

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: [REDACTED]

Passenger

Cox Medical Center  
Branson, Missouri

Friday,  
July 20, 2018

APPEARANCES:

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

TOMLYN McDONALD  
([REDACTED]s mother)

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
By Sgt. [REDACTED]

4

I N T E R V I E W

(8:27 p.m.)

1 SGT. [REDACTED] Today is July -- what's today? The 20th?

2 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: Yes.

3 SGT. [REDACTED] 20th, '18. I've got about 8:27, 2027 hours  
4 here. We're at the Cox Branson Hospital. With me is

5 [REDACTED] daughter of --

6 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: Tomlyn.

7 SGT. [REDACTED] Tomlyn McDonald.

8 INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

9 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

10 Q. And, [REDACTED] what is your middle initial?

11 A. [REDACTED]

12 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: [REDACTED]

13 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

14 Q. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

15 SGT. [REDACTED] And the same address as you, I presume, then?

16 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: Correct.

17 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

18 Q. And what is your phone number? Do you know it?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. What is it?

21 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: Well, her phone's in the bottom of --

22 SGT. [REDACTED] Okay. Well, that's -- yeah.

23 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: But we're going to get it replaced.

1 SGT. [REDACTED] That's all right. But I can get a hold of  
2 her through you if I need to.

3 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: Okay. Sure.

4 SGT. [REDACTED] Yeah. That's fine. Just a habit of asking  
5 that.

6 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

7 Q. So I just want to kind of get a statement from what you  
8 recall yesterday. If you don't remember anything, that's fine.  
9 But basically you remember going to the Ride the Ducks. Right?  
10 Starting from there, what do you remember them saying?

11 How old are you? I meant to get that in there first.

12 A. I'm 11.

13 Q. You're 11?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And what's your date of birth?

16 A. [REDACTED].

17 Q. [REDACTED].

18 MS. TOMLYN [REDACTED] So she's almost 12.

19 [REDACTED] Yeah.

20 SGT. [REDACTED] So almost 12. All right.

21 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

22 Q. So what do you remember when you got to Ride the Ducks? What  
23 did they tell you? Do you remember?

24 A. Well, when we first got in -- well, not first. He was like  
25 talking and this and that, just trying to make jokes and all that.

1 And so, then we kind of got to the water.

2 Q. Do you remember him talking about the weather or anything?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. What did they say about the weather?

5 A. That was kind of before we got on the boat.

6 Q. Yeah. Before you got on, what do you remember them saying  
7 about the weather?

8 A. They were like -- I don't remember, but I remember them  
9 talking about the weather. I don't know exactly --

10 Q. All right.

11 A. -- what they said.

12 Q. They mentioned it.

13 A. Yeah. They mentioned it.

14 Q. All right.

15 A. So then we finally got in the water. And everything was  
16 okay. He was mentioning the life, the life jackets and all that.  
17 And then --

18 Q. Was that in the very first part when he talked about the life  
19 jackets, hitting the water, or was that in the demonstration  
20 before you left? I'm just asking. Is that --

21 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: He was doing the demonstration on the  
22 life jackets while the black man was still driving.

23 [REDACTED] Yeah.

24 SGT. [REDACTED] So that was at the process of driving, then?

25 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: Yeah.

1 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

2 Q. Okay. So you get to the water -- so you get to the water and  
3 then what happened?

4 A. We get to the water and the waves just start -- everything  
5 was fine at first, and then the waves just start coming in.

6 And --

7 Q. Where were you sitting?

8 A. I was sitting next to the window.

9 Q. On the, were you on the -- if you're looking at the back of  
10 the driver, were you on the left side or the right side?

11 A. This side.

12 Q. You're on the left side. Okay. Who were you sitting next  
13 to?

14 A. My cousin, [REDACTED]

15 Q. Cousin [REDACTED]

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And what --

18 A. Yeah. So the water started going into the boat. And, yeah,  
19 it just filled. It was just like a movie. It just filled --

20 Q. Filled up?

21 A. Yeah. And then finally the guy pushed open the --

22 Q. Top?

23 A. Yeah. But the windows were closed. And he originally said  
24 that the windows would be our emergency exit, but the windows were  
25 closed so we didn't really have an emergency exit. But then

1 finally, he opened it up.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And so, I was swimming, and I just remember like it took me  
4 forever to get up to the top so I can breathe. Yeah.

5 And then, took me about like 5 minutes got get to like the,  
6 to the showboat. And I -- the back of it, like the paddles that  
7 make it go, like the big old paddles, me and my mom climbed up it.  
8 Yeah.

9 Q. So you had to, kind of -- do you remember trying to push the  
10 canopy off, or that big top off you or anything?

11 A. Uh-uh.

12 Q. Or did it just kind of float off?

13 A. It just kind of float off.

14 Q. Did you --

15 A. I was kind of, I was --

16 Q. -- did you go completely under water and stuff?

17 A. -- feeling around. Yeah. Yeah.

18 Q. And then once you kind of went under water, you just kind of  
19 started swimming up, and you were -- were you able to swim  
20 directly up once you went under water?

21 A. Uh-uh.

22 Q. You had to kind of come, get --

23 A. I had to, I had to -- my eyes were open, but I still couldn't  
24 see anything. It was just all blurry. So I had to use my hands.  
25 And then finally, I felt like a, like a opening, so I swam up



1 and -- yeah.

2 Q. And so you got to the top. Who was the first person you saw  
3 when you got to the top? Do you remember?

4 A. My mom.

5 Q. Your mom? Okay. And then that's when you swam on over to  
6 the paddle wheel?

7 A. Well, the first, the first person I saw was a little black  
8 boy. He survived, but he was trying to push me under. But I was  
9 like, okay, we can't do that. You know, please don't push me  
10 under. Like we have a family, you know. But, yeah.

11 Q. And then you just kind of swam your way over to the  
12 paddlewheel; is that right?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. But as, we're driving down -- as they're going down there,  
15 when things get bad, there was no mention, anything good or bad,  
16 about putting a life jacket on; is that right?

17 A. Yeah.

18 MS. TOMLYN McDONALD: He never said --

19 [REDACTED] He just said --

20 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

21 Q. Just said --

22 A. He just said I don't think we're going to use it, though.

23 Q. When you're out on the water?

24 A. Yeah. He said I don't think, I don't think we're going to  
25 need it.

1 MS. TOMLYN [REDACTED] Did he say that during the  
2 demonstration or while we were in the water?  
3 [REDACTED] I don't remember. I was too shocked.  
4 BY SGT. [REDACTED]  
5 Q. All right. Okay. But, I mean, as far as that specific part  
6 of when you think -- realized the wind's starting to pick up, was  
7 there any mention or talk of a life jacket then that you can  
8 recall?  
9 A. Yes. There was mentioning a life jacket.  
10 Q. Was that by the captain or by somebody else?  
11 A. I -- it was by the -- wasn't it? Yeah, it was by the white  
12 person. I don't, I don't remember the one --  
13 Q. The captain driving the boat or somebody else?  
14 A. Uh-huh. I don't know who was really driving the boat.  
15 Q. Okay.  
16 A. Me and [REDACTED] were just kind of goofing off.  
17 Q. Goofing around?  
18 A. Yeah.  
19 Q. All right. So is there anything else, I mean, that I'm  
20 leaving out that -- not asking or anything?  
21 A. Uh-uh. But I think they should be more cautious of what's  
22 going to happen. I don't even think we should have gone out --  
23 Q. Yeah.  
24 A. -- on the place.  
25 Q. All right. All right. Well, if I have any questions, I'll

1 get back a hold of you through your mom, then. Okay? Will that  
2 be all right?

3 A. Yeah. That's fine.

4 SGT. [REDACTED] All right. We'll go ahead and we'll be done,  
5 then. Okay? All right. Stop it here.

6 (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:           CAPSIZE AND SINKING OF STRETCH DUCK 7  
                                  ON TABLE ROCK LAKE, BRANSON, MISSOURI,  
                                  JULY 19, 2018  
                                  Interview of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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.

[REDACTED]

*Karen Coen Brooks*  
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Karen Coen Brooks  
Transcriber