

Statements of Captain  
Mario Rocamora

Three (3) pages total including this cover

October 18, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

Approximately 10:25 AM, I inbound Cotee River Channel approaching Marker #12, I had powered down and was making my turn. The starboard engine revved-up came back down and quit, the port engine was still running. I used the port engine to continue, as I was making the turn about half way through I lost power on the portside. I turned the wheel to the starboard to set the vessel on the edge of the sandbar out of the way of oncoming traffic. At the same time both of my deckhands came up to the bridge and told me that they saw smoke coming from the engine room.

The three of us ran down to the main deck the small hatch was open and smoke coming out of it. We tried to open the main hatch when it was lifted 1½ inches to 2 inches flames came out we closed the hatch and pulled out the fire hose. By this time the cabin was filling with smoke we could no longer see and was getting hard to breath. I told my deckhands to get out that there was no way that we could save the vessel that fire was out of control. We went outside to the bow of the vessel. I looked to the starboard side the flames were coming out of the windows and had reached the canapé on the top deck and it was on fire.

A pleasure boat had pulled up alongside of us to assist, after the deckhands were off of the vessel and safe, I got off. We pulled a few hundred yards away I called the main dock and ask them to have an ambulance waiting one of the deckhands was complaining of being dizzy. After 4 or 5 minutes there was an explosion onboard. I had the pleasure boat take me to another company vessel on the scene. I used the VHF radio to call the Coast Guard after several tries the Coast Guard responded. I ask about getting someone to take care of the fire and they informed me that Pasco Fire and Rescue were already there.

  
Captain Mario Rocamora

STATE OF FLORIDA  
COUNTY OF PASCO

Sworn to and subscribed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2004 by Mario Rocamora, Personally Known \_\_\_\_\_ or Produced Identification \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Identification Produced \_\_\_\_\_

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Notary Public - State of Florida

## MASTER'S STATEMENT

**Taken:** October 19<sup>th</sup> 2004 @ 10:15. **Verbally Received By:** Thomas F. Calahan, Marine Surveyor, AMS 723  
**For:** Crittenden Adjustment Co. Florida **Claim:** FF4-12174

I Mario Rocamora Jr. state that I am the Master of the M/V **Express Shuttle II**, Official Number **1053146**, and further state that on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of October 2004 at approximately 10:25 Express Shuttle II sustained catastrophic damage as describe below.

Underway en-route Port Richey after dropping off all passengers and approaching #12 day marker. The vessel was slowed to enter a No Wake Zone when the starboard engine rpm's increased and slowed twice without command and then stalled. At the same time a low voltage warning light came on and both deck hands onboard reported to the bridge that smoke was coming from a small hatch in the aft part of the engine room. I (The Master) completed the turn at #12 day marker on the port engine only and steered the vessel to the right toward shallow water when the port engine stalled.

I (The Master), and the two deck hands went to the main deck to fight the fire. I (The Master), opened the hatch over the starboard engine. Once opened, flames jumped out (like a blow torch). <sup>TC/MR</sup> <sub>ORDER a Deck hand TO START</sub> At this point the cabin was too smoke filled to attempt further fire fighting so I (The Master) gave the order to evacuate to the bow of the Express Shuttle II. <sub>The fire Pump</sub>

I (The Master), attempted to enter the bridge to save the logbooks but was turned back by the fire and returned to the bow.

A pleasure craft came along side Express Shuttle II to help. The two deck hands to abandon Express Shuttle II and boarded the pleasure craft. I (The Master), remained onboard to consider further fire fighting efforts. Five minutes later and at the demands of the assisting pleasure craft operator I (The Master), abandoned Express Shuttle II and boarded the pleasure craft. From the time the incident started to the time I (The Master), abandoned Express Shuttle II was approximately 20 minutes.

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Mario Rocamora Jr.  
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