

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FIRE ON BOARD THE *ISLAND LADY*
PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA
JANUARY 14, 2018

* ACCIDENT NO.: DCA18FM010

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Interview of: LTJG [REDACTED]
Marine Inspector

U.S. Coast Guard Facilities
Tampa, Florida

Tuesday,
May 1, 2018

APPEARANCES:

BRIAN YOUNG, Senior Marine Engineer
National Transportation Safety Board

NANCY McATEE, Fire and Explosion Specialist
National Transportation Safety Board

[REDACTED], Investigating Officer
U.S. Coast Guard (Civilian)

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:12 p.m.)

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3 MR. YOUNG: Okay. The recording is on. It's May 1st at
4 2:12. This is Brian Young with the NTSB. I'm joined with
5 Nancy McAtee from NTSB, [REDACTED] from the Coast Guard, and
6 we're interviewing Lieutenant JG [REDACTED] here in Tampa,
7 Florida. We're discussing the *Island Lady* inspections after the
8 fire that occurred January 14th, 2018.

INTERVIEW OF LTJG [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

BY MR. YOUNG:

10
11 Q. So thank you for joining us today, [REDACTED]. And can you please
12 maybe start and talk to us a little bit about your experience
13 within the Coast Guard and your training that got you to where you
14 are today?

15 A. Sure. So I graduated from the Coast Guard Academy in 2014.
16 I was on a Coast Guard cutter for 2 years as a deck watch officer.
17 And so, then this summer I will have been doing inspections at
18 Sector St. Petersburg for 2 years. So that's my short history
19 with the Coast Guard.

20 Q. And in order for you to be a marine inspector, what training
21 or qualifications were you required to do?

22 A. So to get the job, I guess there were no real prerequisites.
23 But then, over -- since my time here, I've gone to two courses in
24 Yorktown. It's the, like introduction to marine inspections, and
25 then the port state school. And so, so far I have my T-boat

1 qualification, so that's my small passenger vessel qualification,
2 and my barge qualification, and currently I'm working on my port
3 state qualifications.

4 Q. And since you've been in the Coast Guard as an inspector and
5 had your T-boat qualifications, can you estimate a ballpark of how
6 many T-boats you have inspected?

7 A. I've -- between both my qualified and break-in time, I would
8 say probably around 100 or over 100. But probably as a qualified
9 inspector, I would say at least 50 or so.

10 Q. And have you ever been the lead inspector on a T-boat
11 inspection?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And about how many have you led?

14 A. I would say maybe between 30 and 50.

15 Q. And of these T-boats, do you recall about how many have been
16 wooden vessels?

17 A. Oh, so I'm not -- I do not have the wooden addendum for a
18 T-boat. So I've never had that qualification. But as a break-in
19 I've been on maybe a handful, but not too many.

20 Q. And would that wooden qualification be applicable for a dry
21 dock inspection?

22 A. Yes. So without that, I wouldn't be able to be the lead
23 inspector on, whether it was an in-water, annual or a dry dock
24 inspection.

25 Q. How many times have you been aboard the *Island Lady* as an

1 inspector?

2 A. So, I believe -- and I was going back looking at the activity
3 just to verify. I believe I was only on board the *Island Lady* one
4 time. I've been on board another one of their vessels more times
5 than that. But the *Island Lady*, I think, I believe it was just
6 the one time.

7 Q. And can you recall the reason why you were aboard the *Island*
8 *Lady*?

9 A. So I remember, so it was out of the water and we were with
10 another -- I think a chief warrant officer. He was going to be
11 giving us some training on wood boats. So it was for training,
12 and I remember, you know, we looked outside at the hull and then
13 we did an internal exam also.

14 Q. What constitutes an internal exam?

15 A. So just going on board and going inside the different
16 compartments and spaces on the vessel.

17 Q. And would this -- this rings a bell, to be in April of '17
18 when the vessel was in dry dock? Do you remember the date?

19 A. You know, I did look at the activity, and that's, you know,
20 I -- that was the time frame. So that makes sense to me. I think
21 -- so I think I had just gotten by T-boat qualification around
22 then but it didn't have the wood addendum. So I think that was
23 around the right time frame.

24 Q. Okay. So was the purpose of your visit to this vessel more
25 of training?

1 A. Yes. Um-hum.

2 Q. So specifically for training then?

3 A. It could -- training, and then just the more eyes. I think
4 there were quite a few of us out there that day. So just kind of
5 the more the merrier to check it out.

6 Q. When you did the internal exam do you recall entering several
7 different spaces aboard the vessel or was it limited to specific
8 areas?

9 A. Right. So if I'm remembering correctly, so since there were
10 a few of us, we did split up. And I remember we started in the
11 forward spaces and then we -- and then there was another group
12 that started aft, and then we both kind of just met in the middle.
13 So I don't think I looked in the entirety of the internal spaces.

14 Q. You being forward kind of answered my question about you
15 being back aft in the steering gear or lazarette. Does that ring
16 a bell to you?

17 A. It doesn't. Yeah, I remember being in the forward peak,
18 around that area, and then I remember, I think, being in the
19 compartment where the fuel tanks were, but I am not recalling
20 being in the lazarette area.

21 Q. And understanding this was training and you had just gotten
22 your T-boat qualification, was there anything that you saw that
23 caused you concern or gave you any feeling that there was some
24 sort of safety issue?

25 A. I remember, I definitely remember, you know, that there were

1 things that we found while we were on board. And I remember, you
2 know, we did write deficiencies that day and we had a conversation
3 with the operator. There's nothing specific. I think maybe I
4 remember they had like the fuel shutoffs weren't in the proper
5 location, if I'm remembering correctly. But that kind of thing
6 might be the only thing that I remember.

7 Maybe since it was a dry dock, I think just -- we find some
8 maybe like soft spots on the wood that needed to be replaced,
9 things like that. So --

10 Q. Do you think that findings that you found were accurately
11 recorded in the activity summary report?

12 A. I believe so. And just, you know, knowing who I was out with
13 and everyone that was involved, you know, I don't have any doubt
14 that everything was, you know, fully depicted and captured.

15 Q. Since you've become a T-boat inspector, you said that you had
16 been aboard the *Island Lady* once, that you may have been aboard
17 the company's other vessel several times.

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. Were those for training purposes or inspections?

20 A. No, they were inspections. I definitely was on board as a
21 fully -- like the lead inspector on the other, its sister ship,
22 the other vessel. I might have been on board for training. So
23 we're -- I'm familiar with the company and their representative
24 or --

25 Q. When you say the sister vessel, you're talking about the

1 casino, the *Tropical Breeze*?

2 A. That's it. The *Tropical Breeze*, yes. Yep.

3 Q. Do you recall when you might have been on that vessel?

4 A. Quite a few times. I'm getting my time frame mixed up. But
5 I would -- I believe in the, probably fall and maybe the
6 summertime.

7 Q. And would it -- were you there for standard inspections or
8 were there any additional visits?

9 A. No. It was -- so it was an annual inspection that we were
10 there for. Then they had -- because of the hurricane, I think
11 they had requested a dry dock extension, so we went there to do a
12 quick exam, just to approve their extension so they could have a
13 little bit more time to come out of the water, and then also for
14 their dry dock, when they did finally get availability to come out
15 of the water.

16 Q. And just going back to the *Island Lady*, based on your
17 experience with that vessel that was in dry dock for the
18 inspection, what was your professional opinion as to the condition
19 of that vessel at that time?

20 A. Yeah. It's a little hard to remember, but I think -- I
21 think, you know, we thought it was generally okay but it needed
22 some work on it. But I don't think it was by far the worst that
23 we had seen. That's what I would say.

24 Q. And did you happen to take any pictures while you were aboard
25 there?

1 A. No.

2 Q. No. How about the *Tropical Breeze*? How do you consider the
3 condition of that vessel in your opinion?

4 A. Hmm. I would say probably the same. Especially now with the
5 problems, obviously, with the *Island Lady*, it's probably worth
6 having probably people more experienced than I am to be going out
7 there in the future.

8 Q. At any time during the *Island Lady* dry dock inspection did
9 you enter the engine room?

10 A. I think I did. Because I remember we were looking at their
11 fixed CO2 system that I think they had on board, because I
12 remember we were doing some training on that. So yes, I believe I
13 was in there.

14 Q. And once again, anything that stood out at you as maybe being
15 in unsafe condition or --

16 A. No. I don't recall. No.

17 Q. Do you remember like the CO2 system -- that was a lot of
18 years ago and a lot of boats that you've inspected, do you recall
19 seeing a pull station, as to where it may have been located to
20 release the CO2?

21 A. No, I don't. I remember seeing like the discharge points,
22 but I am not sure if I remember seeing the pull station.

23 Q. Other than that one dry dock inspection of *Island Lady* was
24 there ever any other reason that you may have been aboard that
25 vessel?

1 A. I don't believe so.

2 Q. I don't have any other questions. You did say you did about
3 -- you've done about 100 inspections, correct, T-boats?

4 A. I think so.

5 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Nancy.

6 BY MS. McATEE:

7 Q. Just one quick question. This is Nancy McAtee, NTSB. Did
8 you ever get up to the wheelhouse in -- during your time on the
9 *Island Lady*?

10 A. I am not sure, but I don't recall being up there.

11 Q. So you probably didn't observe the fire detection test?

12 A. No. I don't think so.

13 MS. McATEE: That's all I have.

14 BY MR. YOUNG:

15 Q. When you were aboard the *Island Lady*, did you recall -- do
16 you recall looking around at life jackets or PFDs or anything?

17 A. No. Because that wasn't the scope of our exam at the time.

18 Q. Have you been located or stationed here since the fire?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Have you been here since January?

21 A. Yes, I have.

22 Q. Are you aware of any calls or complaints or concerns from
23 others about the condition of *Island Lady* or the *Tropical Breeze*?

24 A. The only thing that's made me aware is, I guess, a news
25 article that's come out. But other than that, I haven't heard

1 any, from anyone else about those vessels.

2 Q. All right. Any questions for us?

3 A. No. I'm all set.

4 MR. YOUNG: So we're going to stop the recording. Thank you
5 very much for your time today.

6 MS. [REDACTED]: Great. Thanks.

7 MR. YOUNG: We appreciate.

8 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE ON BOARD THE *ISLAND LADY*
 PORT RICHEY, FLORIDA
 JANUARY 14, 2018
 Interview of LTJG [REDACTED]

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA18FM010

PLACE: Tampa, Florida

DATE: May 1, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Karen Brooks
Transcriber