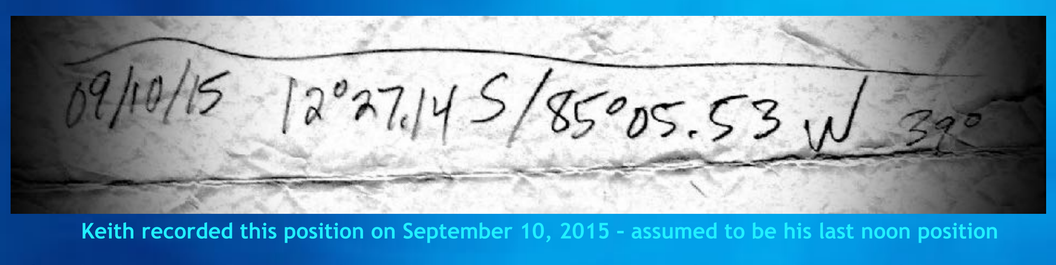
Timeline and Lingering Questions Regarding the Disappearance of an IATTC Transshipment Observer

By Elizabeth Mitchell



Keith recorded this position on September 10, 2015 - assumed to be his last noon position

Keith Granger Davis, 40 years old, was reported missing on September 10, 2015, 19:50 Zulu, while working as an observer in the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Transshipment Observer Program. His employer was a private US-based firm (MRAG Americas). Keith was assigned to the M/V Victoria No. 168, a Chinese operated, Panama-flagged transshipment vessel. They were transshipping catch from the F/V Chung Kuo No. 818, a Chinese owned, Vanuatu-flagged longline fishing vessel, 500 miles off of Peru, when Keith was last seen. The fishing vessel's owner, Gilontas Ocean Group, has bases all over the world and its headquarters are in Taipei, China.

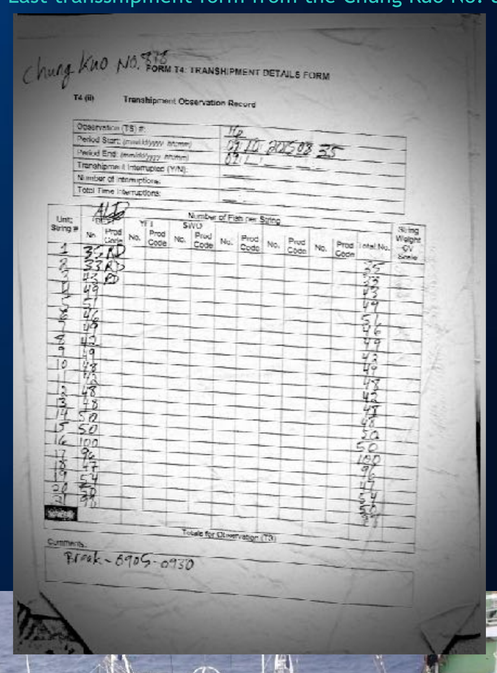
It appears the investigation itself was suspiciously lacking. The Chung Kuo No. 818 was released without inspection, despite having been, along with the Victoria No. 168, the last known witness to Keith being alive. We were initially told that US authorities would be leading the investigation into the circumstances surrounding Keith's suspicious disappearance. But when the vessel arrived in Panama 10 days later, Panamanian authorities abruptly took over the investigation and left the vessel unattended overnight, beginning the investigation the following morning, September 21, 2015. Currently, the FBI in the United States is keeping the case open, as are Panamanian authorities, but no further details have been released. In June 2016, the FBI released Keith's two computers (work and personal), 10 months after his disappearance. To date (August 29, 2016), Keith's camera has not been returned. *Despite an open, on-going investigation, by both Panama and the United States,* IATTC allowed the vessels to resume operations and MRAG Americas placed an observer on the Victoria No. 168 less than 3 months after Keith's disappearance. Shamefully, the IATTC reported at their 90th meeting in June 2016 that there were no problems in their transshipment observer program. A proposal to implement safety measures for observers was also rejected by members at this meeting.

This poster and associated timeline are an attempt to piece together what little information is available regarding Keith's disappearance. The photos displayed here and in the associated timeline are from Keith's last trip on the Victoria No. 168. Keith was recording data just hours before he was last seen. If there are any corrections regarding the information I have provided here or if you have any additional information, please contact the APO.

August 20, 2015: "Shark fins on far shelf of LSTLV, after falling off of fish being pulled out of hold"

August 4, 2015, just prior to boarding Victoria No. 168: "Kuna Villages/San Blas - snorkeling out of a dug-out canoe run by a Kuna man ..

Last transshipment form from the Chung Kuo No. 818



August 18, 2015: "Albacore (ALB) being transferred in cargo net - regular way of loading fish this voyage"

August 20, 2015: "F/V Chung Kuo No. 31 tied alongside LSTLV, "for repairs"

Association for Professional Observers (APO) PO Box 933, Eugene, Oregon 97440 USA 541-344-5503 apo@apo-observers.org