

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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CAPSIZE AND SINKING OF STRETCH DUCK 7 *

ON TABLE ROCK LAKE, BRANSON, MISSOURI, * Accident No.: DCA18MM028

JULY 19, 2018 *

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Interview of: TALYSSA MANN

Branson, Missouri

Tuesday,
July 24, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL KARR, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

BRIAN YOUNG, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

JAMES GILLETTE
U.S. Coast Guard

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:31 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. KARR: It is 11:31. We're in Branson, Missouri, and we
4 are going to interview --

5 Is it Talyssa Mann?

6 MS. MANN: Yes, sir.

7 MR. KARR: And my name is Michael Karr. I'm with the
8 National Transportation Safety Board.

9 MR. GILLETTE: Hi, Talyssa. I'm Jim Gillette with the United
10 States Coast Guard.

11 MR. YOUNG: And I'm Brian Young with the NTSB.

12 MS. MANN: And I'm Talyssa Mann.

13 MR. KARR: Nice to meet you, Talyssa. We're going to ask
14 questions about the sinking of the stretch duck 7.

INTERVIEW OF TALYSSA MANN

15
16 BY MR. KARR:

17 Q. And the first question I'll ask you to do is just please just
18 tell me the story of your ride onboard the Stretch Duck 7.

19 A. So, we went into the water, and the, it was fine. Everything
20 was going fine. Everybody was enjoying it. And then we turned
21 next to the steamboat, facing forward, where the steamboat faces,
22 I don't know what direction that is. And the --

23 Q. Sounds like you're describing a right turn?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. To go towards the steamboat.

1 A. Yeah. A right turn. And the wind started picking up, and it
2 got choppy. So, he put the window things down. And then it, the
3 waves got worse, they got bigger. And he took a sharp right turn.
4 And the right side of the boat went down, and water had gotten
5 into it, and the side I was sitting on, my feet were submerged at
6 that point.

7 And then in a matter of seconds, the water was to my knees.
8 I stood up to get a last breath of air, and we were all the way
9 under. I, personally, don't think capsized. I think it just
10 sunk. Because, if it capsized, for me to be swimming up the way
11 that I did, I wouldn't have came (sic) out of the water. I would
12 have been going a different direction.

13 And, and I got to the dock, and the people from the steamboat
14 helped me out of the water.

15 Q. And how did they, how did you get to the dock? Under your
16 own power?

17 A. Yeah. And I had to help my cousin, my 10-year-old cousin.
18 He has asthma. I saw him come up, and my instincts just kicked
19 into get him.

20 Q. How did you, tell me about carrying, getting your 10-year-old
21 cousin to the dock, and then how he, how did he get out of the,
22 you know, how did he get from the water up onto the dock?

23 A. The cop that was there on his boat when it happened, I, like,
24 we, I had swam with him, and yelled at him to keep, get him going.
25 And I would go under water, push him up, so he could get air. And

1 then, I, like, with all my might kicked the crap out of him, until
2 he flew to that boat, and they put a donut over him, those little
3 lifesaver things, and pulled him onto the cop's boat.

4 Q. All right. And then how did you get out of the water? Did
5 you crawl?

6 A. I was holding onto the dock, and some guys pulled me up out
7 of it.

8 Q. All right. And did you go to the mainland immediately? Or
9 did you go --

10 A. I went --

11 Q. -- to the boat?

12 A. I went onto the cop's boat, because that's where I saw my
13 stepdad.

14 Q. Onto the --

15 A. Cop's boat.

16 Q. Cop's? The cop's?

17 A. It was tied to that thing that I was holding onto.

18 Q. But when you say a cop's boat?

19 A. It was a deputy that was on the water.

20 Q. It was, with an actual police boat?

21 A. I honestly couldn't tell you. I didn't pay too my attention
22 to it.

23 Q. All right. When you, you mentioned the vessel making two
24 right turns. Can you tell me where in your journey that you just
25 described did you first feel that water coming into the boat?

1 A. So, this being the steamboat, we came into the water behind
2 it.

3 Q. All right.

4 A. Turned right next to it.

5 Q. All right. Turned it to the side?

6 A. On the next right turn, when he took that next right turn.

7 Q. So, you're --

8 MR. KARR: So, what she's describing is when she made the
9 right-hand turn behind the paddle wheel --

10 MS. MANN: Yes.

11 MR. KARR: -- is when water first entered the boat.

12 MS. MANN: Yeah. That's when.

13 BY MR. KARR:

14 Q. And do you remember where the water entered the boat?

15 A. No idea.

16 Q. When you were sitting down -- I'll be, I'll ask you a direct
17 question. When you were sitting down in your chair, you were
18 sitting along the side of the boat, did you feel any water come
19 between the curtain and the side of the boat?

20 A. I felt water coming from everywhere. It was just splashing.
21 But I was looking forward at the land.

22 Q. And when you looked forward at the land, what did you see
23 with regard to water?

24 A. The, just the waves.

25 Q. When you -- do you recall when the demonstrated or told you

1 about the lifejackets?

2 A. It was when we departed from the Ride the Duck building, he
3 said here they are. This is what they look like. But you're not
4 going to need them.

5 Q. Did he tell you, did they say anything else about safety?
6 Any other safety instructions?

7 A. He said the windows are your emergency exits. And then when
8 we got on the water, he closed them. And I was, like, great.

9 Q. When did you actually think that?

10 A. When he closed them.

11 Q. When you were underway in the boat --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- and you, that thought entered your head?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. All right. That's a good observation.

16 MR. KARR: I don't have any questions right now.

17 MR. GILLETTE: So, I have some follow ups.

18 BY MR. GILLETTE:

19 Q. Talyssa, hi. This is Jim Gillette with the Coast Guard.

20 When you were getting on the boat at Ride the Duck, did
21 anybody talk about weather?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. What the weather was going to --

24 A. They said we weren't, they weren't sure if we were going to
25 go out, because that there was a storm warning.

1 Q. Do you know who that was that said that?

2 A. I'm pretty sure it was the captain.

3 Q. The captain said it. Okay.

4 Now I'd like to go to when you were on the water. Did you
5 hear the engine of the boat at all? Did you hear any noises from
6 the engine?

7 A. Not that I'm aware of. Everybody was pretty loud, though.

8 Q. Did you hear any types of alarms during the boat?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Did you -- when they lowered the curtains, do you know who
11 did that?

12 A. The captain, I'm pretty sure.

13 Q. Pretty sure. Did you see --

14 A. Well, I don't know, though, yeah.

15 Q. -- him do it? Or, you didn't -- did you see him do it?

16 A. He was up there with the buttons.

17 Q. Do you remember if they came down fast or slow, or --

18 A. Just slowly. Slowly. But not like super slow.

19 Q. I'd like to, kind of, talk about the water again. So, you
20 were showing yourself, you were showing first it came to about
21 your ankle. First of all, how tall are you?

22 A. I'm 5-7.

23 Q. 5-7. Okay. So, when you were sitting on the boat were you
24 on the right side or the left side?

25 A. I was on the right side.

1 Q. Did you have anybody sitting next to you? Or were you by
2 yourself?

3 A. No. I was by myself in my seat.

4 Q. You described you first felt water come in, and the first
5 time it was up to your ankle. Were you sitting down at that time?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Do you know how much time it was in between when it went to
8 your ankle, where did it go next on you?

9 A. My knee.

10 Q. Your knee.

11 A. It felt --

12 Q. Do you know the timing?

13 A. -- like a matter of seconds. But I really couldn't tell you.

14 Q. When it came up to your knee, what happened then? Did you
15 stand up?

16 A. I stood up to get that last breath of air, and we were
17 already under.

18 Q. So, were you, was the water rising when you were sitting down
19 on your knee? Did it ever get up any higher to you while you were
20 sitting down?

21 A. No. It was around my ankle for a bit. But when I hit my
22 knee, it just shot right up. All the water was, the boat was
23 under.

24 Q. When you say a bit, can you give, like, a little time
25 estimate of 5 seconds, 2 minutes, what was your best guess?

1 A. Maybe a minute, a minute or two around my ankle.

2 Q. And then from the point when it hit your knee to the point
3 you stood up --

4 A. Less than a minute.

5 Q. Less than a minute.

6 A. Probably around 30 seconds, it felt like. But I couldn't
7 really tell you.

8 Q. Was there a feeling that you got, like, as far as, between
9 the knee and when you stood up in the water, was it up, it was
10 over your head?

11 A. Yes. It was over my head.

12 Q. Was it a feeling like the water was coming --

13 A. No. It was rose, above me.

14 Q. It rose above you. So, it --

15 A. It went with me --

16 Q. -- felt like it was already in the boat?

17 A. -- while I stood up. Yes.

18 Q. So, it felt --

19 A. It was like the water stood up with me.

20 Q. The water stood up with you.

21 When you were under water, did you feel like you were
22 touching anything? Did you feel like you were --

23 A. As soon as my head was covered, I just swarm up.

24 Q. Were you -- how about the water temperature? What was the
25 water temperature for you? Like, hot, cold?

1 A. I run hot normally. But, I mean, I didn't feel cold when
2 they got me out. They were trying to cover me up, and stuff. But
3 when I get anxiety, I get hot flashes. So, I wouldn't say I'm a
4 reliable source --

5 Q. Sure.

6 A. -- of the temperature.

7 Q. So, you don't know if the water -- you didn't feel, like,
8 different changes in the water, like, between hot and cold?

9 A. I wasn't paying any attention to that. I was one of the --
10 like, my head was one of the first to pop up. I didn't see
11 anybody when I came up. So, I probably didn't go as far under as
12 some people might have.

13 Q. Do you know how you may have gotten out?

14 A. The top was, the top just wasn't there when I started
15 swimming.

16 Q. Do you know how, estimate, time -- I'm sure it seemed like a
17 long time.

18 A. Right.

19 Q. But do you know, kind of, the minute you went under water to
20 when you got to the top estimate?

21 A. It --

22 Q. Was it quick?

23 A. It was pretty quick. I'm a strong swimmer. And, like I
24 said, I was one of the first people to pop up.

25 Q. Did you feel, like your eardrums or anything, since you're a

1 swimmer, did you feel like you went --

2 A. No, my ears didn't pop.

3 Q. -- extremely deep?

4 A. My ears didn't pop. And I have bad ears when I get deep.

5 Q. Did you feel anybody -- or you didn't feel anything from,
6 like, the boat, or anybody as you went up?

7 A. No. But my aunt does have scratches down her arms from
8 people trying to pull her and get above her.

9 Q. When you came up, you said that you didn't see anybody?

10 A. The captain was the only person I saw.

11 Q. Did you see him come up? Or did you see him -- you just saw
12 him?

13 A. I was facing a different direction. But he was the first
14 person besides myself that I saw.

15 Q. Roughly how close was he to you when you came up?

16 A. Like 20 yards, 10, 15, it was not close, at all.

17 Q. Did anybody come up close to you?

18 A. My cousin.

19 Q. And roughly how close was that that he came up to you?

20 A. About the distance between the two of us, a yard, a yard and
21 a half.

22 Q. How much longer after you were up did he come up?

23 A. It felt like forever, because I was frantically searching for
24 my family's heads to come out of the water.

25 Q. Were you treading water --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- as opposed to swimming?

3 A. In that spot. Trying to see where they were.

4 Q. When did you decide -- what made you go towards the boat or
5 the land? Like, when you were able to see things, what, in your
6 mind, what made you in the survival aspect go I need to go to this
7 position to --

8 A. My cousin --

9 Q. -- save myself?

10 A. -- wouldn't have made it if I didn't get him there. So, my
11 first instinct was to make sure that he lived.

12 Q. And where were you trying to get him to? Where were you
13 guys, where, when you, where did you focus on that I -- that's
14 My --

15 A. The --

16 Q. -- quickest place that I could get to?

17 A. -- deputy's boat was tied to some metal thing. It was, like,
18 this wide. And that's what we swam towards, because the things on
19 the steamboat were still moving when --

20 Q. The paddles?

21 A. Yeah. The paddles, they were still moving. So, I didn't
22 want to swim towards those, because --

23 Q. You demonstrated a downward motion. Was the paddles going on
24 a downward motion, or do you --

25 A. I have no idea.

1 Q. -- you couldn't recognize that.

2 Were you directly, like, looking at the paddles, were they,
3 you know, like, directly behind you? Were they over, like, on a
4 45-degree, or --

5 A. To my 3 o'clock.

6 Q. To your 3 o'clock?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. That's where the paddle boat?

9 Do you have a guesstimate on how far they were away from you?

10 A. They were quite a ways away. We went down at least 30, 40
11 yards in front of the steamboat. It felt like. I mean, I could
12 be wrong.

13 Q. And you said that you helped push your cousin who has asthma
14 over to the boat?

15 A. To the deputy's boat --

16 Q. To the deputy's --

17 A. -- that was tied.

18 Q. -- boat. Was it a deputy that assisted you guys to get out?
19 Did he have a uniform on? Or was he --

20 A. I don't know. I think that's who pulled my cousin out. But,
21 once I saw him in the floaty, I was focused on myself. And I'm
22 pretty sure somebody that pulled me up was either over by the
23 steamboat gift shop or on the steamboat. It was two men.

24 Q. All right. Thank you, Talyssa.

25 A. Um-hum.

1 MR. YOUNG: It's Brian Young.

2 BY MR. YOUNG:

3 Q. Thank you again for sitting with us and talking. I just
4 have, like, 5 questions, and --

5 A. All right.

6 Q. -- that's it.

7 Do you ever see any lightning before or during the trip that
8 you can remember?

9 A. Not that I remember.

10 Q. When you were exiting the boat, do you remember having to
11 push through anything, like vinyl or plastic, or anything?

12 A. No. I was --

13 Q. Or did you seem like you just --

14 A. I just swan straight up.

15 Q. You were able to swim straight up.

16 A. Yep.

17 Q. Without any restrictions?

18 A. Nothing.

19 Q. Do you remember hearing any discussion between the guy who
20 drove the boat and the captain who drove the -- you know, there's
21 a driver --

22 A. The land --

23 Q. -- and a captain?

24 A. The --

25 Q. The land?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Nothing?

3 A. The captain that drove the boat on water, he said nothing
4 once the wind picked up.

5 Q. How about the other -- the land driver? Where was he?

6 A. He was sitting either behind or beside him I think. I think
7 behind him. Because when he drove, the captain was next to him.
8 And then I think he sat behind him when the captain moved up. But
9 he didn't say anything either.

10 Q. And these screens that come down on either side, do you
11 remember any of them being ejected from the boat at all?

12 A. I didn't look to my sides. Once we were under, I was just
13 looking up.

14 Q. And if we use the tissue box again, as the 7, when you
15 started taking on water on your ankles and all, do you kind of
16 feel like it was leaning to one side?

17 A. When he took that right turn, I think, is when -- because he
18 took it too, so sharp -- the wave, like, went like that, and water
19 got in onto the right side. The way it pushed the left side,
20 water got into the left side.

21 Q. Right. So, it would be leaning a little bit to starboard, or
22 the right side.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. So that your side was lower than the other side?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And how about forward and aft? So, where the driver and the
2 captain are sitting --

3 A. The back went down not too much before the front, but it was
4 a bit before.

5 Q. So, you could -- if you would have wanted to walk --

6 A. It was --

7 Q. -- to the captain --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- you would have to go uphill a bit?

10 A. A bit. Yes. Not too much, though.

11 Q. Not too much. Could you remember if that, kind of, uphill
12 went worse and worse, or did it stay the same when you sat down,
13 or --

14 A. The right went under a little bit, and the back under a
15 little bit, and then the whole boat down.

16 Q. Kind of, straight down while you were, kind of, positioned --

17 A. Teetering, kind of.

18 Q. Yep. Good. But, I know, trying to establish about the cop
19 boat. Do you remember seeing blue lights flashing on his boat,
20 maybe? That might help us --

21 A. No, it was -- there's a video, though. You can see him.
22 Because --

23 Q. Is that your video?

24 A. No. It's, it was from the news. You can see the duck boat
25 that was behind us get on the land, ours go under, and then you

1 can see his boat coming up.

2 Q. So, when you did pop up, or as you were swimming, do you --

3 A. When we popped up, he was already tied next to the steamboat.
4 They were throwing lifejackets, and everything out.

5 Q. And you think, did you -- I know your mom took a lot of
6 pictures and videos.

7 A. I don't have anything on my phone.

8 Q. Did your phone make it without getting --

9 A. Yeah. My phone made it. But as soon as it happened, I
10 deleted it. I didn't want to see it. Sorry.

11 Q. No, no. That -- no. Appreciate that. No. Thank you for
12 answering the questions.

13 MR. KARR: And, Talyssa, I don't have any more questions.
14 But did your mother --

15 MR. GILLETTE: I did have --

16 MR. KARR: Oh, okay.

17 MR. GILLETTE: I do have a follow up.

18 BY MR. GILLETTE:

19 Q. I'm sorry, Talyssa.

20 A. No. No. It's --

21 Q. I want to go back to your wind and the captain speaking.
22 When you were out there on the tour, was the captain speaking
23 during the tour?

24 A. He was, he was cracking jokes and everything, until we got in
25 the water. And then he was pointing out stuff, you know, until

1 the wind picked up. And once the wind picked up, he was silent.

2 Q. And when did the wind pick up? It --

3 A. Once we got next to the middle of the side of the steamboat.

4 Q. And how --

5 A. We were coming up to pass the island that was to the left of
6 us, to the left of the steamboat.

7 Q. Do you know where the wind was coming from? Your left side?
8 Your right side?

9 A. In front of us.

10 Q. It was coming in front of you?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And what was the time frame from when you say it picked up to
13 the time that you sank? Do you remember like an estimated time
14 frame?

15 A. Maybe 6 minutes? 6 or 7 minutes. It was, like, it was fine
16 at first. But then it just got -- like, it was just a little bit
17 of wind, and it was a little rocky, like, just little tiny waves,
18 we were just, you know -- and then it got bad.

19 Q. Do you know, was he not speaking for about 6 minutes, or
20 could you not hear him, or --

21 A. As soon as the waves got bigger, he was silent. So, at
22 first, they were just, kind of, like, little tiny waves, you know,
23 like you could make in a pool with a floaty. And then once they
24 got to actual waves where you could see, like, whitecaps, and he
25 was silent.

1 Q. And then did you see, by chance, did you see him exit the
2 boat?

3 A. I saw -- the last thing I saw was him reach up, and I think
4 that might have been to push the button to lower the -- to make
5 the windows go away.

6 Q. Did he reach up with his right hand? His left hand?

7 A. His left, I think.

8 Q. And did he reach forward? Did he reach backwards?

9 A. Up.

10 Q. Straight up?

11 A. I think so.

12 Q. Was he sitting down on the --

13 A. He was standing at that point.

14 Q. Off of his --

15 A. I think, like, like that, like, kind of on it, kind of off of
16 it. Like, one leg on, like halfway sitting still.

17 Q. All right. Can you describe left or right, which way he was
18 doing it again?

19 A. It, up with his left arm.

20 Q. Did you see him push a button or pull a lever?

21 A. I just saw his arm go up, and then I was under.

22 Q. Did you see, when his arm went up, did you see any action
23 that took place after it? Did a window go down? Did a door go
24 up?

25 A. We were already under. I wasn't looking.

1 Q. So, all you saw was a hand go up. But you were not aware of
2 what --

3 A. Personally, I didn't know the top part of the boat was just a
4 tarp. So, I was hoping that something had ejected the top of the
5 boat. And that's why I just kept swimming out.

6 Q. All right. Thank you, Talyssa.

7 MR. YOUNG: Thank you very much.

8 BY MR. KARR:

9 Q. I'll, I've got one more question. When you were -- you just
10 described, you know, a quick scenario where you saw the captain
11 pull, and then the next thing you know, you went under. Can you
12 tell -- do you have any sensation as to how the vessel sank from
13 underneath you?

14 A. The -- like I said, it was slanted from back to front,
15 slightly. But it just sank down like that, like --

16 Q. I mean, was it such that, maybe, when you saw the captain you
17 were looking like this with your neck up like this?

18 A. No. I wasn't looking up. It was, like, I was looking up
19 with my eyes, but not with my head. It wasn't tilted that much.

20 Q. All right. Well, thanks. I have no more questions.

21 MR. YOUNG: No more questions.

22 MR. GILLETTE: Thank you.

23 MR. KARR: And, thank you very much for --

24 MS. MANN: Um-hum.

25 MR. KARR: -- for good description of everything.

1 MS. MANN: Can I have this picture?

2 MR. KARR: Yes. So, airdrop, or --

3 MS. MANN: She doesn't have an iPhone.

4 MR. KARR: And we're --

5 MS. MANN: I can email that.

6 MR. KARR: -- recording is --

7 MR. GILLETTE: What do you think is best? Text, you know
8 this stuff better, Snapchat, Instagram --

9 MR. KARR: 11:56, or 11:54, we're going to end.

10 (Whereupon, 11:54 a.m., 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: CAPSIZE AND SINKING OF STRETCH DUCK 7
 ON TABLE ROCK LAKE, BRANSON, MISSOURI,
 JULY 19, 2018
 Interview of Talyssa Mann

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA18MM028

PLACE: Branson, Missouri

DATE: July 24, 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 Coen Brooks
Transcriber