

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

\*

CAPSIZE AND SINKING OF STRETCH DUCK 7 \*

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

JULY 19, 2018 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: TALYSSA MANN

Passenger

Cox Medical Center  
Branson, Missouri

Friday,  
July 20, 2018

APPEARANCES:


SGT. JASON [REDACTED]  
Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP)

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Talyssa Mann:

By Sgt. Jason 

4

I N T E R V I E W

(8:35 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 SGT. [REDACTED] All right. Today is July 20th. I got about  
4 7:42 hours. We're at Cox Branson, or Branson Cox, however, they  
5 say it, Hospital in a consultation room off the ER. With me is  
6 Talyssa Mann, T-a-l-y-s-s-a, Mann.

## INTERVIEW OF TALYSSA MANN

8 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

9 Q. What is your middle initial?

10 A. J.

11 Q. Talyssa J. Mann. And what is your date of birth?

12 A. [REDACTED].

13 Q. And how old are you?

14 A. I'm 19.

15 Q. Nineteen years of age. And where do you live at right now?

16 A. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

17 Q. How do you -- [REDACTED]

18 A. [REDACTED]

19 Q. [REDACTED] Where all the bats are at?

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] And what is a good phone number for  
22 you?

23 A. Area cod [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]

24 Q. [REDACTED] Okay. And, and the people that were in your group,  
25 just to get this on recording here, was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Shayne

1 Collins, Tiffany Collins, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Talyssa Mann,  
2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Tomlyn McDonald and  
3 Ronita McKinley. Is that right?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. That's everybody that's in your group, then. Okay. All  
6 right. So, tell me, did you all -- I'm assuming you came down  
7 here as a family vacation. Is that right?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. What, when did you come down?

10 A. What day is it? Friday?

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. Wednesday. We got here Wednesday. They got here Thursday.

13 Q. Did family come in from all over, I'm assuming?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And some of your family's from Texas, though, right?

16 A. Um-hum. We all got here, we were all here together Thursday,  
17 though, when it happened.

18 Q. And just got together on Thursday, right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. All right. So, you were, your family was, kind of -- well,  
21 let's back up a little bit here.

22 The day that it happened, you bought your tickets, I assume.  
23 You showed up. Do you know about what time you left, you loaded  
24 up to start off or whatever?

25 A. 6:30 was our ride.

1 Q. 6:30 was the time you were supposed to take off. And one of  
2 the things is, is I'll repeat a lot of stuff that you say, just so  
3 -- I'm trying to observe detail and stuff. Okay?

4 So 6:30 p.m. was when your boat was supposed to take off,  
5 then. So you showed up at the Ducks place there off the strip,  
6 then. Is that right?

7 A. Yeah. Got in line.

8 Q. Got in line, got your tickets, got loaded up. Is that right?

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. So, go ahead, and you just tell me the story as to how things  
11 go, and I'll stop and ask you if I've got any questions then.

12 So --

13 A. Well, we were in line, and then they were like we're not sure  
14 if we're going to take the boat out because there's a storm  
15 coming.

16 Q. They made that announcement?

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Who made that announcement?

19 A. The captain. And then they waited a couple minutes, talked  
20 about it, and they loaded us all up, took our pictures. And they  
21 said that they -- we were going to do the water part of the tour  
22 first to miss the storm.

23 But that didn't work out. We were going, and all of a  
24 sudden, the wind started catching the waves --

25 Q. So I'm going to back you up here. The captain, you know for

1 a fact it was the captain, or whoever's talking the most then. Is  
2 that right?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Made the announcement that there's a storm coming in, and  
5 they weren't sure, but they were aware of it obviously.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And so, they said we're going to do the water part first and  
8 then the drive part. Is that right?

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. And where were you sitting at in there? Because they took a  
11 picture, and I know that -- I know there's a picture, that we have  
12 it, but you and your family were kind of in the middle of the  
13 boat.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Is that right?

16 A. It was in the center. I was on the right side.

17 Q. You were on the right side. If you're looking at the driver  
18 from behind, you're on the right side, then, right?

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. So what would be classically the passenger's side, about the  
21 middle. Who was sitting next to you, then?

22 A. In front of me was the family of the black people. And then  
23 behind me was my family. I was in a --

24 Q. So, the --

25 A. -- seat by myself.

1 Q. The black family was kind of in the front part of the boat?

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. And they were just right in front of you. Is that right?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Did you share a seat with anybody or anything?

6 A. No. It was just me.

7 Q. Just you. So you take off, and you go to the water then; is  
8 that right? And just go ahead and tell me the story then.

9 A. We got in the water. Everything was fine and dandy. And  
10 then the waves started picking up. He rolled the windows up,  
11 because the water was splashing in. And then he just kind of kept  
12 driving.

13 And all of a sudden the waves got bigger, and there was water  
14 on my side, the right side of the boat. There was water coming  
15 in, so the boat was leaning. And the waves got bigger. And in a  
16 matter of seconds, the back part sank, and we were under.

17 Q. Did -- was there ever any announcement or, about life jackets  
18 or anything?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Was there anything said --

21 A. Well, he said --

22 Q. What did the captain say?

23 A. The life jackets are up here. You pull this to get them  
24 down.

25 Q. Was that the instructional part when you started?



1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Or was that --

3 A. When we started.

4 Q. The only thing he talked about life jackets was in the  
5 beginning?

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. So when things kind of started to go bad and get hairy --

8 A. He didn't --

9 Q. -- there was no --

10 A. The, he didn't say anything. Nothing came out of his mouth.

11 Q. He didn't say anything. Did he just kind of seem like he was  
12 focused on driving then, I guess?

13 A. Kind of. Yeah.

14 Q. Do you remember the guy in the back coming up front or  
15 anything? Was there -- because there was two guys, right?

16 A. Yeah. He was sitting next to him, up in the front.

17 Q. Now, did the, was -- because depending upon how they're  
18 licensed, do you remember, did one person drive out there and then  
19 one person drove, drive the boat? Okay. Because --

20 A. The black guy drove on land.

21 Q. Drove on land.

22 A. The white guy, the --

23 Q. Captain.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. That's who you're calling the captain, then, right? And then

1 he, the captain drove in the water. And the captain is the same  
2 one that told you in the beginning that they weren't sure if they  
3 were going to take you out because of the storms?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. But they were going to try to do the water part first, and  
6 then --

7 A. That was it.

8 Q. -- and then do the drive around after that. Is that right?  
9 Okay. So you take off, you do your thing, things seem to be going  
10 well, and then the wind starts picking up. Is that right?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Then the captain doesn't really make any announcements?

13 A. Doesn't say anything.

14 Q. Doesn't say anything. And --

15 A. And it's, like, we all knew what was going to happen.

16 Q. You're on the right side. And then the water started coming  
17 on the right side, and started to kind of, to list, or tilt to the  
18 right a little bit. Is that right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And it was the big *Branson Showboat Belle*, big boat over to  
21 your right?

22 A. It was to the right side.

23 Q. And you didn't have the life jacket on, and nobody tried to  
24 get a life jacket. Is that correct?

25 A. I think we were all hoping it was fine.

1 Q. Just kind of --

2 A. Hoping.

3 Q -- the bank is right there. We're just, we're pretty close.  
4 We're going to make it. Right?

5 A. Yeah. And that happened in a matter of seconds. There  
6 wasn't even a reaction time, really. There was --

7 Q. So the water went down. But before that, he had dropped the  
8 canopy. Is that right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. The sides, to keep it from splashing in there. And it  
11 started coming --

12 A. When the wind started to pick up.

13 Q. What else? Let me ask you that.

14 A. That was it. The boat started going, and then it, down.

15 Q. And then it just went down?

16 A. Instantly. I remember standing up. And as I stood up, the  
17 water came exactly with me to get a last breath of air.

18 Q. You stood up with it, to -- and you were underneath the  
19 canopy, then. Is that right?

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. How --

22 A. As he, as we -- as I -- I watched him as we stood up. He  
23 released the top.

24 Q. And then --

25 A. Well, I watched him reach up and touch something. So I hoped

1 he released the top. So I just kept reaching --

2 Q. Did the top come off right then?

3 A. We were already under when the top came off, though.

4 Q. So you saw the captain reach up and --

5 A. Reach up. And I had hoped that was, it was --

6 Q. And then that released the top then?

7 A. Um-hum.

8 Q. Did the top go kind of back?

9 A. I, I didn't --

10 Q. Or did it float off?

11 A. I didn't see.

12 Q. Or could you tell?

13 A. We were under, we were under already.

14 Q. You were under water. Okay. So how did -- and I know this  
15 is, and I know you don't want to -- difficult thing here. How  
16 did -- what do you remember when you saw him release the top? You  
17 saw him release the top, and then what do you remember next?

18 A. Just reaching for the top of the water.

19 Q. Just trying to get up and get to the top of the water?

20 A. Um-hum. I got to the top, and I saw him get to the top. And  
21 then I saw my baby cousin get to the top. And he has asthma, and  
22 he's a chunk. And I was just, I was getting him to -- up, and I  
23 was getting me, us, to somewhere we would hold on to something.

24 Q. Was there anything close to hold on to?

25 A. We were way in front of the showboat. There's like the dock.

1 Then there's like a metal thing next to it. And we --

2 Q. How far were you from that when you --

3 A. We were far.

4 Q. Did you have to swim over there?

5 A. Swam. Yeah. And I was holding him up, too. And the waves  
6 were huge.

7 Q. So you got over there --

8 A. We were holding on. And then the cop --

9 Q. Who did you, which cousin did you try to swim with?

10 A. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

11 Q. [REDACTED]

12 So you got over to the side, over by the dock --

13 A. Well, I --

14 Q. -- is that right?

15 A. -- got, I was getting over there, and they had a donut life  
16 thing. And I couldn't keep him up anymore because he was pushing  
17 me under. I just kicked him to them. They threw it on top of  
18 him. It happened to land right over his head. And they pulled  
19 him up on the rope from that thing. And then I got to that thing,  
20 and they were trying to get us to like go to the land. But there  
21 was no way in hell. And they eventually just pulled us up onto  
22 it.

23 Q. And then that's how you got on there was just kind of swam to  
24 yourself, trying to get your cousin, and then somebody threw,  
25 basically, a life preserver with a rope to you. Is that right?

1 A. To -- for my cousin. Yeah. And then I swam to that metal  
2 thing, and I was holding on. They -- some guys pulled me up, and  
3 my mom, with my brother.

4 Q. Did your other family members swim over to you? Do you know  
5 how they got out of the water?

6 A. They swam closer to the steamboat. Because the -- those  
7 things were still moving when my head came up so I wasn't going to  
8 go that way. Because I was one of the first people who popped up.

9 Q. So but you popped up, and then you saw the captain, then,  
10 right? Because he was one of the first people then?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Did you -- and then your cousin --

13 A. He threw my little brother behind him when he was trying to  
14 swim. Yeah. It was kind of all-for-one situation.

15 Q. And you, did you remember seeing anybody else?

16 A. I just saw my mom, my brother and my cousin, and him. We all  
17 went to the same spot. And then --

18 Q. They all surfaced about the time you did, then?

19 A. Yeah. It was like --

20 Q. So the captain pushed, who was it out of the way again, you  
21 say?

22 A. My little brother.

23 Q. Which is who?

24 A. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

25 Q. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] And then ultimately all your family kind of

1 made it over --

2 A. My stepdad -- when I got pulled up, I saw my stepdad and my  
3 sister pulled onto the cop's boat that was docked onto where, what  
4 we were hanging onto. And then [REDACTED] got pulled onto that boat,  
5 too. Because that's who threw out the -- that thing for him. And  
6 then later, my aunt and cousin showed up, and they took us all to  
7 land, and then they found my grandma.

8 Q. Found your grandma.

9 So I'm going to kind of recap just a little bit of what I  
10 think you told me. Is there anything jumping out at you that I  
11 haven't asked that you thought, man, if you had just said that?  
12 I'm just, you know, trying to make this as easy as possible as  
13 far, you know, what you recall and remember.

14 But I'm going to kind of recap what I think you told me and  
15 you correct me if I'm wrong then. All right? So you go there,  
16 basically, all got together on Thursday. Some of your family's  
17 from New Mexico, some from Texas. Then, 6:30 was your takeoff  
18 time; is that right? And the captain told you, made an  
19 announcement that they weren't sure if they weren't going to go  
20 out because there was a storm coming. But they opted to go out  
21 anyway and do the water part first, and then the driving part. Is  
22 that correct?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And you know that that's the captain. And you know that it  
25 was the black guy that drove out there, and then the white guy

1 that was in the water, then, right?

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. So everything was going pretty fine until the winds hit, all  
4 of the sudden, was -- the winds just hit all of the sudden, then,  
5 right? It was pretty quick. And then the waves started getting  
6 bigger.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And getting over -- you're sitting on the right side.  
9 Ultimately the boat starts taking on water to the right side like  
10 that. And then it fills up pretty quick. And you can remember  
11 standing up and kind of getting your breath. And you remember  
12 seeing him hit something that kind of popped the canopy off. Is  
13 that right? Is there -- is that right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. And you don't remember him saying anything about life  
16 jackets other than --

17 A. In the beginning.

18 Q. -- in the beginning?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And that was just the demonstration of where they were at or  
21 anything. Okay. But nobody tried to get a life jacket that you  
22 could see? Nobody said -- nobody made a suggestion that, hey, we  
23 need to get those; this isn't looking good. Nobody said anything  
24 like that, right?

25 A. Well, honestly --



1 Q. That you recall.

2 A. -- he wasn't saying anything so we all thought it was fine.

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. We didn't --

5 Q. He was acting cool, so you thought everything was okay?

6 A. Yeah. And then all of a sudden we were taking on water and  
7 there was no time to react.

8 Q. And you popped up, and you helped your cousin

9 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] He had trouble swimming, right?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. And then you kind of --

12 A. I'm sorry. I haven't slept, and my eyes are bothering me.

13 Q. I understand. And you kind of helped him. And you remember  
14 seeing the captain kind of push him out of the way to --

15 A. My brother. Yeah.

16 Q. Yeah. Who's your brother?

17 A. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

18 Q. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Okay. Pushed your brother, [REDACTED] And  
19 then you kind of -- somebody threw a life preserver to that, to  
20 your cousin. And then you kind of made it on over to where there  
21 was something that you could hold. And then --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- people pulled you up, right?

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. Anything else that I'm missing?

1 A. Just a huge thank you to those workers. If it wasn't for  
2 them on that boat, the steamboat --

3 Q. I mean, all of your family were pretty much sitting in the  
4 middle, right?

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. Was there something about the middle part that was easier to  
7 get away from that boat?

8 A. I think the thing is, is we all grew up swimming. My grandma  
9 was a swimmer in high school.

10 Q. So all your family is swimmers?

11 A. We're all, we've -- I grew up in the ocean. I'm used to  
12 being in waves.

13 Q. So you're all good swimmers?

14 A. Yeah. And I believe that had a lot to do with it. Because  
15 we all grew up around water.

16 Q. So you didn't feel it was something of the nature of where,  
17 you know, you just --

18 A. We had that advantage, because we were --

19 Q. But like, situationally, because of the way the canopy popped  
20 off, that people who were in the front or in the back were a  
21 little more disadvantaged?

22 A. Well, the people in the front, it was two older men, a woman  
23 that was in a wheelchair, two young children. They had no chance.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. And that's who was in the front. You know what I mean,

1 like there was nothing that could have been done for that. And  
2 there was older people in the back, too.

3 I remember one little girl, we were up there, and they were,  
4 like -- she was, like, I don't know where my dad is. And they  
5 were, like, that's okay, they'll find him. And she was, like, no,  
6 he can't swim. And he's almost 70. He didn't make it. I know he  
7 didn't.

8 Q. And that was later, right?

9 A. No. That was while everybody was still pulling people up in  
10 the storm, but they made it onto the steamboat; they brought me on  
11 there. They were putting tablecloths over us to get us dry,  
12 and --

13 Q. All right. Is there anything else? I'm really very sorry  
14 that this happened to you.

15 A. It's not your fault.

16 Q. Well, there's a lot of questions to be asked, and answers to  
17 be gathered yet. And --

18 A. I understand.

19 Q. -- we don't have that. And that's what we're trying to do.  
20 Okay? If we got any questions, can we just call you back at that  
21 number that you gave me, [REDACTED]?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Will that be okay?

24 A. That is fine.

25 Q. All right.

1 I'm going to go ahead and stop the recording now. Okay?

2 A. All right.

3 Q. I'll take you back up there, and we'll find the lady we met  
4 first when we --

5 A. My aunt.

6 Q. And her name was?

7 A. Tomlyn.

8 Q. Tomlyn. Okay. All right. I'll get you back upstairs.

9 A. All right.

10 Q. Thanks.

11 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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 20, 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