

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: TED MARTIN

Hilton Convention Center
Branson, Missouri

Wednesday,
July 25, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
U.S. Coast Guard

TROOPER [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Ted Margin:		
By Mr. Muise		4
By LCDR [REDACTED]		10
By Trooper [REDACTED]		11
By Mr. Muise		11
By LCDR [REDACTED]		13
By Trooper [REDACTED]		14

I N T E R V I E W

(2:00 p.m.)

1 MR. MUISE: Chief, can you tell us --

2 I'm sorry. This is Marcel Muise with the NTSB. And we are
3 interviewing the Branson fire chief. It's July 25th, 14:00.

4 Chief, can you just tell us your name, your position, and spell
5 your name for us.

6 CHIEF MARTIN: Sure. It's Ted Martin, T-e-d, M-a-r-i-n. I
7 serve as the fire chief and emergency management director for the
8 City of Branson. The physical address is 110 Crosby, C-r-o-s-b-y,
9 Street in Branson, 65616. My direct phone number is 417-██████████.

10 MR. MUISE: Go ahead, for --

11 LCDR ██████████ Good afternoon. This is
12 Lieutenant Commander ██████████ ██████████ with the United States Coast
13 Guard Investigations Center of Expertise. I am the national
14 technical advisor.

15 TROOPER ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ Missouri State Highway
16 Patrol, Marine Division.

INTERVIEW OF TED MARTIN

17 BY MR. MUISE:

18 Q. Chief, can you just, in your own words, tell us what you know
19 from that evening, what you guys, what you saw, what you did that
20 night?

21 A. Sure. I just received home, or just got home, just a mile
22 east of the Branson landing, and off of E-76. And heard my fire
23

1 pager going off in the bedroom. And the ironic part to that is
2 all of our alerts come to cell phones, except for mutual aid
3 calls. So, I knew it was a mutual aid call. I wasn't on call,
4 and, kind of, proceeded with our evening at home. And then
5 shortly, within a few minutes, was notified of a, an incident on
6 Table Rock Lake involving the Ride the Ducks with a possible Duck
7 capsized.

8 I own a personal vessel docked adjacent to the county fire
9 boat. So, I opted to kind of head that way, to my dock, and
10 called the county fire chief during that, in motion, and said if
11 his guys wanted my boat, take it, or I'll bring it to you, or
12 we'll ignore it. But I'm at least going to move that way for
13 resources.

14 And I think that at this point in the response we were pretty
15 much in the mindset of an incident has happened, it's warm Table
16 Rock Lake, and we'll probably go pull 30 warm life jackets out of
17 the water, or life-jacketed people. And, obviously, the events
18 turned into something different.

19 So, I arrived at the state park marina, and it was
20 essentially vacant, which, you know, seeing, unless it's about
21 January 2nd in this town. So, obviously, the guests had left
22 around the storm time period. Two young employees approached me.
23 I was in my staff car. And they said that there had been an
24 incident on the lake. I said yes, that's kind of why I was there.
25 And at that point, the county has the fire board small boat on a

1 trailer, and I knew they were passing the, the marine one, headed
2 for the state park boat ramp, which is north of the marina. So, I
3 thought I'd go over there and help them launch their vessel.

4 When I pulled up to the ramp, I noticed a state park marina
5 pontoon boat at a small launching dock there with three employees
6 and a volunteer firefighter standing on that boat. The two
7 volunteer firefighters had backed their vessel into the lake with
8 the fire department vehicle. And I just asked them, hey, what can
9 I do to help you get your vessel in the water and get to work,
10 pull your truck out, whatever it needs to be, as it was just their
11 operation. And they reported that they were good, but I might go
12 check with the guys in the boat, because they were working a
13 cardiac arrest, which wasn't evident when I pulled up. They were
14 not physically working a cardiac arrest.

15 So, I got up on the dock, recognized a male patient laying
16 midway on the pontoon, crossways. I crossed the boat. And so, I
17 asked the three employees and the volunteer firefighter, who had
18 applied an AED to the patient, but there was nothing being done,
19 and it was, he was having a hard time getting patches to stick,
20 because the victim was wet.

21 I asked the four if they would help me do CPR. And then, one
22 of the state parker rangers was on the dock, and I asked him to go
23 get some equipment out of my car, my staff car. And he
24 essentially brought the car down, so we had extra blankets and
25 towels, we were able to dry the patient enough to get -- I have an

1 AED that actually has monitoring patches on it, and did a quick
2 assessment, and identified the patient was in (indiscernible).
3 Didn't have much hopes. But, we had quite a little bit of a
4 spectator issue as well. And because of unknown exact downtime,
5 the employees referred that it had probably been 20 to 30 minutes,
6 they said they had brought the person into the boat ramp, I went
7 ahead and elected to start care, and had them help, and instructed
8 them in compressions while I worked on some airway issues and
9 such.

10 And at that point, I asked the state park ranger to contact
11 Taney County Sheriff's Department by radio, and confirm that an
12 ambulance was headed our way, because it was starting to become
13 evident that all of the operations were at the *Belle, Showboat*
14 *Belle*. And so that was done, and about 10 or 12 minutes later,
15 and ambulance arrived, discussed with the paramedic whether to
16 continue efforts or to stop. We decided, again, with more advance
17 care now, onsite, to go ahead and start with advanced cardiac life
18 support measures. We did that for probably 15 or 20 minutes, and
19 then I asked the paramedic on the scene if I could contact the
20 medical control doctor at Cox, and with the description given,
21 then terminate efforts.

22 So, contact, somehow, was made with the folks at the, up near
23 the *Showboat Belle*, the incident commanders, and we were notified
24 that Trooper Mark Green would be coming our way. So, we released
25 the ambulance to go help further at the *Belle*, and I stayed with

1 the patient until Trooper Green arrived, and he was placed in a
2 body bag, and placed in the bow of his vessel, and one of the
3 volunteer fireman rode with him back over to the *Belle* to keep the
4 body stable on the vessel.

5 At that point, I left the boat ramp area, and was instructed
6 by our city administrator that we would then begin the efforts to
7 be a reception site for the victims and their families, and so we
8 could start help, coordinating an information center for them.

9 And we were, I was initially instructed to go to Ripley's
10 Believe it or Not. And then, when I got there, they had no
11 knowledge. Then they said we're going to Ride the Ducks and use
12 their facility. And then the city manager sit up and said we're
13 not going back to Ride the Ducks with the victims. Let's go to
14 city hall.

15 So, at that point, we went down there and started
16 coordinating those efforts, and we used our courtroom for the
17 people who wanted to come down there for further information
18 gathering, and we had about, I think, 17 chaplain support people
19 arrive immediately I don't know how fast they came, but they were
20 there quickly. And so, we spent some time giving them a briefing
21 of what had happened and what our expectations were, that we were
22 solely going to try to keep those folks together and be an
23 information nucleus for the leadership of the partners in the city
24 hall.

25 And then we used a small conference room for an executive

1 staff, the mayor, me, city administrator, police chief, so we
2 could do our coordination efforts away from the main folks in city
3 hall.

4 And that's, kind of, the first hour of the evening. And
5 then, of course, we continued to work with the partners as they
6 arrived at city hall, they were moved up to our emergency
7 operations center at fire station 9.

8 So, the trooper was asking earlier about triage and all that.
9 I didn't see any of that, because we only had the one patient at
10 the boat ramp.

11 So, I think that he identified locations as state park
12 marina, which is a contracted type business operator down to the
13 state park boat ramp, and then the *Showboat Branson Belle*
14 property.

15 Q. Okay. Thanks, Chief. The volunteer firefighters, what
16 department were they from?

17 A. Western Taney County Fire Protection Industry. And his name
18 is Elijah Goodwin, G-o-o-d-w-i-n. And the state park marina guys,
19 I couldn't tell you their names. I picture a couple of them
20 having a vessel on their dock, but I don't know their names off
21 the top of my head.

22 Q. Okay. Where's the county boat in relation to that? Where --

23 A. It was -- I don't know where it comes from. But it launched
24 at that same ramp.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. It could easily launch four boats, probably at a time, it's,
2 like, it's space for two, kind of long, narrow boat dock, and then
3 two spaces for launch.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. With lots of parking above that.

6 Q. Were you in contact with Chief McNevin at all?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. Is, anybody else from your department respond?

9 A. We had a latter truck respond initially on the alarm
10 assignment. It was cancelled. From my understanding, they were
11 in the area of the Moonshine Beach area, at that peninsula, and it
12 turned around.

13 Q. Does, your apparatus, do they have VAT 11?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. How about Fire Ground 1, Stone County Fire Ground 1?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You do have all those?

18 MR. MUISE: I have nothing else.

19

20 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

21 Q. The ladder that was sent from Branson Fire, was it turned
22 around by your staff, or was it --

23 A. Whomever was on the scene. I haven't got a full briefing on
24 what their detailed notification was on that.

25 Q. Okay. And it was, possibly, an attempt to direct them to the

1 response, or that the response was completed, and --

2 A. I'm not sure. I think they just called for manpower, and
3 then I think they determined they had enough manpower and turned
4 them around.

5 LCDR [REDACTED] That's all my questions.

6 BY TROOPER [REDACTED]

7 Q. When you mentioned the page, which was a mutual aid, you
8 weren't on call, you didn't -- but then you did find out later and
9 decided to get en route, how did you find out?

10 A. I went back to the radio, listened. I think I received a
11 phone call that stated that this incident was happening with
12 multiple casualties, and --

13 Q. And I want to -- I know you said it, but said that was a male
14 that --

15 A. Male that was, it would be later identified as, I forget the
16 name, the gentleman from Osceola, Arkansas. The father/son that
17 passed away, it was the dad.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. That was, to me, done by a clothing description from the
20 photographs, the dark shirt, khaki shorts, heavysset.

21 TROOPER [REDACTED] Nothing further.

22 BY MR. MUISE:

23 Q. Just a couple follow ups. Does the Ride the Duck, their
24 route on land, does it pass through your jurisdiction?

25 A. Their actual Duck facility or Duck dock is in the City of

1 Branson. And then they had road travel in the city and outside
2 the city in the unincorporated parts of the jurisdiction. And
3 that includes in the Taney County. And then, of course, the
4 waterway, primarily, is in Stone County, where they operate, as I
5 understand it.

6 Q. Correct.

7 A. And --

8 Q. Does your department participate in drills, mass casualty
9 drills with either the *Belle* or with Ride the Ducks, or both?

10 A. In a supportive role to the mutual aid partners, we have done
11 some participation with the *Showboat*. I'm not sure about the
12 Ducks. We do, we probably have done inspections on their
13 facility, not the vessels themselves. And, of course, we do
14 aggressive fire/life safety, which includes hand-on CPR and severe
15 weather in our trainings that we do. And I don't know the last
16 time we've trainings with them at all. It's probably been a long
17 time ago.

18 To, you know, to be -- without just rambling, to a direct
19 question, Herschend Family Entertainment has a pretty solid safety
20 program that we're familiar with.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. So, when you look at White Water, Silver Dollar City,
23 Dolly Parton's Stampede, and previously, Ride the Duck, those
24 weren't a high issue with us, because we knew they had a safety
25 program. And so, when this gets taken over, along about January,

1 we had not seen what their characteristics were, if that makes
2 sense.

3 Q. Okay. So, Ripley's took over from the previous owners, Ride
4 the Ducks International, I think. Was there any change in the way
5 you did business with them, or --

6 A. No. I would say that the assumption would be that their
7 safety program calls moved forward. But we hadn't spent any time
8 with them yet.

9 Q. Okay. I forgot to ask all county is there a pre-incident
10 plan for the *Belle* or for Ducks?

11 A. I'm not sure. I know they do their drill annually, maybe, or
12 every other year.

13 TROOPER [REDACTED] Exactly.

14 BY MR. MUISE:

15 Q. Oh, and then what follows? Does your department do,
16 obviously, they do marine EMS, as well.

17 A. We do on first response (indiscernible).

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Everybody, almost everybody's an EMT, or, there's just a
20 couple of paramedics on the paramedic. And all the transport,
21 primarily is done by Taney County paramedics or mostly --

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. -- paramedics.

24 MR. MUISE: I have nothing else, honestly.

25 LCDR [REDACTED]

1 Q. Are you aware that the locations where the Ride the Ducks run
2 normally in the water?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And is it just Table Rock Lake, or other locations?

5 A. And Taney (indiscernible).

6 Q. Taney (indiscernible). And can you describe how your mutual
7 aid call works? Is it just your city and the two counties, Stone
8 and Taney?

9 A. That's some of the partners, but there's others in the area,
10 as well. (Indiscernible).

11 Q. And how, what radio frequency, how does it operate?

12 A. Everybody's on their own frequencies here. We do have the
13 new Missouri, what's called MOSWIN, but most of the fire
14 departments are no tone that. So, we still use, you've used the
15 term VTAC 11, VTAC 21, those are some State frequencies allocated
16 for multiple jurisdiction use.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] I have nothing further.

18 MR. MUISE: All right. It's --

19 BY MR. MUISE:

20 Q. I'm sorry. Do you have anything else to add, or any
21 questions for us?

22 TROOPER [REDACTED] Can I throw in one more question here?

23 MR. MUISE: Sure. Of course.

24 BY TROOPER [REDACTED]

25 Q. As far as, okay, so you'd just got home. Were you, was there

1 any thoughts going through your mind about the weather, or were
2 you even aware of pending weather or anything like that? Because
3 you live just a mile from here. So, I'm just curious.

4 A. Yes. Very familiar. Part of my role is emergency
5 management. We're very engaged with our National Weather Service
6 office. And we were aware of that line from a line of storms from
7 Blue Springs, Missouri to Nevada, moving southwest with warnings
8 issued, severe thunderstorm warnings issued from the counties,
9 including Vernon, down towards Springfield, Greene County area,
10 down into Stone and Taney County. And I was aware of warnings.

11 For full disclosure, let me pull up a text message as an
12 example. Actually, I screenshotted it. I sent a message to our
13 assistant parks director at 18:36 that says heads up, this storm
14 is approach quickly and packing a punch of strong winds. I don't
15 have a image of the radar, but when the cell was moving out of the
16 northwest to the southeast, you could see, on the newer radar, you
17 could see the line of wind well ahead of the rain. And so, you've
18 got your meteorologist, or one of you do.

19 MR. MUISE: We do.

20 MR. MARTIN: And you have the National Weather Service Data
21 that we secured for the patrol, so all that's very well time
22 stamped on all the warnings being issued in advance.

23 TROOPER [REDACTED] Thank you.

24 MR. MARTIN: We have the integrated, for example, outdoor
25 warning policy that the City of Branson, Springfield, Joplin --

1 they're Jasper County, right? Joplin?

2 TROOPER [REDACTED] Yeah.

3 MR. MARTIN: We worked with National Weather Service about
4 two years ago to build an outdoor warning siren policy that we
5 could educate the public from, and the broadcast meteorologists,
6 if wind sirens are sounded and tested, and within that protocol
7 is, obviously, rotation, Doppler indicated rotation, visible
8 tornadoes, and life-threatening winds. The agreed mile per hour
9 was 70 miles per hour. So, we have two weather stations, three
10 weather stations. I only have access remotely to two of them
11 right now. But we have three Davis weather stations in the city
12 that are certified annually. One is our fire station 1 on Highway
13 76 where the emergency operation center is. The other one is fire
14 station 2, which is the north side of time. And then we have the
15 third one at the Branson Recplex. And all three were under that
16 threshold. So we did not activate our sirens. There were, the
17 highest was in the 50 mile per hour range, 56, I think, was the
18 highest.

19 BY TROOPER [REDACTED]

20 Q. And were you aware of any calls that may have come in from
21 that same incident, that same weather incident, elsewhere in your
22 jurisdiction?

23 A. I believe we had reports of tree limbs down. I think we had
24 a natural cover fire working about the same time from a lightning
25 strike. And then just normal, signs down, fire alarms because of

1 lightning strikes, and --

2 Q. Thank you.

3 A. -- typical thunderstorm incidents.

4 TROOPER [REDACTED] No further.

5 MR. MUISE: Okay. Chief, again, thank you.

6 It's 1426 now.

7 (Whereupon, at 2:26 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

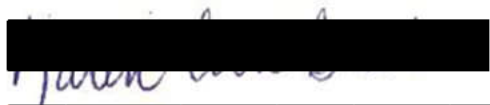
IN THE MATTER OF: CAPSIZE AND SINKING OF STRETCH DUCK 7
 ON TABLE ROCK LAKE, BRANSON, MISSOURI,
 JULY 19, 2018
 Interview of Ted Martin

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA18MM028

PLACE: Branson, Missouri

DATE: July 25, 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