

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD,
Complainant

v.

MEKHI ALEXANDER O'BERRY,
Respondent.

**Docket No. 2025-0217
MISLE Activity ID: 8096339**

**GEORGE J. JORDAN
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE**

DEFAULT ORDER

This matter comes before me on the United States Coast Guard's (Coast Guard) Motion for Default Order (Motion for Default). As of the date of this order, Mekhi Alexander O'Berry, (Respondent) has not replied to the Complaint nor the Motion for Default. Upon review of the record and pertinent authority, the allegations in the Complaint are **PROVED**.

On April 21, 2025, the Coast Guard issued a Complaint against Respondent seeking to revoke his Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) for being a user of a dangerous drug in violation of 46 U.S.C. § 7704(b), as defined by 46 C.F.R. § 5.35. Specifically, the Coast Guard alleges Respondent tested positive for marijuana metabolites (THCA) after taking a required pre-employment drug test. On April 24, 2025, the Coast Guard filed its Return of Service providing the Complaint was delivered to Respondent's residence by express courier service and signed for by him on April 23, 2025. Subsequently, the Coast Guard filed a Motion for Default on May 29, 2025. Coast Guard's Return of Service for the Motion for Default was filed on June 9, 2025, providing a copy was delivered to Respondent's residence and signed for by a person of suitable age and discretion by express courier service on June 2, 2025.

To date, more than twenty days have passed from the service of the Motion for Default and Respondent has neither filed an answer nor requested an extension of time to file an answer

33 C.F.R. § 20.308(a). As Respondent has neither filed an answer nor asserted good cause for failing to do so, I find Respondent in **DEFAULT**. 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(a); Appeal Decision 2700 (THOMAS) (2012). A default constitutes an admission of all facts alleged in the Complaint and a waiver of the right to a hearing on those facts. 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(c). Therefore, I find the following factual allegations in the Complaint **ADMITTED**:

1. On December 20, 2024, Respondent took a required pre-employment drug test, pursuant to 46 C.F.R. Part 16.
2. A urine specimen was collected from Respondent by Evan Pertile of Midlands Exams & Drug Screen in Columbia, South Carolina, in accordance with 49 C.F.R. Part 40.
3. Respondent signed a Federal Drug Testing Custody and Control Form for providing urine specimen ID# 7934797105.
4. Urine specimen ID# 7934797105 was received by and subsequently analyzed, pursuant to 49 C.F.R. Part 40, by the U.S. Army Forensic Toxicology Drug Testing Laboratory, a SAMHSA certified laboratory.
5. On February 12, 2025, urine specimen ID# 7934797105 tested positive for THCA, as reported by the U.S. Army Forensic Toxicology Drug Testing Laboratory.
6. On January 15, 2025, Dr. Michelle Alexander, the Medical Review Officer, determined that Respondent failed a chemical test for dangerous drugs, raising the presumption of use established by 46 C.F.R. § 16.201(b).
7. Respondent has been a user of a dangerous drug, as described by 46 U.S.C. § 7704(b).

Upon finding the Respondent in default, I must now issue a decision against him. 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(d). In reviewing the record, I find the facts deemed admitted sufficient to establish Respondent is a user of a dangerous drug, as outlined in 46 U.S.C. § 7704(b), 46 C.F.R. § 16.201(b), Appeal Decision 2556 (LINTON) (1994), Appeal Decision 2603 (HACKSTAFF) (1998), and Appeal Decision 2704 (FRANKS) (2014). Accordingly, I find Respondent is a user of a dangerous drug.

SANCTION

Having found Respondent in default and all allegations in the Complaint proved, I must now determine the appropriate sanction. 33 C.F.R. § 20.902(a)(2). While it is within the sole discretion of the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to determine the appropriate sanction at the conclusion of a case. Appeal Decision 2362 (ARNOLD) (1984). A proved allegation that a mariner is a user of a dangerous drug carries the mandatory sanction of revocation of their MMC, unless they can prove a cure. 46 U.S.C. § 7704(b). The Coast Guard proved Respondent is a user of a dangerous drug, thus the only sanction to levy is revocation.

WHEREFORE,

ORDER

Upon consideration of the record, I find Respondent in **DEFAULT**.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, in accordance with 33 C.F.R. § 20.310, I find the allegations set forth in the Complaint **PROVED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, all of Respondent's Coast Guard issued credentials, including Respondent's Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC), are **REVOKED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, Respondent shall immediately deliver all Coast Guard issued credentials, license, certificates, or documents, including MMC [REDACTED], by mail, courier service, or in person to: Andrew Alan Brown, U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Charleston, Prevention Department, 1050 Register Street, North Charleston, SC 29405. In accordance with 18 U.S.C. § 2197, if Respondent knowingly continues to use the Coast Guard issued MMC, Respondent may be subject to criminal prosecution.

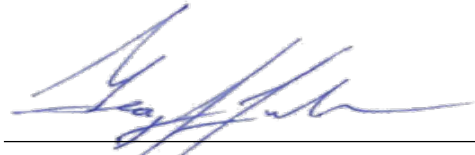
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(e), for good cause shown, an ALJ may set aside a finding of default. A motion to set aside a finding of default may

be filed with the ALJ Docketing Center in Baltimore. The motion may be sent to the U.S. Coast Guard, Administrative Law Judge Docketing Center, Attention: Hearing Docket Clerk, Room 412, 40 South Gay Street, Baltimore, MD 21202-4022.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, within three (3) years or less, Respondent may file a motion to reopen this matter and seek modification of the order of revocation upon a showing that the order of revocation is no longer valid, and the issuance of a new license, certificate, or document is compatible with the requirement of good discipline and safety at sea. See generally 33 C.F.R. § 20.904.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, service of this Default Order on the parties serves as notice of appeal rights set forth in 33 C.F.R. § 20.1001-20.1004 (Attachment A).

Done and dated, July 7, 2025,
Seattle, Washington

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George J. Jordan", is written over a horizontal line.

GEORGE J. JORDAN
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE