

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

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: TIA COLEMAN

Sunday,  
July 22, 2018

## APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL KARR, Marine Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

CINDY LAKE, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

MARY PAT McKAY, M.D., Chief Medical Officer  
National Transportation Safety Board

JAMES GILLETTE, Marine Investigator  
U.S. Coast Guard

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(12:00 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. KARR: So it's noon on July 22nd, we're in a hospital in  
4 Branson, Missouri to interview Tia Coleman and let's -- we'll go  
5 around the room and introduce ourselves. My name is Mike Karr,  
6 I'm with the National Transportation Safety Board.

7 MR. GILLETTE: Hi, my name is Jim Gillette. I'm with the  
8 United States Coast Guard.

9 DR. MCKAY: My name is Mary Pat McKay and I'm with the NTSB.

10 MS. THOMAS: I'm Melissa Thomas and I'm Tia's niece.

11 MS. BIGBEE: My name is Leeta Bigbee and I'm Tia's older  
12 sister.

13 MS. COLEMAN: I'm Tia Lindsey Coleman.

14 MS. BRACKNEY: Yelena Brackney and I'm the other sister.

15 MR. KARR: Thank you, everyone.

16 MS. LAKE: Cindy Lake, NTSB. Just for the record.

INTERVIEW OF TIA COLEMAN

17  
18 BY MR. KARR:

19 Q. Ms. Coleman, may I call you Tina?

20 A. Tia.

21 Q. Tia?

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. Thank you. If you would, tell us about the boat ride and  
24 tell us everything you'd like to tell us about, I'll offer if you  
25 could start when you were -- when you -- before you entered the

1 water.

2 A. So do you want to know when we got on the boat and left the  
3 station?

4 Q. You know what, yes, because that sounds like shortly  
5 thereafter then you entered the water, correct?

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. So we got on our boat, our time was at 6:30. I heard one of  
9 the people yell out, you know, I'd like you to go to the water  
10 first because a storm's coming. Then the driver, the driver's  
11 name was Bob, him and -- I can't remember what the captain's name  
12 was.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Scott.

14 MS. COLEMAN: Captain Scott was saying yeah, we're going  
15 ahead to the lake first, but Bob was driving and he said we're  
16 going to the lake because there's a storm coming, he said, and we  
17 will get wet because it's going to rain, but we're not going to be  
18 in there long. So we take off the tour as Bob is driving. We  
19 pull up to, it looks like a park that we went through. When we  
20 get to the park, Bob and Captain Scott -- sorry -- switch places.  
21 I don't know, I don't have my cuff on. They switched places.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, that's you wiggling your fingers.

23 MS. COLEMAN: Oh. They switched places so now the captain is  
24 in the seat and it's a really hot day, it's like 96 or something  
25 out, so when we go into the water, it's -- it's a little cloudy,

1 but it's good, it's not -- the water's not rocky, it's a smooth --  
2 which I didn't expect it to be smooth, but it was smooth going in  
3 and it was so smooth that he had all the kids get up and come  
4 drive the boat, he said you can come drive the boat. While they  
5 were up driving the boat, he let us know you already know, but  
6 there are emergency exits, there are these windows if you need to  
7 get out the windows.

8 He said above you are life vests. He said you don't really  
9 need to know where they are because you're not going to use them,  
10 but there are life vests above you and he did show us where  
11 there's adult life vests, kids life vests, and infant life vests.  
12 So everybody was fine with that.

13 My son, my middle son, [REDACTED] got up to -- he got on the boat  
14 and he was driving the boat and he was excited. My nephew,  
15 [REDACTED] was driving -- I think [REDACTED] may have been the last one  
16 driving the boat, and then the captain took over. And as he was  
17 driving, it started getting windy, which still did not scare us  
18 because we were hot and like there were little specks of water  
19 coming in and my kids love water, we all laughed and all, it was  
20 like "this feels so good."

21 The captain, to me, did not seem to be worried at the time.  
22 Bob was sitting in his seat. I didn't hear any concern at that  
23 point. Then a big -- I want to set my knee back up. So the  
24 captain said there is no need to worry because this boat, he gave  
25 us, basically, as we were driving, he gave us the whole history of

1 the boat, it was John -- John Wayne drove the boat in some old  
2 movie and it was originally from, I don't know, World War II.  
3 They're inspected by the National Guard, I think he said, or Coast  
4 Guard, he probably said, so they have to be safety inspected, so  
5 the boats are fine, we shouldn't be worried. He then said the  
6 boats can take waves swells up to 18 to 20 feet, so we should be  
7 just fine.

8 So a big swell came in, but from where I was sitting, we had  
9 the windows down, which were plastic, so our -- we didn't have a  
10 clear shot. I was in the front, too. I didn't have a clear shot,  
11 but I'm sitting here and at this point, I'm sitting here and my  
12 oldest son, [REDACTED] is next to me. We had originally switched  
13 spots. I was sitting on the inside and I had the baby, I was  
14 holding the baby, my baby, [REDACTED] and I looked at my husband and  
15 [REDACTED] were next to me, I said hey, while we're stopped -- this is  
16 right before we went in the water -- I'm going to be bouncing  
17 around because details are coming and going. I said hey, you want  
18 to switch me spots so I can sit with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] because [REDACTED]  
19 is autistic, so he gets very excited easily.

20 So I wanted him, I wanted to follow the rules of the boat and  
21 stay seated while it was in motion so I could have my husband  
22 holding him down while I was holding the baby who was half asleep,  
23 anyway, she was asleep at that point. I was like, you want to do  
24 that and he was like, well, just give me her and I'll keep them,  
25 that way you don't -- you can just hold and have him by the

1 window, I'm like, I don't trust him by the window. So I did it,  
2 though, I let him sit there and he was so excited and he was  
3 jumping up, so I had him where he couldn't get up too high. But  
4 that first big water, big wave came in and it was a big riverboat  
5 that I saw. When we got up there and when it started getting  
6 really rocky, I saw another duck boat ahead of us but it looked  
7 like they had made it to shore.

8 We were next to this big riverboat or I don't know what it's  
9 called, but that's what it looked like to me, it had like the  
10 spindles, the red on there, and it was -- the bus basically split  
11 in half like this. I was in the front with [REDACTED] behind me was  
12 my sister-in-law and my mother-in-law. Across from me and [REDACTED]  
13 was my husband Glenn, [REDACTED] was in the inside, and Glenn was  
14 hugging [REDACTED] Behind them was my nephew [REDACTED] who was holding  
15 his baby brother, [REDACTED] Behind them was my father-in-law and  
16 my uncle, who lived with my mother-in-law and father-in-law, they  
17 took care of him.

18 And when that first wave came in, we were like whoa, ha, ha,  
19 you know, this feels great, the water feels good, you know,  
20 because it was at this point it was never expressed to us that we  
21 never -- we needed to get life jackets at this point. Then the  
22 big wave, the last big wave came in and when it came in, I stood  
23 up and the last thing I heard, my sister-in-law said grab the  
24 baby, she said grab the baby. And then I lost my son, who was  
25 next to me, I don't know where he went. I don't know what



1 happened. The part came up over my face and I hit my head at the  
2 top of the boat. I didn't realize the boat had capsized, I  
3 thought it just sunk. I didn't realize, because at this point the  
4 captain was turning the boat. Bob never said anything about  
5 grabbing the life jackets, the captain never said anything about  
6 grabbing life jackets, nobody got up and grabbed life jackets that  
7 I could see, that I heard, because I had -- I had some over my  
8 head, you know.

9 So when we turned and that big swell came in, that's when we  
10 capsized and I thought I was dead because the boat went down and I  
11 was trying to get up, I couldn't see anything, I just remember  
12 kind of like a light and I hit my head at the top of -- I'm  
13 assuming the top of the boat, some part of the boat I hit my head.

14 And I don't know if something pushed me up, pushed me out,  
15 and I got out into the water and as I got out to the water, I was  
16 underneath a lot of water and I know, for sure, I was pretty deep  
17 because they told us on part of the tour that the lake water stays  
18 like, 85, it stays pretty warm for whatever reason, that part of  
19 the lake stays warm, but the water was icy cold where I was at, so  
20 I knew I was down. So I'm a decent swimmer, but in the middle of  
21 a storm, this is what it is.

22 So I started swimming up and I was swimming and fighting so  
23 hard and I'm just swallowing water, because I can't get to the top  
24 fast enough and as I'm swimming up, there's something pulling me  
25 down and I'm swimming and it's like I'm fighting back and forth.

1 And then I screamed out, I said, "Lord, I got to get to my babies,  
2 I got to get to my babies," so this is at least is what I'm  
3 praying, I got to get to them, I got to save my babies. And I  
4 just -- it's a constant fight, I can't explain the fight, it's --  
5 it was so terrible. Me swimming and I'm -- I'm getting pulled  
6 down, I'd swim up two feet, I'd be pulled down five feet and of  
7 course, I don't know the actual footage, but it's just how I felt.

8 And then I couldn't take it anymore, I couldn't take it  
9 anymore. I no longer had a will to live. I said, "Lord, just  
10 take me now, I can't do this any longer, just take me. Why are  
11 you even keeping me?" and I let go. And I let go, I started  
12 floating. As I was floating up, I could feel the water  
13 temperature change, so I knew I was getting closer to the top and  
14 I lift my head out and I jumped out and I screamed out, "Help" and  
15 as soon as I did, a big wave came over, it smashed me and I don't  
16 know how many times it happened.

17 It seemed, it seemed like I was in that water for over an  
18 hour, but I couldn't have been. I was probably in there, like, 10  
19 minutes, but I was screaming help, help and I didn't know until  
20 recently that somebody jumped in to help me. I knew I got over to  
21 the boat and I was holding on, but I couldn't pull myself up. And  
22 they jumped in and helped me up and the people pulled me up off  
23 the boat and I didn't see -- I saw my baby's diaper bag floating  
24 and I tried to grab it. I tried to grab it, so I could just have  
25 something to hold on to because I didn't have enough strength. I

1 didn't have enough strength. So I tried to grab the diaper bag  
2 and it got away from me and I didn't see my baby, I didn't see my  
3 husband, I didn't see anybody I knew and I saw all of these people  
4 throwing life vests off the river boat and people were jumping in.  
5 I didn't know -- I didn't know what to think, it must be angels.  
6 And then when I got to the deck, I was surrounded by people who  
7 told me they loved me and they were hugging me.

8         And I don't know how, because my legs were so tired from  
9 fighting, they felt like just wet noodles and they had me get up.  
10 I couldn't walk, not on my own. I had two men around me, holding  
11 me up, and they walked me up to the boardwalk and as I got up to  
12 the top, there was a lady, I didn't even remember the lady being  
13 on the boat. She was spread out and she was dead and I could see  
14 her eye bulging and it's the first time I've ever seen anything  
15 like that.

16         I got to the bench and I just didn't know -- I didn't know  
17 what happened. At the time, I thought my kids were safe. And my  
18 nephew, [REDACTED] came running down the thing and he said, Aunt  
19 Tia, Aunt Tia, I tried to save [REDACTED] He said I saw him floating,  
20 but I was too weak; I was just holding on to the boat, I was too  
21 weak, I couldn't get to him, I couldn't get to him. And so I was  
22 just so happy to see him because I didn't know where the rest of  
23 them were and he knew his granny was dead. He knew his granny and  
24 his granddad was dead because they had back problems and knee  
25 problems. And so, he was so sad and I just held it in for him; I

1 held all my emotion in, I tried my best to.

2 Then I saw a firefighter come over to me, it was the same  
3 firefighter that delivered my mother-in-law a wheelchair the day  
4 before. So I grabbed his face and I said, "Do you remember me?"  
5 He said "I do, I do." And (indiscernible) going in and out of  
6 consciousness. He said, "Are you a good swimmer, Tia? Are you a  
7 good swimmer?" I said, "No, I'm okay." He said, "Yeah. Me, too.  
8 Me, too." And he stayed with me, came back up to see me. I  
9 would've given my life up for all of them.

10 And they brought me to the hospital and they showed me a  
11 picture of my family, my beautiful family, and asked their names  
12 and date of births. And yesterday we got to go see them. No  
13 more. They were just as beautiful as before, all of them, nine of  
14 them. I try to keep my nephew sheltered from as much stuff as  
15 possible because he lost his mom, his brother, his uncle, his  
16 cousins, his great-uncle, his entire grandparents. I didn't want  
17 to tell him the story.

18 Q. Well, thanks for telling -- thanks for telling us. Thanks  
19 for telling us the story.

20 A. Do you have any questions for me?

21 Q. I do have some questions. You mentioned the -- talking about  
22 the emergency windows, the life vests, and where the adult life  
23 jackets were. When did you receive that information? Were you in  
24 the water, were you -- was it ashore, before you got in the boat?

25 A. It was not before we got in the boat, for sure. I want to

1 say it was when the -- I'm sorry, I can't totally --

2 Q. That's fine.

3 A. -- remember. I want to -- it was either when the kids were  
4 driving the boat or it was right before we went into the water.  
5 And to me, it wasn't a thorough explanation, it was that they  
6 didn't look like the life jackets I'm used to seeing with the  
7 sleeves and the arms, it just looked like a big square that you  
8 put up your neck, like it didn't have the straps. Yeah, that's --

9 Q. What you just described, you know, where the windows were,  
10 where the life rafts (sic) were, was it -- did it appear to be a  
11 regular routine of what he would do every time, like he had  
12 well --

13 A. I have no idea.

14 Q. Did it sound well rehearsed or -- let me ask you, not did it  
15 sound well rehearsed, but could you sort of reenact the whole  
16 safety briefing that he gave?

17 A. I would say that the safety briefing, I would say this, we  
18 were rowdy by that time because when we were leaving, before we  
19 were leaving, when we climbed on the bus and I felt like I could  
20 probably hear the best since I was the closest, and he was telling  
21 little jokes and stuff when we first got on the boat and so we  
22 could hear the stuff being -- but by the time we reached out to  
23 the water, when we got to that little forest, I do not believe the  
24 safety briefings were -- I don't believe they were done well, in  
25 detail, because even with the life jacket above my head I don't

1 know if I could've just pulled it down. I don't know if there was  
2 a hook up there to pull it down from -- even if I got it down, I  
3 wouldn't know the proper way to secure it on. I felt like we  
4 should've really been listening and I don't think we were. I feel  
5 like that was not a priority, I don't feel like it was a priority  
6 for the captain, it was just kind of like -- because to me, I felt  
7 like he was like this is just another day for me out here at work  
8 and here's the things, here's the, here's the -- here's the life  
9 jackets, you won't need them, he even said that you won't need  
10 them, but there they are, but you won't even need them.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Would you have known which one's for  
12 which person? Like what was an adult one and what was --

13 MS. COLEMAN: He pointed out which ones were those. And  
14 inside --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So which ones would be around the  
16 boat?

17 MS. COLEMAN: I would've had the one around the boat because  
18 in my -- where I was, I think the adults were ahead of me and the  
19 kids might've been across the way, but then the infants were in  
20 the back. So if I'd been notified in time to grab them, we  
21 probably could've pulled together, as a boat, to get everybody a  
22 jacket. But we were never notified to wear them, even when --  
23 that we were in the danger. And we, as a whole, even as happy as  
24 everybody was on the boat to be out there, everybody followed his  
25 instructions. He asked us to stay seated and nobody really got up

1 like that. They didn't get up until the big wave came in and  
2 people started to get scared. But they still -- water was coming  
3 in at first and it was so refreshing, it was just like oh, so hot,  
4 this water feels so good, and we couldn't really see, I couldn't  
5 see, up ahead how bad it was. But even when we were driving, he  
6 was like yeah, the storm's coming, see. You could look down and  
7 see the storm, that the storm would be there. And I was like  
8 okay, but I didn't --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: When he turned by the other boat, was  
10 that --

11 MS. COLEMAN: That was the end.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: By the big boat?

13 MS. COLEMAN: But when we were still driving --

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You didn't tell them that though.

15 MS. COLEMAN: What?

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That he turned on the boat.

17 MS. COLEMAN: Yes. Well, he -- yes. When the first wave  
18 came in, he was -- because the first thing I thought is why is he  
19 very close to this big boat, and probably to get us to shore is  
20 what I'm assuming. But when that next big wave came in, with him  
21 turning, because he was turning, he was in the midst of turning,  
22 and when that wave came in, it knocked us down, when the nose  
23 dipped down, back, whatever happened, that's when we plunged under  
24 water.

25 BY MR. KARR:

1 Q. Well, I have questions about those waves. So if you wouldn't  
2 mind, this pillow makes a great boat model. If you could show me  
3 again or show how the first wave hit the boat and brought water in  
4 the boat.

5 A. Okay, so this is the captain's seat. He has a little zip  
6 window that he can keep zipped up or zipped down. He zips it up  
7 here. And this is, I don't know, like the first mate's seat,  
8 maybe Bob's seat. Bob was not sitting here, Bob was sitting over  
9 here. This window --

10 Q. He's behind the driver?

11 A. Exactly. This window had a zip, too, and they had only shut  
12 it, like, part of the way, the zip was only shut part of the way.  
13 So when the wave came in, it -- through that little hole, it  
14 sprayed us and they were like oh, okay, I don't want -- I remember  
15 him saying this, I don't want the floors to get wet, they cost a  
16 lot to repair. So he closed the window as much as he could.

17 Q. Tia, do you mind, what I'm going to do, I'm going to make  
18 some comments just because I'm going to try and illustrate what  
19 you're saying, so when I make a comment, just keep talking --

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. -- and thanks.

22 A. Um-hum. So he closed that little plastic window.

23 Q. On the starboard side of the bow.

24 A. And then where my window was, they had put something that  
25 came down, it was like metal bars, but it was plastic, so the



1 metal bars --

2 Q. On the starboard side.

3 A. -- are really thin, maybe. Maybe a fourth inch around,  
4 circumference. Maybe. But it had plastic so it could keep us  
5 from getting sprayed so much from the water, but it was still --  
6 it wasn't secured to anything. You could push the window. But  
7 when the wave came in, it came through those crevices, from what I  
8 could see, in the front. They said water came in through the  
9 back. I didn't -- I don't know. I was concerned of my family, my  
10 unit.

11 Q. When that wave -- the wave took off that curtain or that  
12 window --

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. -- do you recall -- can you tell me how far the window may  
15 have opened as the water came up into the boat?

16 A. I can't tell you that.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Because in the front it looks like he had zipped up, so it  
19 didn't look like he's moved.

20 Q. Specifically, you were sitting on the -- you were sitting  
21 behind the -- you were sitting --

22 A. The captain's here --

23 Q. Right. And you were --

24 A. -- and I'm here.

25 Q. -- sitting over there, you were sitting on the starboard

1 side.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. All right.

4 A. On the starboard side, which is the right of the boat, facing  
5 it, it's the right of the boat, and that's where the wave was  
6 coming in. And so when he was turning, I felt like -- I felt like  
7 he was turning to get away from them, but it's scary, that's when  
8 I started getting scared because the boat seemed so -- the big  
9 riverboat seemed so close and it looked like it was moving, so I  
10 was like we're about to get crushed by this boat, you know, my  
11 mind is in a thousand places and before I can think of anything  
12 else, the last big wave come in. And when it came in, I jumped  
13 up, thinking that it was going to wash out like the rest and it  
14 didn't wash out, it pulled us down, and that's when I lost -- I  
15 lost everything.

16 Q. The last big wave --

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. -- how did that -- so the last big wave, when it hit your  
19 boat --

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. -- did it come this way, did it come this way?

22 A. It came in at this angle.

23 Q. So it came, came --

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. It came in like that, so it came in at about a 45-degree

1 angle on the starboard --

2 A. Maybe.

3 Q. -- side.

4 A. Yeah, I can't --

5 Q. Yeah, I'm estimating.

6 A. I can't estimate the degrees, I just know it came in that  
7 window.

8 Q. Right. Well, it came in that window in the front.

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. Did it come in any -- did it come in along the rest of the  
11 boat?

12 A. Where I was sitting, it did.

13 Q. It did?

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. Through the bottom of the curtain?

16 A. Uh-uh. Yes. I'm sorry. The water was above the curtain, so  
17 when it -- when we were in there -- no. Since the curtain is not  
18 -- our curtain was not secure, there's no zipper or if it is, it  
19 wasn't zipped up. The water came in through the sides and when it  
20 came in, it pushed it in, kind of like a shower curtain. If you  
21 threw a big bucket of water on a shower curtain it would cave it  
22 in and that's kind of how I felt it did.

23 Q. Can you describe -- using that bucket analogy or any other  
24 analogy --

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. -- you know, just can you describe the volume of water that  
2 came under the curtain?

3 A. It looked like once -- the first wave that came in, it looked  
4 like it was maybe two feet.

5 Q. The wave which --

6 A. When it landed in the boat, it looked like it was about two  
7 feet of water because it was on the ground and I could still see  
8 the kids, nothing was -- it wasn't too scary with being two feet,  
9 to me, because nothing was covered up, but the second wave that  
10 came in, I want to say it covered laps, it covered -- you know,  
11 you're covering up people now in --

12 Q. How did all that water get in the boat?

13 A. Through the window.

14 Q. Through the windows.

15 A. From what I was, it came in through the window.

16 Q. Yeah. Did you see anybody get slapped in the face with the  
17 curtain?

18 A. I did not.

19 Q. Or with the window?

20 A. I did not, but I also heard, which I can't -- I can only --  
21 this is hearsay, that water, a big -- when it hit me from that  
22 side, that the back got hit with a lot of water. So when all that  
23 water rushed in, it may not have been just from my window, it may  
24 also have been from water that came in through the back.

25 Q. All right. And how did -- you may -- how did it feel when

1 you got hit, you know, did you get hit with that water? Did it  
2 hit you in the face?

3 A. I jumped up. When the water came, I jumped up and I had my  
4 son, and then all of a sudden we started sinking and then what I  
5 felt was my head hit something. I don't know if I hit a curtain  
6 because I don't know which way I was, I was -- my -- I was  
7 discombobulated in the water, so I don't know if I was on the side  
8 or if I was at the top of the boat or I had flipped around to the  
9 bottom, but my head hit something.

10 Q. So you --

11 A. I still have a scar up there.

12 Q. So when that -- so you were still seated when the first wave  
13 hit?

14 A. When the first wave, yes.

15 Q. But after the second wave hit --

16 A. I jumped up.

17 Q. After it hit?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. After the -- no.

20 A. After the second wave hit, I jumped up and I was like okay,  
21 and then the boat went down and when I jumped up, my sister-in-law  
22 yelled out grab the baby. When she yelled out grab the baby, the  
23 boat immediately started to sink.

24 Q. Can you sort of -- if you're standing up and the boat started  
25 to sink, can you describe what you touched, how it felt, you know,

1 did any part of the boat hit you? I'm trying to -- based on your  
2 -- I'm trying to figure -- I'd like you to describe what the  
3 boat's doing as you're standing up and water loaded the boat.

4 A. When I stood up, when I jumped up, I looked around real  
5 quick. I think I -- I don't know if I was in shock, I don't know,  
6 I looked around. And then I couldn't grab the baby because I had  
7 my baby, my nine-year-old, and my husband had the two, so I  
8 couldn't grab him and then once I stood up and it was maybe -- I  
9 wouldn't even say 30, maybe like five seconds, the water filled up  
10 and I remember seeing the light, like, so that's what made me  
11 think I was at the roof of the boat, it was some kind of light  
12 that was up there. And I remember pushing and as I'm pushing,  
13 nothing happened and then something happened while I pushed  
14 through and again, I can't tell you what I pushed through.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I don't know if it was metal, I don't -- I don't know.  
17 Another account I heard that the captain was able to get the roof  
18 of the boat off. I didn't see it, I have no idea. So if that was  
19 the case, then that could've been where I went through, I have no  
20 idea. I don't. Can I interject, just because --

21 Q. You may.

22 A. -- I remember something about the boat, but I don't know if  
23 somebody that we were talking to said that, that the -- you know  
24 what I mean? We heard it, where we heard it from, that the top  
25 was --

1 Q. Let's not talk about that --

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. -- because, you know, the boat was not lost yet.

4 A. Again, I just don't know, okay.

5 Q. And that's a good answer for questions that I ask you, if you  
6 don't know --

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. I'm only looking for what you saw.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. This is a tough one. So as you stood up -- well, you know,  
11 you mentioned [REDACTED] just disappeared, I mean --

12 A. Him and everybody, we all stood up.

13 Q. So when you stood up -- when you stood up, where was the  
14 water? You know, as you stood up, how high was the water on your  
15 body, up to your shoulders?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. How many seconds?

18 A. And about five seconds later, it went over my head.

19 Q. Tia?

20 A. Of course. My sweet family.

21 MR. KARR: Yeah, why don't you take --

22 (Off microphone discussion.)

23 MS. COLEMAN: My sweet family.

24 MR. GILLETTE: Ms. Tia, are you able to continue? My name is  
25 Jim Gillette, I'm with the Coast Guard. I'm only saying that so

1 it's on the --

2 MS. COLEMAN: For the recording, I understand.

3 MR. GILLETTE: For the recording.

4 BY MR. GILLETTE:

5 Q. Kind of follow up with what Mike's speaking.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. How tall are you?

8 A. Five-four.

9 Q. Five-four?

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. So going back, when the first amount of water came in, you  
12 were sitting in the seat and you were at the starboard side window  
13 and it came up to about knee level (indiscernible), correct?

14 A. I wouldn't think it was even up to knee level.

15 Q. So the first one was about ankle level?

16 A. I would say it was about ankle level, but there's a dip down  
17 there, so that part was probably flooded because it only hit like  
18 -- I had on flip-flops, I still had my shoes on --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- at that point.

21 Q. The second one that came through, what was the timeframe  
22 between the first one and the second one? I know it's hard to  
23 remember time.

24 A. Yeah. I would say it was at least a couple minutes.

25 Q. Okay.



1 A. Because even when that first wave came through and got on  
2 there, we weren't really that scared --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- because there was -- there was no -- to me, there was no  
5 sense of urgency. I can't say what the captain was feeling,  
6 but --

7 Q. Was there was any communications?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Anybody talking, like other passengers --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. -- saying hey, what's up with the water?

12 A. One of the passengers was like oh, my goodness, oh, this is  
13 going to be like the Titanic. I mean, they were -- you know,  
14 because he -- the captain told us, he did say we're going to get  
15 wet. He said you're going to get wet, it's storming, you're going  
16 to get wet, but we're about to get out of here and go home.

17 And so we were prepared to get wet and so when we got  
18 splashed, we were like okay because from what it appeared to be at  
19 first, the storm was not where we were, it was down or so I  
20 thought, but just, I'm a regular civilian. I like water, I've  
21 never driven a boat, I can't tell you any nautical anything except  
22 maybe a little bit about the clothes, Nautica, there's nothing I  
23 can tell you, okay? So I had no -- I have no idea how it happened  
24 so quick, to be honest.

25 Q. After the first time --

1 A. Uh-huh.

2 Q. -- do you remember any -- did you see the captain? What was  
3 the captain doing, do you remember?

4 A. Zipping up the windows, making sure his window -- his shirt  
5 was wet because I remember laughing with my sister-in-law, look  
6 how wet his shirt is, the captain now, because the water feels  
7 good. You know, we're chatting it up, it's no big deal to us  
8 because we were on a boat, first, plain and simple, dummies,  
9 however you want to say it, we were on a boat that could drive on  
10 land and then it could get in the water, so I thought it was  
11 normal for some water to get in the boat.

12 Q. At the time the second wave came through the window, do you  
13 remember seeing the captain at that point?

14 A. I remember seeing him turning. When the second wave come, he  
15 was turning. We were out here, it was some island out this way,  
16 the big riverboat were here and then it was land right next to the  
17 riverboat and I remember seeing him -- I guess the riverboat was  
18 anchored, I'm not for sure.

19 Q. Do you remember which way he was turning?

20 A. To the right.

21 Q. To the right.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. Can you kind of describe how he was turning or just -- it's  
24 similar to a car wheel, is it not?

25 A. Yeah, I guess so.

1 Q. How did he kind of react to the car wheel?

2 A. To be honest, I wasn't paying a ton of attention to that.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I was more focused on my family. I just remember -- I  
5 remember the boat turning because I was looking like we are  
6 getting closer and closer to this riverboat and that concerned --  
7 actually, that concerned me more than the wave coming in because  
8 I'm like we're about to get smashed. You know, I can somewhat  
9 swim, so to me, in my mind, I could probably swim better than  
10 survive being crushed.

11 Q. On your right side, you were saying -- we said that's the  
12 starboard side.

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. On your left side is the port side. You had mentioned that  
15 the curtain was down on the right side, that's what's keeping the  
16 splash from hitting you.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Was the left side curtain down on that side --

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. -- do you remember that?

21 A. It was.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But they were not -- they're like blinds, that's the best way  
24 I can describe it. You know how, if you have your window open but  
25 your blinds, they still will blow and that's kind of how the

1 window was doing. It was windy out.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. It was apparently a terrible storm, but even with the wave  
4 coming in like that, I didn't -- I still didn't think too much  
5 because he had just got through saying, before we hit that part of  
6 the water, that these boats are great, they can take up to 18-foot  
7 swells and I'm assuming an 18-foot swell is a wave, 18 to -- he  
8 said 18- to 20-foot swells, I mean -- and that, I don't even know  
9 if anybody heard that because I was so close to him, so I was like  
10 okay, a little water, that's why the two feet didn't bother me at  
11 all.

12 Q. Now, the second one, though, that came in, that alerted you,  
13 it sounds like, and you stood up.

14 A. Yeah, because my lap got wet. When my lap got wet, I stood  
15 up and then the boat started filling.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And by the time I looked around, you know, my son was here  
18 but then he's -- so I don't know if he floated out --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- through the -- I have no idea.

21 Q. You have no idea.

22 A. Because at this point, I'm up. It's happening really fast.

23 Q. Do you have an estimate on the time of how fast it came in at  
24 your waistline, I guess?

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. You stood up. Do you have an estimate of time of how fast it  
2 went from your waist to --

3 A. I would say about five seconds because --

4 Q. About five seconds.

5 A. -- the biggest thing I remember is my sister-in-law yelling  
6 out grab the baby, she said grab the baby, and she was talking  
7 about her baby because her son had the baby.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And I'm looking around and then I don't see anybody. I see a  
10 light and then I go under.

11 Q. Okay. So you did not see anybody exit the window --

12 A. Uh-uh.

13 Q. -- or anything else?

14 A. No.

15 Q. You don't have any recollection of seeing the captain after  
16 you stood up? Okay.

17 A. I did not -- I don't remember seeing the captain at all.

18 Q. Okay. Was there any --

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello.

20 MS. COLEMAN: Hi, dad.

21 (Crosstalk.)

22 MS. COLEMAN: I'm okay.

23 (Off the record.)

24 (On the record.)

25 MR. KARR: All right, we're ready to resume at 12:58.

1 BY MR. GILLETTE:

2 Q. This is Jim Gillette, we're back on the -- Tia, just some  
3 questions again.

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. When the water was coming in --

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. -- and we'll go back to the very first time when you said the  
8 water came up to your ankle --

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. -- do you remember if you guys were what's called pitching,  
11 going from the front to the back, or were you doing what's called  
12 rolling, where you were going left and right when the water came  
13 in? Do you remember that? Or a little of both or how do you --

14 A. Maybe a little of both because it just felt like we were kind  
15 of driving to the -- in fact, we were turning.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. But just maybe steering, if that makes sense.

18 Q. Yes.

19 A. Steering.

20 Q. Steering starboard.

21 A. Steering to the right.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So that's how it felt like and -- which made sense, because  
24 there was an island on this side.

25 Q. Okay, on this side, meaning --

1 A. The left side.

2 Q. -- the left side?

3 A. So we were steering away from that --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- island. I thought, I had no idea, I've never ridden in  
6 that boat, just in my little opinion, I thought we were going to  
7 the island to check out wildlife or something, I don't know, but  
8 we started -- we steered to the right, which steering to the right  
9 was where the riverboat was and land.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Like where we came out of.

12 Q. On the second amount of water that came in --

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. -- that went up to your waist, the same question, do you  
15 remember if you were going up and down or left to right or a  
16 little of both?

17 A. We were still turning.

18 Q. And the turn was in which direction?

19 A. Towards the right.

20 Q. Towards the right.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. And then --

23 A. It felt like a full turn.

24 Q. Okay. During the time that you guys were taking on water, do  
25 you remember hearing any -- of the engine, did you hear the engine

1 while you were driving? Or while you were on the water --

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. -- at any time?

4 A. I heard the engine. But while we were taking on the water, I  
5 didn't know how deep it was, so I didn't know if those little  
6 wheels were on something or -- I didn't know, so I heard the  
7 engine and it's --

8 Q. Was it revving or --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- any noise? Can you --

11 A. It was revving. So it was like end up.

12 Q. Uh-huh.

13 A. But they also told us the boats don't go that fast, so I  
14 didn't -- I mean, we weren't going that fast.

15 Q. Did the noise of the engine change when you were making turns  
16 or going in the waves or anything or did you just hear a  
17 natural --

18 A. I have no idea.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Once again --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. -- not being insensitive to you, but --

23 Q. Oh, no.

24 A. -- that was really the last of my concerns.

25 Q. Okay. And then also the water that came in, going back to



1 the first amount of water that came in --

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. -- you said that it was about two minutes between -- and stop  
4 me if I'm wrong, please.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. You said it was about two minutes between the first time it  
7 was at your ankles --

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. -- to when it was about at your --

10 A. Right.

11 Q. -- waist where you're sitting. Do you remember that water  
12 that was at your ankles, do you remember that ever going down?

13 A. Yeah, it felt like it was like a big chunk of it and it kind  
14 of washed out the back. I don't know if went to the back and  
15 settled, but it --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. It went away. It went away from where I was sitting.

18 Q. So while you were sitting in between that two minutes --

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. -- before the next one came in, how high was the water on  
21 your feet or your ankle area?

22 A. I want to say it was gone because I still had on flip-flops  
23 and they didn't get washed away until I was in -- underneath the  
24 water.

25 Q. Okay. And you didn't see anything else behind you as far as

1 other water, you couldn't see any other water?

2 A. I didn't look behind me.

3 Q. You didn't look behind you, okay.

4 A. Now, when the water came in and filled up --

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. -- I know I was hitting the inside of the boat. I know my  
7 head hit the boat, my feet and ankles and my hands, because I was  
8 trying to -- once I couldn't see -- once I didn't know where I  
9 was, because basically it was like I was dropped in the Twilight  
10 Zone, I didn't know where I was, I was hitting, trying to get out.

11 Q. Were you floating?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Like you're under water --

14 A. Like I was no longer standing up.

15 Q. You were no longer standing up?

16 A. Yeah. My shoes were gone at that point.

17 Q. Okay. Things that you felt, did you feel metal, did you feel  
18 plastic, did you feel --

19 A. I know for sure I felt some metal --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- but I don't know what everything else was because I was  
22 pushing and it wasn't budging.

23 Q. Okay, what were you pushing then? I know you may not know  
24 what you're pushing.

25 A. Um-hum.

1 Q. But when you're pushing, were both hands feeling like it was  
2 on something?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And what was --

5 A. It felt like it was above me, it was above me, but I don't  
6 know if above me was to my side or if it was -- because at that  
7 point I don't know which way the boat was situated.

8 Q. Okay. And you said you saw light, as well.

9 A. I did see light.

10 Q. Is this the same time that you were pushing?

11 A. Yeah, when I was under -- because I was trying to look up, I  
12 saw light, so that's another thing that made me think it was the  
13 top of the boat because --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. But the bottom of my head was to that, it wasn't on the  
16 floor, like that. I don't know, but --

17 MR. KARR: Let me ask you.

18 MS. COLEMAN: Sure.

19 MR. KARR: Did light mean a light fixture?

20 MS. COLEMAN: A light fixture, not sunlight, let me clarify  
21 that.

22 BY MR. GILLETTE:

23 Q. Were the lights on prior to you guys driving, did you notice  
24 the lights on while you were driving?

25 A. It was still daylight, so I had no idea. I'm assuming -- I

1 don't know.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. It was still daylight, so it was -- I couldn't tell you.

4 Q. Okay. When you were exiting the boat and floated upward, did  
5 you feel that you touched anything on the way out like on your  
6 head or -- what I'm trying to do is try my best or try your best  
7 to figure out where you may have exited the boat, so I'm just  
8 trying to figure out if you felt anything when you were leaving  
9 because you were originally saying you were pushing, but you felt  
10 like you were floating. And like I said, stop me if I'm -- if I  
11 heard --

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. And then you -- you exited up.

14 A. Right.

15 Q. So --

16 A. I popped through. Whatever I was pushing, I was able to pop  
17 through it.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And I want to say, I want to say something up under me or  
20 behind me was pushing me, too, because I didn't --

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. I don't know if it was a -- I can't tell you if it was a  
23 person, if it was debris, but it was pushing, so when I got out,  
24 then I started to swim up or swim in the direction I thought was  
25 up, but then it was a heavy -- a very, very heavy dragging

1 feeling, pulling me back down.

2 Q. Do you remember, as you were going up, something pushing you  
3 and you said you don't know, can you describe where on your body  
4 it was actually pushing you?

5 A. My feet.

6 Q. From your feet?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And so I don't know if that was -- I don't know. I just  
10 don't know. It was -- because at that time, I was no longer  
11 situated -- I wasn't sitting on the boat, I was inside but I  
12 wasn't -- I was floating. I couldn't --

13 Q. Uh-huh. Okay. And then you said you were going up and you  
14 felt like you were being pulled down. Did you feel something  
15 physical pull you down?

16 A. The water.

17 Q. The water pulled you down.

18 A. Um-hum. It was like a sucking, a suction.

19 Q. A suction.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. And it was very cold, where I was exited, it was very cold.  
23 That's how I knew -- that's how I knew I was in pretty deep  
24 because they told me the top part of the water was warm and when I  
25 actually reached the top, it was warm.

1 Q. Visually, could you see anything?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Bubbles.

5 Q. Bubbles?

6 A. I did, I just saw a bunch of bubbles.

7 Q. Okay. When you were being pulled down, something released  
8 and you went back up again?

9 A. That part I was kind of in and out of.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I was pulled and I was kicking, kicking. I was swimming,  
12 trying to get to the top, so I was -- I was resisting getting  
13 sucked in --

14 Q. Um-hum.

15 A. -- to the best of my ability. And then I started losing --

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. -- my breath, so my lungs started filling up with water and I  
18 thought I was dead. So after a while I just said to myself, I'm  
19 pretty sure I didn't say it out loud because I didn't have any  
20 oxygen, I said, "Lord, I've got to get to my babies," and then I  
21 kept seeing it and I couldn't get -- I couldn't get anywhere and  
22 then I said, "Lord, just don't let me suffer anymore, just take  
23 me, I can't -- I can't fight it, I can't fight this, it's too  
24 much." And then I just stopped everything and I know a little bit  
25 about floating, I've taken swimming, I took some classes and

1 things, so I just let go like this, then I just started floating  
2 up. And then I could feel the water warming around my face, then  
3 I started to see light and I took a deep breath and a big wave, I  
4 don't know how big it was, it could've been -- I heard, I don't  
5 know, that they weren't bigger than six feet, but it just splashed  
6 over my face and I said help, help, save me, and I went back down  
7 under the water and I jumped back up and my legs were so heavy and  
8 so noodle-like from fighting.

9 Q. Tia, I only want to ask you just a few more questions. I  
10 know this is -- this is long and --

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. -- stuff. So what I'd like to ask is when you guys were  
13 above the water and you were doing the trip, this is just kind of  
14 a follow-up question on something --

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. -- that you said earlier. When you guys left, when you came  
17 in the water --

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. -- from the land side --

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. -- was there anything mentioned by the captain or the driver  
22 or anybody as far as cutting the trip short? Was anything  
23 mentioned to that nature?

24 A. They said -- they said, even before we left, we're going to  
25 do this water first so that we can miss the storm. Then the

1 captain said yeah, yeah, you guys are going to get a little wet,  
2 you're going to get rained on. And he said -- I don't remember  
3 him saying cutting the trip short.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. He may have, I'm sorry. I don't --

6 Q. That's okay.

7 A. We were so excited because the kids got to drive, the kids  
8 were excited. They did mention the storm and that's why they said  
9 we were there first. And also, I don't -- it took a while to get  
10 to the water, so I don't know how far away it was --

11 Q. Sure.

12 A. -- if we could've gotten there any sooner, I'm not for sure.

13 Q. Did the captain or the driver, did they -- how did they  
14 recognize there was a storm out on the water?

15 A. When we were driving to the lake, it was some water, which I  
16 didn't think we were going through that water, they were like  
17 look, you can tell the storm is coming because it's foggy over the  
18 water and they're like get your cameras out, this is great, so we  
19 were taking pictures, it was beautiful. And it was also another  
20 duck boat ahead of us. Captain said we're going to let them get  
21 out a little further before we go into this water and he did, and  
22 he let them get out and then we went right in after them. We were  
23 like, I don't think we were five -- we weren't even five minutes  
24 because you could see them, we were even five minutes behind them.

25 Q. So before you entered the water, you were right behind



1 another duck boat --

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. -- on the land side?

4 A. On the land side, no. They were in the water.

5 Q. They were in the water.

6 A. But they had -- if they entered in the same spot we did, they  
7 had just gotten there because it was really close. I don't know  
8 if they all enter in the same spot or not.

9 Q. Okay. And then this is just one other question and this goes  
10 back to my last one.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. And this is just when you guys got on the duck boat back at  
13 the office.

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. You said -- it sounds like you sat up in the front.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. How did you guys get that seat? Were you first in line, were  
18 you --

19 A. So --

20 Q. -- second in line? How did that work?

21 A. Okay, that's a good question. We had ordered our tickets on  
22 line.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. We got there and they were hey, we got a party of 11, come  
25 take your picture. It's six o'clock. Our original flight -- our

1 original boat was supposed to leave after six o'clock. We got  
2 there, they saw the tickets, they said oh, this is not ours, it's  
3 for another duck boat place. So what you can do is exchange your  
4 tickets for the 6:30 and then we'll get you on there. My sister-  
5 in-law took the tickets. Because this is our first time in  
6 Branson, we didn't know it was two duck boat places. She took  
7 them and got tickets exchanged. We even got change back.

8       So we got our tickets, this was a half an hour later than  
9 what we were originally supposed to be on the boat, they took our  
10 picture, which is the last picture we got together. They told us  
11 to -- one of the guys at the duck boat place, before we take off,  
12 he's like you guys are not going to like this, but you need to go  
13 to the water first because it's going to storm. And everyone was  
14 like okay, and the driver, you know, what did he say? He's like  
15 you got to drive -- we're going to the water first.

16 Q.    When you got on the boat --

17 A.    And I want to say I remember Bob saying that they were going  
18 to cut it short, I want to say that. I'm sorry, I can't say it  
19 was surety, but -- and Bob was the first mate, he was the driver.

20 Q.    So how did you guys choose those front seats?

21 A.    Oh, they told us to come up front, the first people on. They  
22 had us go first because --

23 Q.    Because --

24 A.    -- my mother-in-law's in a wheelchair.

25 Q.    Okay.

1 A. My father-in-law, his back is really bad and his knees. He  
2 drove for UPS for almost 50 years on a semi truck, so they had him  
3 and -- they had us go first. I was the first one because, as I  
4 mentioned earlier, my son, [REDACTED] is autistic.

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. And he gets really antsy, he's got huge anxiety. So we got  
7 on first and then my husband and my daughter, who was asleep, and  
8 my middle son, [REDACTED] who didn't even want to get on the boat.

9 Q. And where did they put the -- go ahead.

10 A. I'm okay, we can go ahead.

11 Q. Tia, I was just going to ask, the wheelchair, where did they  
12 put the wheelchair? You said --

13 A. Their elevator was broke, so both of them all can walk, they  
14 can walk.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. She's just had multiple surgeries on her back, her disc.  
17 She's had a knee replacement. My father-in-law has had surgery on  
18 his back and his knee, so they just had them walk up the steps,  
19 which is maybe eight steps, with the cane.

20 Q. Um-hum.

21 A. And they asked them could they walk up and they were like, we  
22 can walk up. And they did.

23 Q. Was it placed on the boat or did they leave it behind?

24 A. It was left behind.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And they told us it would be there when we got back, we  
2 didn't have to worry. My father-in-law was worried about somebody  
3 stealing the wheelchair, so he kept asking. They said sir, we're  
4 going to keep it safe for you.

5 MR. GILLETTE: Tia, that's all the questions I'm going to  
6 ask, okay?

7 MS. COLEMAN: Okay.

8 MR. GILLETTE: I'll let -- yes, ma'am?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You asked her did she hit anything,  
10 like as she was coming up did she hit her head?

11 MR. GILLETTE: Yes.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Her legs were all bruised, so she had  
13 to have hit something.

14 BY MR. GILLETTE:

15 Q. Okay, your legs are bruised?

16 A. My legs are bruised, my ankles is fine, I got an air cast on.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I have a bruise, a blister, on my toe so it rubbed against  
19 something. My knees have a -- this one isn't as bad, but this  
20 one's pretty bad.

21 Q. Your left leg?

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. That's fine? And your left ankle is --

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. What's on your left ankle? You said -- what's wrong with the

1 left ankle?

2 A. A sprain.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. Okay. And then you also mentioned earlier you --

6 A. I have a scar up -- so I know --

7 Q. But you're not aware of what caused it, you just know that  
8 something --

9 A. I know my head was definitely hitting the boat.

10 Q. The boat.

11 A. My knee. I'm not a hundred percent sure, but I'm assuming  
12 it's me getting out of the space, I got a --

13 MR. GILLETTE: Okay. Did you have any other? Okay. Thank  
14 you so much, Tia.

15 MS. COLEMAN: Um-hum.

16 MR. GILLETTE: I'm going to pass it back to Mike.

17 BY MR. KARR:

18 Q. Shortly before the big wave hit, you said you were watching  
19 your family.

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. At any time did they -- well, did any of the people on one  
22 side or the other get knocked over? Did you see that happen?

23 A. I didn't see anybody get knocked over.

24 Q. Or I should say did they move from one side of the boat to  
25 the other?

1 A. I didn't see that. The captain was saying something to Bob,  
2 but I don't know what he was saying because whatever he was saying  
3 wasn't loud enough for me to hear and I was the closest, so I  
4 don't know. And basically, me and my sister-in-law, who is like,  
5 we're a really close-knit family, so she's like my sister, we were  
6 talking, like, look at all this water, it's so pretty, water  
7 coming in, you know -- you know, we're thinking that we're in an  
8 amusement park.

9 But I did not see anybody get up, but they may have because I  
10 was in the front and so I was only focused on these three rows  
11 because the driver told us to sit two to three to a seat because  
12 it's going to be a full ride, he said. Maybe it's a count, I  
13 heard all of the count. It was 29 plus Bob and Captain Scott,  
14 captain, so it was 31 total.

15 Q. Just before that big wave hit or at any time, did you see the  
16 stern under water? I mean, as you looked aft.

17 A. What's the stern, the back of the boat?

18 Q. The back of the boat.

19 A. I never looked back.

20 MR. KARR: Okay, all right.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: ██████ said when that first wave came  
22 in, ██████ (indiscernible). He said when that first wave came  
23 in, he looked back and his grandparents were already in the water.

24 MS. COLEMAN: I didn't know.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sorry.

1 MS. COLEMAN: That's okay. And they said the boat capsized,  
2 that's why I said I didn't know. I didn't know if he -- I didn't  
3 know. I was just so focused on my three, my four, including my  
4 husband.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just know that because I sat in on  
6 his --

7 MS. COLEMAN: His interview, yeah. Okay.

8 MR. KARR: Do you have anything?

9 DR. MCKAY: I have just a couple questions. We're almost  
10 done.

11 MS. COLEMAN: Okay.

12 BY DR. MCKAY:

13 Q. First, I want to say thank you so much for taking the time to  
14 do this.

15 A. Um-hum.

16 Q. I can only imagine how hard it is.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. A couple of questions in the beginning. Bob and Captain  
19 Scott switched places and the captain took over to go into the  
20 water?

21 A. Absolutely. Bob was never driving in the water.

22 Q. Okay. And then Bob was sitting -- where was he sitting?

23 A. He was in front of my husband.

24 MR. KARR: This might be a good time for the -- well, let me  
25 -- well, basically, we'll give you a piece of paper. We'd like

1 you to indicate where everybody was sitting, that you know of.

2 MS. COLEMAN: Okay. We first started off, Bob was driving.  
3 The captain was sitting up, but he was facing us because he had a  
4 microphone and he was telling jokes, cracking jokes and telling us  
5 about the duck boats and how great they are. Then we get into the  
6 water. The last place I remember seeing Bob, because I can't tell  
7 you if he moved or not, I'm sorry, I'm cloudy on that, was right  
8 in front of my husband, so it's like a seat or a sling or  
9 something, it's a little seat right there in front of him, it was  
10 just a one-seater, though. And I always remember it was a chair  
11 or a rail, he was right there, in front of my husband and my  
12 husband was -- my husband was -- [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were directly  
13 across from me.

14 DR. McKAY: Okay.

15 MS. COLEMAN: So he was -- he was literally right behind the  
16 captain.

17 BY DR. McKAY:

18 Q. And once you went in the water, all the way up to the very  
19 end and the big wave coming in, did he do anything or say anything  
20 that you noticed?

21 A. Who?

22 Q. Bob.

23 A. Bob helped close up that window.

24 Q. When they put the curtains down, when they closed the window?

25 A. I don't think he put the curtain down, the captain put the



1 curtain down. There's another window that you can zip up and he  
2 zipped up part of that window.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. That's in the very front of the boat.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. The captain has his window and then he has, like, two side  
7 windows or just one side window, I should say, because that's the  
8 one I saw, and it's like a little hole and he closed that one up.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Partially, because we got wet from there, too.

11 Q. Okay. And the windshield in front was up the whole time that  
12 you saw it?

13 A. Um-hum. It was zipped up. It was down.

14 Q. No, no, the hard window. It's not glass, I don't know what  
15 it's made of, but in front of the -- in front of the captain.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. Straight front.

18 A. Yeah, it was open at first, and then when it started raining  
19 -- because it wasn't even raining at first. When it started  
20 raining, he closed it.

21 Q. Okay. So he zipped it up. There's actually a windshield,  
22 right, in the very front?

23 A. Maybe. It didn't look like a windshield to me, it looked  
24 like a plastic window.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It looked just like -- like a Jeep plastic window.

2 Q. Okay, all right. Okay. So as water was coming in the boat,  
3 Bob didn't get up and he didn't do anything that you noticed?

4 A. I want to say he was -- he zipped up the window here and he  
5 ended over -- the last place I saw him was in front of my husband.

6 Q. So that --

7 A. So he must've got up, I just don't --

8 Q. Okay. But he didn't say anything to the group, he didn't say  
9 anything --

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Nothing to the group. The captain didn't say anything to the  
13 group. Him and the captain said something, but I don't know what  
14 because --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And they must've been very quiet because I was right up  
17 front.

18 Q. And did you see either of them using the radio?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. There's been a lot of stuff on (indiscernible).

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. At any point did you notice things moving around in the  
23 water, floating around?

24 A. Well, when that first wave came in, when I said there was  
25 about two feet, the baby diaper bag was on the floor and it got

1 wet at the bottom and that's -- but it wasn't -- our feet, I could  
2 walk down the aisle, then we sat in our seats, which are elevated  
3 a little bit. So the diaper bag was on the floor, floor, so it  
4 got wet. I said here, move this, let's move this up, so we moved  
5 that up.

6 Q. Um-hum.

7 A. So I did see that moving. My mother-in-law had her purse, a  
8 purse. Nobody -- I didn't see anybody in the front put their  
9 purse down.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I had my wallet inside the diaper bag that's got all of my  
12 information

13 Q. Uh-huh.

14 A. All the men had wallets. So we traveled in a 15-passenger  
15 van, so we didn't take too much with us. The babies didn't have  
16 the car seats out there because we were holding them, so --

17 Q. Okay. One of the things that we'd like to give you the  
18 opportunity to tell us --

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. -- you're the one who was there and saw all of this. Is  
21 there any safety issue that you think we should be addressing?

22 A. Absolutely. I feel like -- I know it's not a must, but I  
23 think it needs be implemented. Any time you're going in the  
24 water, at the very, very least, the children should be forced to  
25 have on their life jacket. It should be very clear cut, like when

1 you're on an airplane and they show you about the flotation  
2 device, every single time I've been on an airplane I keep  
3 wondering I'm not even traveling in water, why do I need to know  
4 about this flotation device? It needs to be banged, stamped,  
5 imprinted in every passenger's head, you, as an adult, may not put  
6 on this life jacket, but these babies, and I mean anybody under  
7 18, needs a life jacket on.

8       There's no guarantee it would've saved them, they could've  
9 still got stuck up under the boat with a life jacket on, but to  
10 them, to even -- they never had a fighting chance. My babies  
11 never had a fighting chance. And that's my nephew, too, my  
12 nephew, he's my baby, too. He never had a fighting chance. My  
13 mother-in-law, my father-in-law. We -- my uncle. I think that  
14 that would be imperative. Safety first. We have a thousand rules  
15 about having kids in seatbelts when you're just driving in the  
16 car. We're out on this water that we don't know about and storms  
17 that pop up and silly me, I didn't know storms pop up on lakes  
18 like that, I just heard about it, like, in the ocean. It's  
19 something that should be educational, even if it's a five-minute  
20 video. I have had birthday parties for my children and we had  
21 videos to show them how to properly jump up and bounce and I know  
22 this is the age of the millennials where we overdo everything, but  
23 apparently there's a reason for some of it. So I feel like an  
24 informational video will be good. Having to put the children on  
25 life -- show them properly how to get them down, getting them down

1 for people, letting them know if you do not put this life vest on  
2 this child, you may not ride. I don't see anything wrong with  
3 that.

4 Q. (Indiscernible).

5 A. Yeah. And my uncle, he's never been diagnosed, but he has  
6 some learning difficulties, a lot of things he didn't understand,  
7 and he had a sudden look like he would just know that. Any  
8 handicapped special ability child, special ability adult,  
9 different ability, however you want to put it, those should be a  
10 must, that should be a must, that you should have to have a life  
11 jacket on, they should know how to use it properly. I'd rather be  
12 safe -- I would rather be safe than sorry because I'm very sorry.

13 DR. MCKAY: That's all I have.

14 MR. KARR: Then the last thing we'll do is we'll ask you --  
15 we'll ask you to identify where people were sitting, everybody  
16 that you know of, family, the crew. And I'll pull out a sheet of  
17 paper --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Here, can you hold, I can write.  
19 Because I think that I probably could -- I'm familiar with the  
20 names, I think. So --

21 MR. KARR: Well, we'll make your -- so there were bench  
22 seats.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Or do you want to write it?

24 MS. COLEMAN: No. No.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

1 MR. KARR: Well, you -- okay.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think.

3 MR. KARR: All right, if you would -- well, if we've got the  
4 duck boat, how about this, we can do it like this. So this is the  
5 boat, like that.

6 MS. COLEMAN: Um-hum.

7 MR. KARR: So if you would start with the driver's seat and  
8 just go ahead. If it's a single seat, go like that, if it's a  
9 bench seat with two --

10 MS. COLEMAN: Um-hum.

11 MR. KARR: -- go like that.

12 MS. COLEMAN: Okay.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So the driver and captain, that's  
14 near, right?

15 MS. COLEMAN: Um-hum.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And then you had said there was a  
17 first mate seat over here, right?

18 MS. COLEMAN: And that's where -- when we got on the boat,  
19 the driver was on the top.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

21 MS. COLEMAN: The captain was there.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

23 MS. COLEMAN: That was the driver.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That was the driver.

25 MS. COLEMAN: I'm sorry, the driver was -- the driver was

1 here, when we -- this is (indiscernible).

2 (Crosstalk.)

3 MR. KARR: What we'll do is, let's make this picture just  
4 before the vessel sank.

5 MS. COLEMAN: Okay. So there's the captain.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

7 MS. COLEMAN: Bob had to be, at some point here because he  
8 closed up the window.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right.

10 MS. COLEMAN: So I don't recall how long he was here, but  
11 then he moved right over here to the single seat.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, there's a seat there, okay.  
13 Okay, so then the first row is you --

14 MS. COLEMAN: Is me.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And [REDACTED] right?

16 MS. COLEMAN: Yes.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And was [REDACTED] on the outside?

18 MS. COLEMAN: [REDACTED] was at the window.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. And then across from you?

20 MS. COLEMAN: Um-hum.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It was a double seat?

22 MS. COLEMAN: [REDACTED] was by the window. Then it was Glenn --

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

24 MS. COLEMAN: -- and he was holding [REDACTED]

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

1 MS. COLEMAN: Behind them by the window was [REDACTED] And he  
2 was (indiscernible).

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And then Uncle Ray?

4 MS. COLEMAN: No. Then the next seat across --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, okay.

6 MS. COLEMAN: -- was my mother-in-law, Belinda.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Um-hum.

8 MS. COLEMAN: Angie. Angela, my sister-in-law --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

10 MS. COLEMAN: -- at the window.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

12 MS. COLEMAN: Then behind them would've been Max.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Um-hum.

14 MS. COLEMAN: Plus my father-in-law.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Uh-huh. Abbreviating, but I'll write  
16 it out. And then Uncle Ray?

17 MS. COLEMAN: Yeah, Uncle Ray was the end.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. I'll write out the names.

19 MR. KARR: Well, theirs is --

20 MS. COLEMAN: And I don't know where in the back, but there  
21 were nine family members from New Mexico on the boat.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, the Collins family.

23 MR. KARR: And you -- okay, all right.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Um-hum.

25 MR. KARR: Let's see if there's anything --



1 MS. COLEMAN: I don't know whether they were sitting there.  
2 I just know they were behind us.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

4 MS. COLEMAN: There were two girls that were on cell phones.  
5 I don't know, they kind of in the middle.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

7 MS. COLEMAN: I didn't look back after that anymore.

8 MR. KARR: Yeah. And you jogged my memory. Was there -- did  
9 you notice anybody taking cell phone videos at the time the vessel  
10 sank?

11 MS. COLEMAN: At the time the vessel sank, no.

12 MR. KARR: Or just before.

13 MS. COLEMAN: A lot of people had them out mainly before we  
14 hit the water and then people brought them out when their kids  
15 were driving. So [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Um-hum.

17 MS. COLEMAN: Their sister (indiscernible) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]  
18 Me and Angie had cameras. And those are the only kids I remember.

19 (Noise interference.)

20 MS. COLEMAN: Because [REDACTED] (indiscernible). [REDACTED] was  
21 sitting (indiscernible). I think [REDACTED] was the first one up. I  
22 want to say [REDACTED] was the last one driving and then the captain  
23 took over.

24 MR. KARR: And here's another question. Your family all came  
25 up front. Did the vessel load passengers that way, as families

1 came on board, they all moved to the front and filled in the  
2 seats?

3 MS. COLEMAN: Filled in the seats.

4 MR. KARR: They did

5 MS. COLEMAN: Front to back.

6 MR. KARR: All right, front/back. All right, thanks, that's  
7 important.

8 MS. COLEMAN: And there was two to three to a seat.

9 MR. KARR: All right, it's important for us to identify where  
10 folks were sitting. All right, I have no more questions and to  
11 you, Tia, thanks. And to you guys, the relatives, thank you very  
12 much. Thanks for all your information. I had the opportunity to  
13 listen to the interview of -- is it your son?

14 MS. COLEMAN: No, [REDACTED]

15 MR. KARR: [REDACTED]

16 MS. COLEMAN: [REDACTED] is Angie's son.

17 MR. KARR: Angie's, oh.

18 MS. COLEMAN: My (indiscernible) died on the boat.

19 MR. KARR: Yeah, (indiscernible). How old is he?

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

21 MR. KARR: Yeah, yeah. All right.

22 MS. COLEMAN: He's 13.

23 MR. KARR: Well, thank you very much, so -- and --

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me. Are you guys going to tell  
25 us how we get, like, the diaper bag back?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, that's me. That's me. And  
2 that's what I'm going to do immediately.

3 MR. KARR: And do you have the sheet where if they want --  
4 we'll be --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The investigative updates?

6 MR. KARR: Investigative updates.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've already talked --

8 MR. KARR: Okay. Good.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- yeah, I've already shared that.

10 MR. KARR: All right. So then we'll --

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Here's my email. I'm going to be the  
12 point of contact (indiscernible). So any questions that you have,  
13 let me know.

14 MR. KARR: 1:33.

15 (Whereupon, at 1:33 p.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 Tia Coleman

ACCIDENT NO.:               DCA18MM028

PLACE:                       Branson, Missouri

DATE:                         July 22, 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 D. Martini  
Transcriber