

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: Mercy EMS Personnel

Showboat Branson Belle Facility
Branson, Missouri

Monday,
July 23, 2018

APPEARANCES:

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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

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

Mercy EMS Personnel:

ROBERT PATTERSON
JIM CUMMINGS
DR. TOM LEWIS
WILLIAM VAUGHN

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:12 p.m.)

1
2
3 DR. McKAY: Recording. It is Mary Pay McKay. It's 1:12 on
4 July 23rd. We're in Branson, Missouri investigating the sinking
5 of Stretch Duck 7.

6 And in the room I have?

7 MR. MUISE: Marcel Muise, Marine Accident Investigator with
8 the NTSB.

9 MR. PATTERSON: Robert Patterson, EMS Director for Mercy.

10 MR. CUMMINGS: Jim Cummings, Field Supervisor with Mercy.

11 MR. LEWIS: Tom Lewis, Medical Director for Mercy EMS Ground
12 Services.

13 MR. VAUGHN: William Vaughn, Operations Supervisor with Mercy
14 EMS.

15 DR. McKay. Okay. Thank you, gentlemen.

16 I'm going to go ahead with -- is it William or Bill?

17 MR. PATTERSON: William. Actually, I go by Shane, but --

18 DR. McKAY: Okay. That'll make my life difficult.

19 MR. PATTERSON: That's why I just said William.

INTERVIEW OF WILLIAM VAUGHN

20
21 BY DR. McKAY:

22 Q. Shane, if you could tell us exactly what happened on last
23 Thursday night, on the 19th, from the time you understood there
24 was an event going on, and then your experience on scene.

25 A. So, my experience from that evening, I am currently operating

1 as the interim regional manager for this area, which is our
2 counties of Stone and Berry in Benton, County Arkansas. I was off
3 duty. I was notified via phone by our first initial ambulance
4 that responded that we had a potential MCI, which was kind of
5 right on the jurisdictional boundary.

6 So, I went back to my house, contacted Mr. Patterson while I
7 was en route. I got dressed and responded down to the scene.

8 Once I arrived at the scene, I would estimate the incident
9 was probably an hour into in progress. I just reported to EMS
10 command at that point, and offered any further assistance that we
11 could provide.

12 That was really, virtually, the -- you know, I contacted, or
13 I had contact with my crew that had, the one crew that
14 transported. We were able to get the names of not only the two
15 that were transported, we were also able to obtain the names of
16 some of the other family members that were unaccounted for, that
17 they were specifically looking for, hoping, obviously, hoping,
18 they were here looking for them, wanting them to know they were at
19 the hospital, but --

20 Q. And how did you clear the scene?

21 A. I cleared the scene just as a supervisor assist, which is
22 generally when I -- if I don't have any patient contact, or any
23 type of major involvement in the scene, that's just how I, how we
24 clear our CAD system.

25 Q. Okay. And about how long, then, were you on scene?

1 A. I'd estimate I was on scene probably two to two and a half
2 hours.

3 Q. Okay.

4 INTERVIEW OF JIM CUMMINGS

5 BY DR. MCKAY:

6 Q. Tim [sic].

7 A. I was working on our south ambulance, on 7621 at Lampe.

8 MR. MUISE: Sorry. This is -- just for the recorder, this
9 is?

10 MR. CUMMINGS: Jim Cummings.

11 MR. MUISE: Yeah, so he -- that way she knows who the voice
12 is.

13 MR. CUMMINGS: Right.

14 I was working as a paramedic on 7621 out of Lampe. Actually
15 heard radio traffic from the fire department that there was a duck
16 that had sank, and that they had 20 people in the water. And I
17 told my partner, I asked him, I said did you hear that. He said I
18 did. I said we should probably go ahead and float north.

19 So, at that point, we were not dispatched yet. But we were
20 some distance away. So, we got an, we started kind of mobiling
21 toward the north.

22 We contacted Mercy dispatch in Springfield and let them know
23 that there was an MCI going on, and that they may be asking for
24 units, and that we were already kind of mobiling that way.

25 I think we were dispatched officially right about 7, or 19:18

1 I think it was. And we arrived on scene, looked it up while ago,
2 and it was at 19:37 when my ambulance arrived on scene. We were
3 probably about the fifth ambulance in or so. So, we were directed
4 straight to staging.

5 And once we got into staging I saw TCA had a unit there. We
6 also had, 7623 was there also. About that time I saw one of our
7 crew members assisting the TCA crew bringing a patient up on their
8 stretcher to load into their ambulance.

9 We were directed, initially, to go to fire ground 1, is where
10 I heard our fire crews were at. Once we got on scene, we found
11 out that command was operating medical off of VTAC 11. So, we
12 switched over to there, let command know who we had in staging.
13 And so, I believe 7623 got an assignment. And that was two
14 patients that they were assigned to.

15 And, so, basically, while in staging, I stayed with our
16 truck. So, waiting for assignments.

17 We ended up -- I don't know how long we were there, but it
18 was about, I think it was about 15 minutes after 8, or so, when we
19 had a couple come up to our truck, wanted to be checked out. He
20 had actually jumped off the *Belle* and had assisted with the crew,
21 or the patients that our crew had transported, to get her out of
22 the water, and her nephew out of the water.

23 But other than that, I didn't have any other patient contact.
24 I did assist pushing a wheelchair up with one of the young ladies,
25 one of the greens, there at the very end.

1 But other than that, we were just in staging. So -- I don't
2 know how long we were on-scene, though. I have no idea.

3 BY DR. MCKAY:

4 Q. So, Bob's going to get us the dispatch reports, so, we'll
5 know what those are. That's part of our process.

6 A. Right.

7 Q. Let me start by asking you, Jim -- It's Mary Pat McKay, by
8 the way, the scene as you came upon it at 7:35 or so, how were you
9 aware of who, where the survivors were at that time, and where the
10 deceased were being managed?

11 A. At that time, my understanding was the *Showboat* was where
12 most of the survivors were. And deceased, I heard that there were
13 some fire crews pulling (indiscernible) out of the water over at
14 the landing, the ramp where the duck goes in. I didn't have, I
15 didn't see any of those things. I didn't see any of those,
16 because where we were staged at, you couldn't see down by the
17 water.

18 Q. You had no view.

19 A. No view. Correct.

20 Q. And it was still light out at the time --

21 A. Yes, it was.

22 Q. -- this all occurred. Any idea when it got dark? Again,
23 we'll check the official sunrise sunset process.

24 A. It seems to me that I was clearing the scene right about the
25 same time, because we were going to a structure fire right after

1 we were clearing the scene. So --

2 Q. And was your sense that there were injuries, it sounds like
3 you checked out one couple who had assisted --

4 A. Right.

5 Q. -- with the rescue. Were there injuries among the other
6 rescuers, whether they were official first responders or not?

7 A. I didn't see anyone else that I was aware of. So, I don't
8 know. We were told there was a deputy that was supposed to be
9 coming to our ambulance to be evaluated. And he never showed.

10 And it was right after that that it could have been a
11 miscommunication on it, because this deputy brought these people
12 over to us to have us check them out. So, that could have been
13 what they were talking about.

14 Q. It sounds like, and we've heard this a minute ago from some
15 of your colleagues across the county line, that there was an
16 initial phone call to fire, or 911 dispatch through fire. And
17 sometime later that got to you. Do you have any sense of, you
18 know, you're listening to the radio traffic and the scanner
19 traffic. Was there any sense of what was going on with that?

20 A. I don't know. I heard a few things at the debriefing the
21 other night. But I didn't hear those personally.

22 DR. MCKAY: Okay. What about you, Shane? Are you --

23 SGT. [REDACTED] Is this one the first responder?

24 MR. MUISE: It is.

25 DR. MCKAY: It --

1 MR. MUISE: It is. Yes.

2 SGT. [REDACTED] Can I sit in on this?

3 MR. MUISE: Absolutely. Absolutely. Come on in.

4 DR. McKAY: Come on in. No, there's a seat right here for
5 you.

6 SGT. [REDACTED] Do they have another first responder interview
7 going on?

8 MR. MUISE: No, (indiscernible)

9 SGT. [REDACTED] Because let me just tell Rob that I'm going to
10 be in here, then.

11 MR. MUISE: Okay. All right.

12 SGT. [REDACTED] Because we had two of us, but we were --

13 MR. MUISE: Let's just pause it, just pause it for a second.

14 SGT. [REDACTED] Unless we can have both of us in here.

15 (Off the record.)

16 (On the record.)

17 DR. McKAY: Okay. So, we're back. And what's happened is
18 we've had two new folks join the interview. These are team
19 members from the Survival Factors Group. So, I'm going to let
20 them introduce themselves.

21 SGT. [REDACTED] My names I [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm a sergeant with the
22 Highway Patrol Marine Division here on Table Rock.

23 TROOPER [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Missouri State Highway
24 Patrol, Marin Division.

25 DR. McKAY: Okay. So, I'm going to continue by questioning.

1 We'll go to Marcel, and then we'll go to the two of you. Okay?

2 All right. Collecting my thoughts.

3 GROUP INTERVIEW

4 DR. McKAY: So, in a typical MCI, is, did things seem to go,
5 I mean, obviously, you're kind of in the staging area, you're not
6 at unified command. Did this seem to go in a reasonable way?

7 MR. VAUGHN: I thought it did. I, once we found out the
8 proper channel to be on to be on VTAC 11, and we were able to talk
9 to command direct and let them know what we had in staging, it
10 seemed to be going pretty well. I thought they did a very good
11 job as far as collecting information and documenting those things.
12 So, it seems to run pretty well. I know that at the very
13 beginning, it's always very chaotic. But, right, but by the time
14 we got on scene, it seemed to be flowing pretty good by then,
15 so --

16 DR. McKAY: And did you have any issues with communication
17 back to your dispatch folks? We know that this location is
18 something of a dead --

19 MR. VAUGHN: I did not have any issues with the dispatch.

20 DR. McKAY: Okay. You?

21 MR. CUMMINGS: No. No issues at all. I was able to just,
22 first, like I said, so the equipment we have, I was able to be on
23 VTAC 11 where command is at, and I was actually, I actually did go
24 down to unified command. And then I have, we have, in my vehicle,
25 well, a blue tooth, I bought extender for -- I was able to use

1 that to communicate with my dispatch in Springfield via my, the
2 radio in my unit. So --

3 DR. McKAY: Okay. And how much interaction did either of you
4 have with, you know, the dive team came in. We know that there
5 were quite a lot of state troopers around, and with the fire
6 department?

7 MR. CUMMINGS: Very little. Actually, because, like I said,
8 I was at staging. At, at one point, we did have one of our EMTs
9 come up and, and he responded, he had just got off shift, and he
10 responded, POV, and so I could go down and help bring up the two
11 young ladies, I had him stay with our truck with the other medic
12 while I went down and helped push a wheelchair. So, other than
13 that, I didn't really have any other contact with the others.

14 DR. McKAY:

15 MR. VAUGHN: Really, probably 90 percent of my contact was
16 with the command from Taney County ambulance district, which was
17 Jeff Hawkins. Just, you, again, letting them know that we were
18 here to support them. They, obviously, they had a unit already in
19 place for the divers in the water. They had a unit, another,
20 several other units on-scene in staging. And, really, once we
21 determined the last seven people that were there were actually
22 just going to go on a shuttle and go back to the vehicle, as they
23 weren't patients is when, really, we terminated most of our EMS
24 response.

25 I did stay on scene briefly after a request was made for the

1 temporary morgue, which is one of the assets we maintain at our
2 facility in Green County. Worked with Sheriff [REDACTED] (ph.), [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED] from William with Stone County to determining was kind of a
4 dual request had been answered. It went out on the, on the
5 Missouri Health Network System, which is how our asset got
6 involved within also the coroner from [REDACTED] County, who has a
7 similar asset, was also responding with theirs. So, we turned --
8 we got the information of where that staging location was, and we
9 turned it over to them and left the scene.

10 DR. MCKAY: Okay. Great. You're raising my next question,
11 because we've talked to the hospital, and we know their morgue is
12 minute. And so, how involved do you guys get in a mass fatality
13 incident in terms of dealing with the deceased?

14 MR. VAUGHN: You know, I don't know if we've ever really
15 practiced that out of how, but we do have the asset which we
16 can -- it's a three-unit asset, which each unit can hold eight
17 bodies, you know, so, really, the call would go through our
18 healthcare coalition or back to Mr. Patterson. But we would
19 transport that to whatever facility is, Your Honor, hopefully
20 already predetermined in an area that has the utilities to handle
21 that. I assumed, since it's an asset that we maintain, that at
22 some point we would -- at least someone from our organization
23 would stay on site to help facilitate that process.

24 But as far as the actual transport or movement of bodies, we
25 don't participate in that at all.

1 DR. MCKAY: My last question is really about MCI training,
2 and so, if you can talk about, each of you, together or
3 separately, I don't know if you've done everything together,
4 recent MCI drills, and how many of those drills happened in
5 participation with fire and law enforcement, and how many of them
6 occur across county lines.

7 MR. VAUGHN: Oh, wow. So, as far as this are, I've only been
8 down in this area for about three weeks. But before that, I was
9 in Springfield for the better part of 20 years. And I could say
10 we, at least annually, performed either a tabletop or a live
11 exercise where we work with not only Springfield fire -- and
12 they're typically airport exercises, which are good, because those
13 test, these types of jurisdictional boundary, then you have
14 Springfield fire, you have airport fire, you have the surrounding
15 rural fire departments that all have these somewhat communication
16 challenges and different protocols, different procedures.

17 You know, how many I've participated in, I'm not totally
18 sure. But, you know, over the years, several.

19 DR. MCKAY: Okay. What about -- and you may know this
20 question, you may not, what about with Taney County?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They do quite a few actually, and
22 we've trained with them, and we've done MCI training a Cerar City
23 (ph.) with all their assets out there and with Taney County
24 involved, just all the areas and stuff. We do a lot of the
25 docudramas, too, at the schools, and things like that. And we've

1 got different agencies coming in and everything, so, yeah, we do
2 quite a bit of training for MCIs.

3 As far as, I mean, training levels, I mean, we've done a lot
4 of actuals, (indiscernible) and everything, involved in all that
5 stuff. And so, as far as training, I've got a lot of training in
6 MCI stuff through -- well, NIMs and then strike team later on, got
7 a lot of that, too, yeah.

8 MR. MCKAY: I'm sure that my colleague here is going to have
9 some questions about that.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And just to, for, just real --
11 specifically, for this community, and I couldn't give you the
12 exact date, but this community did participate in an airport
13 disaster exercise, I want to say back in approximately the spring.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That was just a few months ago.
15 Right.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, and we were involved in that.
17 Mercy, I know you said, obviously, Taney County ambulance, both
18 aircraft, they involved the hospital. So, there was a fairly
19 largescale even in this community that went on recently.

20 DR. MCKAY: Great. That's all the questions I have for now.
21 Marcel?

22 MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise. I'm with the Office of
23 Marine Safety with the NTSB. So --

24 BY MR. MUISE:

25 Q. Along the lines of communications are you aware of any dead

1 zones in this area? I heard you say you could talk to Springfield
2 pretty easy, but, is there any other dead zones that you can't
3 talk to anybody?

4 A. Right in this general area, I'm not aware of any. We've got
5 pretty good communications right in here.

6 Q. Are you familiar with narrow banding?

7 A. I'm not. Are you?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Somewhat.

9 BY MR. MUISE:

10 Q. Does it cause any problems for you communication-wise, as an
11 agency?

12 A. No.

13 Q. It has not. Okay. Good.

14 Along the lines of training, so you mentioned NIMS. What
15 level NIMS ICS training do your crews have?

16 A. Crews or me?

17 Q. Crews.

18 A. Bob might be able to speak to that, because --

19 MR. PATTERSON: If it were --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Go ahead.

21 MR. PATTERSON: So, all ground personnel are required to have
22 100, 200 and 700. Anybody that -- and we had two supervisors on
23 the ambulance then, plus the other supervisor and myself who
24 responded. For just general supervisor level, we require 100,
25 200, 700 and 800. And we also encourage 3- and 400.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I got 3 and 4, strike team --

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, yeah.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think all our senior leaders have 3
4 and 4. Yeah.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, and then, as far as, you know, as
6 far as past there, the various regional managers and other
7 managers have the different level of NIMS training. I'm an
8 operations person with our local incident management team, so,
9 I've got -- I couldn't even list them all right now.

10 BY MR. MUISE:

11 Q. That's fine. That's okay. That's a good idea.

12 Mass casualty drills and training, does any of that include
13 the Coast Guard or the Coast Guard Auxiliary?

14 A. We have done that on the lake. Yes. We have. And it's been
15 a couple years since we were -- and we were talking about, you
16 know, doing that again this year or next year with them. But,
17 yes, we have included Coast Guard Auxiliary on that.

18 Q. And just to be clear, I heard this, you had two rigs on
19 scene?

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. And you transported one?

22 A. We transported two.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We transported two.

24 BY MR. MUISE:

25 Q. Each of you took one?

1 A. (Indiscernible) one rig, yes.

2 Q. In one rig?

3 DR. McKAY: No, it was two --

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

5 DR. McKAY: -- family members in one --

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Two family members in one of them,
7 yes.

8 BY MR. MUISE:

9 Q. Both green tags?

10 A. One yellow, one green (indiscernible).

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible) yes.

12 MR. MUISE: That's all --

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He was basically going just for
14 evaluation.

15 MR. MUISE: That's all I have, then.

16 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

17 Q. This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Water Patrol Division. My main
18 thing is, you know, like I said, there was a lot of chaos there at
19 first. And so, I'm going the accident report for the Highway
20 Patrol, the Marine Division part of it. So, I'm trying to figure
21 out as far as the injuries you transported, where they're
22 transported, where they were picked up, and stuff like that.

23 So, you two patients I understand, both in the same car, you
24 had two cars down here total, and on your two patients was one
25 male and one female?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. Were they Caucasian?

3 A. No. They were African-American.

4 Q. Both African-American?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And what was their ages approximately?

7 A. I wasn't on that car. But I believe she was in her 30s. I
8 think he was adolescent.

9 Q. Yeah. I believe --

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I would estimate (indiscernible).

11 SGT. [REDACTED] Okay. Maybe we can do that.

12 DR. MCKAY: I actually know these ages, and I can provide
13 them to you.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

15 SGT. [REDACTED] If you don't want to disclose their names. I
16 can always call Mercy later, or I can get them from her. That's
17 no problem. But the main thing is, and I can --

18 (Crosstalk.)

19 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

20 Q. Actually, I actually will have their names. I just need,
21 because I'm just kind of like backtracking right now. Because
22 I've already figured out a lot of it, but there's still a lot of
23 pieces of the puzzle that I'm just trying to get a -- of these
24 patients, and the ambulance services were talking about red,
25 green, these colors and stuff. And I don't understand that as far

1 as the injuries. I assume that that's like -- a red is a bad
2 injury or something?

3 A. Yeah. Red's critical.

4 Q. Red's critical?

5 A. Uh-huh. Yellow's immediate, and then green is delayed.

6 Q. Okay. So, you had a yellow and a green?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. Okay. And did you have anybody that had had CPR performed on
9 them already?

10 A. No.

11 Q. No? Okay. And so, did -- and did you transport everybody to
12 Cox Branson?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Both of them?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. There wasn't anybody that was transported anywhere
17 besides Cox Branson --

18 A. Not that I know of.

19 Q. -- from my understanding. Okay.

20 SGT. [REDACTED] I think that's all I have, then.

21 DR. McKAY: Okay.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions.

23 DR. McKAY: No questions.

24 BY MR. MUISE:

25 Q. I was going to mention, earlier, you were talking about the

1 responses that you guys have been in. And this isn't necessarily
2 a question for me, but you guys were probably involved in the Leap
3 Day Tornado --

4 A. I was.

5 Q. -- in Branson? That came through Branson?

6 A. It went down my street.

7 Q. Yeah. So, that was a pretty big, pretty big event.

8 DR. McKAY: Yeah.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It was. I was --

10 BY MR. MUISE:

11 Q. -- (indiscernible) for your agency.

12 A. Well, I was on duty, so, and it --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. -- coming down my road, so --

15 Q. Yeah. So, that was, that was a pretty good tornado on the
16 ground for a long time, so. And, on the casualties on that, I'm
17 not remembering exactly -- I know there was serious injuries.

18 A. We had one guy fall off his roof while he was trying to tarp
19 it.

20 Q. Yeah.

21 DR. McKAY: Okay. All right. Marcel, do you have any --

22 MR. MUISE: I have no follow-up.

23 DR. McKAY: -- questions? All right. So I'm going to go
24 ahead and end the interview, which is ending at 1:35 on July 23rd.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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 Mercy EMS Personnel

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA18MM028

PLACE: Branson, Missouri

DATE: July 23, 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