
Jackie Jones, Jr. -- Jacksonville, Florida
Lonnie Jordan -- Jacksonville, Florida
Piotr Krause -- Poland
Mitchell Kuflik -- Brooklyn, New York
Rafal Lightfoot -- Jacksonville Beach, Florida
Jeffrey Mathias -- Kingston, Massachusetts

Dylan Meklin -- Rockland, Maine
Marcin Nita -- Poland
Jan Podgorski -- Poland
James Porter -- Jacksonville, Florida
Richard Pusatere -- Virginia Beach, Virginia
Theodore Quammie -- Jacksonville, Florida
Danielle Randolph -- Rockland, Massachusetts
Jeremie Riehm -- Camden, Delaware
Lashawn Rivera -- Jacksonville, Florida
Howard Schoenly -- Cape Coral, Florida
Steven Shultz -- Roan Mountain, Tennessee
German Solar-Cortes -- Orlando, Florida
Anthony Thomas -- Jacksonville, Florida
Andrzej Truszkowski -- Poland
Mariette Wright -- St. Augustine, Florida
Rafal Zdobych -- Poland